



2024 CDAA Awards for Excellence

Practice

Awarded to Naishadh Gadani – Individual | Naishadh’s unique initiatives demonstrate his ability to identify gaps in career services and create solutions that resonate with diverse audiences. He has introduced groundbreaking concepts like *Australia’s Got Fresh Talent* where skilled migrants and international students deliver pitches to potential employers. At Monash University, he led the development of the *Global Impact Challenge*, a hackathon designed to engage international students. He has also worked collaboratively with over 50 career professionals to create *The Big Book of Career Doodles*.

Judges’ Comments

- Naishadh has demonstrated a wide range of actions and creative initiatives that show innovative responses to the changing landscape.
- Demonstrated innovation, clever design in doodles related to careers, clarity about the importance of career development, diversity in target markets, and the initiative to help migrants - all to be commended.

Awarded to Goldfields LLEN, Passions & Pathways Program – Organisation | At a 2010 meeting hosted by the Goldfields LLEN, a primary school principal spoke about how community issues, such as intergenerational disadvantage and unemployment can impact on student’s aspirations and the desire to learn. This resulted in a unique initiative aimed at inspiring primary school communities to embrace partnership with local businesses. This initiative was called ‘Passions & Pathways’. In 2023, 72% of students reported feeling more excited about their futures and what they might do.

Judges’ Comments

- This is a great program that can make a real difference to students for their lifespan. They have demonstrated excellence in their outcomes.
- They have clearly articulated their intent, program and actions with appropriate evaluation to target a specific high needs client group. Very impressive.

Highly Commended - Awarded to Catherine Harris - Individual | Project Roar was initiated by Catherine to combat the high attrition rates of women in the technology sector, where more than half of trained women leave the industry. The program aimed to provide essential career development support, addressing the barriers women face.

Judges’ Comments

- A great initiative, demonstrating intent and actions, and one that will hopefully be expanded. Well deserved.

Leadership

Awarded to Michael Healy | Michael's leadership purpose is to support career development practitioners to make use of insights from research and quality information, in order to innovate in their program and service design and delivery. By providing excellent professional learning opportunities and high-quality training, he aims to ensure that career educators are well-equipped to offer the best possible support to their clients and students. His leadership activities are also designed to cultivate a community of engaged and enthusiastic practitioners.

Judges' Comments

- An excellent demonstration of leadership for the profession, in particular for those who work in the education system, as well as young people and diverse groups.
- Michael has demonstrated leadership across different paid and unpaid roles, impressive reach via social media, and a strong impact through myfuture and CareerEd.

Research

Awarded to Dr Col McCowan OAM | Col is a registered psychologist, teacher and counsellor who has an extensive career working within government, higher education, and as a highly respected pro-bono careers practice and research consultant in Australia and overseas. This year, he graduated with his PhD at the University of Southern Queensland. His research included the development and empirically validated suite of Career Education and Development Scales. He is a leading figure in career development policy discussions and has received the Medal of the Order of Australia.

Judges' Comments

- Col has demonstrated a long history of career education counselling and practice research. This is captured within his submission and through the [included article](#) that was published in the *Australian Journal of Career Development* by Wendy Patton. In many ways, recognition is well-overdue.
- Definitely worthy of an award. Col has demonstrated excellence in research and through his impact.

CDAAs vision is a career development profession recognised for excellence and valued by all Australians. We recognise this work through our Excellence Awards Program, which was launched in late 2012 as part of the Association's Framework for Excellence. The awards are based on the four categories of excellence: Leadership, Practice, Research and Policy.

