

AUSTRALIAN WATER

ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

Industry superstars celebrated at Ozwater'21 gala

5 May 2021

The Australian Water Association (AWA) brought together the country's most inspiring and passionate water professionals to celebrate the National Water Awards, sponsored by ANZ, for Ozwater'21 at the Adelaide Convention Centre last night.

AWA's Chief Executive, Corinne Cheeseman, said "After such a challenging year, it was fantastic to come finally together to celebrate the water industry's amazing achievements at the Gala Dinner. I congratulate all our award winners for their outstanding contribution to the sector and the wider community."

"It is important to highlight the outstanding accomplishments across the water sector to inspire others, but most importantly to bring into focus important projects that need our attention. I would also like to thank our generous sponsors for their support of these awards."

This year's winners are:

**R&D Excellence Award, sponsored by WaterRA
*Northern Australia Water Resource Assessment – CSIRO and collaborators, supported by the Australian Government through the National Water Grid Authority***

This project undertook the most extensive interdisciplinary study of the potential for agricultural development in northern Australia, providing a new standard in modelling of water and agriculture resources at scale, supported by intensive data analysis. The wealth of new publicly available information will help support industry, governments, and communities to make decisions about water and agricultural development in northern Australia.

**Organisational Excellence Award, sponsored by Stantec
*Wara Paring Indigenous Civil Construction Project – Aqua Metro Services and Melbourne Water***

This project is a 100% Indigenous-owned training initiative to create and support sustainable Aboriginal businesses in the water industry. The initiative involves supporting a sustainable pipeline of young Aboriginal workers and providing employment, training, and development opportunities in a work environment that is culturally safe and supportive. The structured training plan can be replicated in any industry, and the hope is to inspire others to create positive, lasting, cultural change.

AUSTRALIAN WATER

ASSOCIATION

Infrastructure Project Innovation Award (Regional), sponsored by SMEC *Port Stewart Water Supply – Arup and Centre for Appropriate Technology*

This innovative and collaborative initiative helped build a cyclone-proof, safe, clean, and reliable drinking water supply for the Lamalama people, the Traditional Custodians of Princess Charlotte Bay in Far North Queensland. Arup provided pro-bono support to Indigenous Organisations; Centre of Appropriate Technology and Yintjingga Aboriginal Corporation to build the system, which was facilitated by Engineers Without Borders Australia.

Infrastructure Project Innovation Award (Metro), sponsored by SMEC *Deriving Value Through Remote Access to Asset Information – CH2M Beca and Western Water*

The Asset Information Management System enriches the physical attributes of an operational site with the technical knowledge of existing asset data. CH2M Beca developed this innovative and industry-leading digital engineering tool, enabling better, more informed decisions by facilitating business continuity and remote asset access to the right information and the right people at the right time.

Student Water Prize, sponsored by Guidera O'Connor *Zhiyao Wang, University of Queensland*

Zhiyao is a final year Ph.D. student focusing on the development of novel processes for efficient nitrogen removal from wastewater and advanced digestion of waste activated sludge. Zhiyao's research contributes to the sustainability of the wastewater industry by developing new technologies that significantly reduce the cost and increase the efficiency of wastewater and sludge treatment.

Young Water Professional of the Year Award, sponsored by Xylem *Simon Roberts*

Simon has expertise in planning, design, strategy, law, and policy and proactively seeks to develop the skills, knowledge, and networks necessary to make a positive impact on the water sector. He is passionate about Integrated Water Management and Water Sensitive Urban Design and is the driving force behind the creation and rapid growth of Our Future Cities. Simon is making an incredibly significant contribution to the advancement of sustainable water management through his various roles.

Water Professional of the Year Award *Dr Annette Davidson*

Annette is the embodiment of professional excellence in water quality risk governance and is an ambassador for the water industry who is dedicated to building a secure water quality future for all. Throughout her career, Annette's passion for a risk-based approach to water safety has changed the industry focus from end-point testing to a preventative approach. She has innovated within and beyond her own company and sector, founding 3 organisations over the last 5 years to help improve and transform water quality data and information governance, leading to tangible public health outcomes and achievement of SDG 6.7.

AUSTRALIAN WATER

ASSOCIATION

Water Industry Safety Excellence Award sponsored by WSAA

Confined Space Entry Simulator – Melbourne Water and Deakin University

Melbourne Water along with their partners at Deakin University have built a world first simulator which will change how people perceive and receive training forever. The immersive experience provides an engaging way to learn about what good, confined space entry preparation looks like and why it is necessary - before giving trainees the opportunity to see, feel and smell what it's like to be lowered by a harness into a live sewer.

Customer Experience Award, sponsored by WSAA

Customer Experience Program – Barwon Water

In February, Barwon Water's customers rated them as number one for trust, reputation, value for money and satisfaction. This is testament to their strong customer focus and success of their Customer Experience program, which has been founded on extensive customer and employee engagement, bringing to life their CX Brand, "I care, We Care".

In this category, Icon Water and Southern Rural Water also received High Commendations. Icon Water for the Becoming Visible Program and their efforts to strengthen the connection between their people and the community. Whilst Southern Rural Water's \$160 Million MID2030 Modernisation Program that is transforming the 100-year-old Macalister Irrigation District was also recognised for its environmental benefits and efficiencies.

Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize, sponsored by Xylem

Annabelle Strachan, Meriden School

Annabelle's study investigated the feasibility of a bio-flocculant as an accessible, safe, affordable and environmentally friendly option to reduce turbidity. Using a combination of dried lemon peel and chitosan, Annabelle tested different concentrations to find the optimal dosages to reduce turbidity. The bio-flocculant identified offered an affordable treatment option for those with limited access to clean water while being environmentally friendly and offering no adverse health effects sometimes associated with flocculation.

Best Water e-Journal Paper – In honour of Guy Parker Award

Contaminants of emerging concern – Laura Kuskopf, Dr. Madoc Sheehan and Anna Whelan

This paper presents information on an increasingly important topic for many water authorities responsible for wastewater treatment and discharge. Using the Cleveland sewage treatment plant in Townsville, the authors outlined a technical road map for the design of a targeted sampling and analytical program which detects the thousands of contaminants of emerging concern potentially present in discharged wastewaters.

AWA congratulates all the award finalists and winners and acknowledges the amazing work by individuals and organisations.

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Bianca Petrevski

Head of Communications and Corporate Services

Australian Water Association

M: 0404 336 333

E: news@awa.as.au

About the Australian Water Association

The Australian Water Association is Australia's biggest water network inspiring and driving a sustainable water future, with a membership of over 5,000 individual and corporate members. awa.asn.au