

AUSTRALIAN WATER

ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

Victoria's resilient water industry celebrates

4 March 2021

The winners of the Australian Water Association's Victorian Water Awards have been announced at the Awards Lunch on Thursday, 4 March at Zinc at Federation Square.

The Victorian Water Awards recognise the contribution of the Association's members for their inspiring leadership and innovative research, programs and infrastructure projects.

"Despite the impact of bushfires and COVID-19 on the Victorian water industry last year, we had a staggering 55 award submissions entered in this year's awards," Australian Water Association Chief Executive, Corinne Cheeseman said.

"The finalists and winners of the Victorian Water Awards are testament to the resilience and innovation of our industry and our members as they continue to provide essential services for the community. I would like to sincerely congratulate you all for your dedication and hard work."

The winners will go on to represent Victoria in the national Australian Water Awards, which will be presented at the Association's annual water conference and exhibition, Ozwater'21 in Adelaide on 4-6 May 2021.

Winners:

Research & Development Excellence Award

Victorian Collaboration on Sewage Surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 (ColoSSoS VIC Node) – WaterRA and ColoSSoS Project Partners

Project partners include: Victoria Department of Health and Human Services, Barwon Water, Central Highlands Water, City West Water, Coliban Water, East Gippsland Water, Gippsland Water, Goulburn Valley Water, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water, Lower Murray Water, Melbourne Water, North East Water, South East Water, South Gippsland Water, Western Water, Westernport Water, Wannon Water, Yarra Valley Water, ALS, Monash University and University of Melbourne

This collaborative, world first research project is operationalising sewage surveillance research in support of the COVID-19 pandemic response in Victoria and Australia. This leading project has been presented world-wide and is held in high regard globally as a leading sewage surveillance program.

Infrastructure Project Innovation Award (Regional)

Torres Strait Islands Sustainable Water and Wastewater Management Plan – Arup, Griffith University and Ganden Engineers & Project Managers

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In collaboration with the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Arup, led the delivery of the Sustainable Water and Wastewater Management Plan with the goal of guiding the long-term transformation of the Council's water and business. This involved facilitating more sustainable and resilient water service provisions and improving health, economic and social outcomes for the 15 Torres Strait Island communities.

Infrastructure Project Innovation Award (Metro)

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, the right people and at the right time.

Organisational Excellence Award (sponsored by Fulton Hogan)

Wara Paring Indigenous Civil Construction Project – Aqua Metro Services and Melbourne Water

This project is a first-of-its-kind, 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.

High Commendation: *Hardship Prediction Model* - City West Water

Student Water Prize (sponsored by Eurofins)

The Development of Novel Nanofunctional Wastewater Remediation Strategies: Creating Clean Water for the Many, Not the Few – Piumie Rajapaksha, RMIT University

Piumie is an emerging water research scientist and international PhD student from Sri Lanka, with a passion to change the way water is used and reused in developing countries. Her project evolved from a fundamental wastewater material synthesis project to an applied wastewater project with a number of impactful outcomes. Her innovative strategies can be scaled and translated, both as a retrofit method to home water filters, but also as 3D printable water clean-up materials for third-world and poor water quality countries.

High Commendation: *Development of a Novel, Biofouling Resistant Passive Sampling Device for Ammonia Monitoring in Marine Waters with Neural Network-Based Calibration* - Lenka O'Connor Sraj, The University of Melbourne

Young Water Professional of the Year Award (sponsored by Xylem)

Simon Roberts, Senior Integrated Water Management Planner, City West Water

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 a 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 and projects, and is a very deserving recipient of the 2020 Victorian Young Water Professional of the Year Award.

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Water Professional of the Year Award

Deb Brown, Director, Resilient Cities and Towns, Department of Environment Land Water and Planning

Deb is an outstanding policy innovator putting water at the centre of community resilience and livability. She has built and maintained partnerships of unprecedented scale and sophistication to promote integrated water management both within, and outside the water sector. Amongst her many achievements, Deb has; reset policy development for urban waterways; led an integrated water management program with government co-investment in 108 projects; and embedded integrated water management and stormwater controls in State planning policies. Deb is an exceptional water leader, influencer and driver of change and we are thrilled to award Deb the title of 2020 Victorian Water Professional of the Year.

The Association wishes to congratulate all the award finalists and winners and thank our generous sponsors for their support of these important industry awards.

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Digna Nichols
Member Engagement Manager
Australian Water Association
E: dnichols@awa.asn.au
M: 0488 344 114

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