



# MEDIA CAPABILITY WINS PRESTIGIOUS NSW LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARD

Dubbo Regional Council's Corporate Image and Communications team has received a prestigious Local Government NSW award during a virtual state-wide ceremony today (Thursday 4 November).

The RH Dougherty Award for Reporting to Your Community (Division B: population 30,000-70,000 people) was awarded to Dubbo Regional Council for, 'Going LIVE from the Dubbo Region'.

In what is recognised as an industry first for an Australian local government Council, Dubbo Regional Council has operated a live broadcasting capability since 2020 that was designed to provide the ability for Council to livestream to all Council owned and operated digital platforms simultaneously, as well as broadcast live to media regionally, nationally and internationally. It's a capability that has widely been used during the peak of the drought emergency, the recovery from drought, promoting the region nationally, and used extensively during the COVID-19 emergencies of 2020, and more recently in 2021.

Judges took into consideration the extensive application of Council's LIVE capability during 2020. This included the 2020 COVID-19 emergency which saw Council deliver a series of live updates, complete with an AUSLAN interpreter that was widely shared on social media as well as being broadcast in metropolitan media. The eight Council produced COVID-19 updates during the 2020 pandemic reached over 80,000 people via Facebook as well as being broadcast nationally during live COVID-19 rolling coverage. During 2020, the capability was also used extensively to showcase the region's recovery from drought, delivered three live Q&A discussion panels during the Dubbo Needs a Rehab campaign, ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, Australia Day, delivering Ordinary Council Meetings during COVID-19 (2020) from the Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre while the chamber was closed, as well as livestreaming/broadcasting other Council events.

More recently, Council's LIVE broadcast capability provided 47 live press conferences during the region's (2021) COVID-19 outbreak, supporting local member Dugald Saunders MP, Western NSW Local Health District CEO Scott McLachlan, NSW Police Force, Australian Defence Force and other leading agencies. This week, Council's broadcast capability assisted the ABC and Taronga Western Plains Zoo with a live cross during national breakfast TV programming to showcase the Dubbo region as regional NSW opened up to double-vaxxed visitors from Greater Sydney.

Judges took into close consideration overall cost of the capability (\$77,000 over two years) and return of investment. Judges considered things such as one single national television 30-sec spot can cost upwards of \$70,000 to buy during peak national programming - compared to the level of exposure the region can gain over several

minutes of live television programming provided by Council that showcases the region. Judges also considered the adaptability of the capability – how it can be used simultaneously across multiple digital and broadcast platforms, and the capability being applied to critical Council work with other government agencies, such media and communications during an emergency (as proven during drought and COVID-19), and the role the capability plays within local emergency management.

The RH Dougherty Awards were established in 1981 and were named after former Local Government Association President, Robert Henry (Bob) Dougherty. Cr Dougherty's life was one of local and community involvement. He worked for more than 20 years in local government and served on more than 20 local cultural, sporting and community organisations, including Keep Australia Beautiful Council of NSW, Chatswood District Community Hospital and Willoughby Symphony Orchestra. Cr Dougherty had a vision of what local government should be, one of which was "to develop real means of communication between councils and their ratepayers", an aim the awards serve to encourage, promote and recognise.

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