



## MEDIA RELEASE

### New South Wales Water Awards recognise the high achievers in the state

4 March 2022

The winners of the Australian Water Association's New South Wales Water Awards have been announced at the NSW Heads of Water Gala & Awards Dinner on Friday, 4 March at the Hilton in Sydney.

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

AWA CEO Corinne Cheeseman congratulated all the finalists and winners, noting their outstanding achievements and significant contribution.

"AWA's Water Awards recognise the important and groundbreaking work our members do for their communities," Cheeseman said.

"From finding innovative ways to minimise leaks and breaks in pipes and using IoT to detect wastewater blockages, to closing the gap to achieve Sustainable Diversion Limits in the Murrumbidgee Valley, all of our NSW Water Award finalists and winners showcase the best examples of our members' collective contribution towards our sustainable water future in the state.

"I congratulate all of the finalists and winners for their dedication, hard work and achievements."

This year's NSW Water Award winners will represent the state in the national Australian Water Awards, presented at the Association's annual water conference and exhibition, Ozwater'22 in Brisbane.

#### **Winners:**

#### **R&D Excellence Award (sponsored by Water Research Australia)**

*Minimisation of Leaks and Breaks in Pipes with Innovative Integrated Deployment - Sydney Water, University of Technology Sydney, Detection Services, Ovarro and WaterGroup*

Sydney Water, in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney, Detection Services, WaterGroup and Ovarro, has developed an innovative method to detect leaks using acoustic sensing and machine learning.

The project has successfully saved more than 5,000 megalitres in water losses equalling \$10 million and demonstrates the potential of this work to benefit water utilities and their customers.

### **Organisational Excellence Award (sponsored by Fulton Hogan)**

*Sydney Water Innovation Festival - Sydney Water and Isle Utilities*

Sydney Water's Innovation Festival, in collaboration with Isle Utilities, brought together diverse perspectives across the globe to fast-track innovation and co-create novel ideas to solve our greatest challenges. This inaugural event provided a safe and creative platform to enhance innovation culture and foster ideas across multiple sectors that address key challenges across the water sector.

### **Highly Commended**

Sydney Water Planning Partnership – Creating a Better Life with World-Class Water Services for Greater Sydney - Sydney Water, Aurecon and Arup

### **Infrastructure Project Innovation Award (METRO)**

*IoT Wastewater Blockage Detection - Sydney Water*

The project deployed 4,000 IoT devices to detect blockages in wastewater pipes before they lead to wastewater discharge into customer properties and the environment.

Since commencement, 220 identified blockages at environmentally high-risk sites have been removed. This represents the avoided incident cost of \$400,000 per month, as well as reduced environmental harm and disruption to customers.

### **Infrastructure Project Innovation Award (REGIONAL)**

*Gayini Nimmie-Caira Wetlands - The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment*

The Commonwealth and NSW governments entered into a Heads of Agreement, investing 180 million dollars to implement the Gayini Nimmie-Caira Project in 2013.

This project, based in the lower reaches of the Murrumbidgee, involved the purchase of 85,000ha and supplementary water entitlements.

The objective of the project was to protect and restore the environment, relax constraints and help “bridge the gap” to Sustainable Diversion Limits in the Murrumbidgee Valley.

### **Student Water Prize (sponsored by Eurofins)**

*A Closed-Loop Technology Benefits the Wastewater Treatment Plants through Sludge Treatment - Huan Liu, University of Technology Sydney*

Huan Liu, a PhD student at the University of Technology Sydney, is currently developing a closed-loop free ammonia technology for enhancing anaerobic sludge digestion, boosting

dewaterability of digested sludge, improving pathogen and antibiotic resistance genes removal and increasing the capacity of anaerobic digester.

The project is part of collaborative research projects sponsored by Water Research Australia and the Australia Research Council and will bring economic and environmental benefits to the water industry.

Highly Commended

*Odour Control by Sludge Dosing at Sewer Pump Stations - Suzannah Keene, Shoalhaven Water/The University of Sydney*

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

*Michael Carter, Principal Process Engineer, Hunter H2O*

Michael is a passionate and inspiring young principal engineer, with a vision for all water supplies across regional NSW to be safe and resilient. Still a farm boy at heart, his regional background has cultivated meaningful impact throughout the water industry and has inspired collaboration across divisions.

Highly Commended

*Kate Smith, Environmental Engineer, Aurecon*

**ENDS**

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**About the Australian Water Association**

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. [www.awa.asn.au](http://www.awa.asn.au)