

PRESS RELEASE

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Three Western Australian Cities share benefits of taking part in LivCom Awards Finals

Not just one but three Western Australian Local Governments stamped their mark firmly on the award winners list at the 2011 LivCom Awards.

The City of Joondalup was named the World's Most Liveable City of 2011 for towns with a population between 150,001 and 400,000.

Another Western Australian city, Mandurah gained silver for populations of between 20,001 and 75,000 also taking the strategic planning award. Greater Geraldton won the community involvement section and Serpentine Jarrahdale Shire also was recognised in the socio economic project award for its 'planning for the future.'

Geraldton was also a finalist in the 20,001 to 75,000 section.

The LivCom Awards, initiated in 1997 and endorsed by the United Nations Environment Program, is the only international competition judged on international best practice for managing the environment while improving residents' quality of life by creating "liveable communities".

Joondalup Mayor Troy Pickard said winning the award was a significant achievement for Joondalup, with the City now being recognised at an international level for its fantastic attributes and lifestyle choices.

"The City has come a long way in a few short years, providing the community with a great range of services and a sense of place, whilst developing sustainable planning and environmental strategies for the future," he said.

"Local Governments face many challenges and must plan for them all.

"From climate change to population growth, community services and emergency management in the face of disaster, the City of Joondalup is leading the way in Local Government in WA, and, as this award now shows, internationally."

Chief Executive and founder of LivCom, Alan Smith said that LivCom had long championed the fact that many of the world's most pressing challenges can be met by working at regional level and the cities represented demonstrated that they are actively taking a lead in this field.

The City of Mandurah was also named as one of the most liveable cities.

Mandurah Acting CEO Tony Free said the City was thrilled to win silver in its population category of 20,001 to 75000 at the awards in Songpa-gu, South Korea.

"We also won the top award for strategic planning so we did exceptionally well against 77 finalists from 26 countries," he said.

"The judges noted the increasing emphasis on involving and empowering the community itself and said this was a real strength in this year's applications.

"Their comments underlined what the City has always recognised: that the Mandurah community is an essential partner in the creation of our liveable community.

"These awards belonged to every single person in our community."

He pointed out that the Western Australian cities of Mandurah, Joondalup and Greater Geraldton, and the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, won five awards overall in the international competition.

"WA's overall performance endorses what Western Australians have always known, that our state is the world's best kept secret," he said.

"The benefits of the awards are far reaching. The process of really describing what we do has taught us a lot about our community. We know being good stewards of the environment, creating opportunities for people to participate and fostering arts, culture and heritage all go in the mix of creating great places to live, which Mandurah is."

With an introduction by City of Greater Geraldton Mayor, Ian Carpenter, City CEO Tony Brun gave an outstanding presentation in support of the City's submission in the finals of the International Awards for Liveable Communities 2011 securing first place in the world in the Whole City category for Community Participation and Empowerment and; a silver award certificate assessment for Category B Whole Cities Entry.

Ian Carpenter said the win was very exciting and puts Geraldton on the world map yet again, hot on the heels of securing fifth spot in the global Reinhard Mohn Awards for Vitalising Democracy for the City's 2029 and Beyond project.

"I really feel this is the direct result of some wonderful collaborative work between the community and the city, he said.

"I think the award really was a reflection of the enormous amount of work which has been contributed by our city staff and importantly the great amount of community input we have received."

The Serpentine Jarrahdale Shire took second place in the project award for the socio economic category, for its Plan for the Future.

The city of Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, is set to play host the 2012 finals of the International Awards for Liveable Communities (22nd-26th November). Now in their 16th year, this is the second time that the prestigious LivCom International Awards – which are devoted to championing and rewarding sustainable development, quality of life and environmental best practice in communities – have been held in the UAE.

At the awards finals, which have been held every year since 1997, judges evaluate the approach to individual criteria for sustainable development – enhancement of the landscape, heritage management, environmentally-sensitive practices, community sustainability and planning for the future.

The finals, which see representatives of the various towns and cities make their case to an international jury, last for five days, culminating in an awards ceremony. The closing date for entries to the 2012 finals is 31st May.