

AUSTRALIAN WATER

ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

2018 Australian Water Award winners announced at Ozwater'18 Gala Dinner

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The Australian water sector's most outstanding individuals and organisations have been recognised in the Australian Water Awards as they were announced at the Ozwater'18 Gala Dinner & Awards Night last night.

Australian Water Association Chief Executive, Jonathan McKeown has congratulated all award winners for their outstanding contribution to the sector and the wider community.

"On behalf of the Association, I would like to congratulate and recognise the dedication, passion and enthusiasm shown by our members who are truly making a difference to the Australian water sector," Mr McKeown said.

"This year saw a record number of award entries across the country with 179 submissions in the last year, 45 of those being submissions for the Infrastructure Project Innovation Award. This is testament to the growth in water industry projects being undertaken by our members all over Australia."

"It is important for the industry to come together to recognise, learn from and be inspired by the individuals and organisations who, in their day-to-day work, are ensuring a secure water future for all Australians."

The Australian Water Association's Australian Water Awards aim to recognise the outstanding contribution of individuals and organisations in the water industry across innovation, research, infrastructure and the delivery of water projects.

The next round of State and Territory award submissions open in June. For more information, visit www.awa.asn.au/awards.

Winners:

Research Innovation Award

Purple Phototrophic Bacteria for Resource Recovery from Wastewater – The University of Queensland and CRC for Water Sensitive Cities (QLD)

This project is developing a world-first technology for a next-generation resource recovery process which will replace existing wastewater treatment technology in the not-so-distant future. This technology has the potential to recover vital fertiliser compounds, bioplastics and provide a sustainable animal feed source.

Highly Commended:

Success in Data Analytics - Sydney Water and Data61 Collaboration – Data61, CSIRO and Sydney Water (NSW)

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Program Innovation Award

Community Leak Program, Living Water Smart – Power & Water Corporation (NT)

Living Water Smart has taken the lead in ensuring the sustainability of Darwin's water supply through their Community Leak Program. The program, launched in January 2017, provided community-wide leak-checking services, leak awareness campaigns and a \$200 Leak Find and Fix rebate. The program has identified and fixed over a billion litres of water leaks across the community.

Infrastructure Project Innovation Award

Sundrop Farms Project – John Holland Group (SA)

John Holland was the EPC contractor for the Sundrop Farms project. This involved the design and construction of 20 hectares of climate controlled green houses and a 39-Megawatt Solar Thermal Energy System. The system is used to sustainably produce 15,000 tonnes of truss tomatoes per year for markets across Australia. The Sundrop Farm project has changed the paradigm of what fully sustainable, high quality food production actually means - not just nationally, but globally.

Water Industry Safety Excellence Award

FCD Skyhook Mark 4 – Fremantle Commercial Diving (WA)

After several years of development Fremantle Commercial Diving, incorporating Watertight Robotics, has set new standards in safety for accessing elevated water tanks. The Skyhook Mark 4 is a unique truck mounted mobile fall arrest system, which provides a rated overhead anchor point for two people. The device is now in full use and is the first of its kind in Australia.

Best Water e-Journal Paper Award

Understanding Naegleria Fowleri: A Different Type of Pathogen, an Increasing Climate Change Threat – Clara Laydon

This paper by Clara Laydon puts the spotlight on the pathogen *Naegleria fowleri*, a warm water environmental pathogen which can cause a rare but fatal infection. With the likelihood of increased temperatures due to climate change, *Naegleria fowleri* could become more prevalent in Australian water supplies and it is important that we continue to use the best management approaches to continue to control this deadly pathogen to protect public health.

Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize

Recycling Waste into Biochar: A Sustainable Wastewater Filter and Fertiliser for the Agricultural Industry – Minh Nga Nguyen, Sydney Girls High School (NSW)

Nga's project is entitled "Recycling Waste into Biochar", a sustainable waste water filter and fertilizer for the agricultural industry. Her project formed a model of application in which agricultural plant wastes are recycled into a multipurpose biochar charcoal, that can filter wastewater and fertilise plants. Nga found that bamboo biochar filter packs could remove 45.6% of harmful pollutants in wastewater, lowering pollutant content to meeting Australian guidelines. Her findings have the potential for application in the agricultural industry, allowing farmers to recover polluting plant wastes and turn it into biochar used to treat livestock wastewater, as well as aid crop growth.

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Highly Commended:

NO₃ – Free: Low Voltage, Low Current Electro-Reduction of Aqueous Nitrates via Single Cell Electrolysis and Subsequent Observations of Gas-Particle Phase Equilibria – Logan Howell, Don College (TAS)

Student Water Prize

Smart Monitoring for Microbial Risk Assessment – Sarah Aucote, Flinders University (SA)

Sarah's Honours project investigated assays targeting mitochondrial DNA as a new and novel approach to tracking sources of faecal contamination. Sarah's research has potential to provide a decreased cost of performing microbial risk assessments, leading to widespread improvements in monitoring and risk management, which in turn will improve Health Based Target compliance, particularly in regional areas.

Highly Commended:

Quantifying Wastewater Dewaterability for Improved Water Recycling – Samuel Skinner, The University of Melbourne (VIC)

Young Water Professional of the Year Award

Katrin Doederer, Research Fellow, The University of Queensland (QLD)

Katrin is highly deserving of the 2018 Young Water Professional of the Year as she has demonstrated all the hallmarks of a very successful and committed early career professional. Not only has she rapidly developed from a successful PhD student to a highly regarded expert in the field of disinfection by-products in drinking water, she has also demonstrated her prowess as an effective communicator and productive project leader at the interface between research and practice. This award will greatly encourage Katrin on this steep career trajectory, with significant current and future benefits for the Queensland and Australian water industry.

Highly Commended:

Priyani Madan, Water Consultant, Arup (VIC)

Water Professional of the Year Award

Ciara Sterling, Head of Community Inclusion, Yarra Valley Water (VIC)

With over 15 years' experience in the water industry, Ciara is an industry leader in supporting customers experiencing vulnerability, hardship and family violence. She is the driving force behind Yarra Valley Water's extremely successful WaterCare initiative and Head of the Thriving Communities Partnership, a cross-sectoral collaboration of organisations tackling the root causes of hardship and inequality. Through her advocacy and passion, Ciara has been relentless in her support for vulnerable customers and exemplary in her ability to bring people together towards a common goal.

Ciara's dedication, professionalism, and track record in driving positive change have raised the profile of women in what is traditionally a male-dominated sector while her intersectoral initiatives have raised her profile in many other industries, including the energy, finance, telecommunications, government and community sectors.

By raising awareness of the water industry's innovative approach to inclusion, vulnerability, hardship and family violence, Ciara promotes our sector as a leader in tackling these issues and is a worthy recipient of the 2018 Water Professional of the Year.

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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 connecting members through information, networking and recognition.

www.awa.asn.au