

Minister's Planning Awards 2026

Award guidelines

The Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning connects industries, businesses, communities and government (at all levels) to leverage regions' strengths to generate sustainable and enduring economic growth that supports well-planned, inclusive and resilient communities.

Copyright

This publication is protected by the Copyright Act 1968.

Translating and interpreting service



If you have difficulty understanding a document and need an interpreter, we provide access to a translating and interpreting service. You will not be charged for this service. To contact the Translating and Interpreting Service, telephone 131 450 and ask them to telephone the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning on +61 7 3328 4811.

Disclaimer

While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, to the extent permitted by law, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses (including direct and indirect loss), damages and costs incurred as a result of decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within. To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing.

Any references to legislation are not an interpretation of the law. They are to be used as a guide only. The information in this publication is general and does not take into account individual circumstances or situations. Where appropriate, independent legal advice should be sought.

Copies of this publication are available on our website at www.planning.qld.gov.au and further copies are available upon request.

Contact us

☎ +61 7 3328 4811 or 13 QGOV (13 74 68)
✉ info@dakilpp.qld.gov.au
🌐 www.planning.qld.gov.au
✉ PO Box 15009, City East, Queensland 4002
🏠 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000

Source number D26/345627

Minister's Planning Awards 2026

Guidelines for the Awards

1. Innovative Regional Queensland Planning Solution Award

1.0 Background

This category invites university students to outline (individually) the solution to a specific Queensland regionally based planning problem (outside of South East Queensland) of their choosing. Their submissions will present the planning issue and their proposed solution to a panel of Planning Group executive officers including the State Planner.

This award is open to undergraduate, post-graduate and masters planning students.

Students from the following universities can nominate themselves for this award:

- University of Queensland
- Queensland University of Technology
- Griffith University
- University of Southern Queensland
- University of the Sunshine Coast.

1.1 Award

One overall award is presented to an outstanding student, with one highly commended runner up also recognised.

The winner will be the submission which presents a solution to a regional Queensland planning problem that is considered innovative, practical, original, and scalable.

This award is intended to:

- publicly recognise innovative and practical approaches to real regional Queensland planning problems
- attract the brightest and best students
- stimulate passion and engage students to employ their skills and creativity
- generate exciting ideas, innovation and collaboration to produce new, fresh and scalable ideas connected to address a regionally based planning challenge.

The winner will be offered a four-week paid internship with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (the Department), subject to the Department's standard engagement conditions and criteria.

The winner and highly commended may be included in a media statement and/or published on the department's social media pages and their submission (in full, in part, or in summary) presented in our website.

The award will be presented during the annual *Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) 2026 Queensland Awards for Planning Excellence*, to be held on 13 November 2026.

1.2 Assessment criteria

Weighted Criteria	Weighting
Presenting an innovative 'regional' planning solution or opportunity to a problem: The regional problem is a 'real regional Queensland' issue, and the solution is innovative and contributes to communities being well-planned, prosperous, resilient, and sustainable.	60%
Practicality: The solution to the regional problem also illustrates how it can be implemented. It is practical to the work of planning practitioners.	20%
Readability (<i>written submission</i>): Ideas and arguments are presented logically and clearly, assessed from the point of view of a planning practitioner.	10%
Compelling and scalable (<i>live or virtual presentation</i>): Presentations to the judging panel are knowledgeable, well organised, engaging, and delivered with conviction. The solution is potentially applicable in other jurisdictions.	10%

Mandatory Criteria
Original work: The submission needs to be the students' original work, except for any permitted third-party material, and has not been published elsewhere.
Permitted third-party material: The thesis or study does not include any third-party material unless it is appropriately used, acknowledged and referenced in accordance with standard academic practice and copyright law.

1.3 Entries

Students from all the eligible universities may nominate their own entry if they consider it meets the above criteria.

Prior to applying, students must read this guideline, the Collection Notice concerning the awards, and the Department's [privacy and security statement](#).

Please complete the online nomination form and upload the relevant documentation in PDF format. If you do not wish to submit your entry online, download a word form and email with your documents to learn-planning@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au.

Entries must be received by **5 pm Friday 25 September 2026**.

Students must be available to present their submission, if invited, on Friday 9 October 2026.

2. Innovative South East Queensland Planning Solution Award

2.0 Background

This category invites university students to outline (individually) the solution to a specific South East Queensland (SEQ) based planning problem of their choosing. Their submissions will present the planning issue and their proposed solution to a panel of Planning Group executive officers including the State Planner.

This award is open to undergraduate, post-graduate and masters planning students.

Students from the following universities can nominate themselves for this award:

- University of Queensland
- Queensland University of Technology
- Griffith University
- University of Southern Queensland
- University of the Sunshine Coast.

2.1 Award

One overall award is presented to an outstanding student, with one highly commended runner up also recognised.

The winner will be the submission which presents a solution to a SEQ planning problem that is considered innovative, practical, original, and scalable.

This award is intended to:

- publicly recognise innovative and practical approaches to real SEQ planning problems
- attract the brightest and best students
- stimulate passion and engage students to employ their skills and creativity
- generate exciting ideas, innovation and collaboration to produce new, fresh and scalable ideas connected to address a SEQ-based planning challenge.

The winner will be offered a four-week paid internship with the Department, subject to the Department's standard engagement conditions and criteria.

The winner and highly commended may be included in a media statement and/or published on the department's social media pages and their submission presented (in full, in part, or in summary) in our website.

The award will be presented during the annual *PIA 2026 Queensland Awards for Planning Excellence*, to be held on 13 November 2026.

2.2 Assessment criteria

Weighted Criteria	Weighting
Presenting an innovative 'SEQ' planning solution or opportunity to a problem: The problem is a 'real SEQ' issue, and the solution is innovative and contributes to a long-term vision for added growth to our existing urban areas while sustainably maintaining the SEQ we love.	60%
Practicality: The solution to the SEQ problem also illustrates how it can be implemented. It is practical to the work of planning practitioners.	20%
Readability (written submission): Ideas and arguments are presented logically and clearly, assessed from the point of view of a planning practitioner.	10%
Compelling and scalable (live or virtual presentation): Presentations to the judging panel are knowledgeable, well organised, engaging, and delivered with conviction. The solution is potentially applicable in other jurisdictions.	10%

Mandatory Criteria

Original work: The submission needs to be the students' original work, except for any permitted third-party material, and has not been published elsewhere.

Permitted third-party material: The thesis or study does not include any third-party material unless it is appropriately used, acknowledged and referenced in accordance with standard academic practice and copyright law.

2.3 Entries

Students from all the eligible universities may nominate their own entry if they consider it meets the above criteria.

Prior to applying, students must read this guideline, the Collection Notice concerning the awards, and the Department's [privacy and security statement](#).

Please complete the online nomination form and upload the relevant documentation in PDF format. If you do not wish to submit your entry online, download a word form and email with your documents to learn-planning@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au.

Entries must be received by **5 pm Friday 25 September 2026**.

Students must be available to present their submission, if invited, on Friday 9 October 2026.

3. Young Trailblazer in Planning Award (university nomination)

3.0 Background

The Young Trailblazer in Planning Award will be presented to one university undergraduate (second, third or fourth year) recognised as being a student who has demonstrated exceptional promise, vision and creativity in the field of planning.

The Department invites universities to nominate up to three students for consideration.

The following universities can nominate students for this award:

- University of Queensland
- Queensland University of Technology
- Griffith University
- University of Southern Queensland
- University of the Sunshine Coast.

The award is only open to university nomination. Students may not nominate themselves for this award.

3.1 Award

One overall award is presented to the student who meets the criteria outlined below, with one highly commended runner up also recognised.

The winner will be chosen based on a rationale (750 words maximum) submitted by their university that addresses the assessment criteria.

The award is intended to:

- acknowledge a young professional not only for their professional achievements but also their potential to shape the future of planning
- give students the opportunity to develop an understanding of the State's role and contribution to planning early in their career and appreciate their positive impact as a planner in Queensland in shaping the places where we live, work and play.
- increase the future pipeline of qualified planning professionals to address the severe shortage of planners in Queensland
- strengthen links between universities and the Department.

The winner will be offered a four-week paid internship with the Department, subject to the Department's standard engagement conditions and criteria.

The name of the prize-winning nominee and highly commended, and university they attend may be published. However, no additional personal information will be given out without the prior consent of the prize-winning nominee.

The award will be presented during the annual *PIA 2026 Queensland Awards for Planning Excellence*, to be held on 13 November 2026.

3.2 Assessment criteria

This award will be given to a student who displays one or more of the following characteristics:

Criteria
Outstanding results in the study of planning at undergraduate level during the current academic year (2026).
Involved in a planning student association that is enhancing the experience of planning students at the university.
Shows promise of high achievement in the planning field.

3.3 Entries

Each university is invited to nominate up to three students who meet one or all of the above criteria.

Prior to applying, please ensure each nominated student has read this guideline, the Collection Notice concerning the awards, and the Department's [privacy and security statement](#).

Please complete the online nomination form and upload the relevant documentation in PDF format. If you do not wish to submit your entry online, download a word form and email with your documents to learn-planning@dsdilqp.qld.gov.au.

Entries must be received by **5 pm Friday 25 September 2026**.