

AUSTRALIAN WATER

ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

2020 Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize winner announced

6 May 2020

Coffs Harbour local Emma Serisier has been announced as the winner of the 2020 Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize.

The Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize is the biggest water science competition for high-school students and is proudly supported by Xylem. The competition challenges young people to think big and take a fresh look at local and global water problems.

Traditionally, the announcement of the Australian winner is made at the Ozwater Gala Dinner but due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Association gave all four finalists the opportunity to present their research projects to the wider water industry via webinar on 6 May.

Following their presentations, the announcement of the winner was made and Emma Serisier took out the 2020 award.

Emma's study looked at potential biowaste adsorbents to decrease the phosphate run-off into natural waterways from agricultural fertilisers and animal manures.

Identifying eggshell waste as an effective adsorbent for phosphate, Emma developed a mathematical model and website for farmers to calculate cost savings and application rates of eggshell on their soils. This free and accessible tool will help farmers counteract their environmental footprint.

Emma has always asked questions and researched their answers, and this project was no different.

"Growing up on a remote rural property instilled responsibility, problem solving techniques and time management into my psyche. It also exposed me to the unique balance within ecosystems and the absolute power of nature and its forces," she said.

Emma has been a passionate advocate for STEM and has won many awards including the 2018 and 2019 NSW Rural Young Scientist of the Year, and the 2020 Coffs Harbour Young Citizen of the Year. She has also represented Australia in the International Science and Engineering Fair in the USA for three years in a row.

"These awards have given me a platform to promote my passion, which is giving rural young people, particularly women, a voice in STEM on the world stage."

Emma recently graduated from Bishop Druitt College in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales and is excited for the future.

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“My next challenge is an Advanced Science Degree at the University of Queensland, majoring in Mathematics, and then onto the MD program. I will continue to mentor and challenge young scientists, particularly those from a rural background, to pursue the answers to their questions.”

The winner of the Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize goes on to compete internationally for the Stockholm Junior Water Prize.

Due to COVID-19 and restrictions on international travel, this year’s international competition, which was originally scheduled to take place in Stockholm in August, will now be held online.

The Australian Water Association would like to wish Emma the best of luck in the international finals and congratulate all finalists for inspiring and driving a sustainable water future.

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About the Australian Water Association

With a membership of over 5,000 individual and corporate members, the Australian Water Association is Australia’s biggest water network inspiring and driving a sustainable water future.

www.awa.asn.au