The **2026 Stormwater NSW Awards for Excellence** encourage and celebrate excellence in the innovation, development, completion and management of stormwater projects and the people involved.

Entries for the **2026 Stormwater NSW Awards for Excellence** are Now Open.

In addition to our project categories, we would encourage you and your team to consider nominating one of your colleagues for the category of **Young Stormwater Professional of the Year** or our newest award **Stormwater Professional of the Year**. These awards celebrate the achievements of current and future leaders within our industry.

As part of the judging process, Stormwater NSW Awards for Excellence finalists in each category may have the opportunity to speak directly to the judges about their project and promote its merits. More information on the interview stage can be found in the 'Judging' section of this document.

Awards for Excellence Submission

Closing Date for Entries: **COB Friday, 31 July 2026**

Why Should You Enter?

There are many benefits of winning a Stormwater NSW Award for Excellence, including:

- Recognition of your Project's excellence, and the chance to showcase the people and organisations involved
- Demonstrating to all stakeholders that your organisation is a leader in its field
- Ongoing promotion including potential media coverage
- Having the Award proudly on display within your organisation
- Providing an example of excellence that can be advocated and promoted elsewhere
- Entry to the Stormwater Australia Awards for Excellence in 2027.

Stormwater Australia Awards for Excellence

Under the Awards for Excellence protocol adopted nationally by Stormwater Australia, only the recipients of the State Awards for Excellence will be eligible for the National Excellence Awards. Therefore, entry of a project into a State Excellence Awards is a minimum prerequisite for entry into the National Awards.

Allowance may be made for recipients of a State Excellence Award to refine their application for National entry based on the judges' comments and feedback on the State level application. For example, it may be recommended that a criteria response is amended to more clearly demonstrate or emphasise aspects of the project. This will allow the State Association to further support excellence in the local stormwater industry.

The National Awards will be held every two years. The next National Awards will be announced by Stormwater Australia in 2026. The preceding two years of State award winners (2025 and 2026) will be eligible for the National Awards in 2027.

Award Categories

The award categories for the 2026 Awards for Excellence are:

1. Excellence in Strategic or Master Planning
2. Excellence in Infrastructure
3. Excellence in Asset Management
4. Excellence in Research and Innovation
5. Excellence in Policy or Education
6. Excellence in Integrated Stormwater Design
7. Young Stormwater Professional of the Year
8. Stormwater Professional of the Year

Further information on the Award Category criteria can be found on the following pages.

Excellence in Strategic or Master Planning

This Award recognises excellence in strategic or master planning in development of integrated stormwater management.

Examples of projects that would be eligible for consideration in this category include, but are not limited to:

- Site or precinct master/ conceptual layout plans.
- Regional or catchment strategies/ plans, including infrastructure plans.
- Integrated Water Management Plans.

Entries in this category will be judged against the criteria listed below. Applications must demonstrate how the project meets each criterion.

	Criteria for Excellence in Strategic or Master Planning	Weighting
1.	The project is expected to result in significant benefits and achievement of project objectives when the recommended approaches, strategies and/ or design are implemented.	20%
2.	The project demonstrates excellence in the application of best planning practices for stormwater.	20%
3.	The project has integrated stormwater management within broader considerations, such as land use planning, integrated water management, sustainability, and livability, to ensure multiple benefits and the best overall outcomes are achieved.	20%
4.	The project demonstrates excellence in consideration of economic, environmental, and social factors	20%
5.	The project involved meaningful collaboration with stakeholders.	20%

Notes on criteria:

- Criteria 2: Best planning practices refers to the site assessment, planning and design component and should represent the best practical planning approach for achieving water resource management objectives.
- Criteria 5: Stakeholders may include those from other disciplines, the community, other organisations and/ or within an organisation.

Excellence in Infrastructure

This Award recognises excellence in stormwater infrastructure projects that have been delivered and are now operational.

Examples of projects that would be eligible for consideration in this category include, but are not limited to:

- Flood protection/ mitigation works.
- A stormwater harvesting and/ or managed aquifer recharge scheme.
- A retrofit or restoration project, such as waterway rehabilitation.
- A stormwater management system for a development, which may incorporate treatment measures such as constructed wetlands or bioretention systems.
- Any combination of the above to achieve an integrated system.

Entries in this category will be judged against the criteria listed below. Applications must demonstrate how the project meets each criterion.

	Criteria for Excellence in Infrastructure	Weighting
1.	The project will deliver significant benefits (including stormwater management outcomes that exceed minimum legislative requirements).	20%
2.	The project demonstrates excellence in design.	20%
3.	The project demonstrates excellence in construction technique.	20%
4.	The project demonstrates excellence in consideration of economic, environmental, and social factors.	20%
5.	The project involved meaningful collaboration with stakeholders.	20%

Notes on criteria:

- Criteria 2: Excellence in design involves application of best planning and management practices. This includes, but is not limited to, design that:
  - Involves innovative or resourceful use of existing practices to respond to and address site constraints
  - Considers and allows for maintenance requirements
  - Integrates stormwater management objectives with broader considerations, such as sustainability or livability, to maximise benefits and achieve the best solution for the site
  - Meets client expectations
- Criteria 5: Stakeholders may include those from other disciplines, the community, other organisations and/ or within an organisation.

Excellence in Asset Management

This Award recognises excellence in the management of stormwater infrastructure in order to encourage and promote improved asset management planning and practices.

Stormwater Australia considers asset management a vital component of the lifecycle of stormwater infrastructure. Effective asset management prolongs the life cycle of stormwater systems and helps ensure they meet required levels of service. While systems, processes, and techniques to manage stormwater assets have advanced, significant improvements are still possible. This is particularly the case with stormwater infrastructure, such as swales, bioretention systems and wetlands, which involve a "green" infrastructure component.

Examples of projects that would be eligible for consideration in this category include, but are not limited to:

- Programs and/ or plans that set out approaches and strategies to manage stormwater assets.
- Programs that undertake management of stormwater infrastructure, including maintenance or renewal programs.
- Projects that improve the management of data relating to stormwater assets.
- Projects that improve the process of handing over stormwater infrastructure from developers to council so that the infrastructure is in a functional state.
- Projects that employ innovative methods or approaches to asset management.

Entries in this category will be judged against the criteria listed below. Applications must demonstrate how the project meets each criterion.

	Criteria for Excellence in Asset Management	Weighting
1.	The project will provide significant benefits.	20%
2.	The project promotes or employs processes or practices that prolong the life of stormwater systems and ensure they meet or exceed expected levels of reliability, functionality, and ease of operation.	20%
3.	The project demonstrates excellence in consideration of economic, environmental, and social factors.	20%
4.	The project integrates with other areas of organisational planning and follows established asset management frameworks to allow broader policy and continuous improvement outcomes to be achieved	20%
5.	The project involved meaningful collaboration with stakeholders.	20%

Notes on criteria:

- Criteria 1: Significant benefits may include, but not be limited to:
  - Improved governance and accountability
  - Enhanced service management and customer satisfaction
  - Improved financial efficiency
  - More sustainable decisions (International Infrastructure Management Manual, 2006).
  - Notable environmental outcomes or improvements
- Criteria 2: Explain how the Assets are managed and what elements of this make it reliable, practical, functional, and easy to use.
- Criteria 4: Explain how asset management approaches are able to consider future challenges that could be anticipated over asset life.

Excellence in Research and Innovation

This Award recognises excellence in research and innovation that fills knowledge gaps and/ or addresses information or technology needs which lead to improvements in the sustainable use and management of stormwater.

Examples of projects that would be eligible for consideration in this category include, but are not limited to:

- Scientific research and validation.
- New technologies (including products and software) used in stormwater management planning, design, construction, or maintenance.

Entries in this category will be judged against the criteria listed below. Applications must demonstrate how the project meets each criterion.

	Criteria for Excellence in Research and Innovation	Weighting
1.	The project clearly identifies knowledge gaps and/ or information needs to improve stormwater management practices	20%
2.	The project demonstrates its ability to fill knowledge gaps and/ or address information or technology needs which lead to improvements in the sustainable use and management of stormwater.	20%
3.	The project involved meaningful collaboration with stakeholders	20%
4.	The project demonstrates excellence in consideration of economic, environmental, and social factors which may, in part, be defined by financial efficiency or value for money.	20%
5a.	Describe how the project relates to the definition of research, and include references to definition cited, benchmarks of excellence against the cited reference and how project relates to these.	20%
5b.	Describe how the project relates to the definition of innovation, and include references to definition cited, benchmarks of excellence against the cited reference and how project relates to these.	

Notes on criteria:

- For judging purposes, innovation may be defined as:
  - The process of making improvements by introducing something new
  - Change that creates a new dimension of performance
- Criteria 1: In response to this criteria, the entry may highlight (but not be limited to) the knowledge or information gap that it addresses.
- Criteria 2: In response to this criteria, the entry may highlight (but not be limited to) demonstration of how the research or innovation is being applied.

- Criteria 3: Stakeholders may include those from other disciplines, the community, and other organisations and/ or within an organisation.
- Criteria 5a or 5b, please complete one to demonstrate how the project aligns with definition of Research or Innovation.

Excellence in Policy or Education

This Award recognises excellence in policy/ regulation, and educational programs/ activities that facilitate or accelerate the uptake of stormwater management principles and practices that lead to the sustainable use and management of stormwater. Examples of projects that would be eligible for consideration in this category include, but are not limited to:

- Capacity building projects.
- Community focussed education programs.
- Policy or regulation that accelerates the uptake of best practice.

Entries in this category will be judged against the criteria listed below. Applications must demonstrate how the project meets each criterion.

	Criteria for Excellence in Policy or Education	Weighting
1.	The project clearly identifies knowledge gaps and/ or information needs and sets a relevant standard for attainment of improved stormwater management within a target community.	20%
2.	The project demonstrates its ability to facilitate or accelerate the uptake of stormwater management principles and practices that lead to the sustainable use and management of stormwater.	20%
3.	The project involved meaningful collaboration with stakeholders.	20%
4.	The project demonstrates excellence in consideration of economic, environmental, and social factors which may, in part, be defined by financial efficiency or value for money.	20%
5a.	Describe how the project relates to the definition of policy, and include references to definition cited, benchmarks of excellence against the cited reference and how project relates to these.	20%
5b.	Describe how the project relates to the definition of education, and include references to definition cited, benchmarks of excellence against the cited reference and how project relates to these.	

Notes on criteria:

- Criteria 1: In response to this criteria, the entry may highlight (but not be limited to):
  - Demonstration of how the policy or education is being applied
  - How the project is tailored to the target audience (where applicable)
  - The knowledge or information gap that it addresses
- Criteria 3: Stakeholders may include those from other disciplines, the community, other organisations and/ or within an organisation.
- Criteria 5a or 5b, please complete one to demonstrate how the project aligns with definition of Policy or Education.

Excellence in Integrated Stormwater Design

This Award recognises excellence in integration of stormwater into the urban environment. It is intended to promote the use of integrated design principles and to acknowledge design lead stormwater projects. These projects, which may be at any scale, deliver quality outcomes for amenity, recreational, biodiversity and functional elements of stormwater systems. The award recognises projects that have been constructed. Examples of projects that would be eligible for consideration in this category include, but are not limited to:

- Stormwater treatment/ flood mitigation within public spaces.
- Linear waterway corridors that encompass multiple aspects of stormwater management.
- Restoration projects, improving aquatic ecosystems and creating liveable spaces.
- Stormwater integrated into urban design layout incorporating aesthetics and recreation.
- Any combination of the above to achieve an integrated system.

Entries in this category will be judged against the criteria listed below. Applications must demonstrate how the project meets each criterion.

	Criteria for Excellence in Integrated Stormwater Design	Weighting
1.	The project is expected to result in significant multiple benefits to the community, environment, and water quality.	20%
2.	The project demonstrates excellence in the delivery of Integrated Design principles by creating adaptable, enduring, flexible, and resilient spaces.	20%
3.	The project integrates stormwater management to ensure multiple benefits and the best overall outcomes are achieved at the local (project) scale.	20%
4.	The project demonstrates how outcomes achieved are able to be integrated within a broader catchment context which includes land use planning, integrated water management, sustainability, and livability and biodiversity outcomes.	20%
5a.	The project demonstrates collaboration between multiple disciplines and stakeholders at all stages of the project.	20%

Notes on criteria:

- In responding to this award category, the entry may highlight (but not be limited to):
  - Demonstration of the design process and range of parties involved
  - Community and stakeholder acceptance of the outcomes
  - How the project compliments surrounding land uses and wider area
  - Stormwater management outcomes
  - Demonstration of Integrated Design outcomes

Young Stormwater Professional of the Year

This Award confers recognition for outstanding stormwater achievements for a stormwater practitioner with less than 5 years of experience (post-graduate or post-employment in the field). This award must be nominated by a party other than the nominee. Self-nominations will not be accepted. It will acknowledge and reward young stormwater practitioners who have:

1. Technical and professional stormwater management competence
2. Demonstrated leadership skills including leadership of teams
3. Positive/ notable outcomes from their stormwater work
4. Creativity/ innovation
5. Community service to industry, the profession and/ or society

To apply for the award, provide the following:

1. An entry form with the following sections completed:
    a. Conditions of entry
    b. Category of entry
    c. Entry contact details
    d. Organisation name (What company does the applicant work for)
    e. Description of how the nominee meets the judging criteria (see criteria below and word limit in the entry form)
    f. Summary (include a max 100-word biography here)
    g. Referee contact details
2. The nominee's curriculum vitae (maximum 2 pages).

	Criteria for Young Stormwater Professional of the Year	Weighting
1.	Contribution to the well-being of the industry, the profession and/ or society	25%
2.	Demonstrated resourcefulness and leadership in the planning and in the solution of design problems	25%
3.	Use of sustainable practices	25%
4.	Innovative design, construction, and aesthetic values	25%

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible the nominee must:

- Be supported by a Stormwater NSW member
- Be a practicing stormwater professional with less than 5 years of experience (post-graduate or post-employment in the field).
- Have given permission for the entry to be lodged
- Reside in NSW.

- Have not previously received the Young Stormwater Professional of the Year Award.

Note: This category of the awards is not currently eligible for a National Award (as no similar category exists at the National level). Entry to this category is free of charge.

Stormwater Professional of the Year

This Award confers recognition for outstanding achievement and contribution to the stormwater industry by an experienced stormwater practitioner. The award acknowledges individuals who have demonstrated excellence in stormwater management through technical expertise, leadership, innovation and service to the industry, profession and community.
The award recognises stormwater professionals who have:

1. Demonstrated technical and professional excellence in stormwater management.
2. Provided leadership within their organisation, projects and/ or the broader stormwater industry.
3. Achieved positive and measurable outcomes through their stormwater work.
4. Demonstrated innovation, creativity and forward-thinking approaches to stormwater challenges.
5. Contributed to the advancement of the stormwater profession through mentoring, knowledge sharing, advocacy and/ or industry service.

To apply for the award, provide the following:

1. An entry form with the following sections completed:
    a. Conditions of entry
    b. Category of entry
    c. Entry contact details
    d. Organisation name (What company does the applicant work for)
    e. Description of how the nominee meets the judging criteria (see criteria below and word limit in the entry form)
    f. Summary (include a max 100-word biography here)
    g. Referee contact details
2. The nominee's curriculum vitae (maximum 4 pages).

	Criteria for Stormwater Professional of the Year	Weighting
1.	Leadership and contribution to the stormwater industry, profession and/ or community	25%
2.	Demonstrated technical excellence and achievement in the planning, design, delivery or management of stormwater outcomes	25%
3.	Advancement of sustainable and resilient stormwater practices	25%
4.	Innovation, influence and positive impact on stormwater management outcomes	25%

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible the nominee must:

- Be supported by a Stormwater NSW member.

- Be a practicing stormwater professional with a minimum of 5 years' experience (post-graduate or post-employment in the field).
- Have given permission for the entry to be lodged.
- Reside in NSW.
- Have made a significant contribution to the stormwater industry
- Have not previously received the Stormwater Professional of the Year Award.

Note: This category of the awards is not currently eligible for a National Award (as no similar category exists at the National level). Entry to this category is free of charge.

Judging

Each accepted entry will be assessed within the State that it is entered by a panel of judges chosen by the committee of the State Association. Entries will be judged against the criteria for each Award category, which are included in this document.

To ensure that the Excellence Awards are relevant to the broadest range of projects across the country, the judging criteria have been designed to allow flexibility in describing project merit and to allow judges to compare projects that demonstrate excellence across the many diverse aspects of stormwater management.

In 2026, Stormwater NSW will undertake a two-stage judging process. All entries in each category will be assessed by the Judging Panel, and a short list of finalists will be determined. Where judging scores are close, finalists may be invited to an interview, which will give applicants an opportunity to speak directly to the judges about their project and promote its merits. The interview will occur through an online platform such as Teams Meetings if required. The date and time of the Awards interviews will be provided to finalists in **August 2026**. Interviews will be conducted in late August or early September.

Application Requirements

Entries must conform to the submission format, contain all the required information, meet the eligibility requirements and accept the Conditions of Entry.

Completed entry forms must be submitted electronically at:
https://gems.eventsair.com/franc2026awards/2026awards-forexcellence.

Entries must be received by **COB Friday, 31 July 2026**

The entry fee is **free for Stormwater NSW Members** and **$400 for Non-Members**. Entries for the NSW Young Stormwater Professional of the Year and NSW Stormwater Professional of the Year are free of charge.

Member rates apply for financial members of Stormwater NSW. This does not include student members.

Submission Format

- All applications must be submitted via the online submission portal.
- Material presented should only consist of information requested on the entry form and visualisation material relevant to meeting the judging criteria. Repetition of material in different forms may detract from the judged score.

- Material of an advertising nature giving general unsupported views or information should not be included, except as adding to visualisation. All images must be of quality, suitable for reproduction.
- Only one electronic file of the award submission is to be provided. All documents and material submitted should be amalgamated into the entry form. The exception is photographs, which should be provided in a jpeg format.

As per the entry form, the following information must be included in Awards for Excellence applications:

- Project title (max 20 words).
- Category entered.
- Organisation and contact (include the lead applicant and any collaborators).
- Contact details.
- Overview/ description of the project including objectives and outcomes (max 200 words) which is suitable for use in a media release.
- Description of how the project meets/ demonstrates each of the judging criteria for the nominated category (max 500 words per criterion).
- At least three high resolution photos (jpg format) maximum of 1 mb per image. Please note: if email attachments exceed a total of 8MB, the attachments must be sent by a large file transfer system such as WeTransfer or Dropbox.
- Logos (lead applicant and project collaborators) in jpeg format, including permission to use and any conditions or guides to use.
- Geographic coverage/ location of project (max 500 words).
- Project timeframe, including a statement confirming that the project has been finished within a two-year period prior to the closing date of the entry - COB Friday, 31 July 2026
- Identification of stormwater benefits provided by the project, including but not limited to, water quality, stormwater reuse, ecosystem health, flooding and drainage control, public health and safety, placemaking/ amenity, and adaptation to climate change.
- Estimated project cost, including the cost of the stormwater component and total project cost (this is to allow the judges to compare the benefits relative to the costs across projects).
- Summary of why the project is an exemplar of excellence in the nominated category (max 500 words)
- Contact details of two referees who can be contacted by the judging panel if required.
- A short (50 word) project description and preferred media contacts to include in media distribution announcing finalists and winners.
- Statement confirming the information provided is accurate and not misleading in any way and that all relevant permissions from collaborations and clients have been obtained for the award application.

As per the entry form, the following information must be included in Young Professional and Stormwater Professional applications:

- Name of Nominee (max 20 words).
- Category entered.
- Organisation and contact (include the nominee and nominator).
- Contact details.
- Biography (max 100 words) which is suitable for use in a media release.
- Description of how the nominee meets the judging criteria (max 500 words per criterion).
- At high resolution photo of the nominee (jpg format) maximum of 5 mb per image.
- Logo of nominee's organisation in jpeg format, including permission to use and any conditions or guides to use.
- The nominee's curriculum vitae (maximum 2 pages).
- Contact details of two referees who can be contacted by the judging panel if required.
- A short (50 word) nominee description and preferred media contacts to include in media distribution announcing finalists and winners.
- Statement confirming the information provided is accurate and not misleading in any way and that all relevant permissions from nominee have been obtained for the award application.

Eligibility Requirements

The following requirements must be met for Awards for Excellence projects to be accepted for award judging:

- The project was completed in the State where the nomination is entered, or at least the majority of the project. Alternatively, for the Excellence in Strategic Planning or Conceptual Design category, the project must be coordinated from that State. Projects that are located overseas but were substantially managed, planned, and/ or designed by practitioners in Australia are also eligible for entry.
- The project should have been completed within a two-year period prior to the Award submission closing date - **COB Friday, 31 July 2026.**

Conditions of Entry

It is a condition of entry that entrants accept the following:

- Information provided by the entrant in relation to the Stormwater NSW Awards for Excellence (including photos) will be used at the discretion of Stormwater NSW for promotional/ publicity purposes.
- At the discretion of the judging panel, the Association reserves the right to assess an entry in a different category than originally applied with the consent of the lead applicant. Note, in this eventuality the applicant will not be afforded the right to refine entry, and it is unlikely that differences between category criteria will allow for a favourable consideration. Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant state association to seek guidance on criteria prior to submitting an application.
- Based on the quality and number of submissions, Stormwater NSW reserves the right to present sub-category awards for specific areas.
- The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence concerning decisions will be entered into.
- Stormwater NSW reserves the right not to allocate an award for a particular category. For an excellence award to be allocated, a project must demonstrate a minimum standard that is considered by the judging panel to reflect excellence.
- Stormwater NSW reserves the right to allocate highly commended and merit awards in a category, in addition to an award of excellence.
- A project can be entered into multiple categories if the project meets the criteria for each category. Separate entries will need to be made for each category.

Should you have any questions regarding the Stormwater NSW 2026 Awards for Excellence submission format, please contact GEMS Event Management Australia on +61 2 9744 5252 or email registration@gemsevents.com.au