

AUSTRALIA'S LEADING SCIENCE AWARDS ANNOUNCE 2023 WINNERS

Winners were announced at a black-tie awards ceremony at the Australian Museum this evening, gathering hundreds of scientists from across the nation.

SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, August 23, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Innovative research shaping the future of environmental conservation, groundbreaking medical imaging techniques, and pivotal efforts in the battle against COVID-19 are among the highlights celebrated in Australia's premier science awards, the 2023 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes.



Eureka Prize Trophy

Winners were announced at a black-tie awards ceremony at the Australian Museum this evening, gathering hundreds of scientists from across the nation. A total of \$180,000 in cash prizes was distributed among 18 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes, celebrating outstanding achievements in Research and Innovation, Leadership, Science Engagement, and School Science.

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Australian Museum Director and CEO, Kim McKay AO

The Australian Museum Eureka Prizes, now in their 33rd year, continue to recognise the country's brightest scientific minds. Over the past three decades, more than \$4.5 million in prize money and a total of 490 Eureka Prizes have been awarded.

Australian Museum Director and CEO, Kim McKay AO, congratulated this year's winners and emphasised the importance of Australian scientific innovation in addressing global challenges.

“As the world faces unprecedented challenges such as accelerating climate change, Australian

scientists continue to lead, innovate and inspire,” McKay said.

“Scientific knowledge and innovation is key to progress. Researchers and scientists help us understand how our universe works and how we can protect it. From the development of software that unravels the secrets of evolution to technological advancements that facilitate renewable energy projects, our collective futures depend on their contributions to build a resilient, sustainable world.

“The 2023 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes exemplify the breadth and depth of talent representing Australia on the international stage, showcasing remarkable achievements and innovations across various disciplines.

“With leaders in areas ranging from artificial intelligence to environmental conservation and infectious diseases research, this year’s winners demonstrate that Australian science is thriving and that our researchers are not only leading but also defining the fields they work in,” McKay concluded.

The 2023 AM Eureka Prize Winners are:

LEADERSHIP

Eureka Prize for Emerging Leader in Science

Dr Stephanie Partridge, University of Sydney

Dr Stephanie Partridge harnesses technology and nutrition science to improve youth wellbeing. Putting adolescent experiences at the heart of her research and advocacy, she collaborates with young people to learn how technology can help them live a healthier lifestyle. Her work has informed major public health policies in Australia and globally.

Eureka Prize for Leadership in Science and Innovation

Professor Michael Kassiou, University of Sydney

Professor Michael Kassiou is driving new approaches to drug discovery for challenging health conditions such as brain disorders and cardiovascular disease. Combining medicinal chemistry, disease biology and advanced imaging, his discoveries have been commercialised by three start-ups. As a leader and mentor, he also fosters the next generation of medical innovators.

University of Technology Sydney Eureka Prize for Outstanding Mentor of Young Researchers

Professor Renae Ryan AM, University of Sydney

Professor Renae Ryan has advanced the careers of many young researchers through mentorship, networking and advocacy. Driving university-wide gender equity initiatives and

founding the Sydney Medical School Early Career Researcher Network, she helped increase representation of women at professor level in her faculty, fostering a more inclusive and supportive academic environment.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

NSW Environment and Heritage Eureka Prize for Applied Environmental Research

The Waterbirds Aerial Survey Team, UNSW and NSW Department of Planning and Environment
The Waterbirds Aerial Survey Team has conducted one of the largest and longest-running wildlife surveys in the world. As well as influencing the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and nomination and management of Ramsar-listed wetlands, their data has contributed to the gazettal of three new national parks, and conservation of waterbirds and freshwater ecosystems, including rivers.

Australian Institute of Botanical Science Eureka Prize for Excellence in Botanical Science

Dr Noushka Reiter, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Dr Noushka Reiter leads an internationally recognised orchid conservation program, which has bolstered the populations of 14 endangered species by up to 260%. Using innovative methods to study pollinators and symbiotically propagate over 20,000 plants across 80 endangered species, her work safeguards Australia's unique botanical diversity, providing a blueprint for global plant conservation.

Aspire Scholarship Eureka Prize for Excellence in Interdisciplinary Scientific Research

Cystic Fibrosis Lung Health Imaging, University of Adelaide; Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide; 4D Medical Pty Ltd; and Monash University

To treat children with cystic fibrosis (CF), it is critical to know the location and extent of abnormal airflow. Combining expertise across physics, medicine and engineering, this interdisciplinary team developed a novel medical imaging method called X-ray Velocimetry. With further development it promises to help detect, treat and monitor CF and other lung diseases.

Australian Research Data Commons Eureka Prize for Excellence in Research Software

Dr Minh Bui and Professor Robert Lanfear, Australian National University

Dr Bui and Professor Lanfear combined their computer science and biology expertise to develop IQ-TREE2 – free, open-source software that turns DNA data into crucial evolutionary insights. Used to investigate everything from early life forms to the virus causing the COVID-19 pandemic,

this user-friendly tool, first released in 2019, has become a staple for life scientists worldwide.

Australian Infectious Diseases Research Centre Eureka Prize for Infectious Diseases Research

The Corona Queens, University of Melbourne and Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity

The Corona Queens, a three-person research team, has advanced the medical community's understanding of how the human immune system fights against COVID-19. The team's work on immune responses in high-risk groups – including children, the elderly, pregnant women and cancer patients – accelerated global research into infection and vaccination.

University of Sydney Eureka Prize for Innovative Research in Sustainability

The Economic Fairways Mapper Team, Monash University and Geoscience Australia

The Economic Fairways Mapper Team developed an open-source toolkit to facilitate renewable energy and mineral projects for a net-zero emissions future. It integrates advanced mapping technology and diverse datasets to identify the most sustainable locations for resource development. This work has informed Australian policy, attracted industry investment and is being replicated globally.

ANSTO Eureka Prize for Innovative Use of Technology

IMAGENDO, University of Adelaide; and OMNI Ultrasound and Gynaecological Care

Endometriosis affects one in nine Australian women and people assigned female at birth, who experience significant pain and economic impacts during the six or more years it takes to receive a diagnosis. IMAGENDO is building innovative artificial intelligence capabilities to pair with MRI and ultrasound technology that, with further development, will provide rapid, non-invasive diagnosis.

Macquarie University Eureka Prize for Outstanding Early Career Researcher

Dr Fengwang Li, University of Sydney

Dr Fengwang Li has created an affordable and more efficient process for using renewable energy to convert waste carbon dioxide emissions into ethylene, a basic component of plastic. This improved process brings real-world carbon capture and utilisation a step closer, offering emissions-intensive industries a path towards net-zero

Department of Defence Eureka Prize for Outstanding Science in Safeguarding Australia

MetaSteerers Team, University of Technology Sydney; Defence Science and Technology Group; and Macquarie University

The MetaSteerers Team developed a low-profile, energy efficient and steerable antenna system to help the Australian Defence Force (ADF) gain a crucial advantage in battle. Their unique

system allows the ADF to transmit large volumes of data or track suspicious radio activity across a wide bandwidth, while remaining almost invisible to adversaries.

UNSW Eureka Prize for Scientific Research

Associate Professor Tim Thomas and Professor Anne Voss, WEHI

Over more than a decade, Associate Professor Tim Thomas and Professor Anne Voss identified and investigated a complex family of enzymes that contributed to cancer growth but were resistant to drug development efforts. A recent breakthrough from their research is an entirely new class of drugs that can stop the growth of lymphoma cells and liver cancer cells.

SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Department of Industry, Science and Resources Eureka Prize for Innovation in Citizen Science

1 Million Turtles, Western Sydney University; La Trobe University and University of New England

The 1 Million Turtle Team's Community Conservation Program uses the TurtleSAT app to involve citizen scientists in hands-on activities such as habitat construction and restoration, nest protection and fox management. Emphasising STEM literacy and First Nations knowledge, the Australia-wide program has influenced policy, and saved over 1000 freshwater turtles and 200 nests in 2022 alone.

Celestino Eureka Prize for Promoting Understanding of Science

Professor Toby Walsh, UNSW

Professor Toby Walsh is a world-renowned authority in artificial intelligence (AI), exploring subjects such as self-driving cars and autonomous weapons. On television, in books and at academic forums he leads conversations about our AI-driven future: what it will look like, how we can prepare and what we should be wary of.

Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Science Journalism

Jo Chandler, Griffith Review

Jo Chandler's longform essay Buried Treasure follows the most ambitious Australian Antarctic endeavour in a generation. The award-winning journalist had tracked the story for over a decade before pitching her article, which skilfully navigates urgent questions about science, our heating planet and the human condition. Published in the Griffith Review (Edition 77: Real Cool World), 2 August 2022

Department of Industry, Science and Resources Eureka Prize for STEM Inclusion

That's What I Call Science

Based in Tasmania, the volunteer-run radio show and podcast, That's What I Call Science reaches over 10,000 people a week with programming designed to increase representation of diverse voices in STEMM. Since 2019, they've given the science community a platform to upskill and create engaging and accessible content for a breadth of listeners.

SCHOOL SCIENCE

University of Sydney Sleek Geeks Science Eureka Prize – Primary

Anna P., PLC Sydney, NSW

In Green Infrastructure: The Solution to Coastal Erosion, Anna uses humour and graphics to explain the phenomenon of coastal erosion and its causes in an accessible and entertaining way. She also highlights how green solutions such as vegetation and natural barriers can be used to protect homes and assets.

University of Sydney Sleek Geeks Science Eureka Prize – Secondary

Darcy B., Ashfield Boys High School, NSW

In The Crazy World of Chlorophyll, Darcy investigates the dominant colour in nature: green. With the help of animation and stop-motion, he explains why so many leaves and plants share the same traits, visualises the photosynthesis process and shares just how many living things rely on the superpower pigment, chlorophyll.

2023 Australian Museum Research Institute Medal

In addition to celebrating the winners of the AM Eureka Prizes, the 2023 Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI) Medal was awarded to Dr Jodi Rowley, Curator, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Biology, Australian Museum Research Institute & UNSW.

The AMRI Medal is presented to an individual staff member, senior fellow, team from the Australian Museum Research Institute for outstanding science and communication of their research outcomes.

Dr Jodi Rowley, an eminent herpetologist at the Australian Museum, has been recognised for her multi-disciplinary, innovative work at the forefront of biodiversity conservation. Dr Rowley has excelled as a research scientist and curator for the AM's herpetology collection, and as co-founder & lead scientist of the award-winning national AM citizen science project, FrogID. Still early in her career, Dr Rowley is an impactful science communicator, mentor and supervisor to students and has authored over 135 scientific articles. Jodi holds the first joint academic appointment between the AM and UNSW Sydney and has reached the top of Senior Research Scientist on the NSW Research Scientist Classification.

For more information visit australian.museum/eureka prizes

Interviews available with winners

Media pack, including releases, winner info, images and [video HERE](#)

Images from the Award Ceremony available [HERE](#) (from 24 August)

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About the Australian Museum

The Australian Museum (AM) was founded in 1827 and is the nation's first museum. It is internationally recognised as a natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. The AM's mission is to ignite wonder, inspire debate and drive change. The AM's vision is to be a leading voice for the richness of life, the Earth and culture in Australia and the Pacific. The AM commits to transforming the conversation around climate change, the environment and wildlife conservation; to being a strong advocate for First Nations cultures; and to continuing to develop world leading science, collections, exhibitions and education programs. With more than 21.9 million objects and specimens and the Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI), the AM is not only a dynamic source of reliable scientific information on some of the most pressing environmental and social challenges facing our region, but also an important site of cultural exchange and learning.

Matt Fraser

Original Spin

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