

Announcing the winners of the 2014 Green Gown Awards Australasia

Celebrating our Sustainability Stars!

News Release – 7 November 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The world was watching as the winners of the 2014 Green Gown Awards Australasia and the International awards were announced live last night from the Hotel Grand Chancellor in the breath-taking city of Hobart.

42 finalists were on the edge of their seats as ACTS president - Leanne Denby and Vice President - Jonathan Pheasant announced 24 winners from 26 institutions from Australasia and internationally.

Senator Christine Milne, Leader of the Australian Greens, attended the event to present a number of Awards. "I am delighted to know that the universities around Australia have their own awards - the Australasian Green Gowns - Europe's got them, the UKs got them, it really is an example of the thought leadership of the sector and I congratulate everyone involved".

Every year the Awards bring together the most inspirational projects from across the sector. Senator Milne presented RMIT University with a hat trick of Awards including the national and international Continuous Improvement - Institutional Change Award for 'Shaping Sustainable Cities', a holistic approach to sustainability capturing RMIT's goals to be global, urban and connected.

"Receiving three significant sustainability awards provides fantastic recognition for the work undertaken by RMIT to embed sustainability across Learning & Teaching, Research and Operations. Being honoured with an International Green Gown Award aligns with the University's global vision to shape sustainable cities" said Professor Paul Gough, Pro Vice Chancellor and Chair of the RMIT Sustainability Committee.

Conference and Awards hosts, the University of Tasmania continued the success, winning the inaugural Facilities & Services category for their 'Thinking beyond the rectangle' - an initiative on sustainable transport. They were also highly commended in the student engagement category. Sustainability Manager, at UTAS Corey Peterson went on to win a personal accolade - the Staff ACTS Award of Excellence. "It's wonderful for institutions to acknowledge one another and we are honoured to be recognised for our unique efforts by our peers, as so many of us are striving for the same goals and we hope our learnings will inspire others".

Guests at the highly engaging and fun packed evening, now in their fifth year, included sustainability professionals from tertiary education, as well as Leaders from the sector, such as the Australian Greens, Australian Conservation Foundation and the Office for Learning & Teaching (OLT).

A snap shot of some of the winners include:

- University of Canberra in Best Newcomer category for ‘Last starter, fast runner’ for embedding sustainable procurement into campus operations and influencing ethical student purchasing.
- The University of the Sunshine Coast in the Carbon Reduction category, sponsored by Envizi, for reducing their total general waste by 75%.
- Swinburne University of Technology, in the Learning & Teaching category sponsored by Sustainability.edu.au and the Office of Learning & Teaching for Transforming VET Teachers into sustainability champions.
- Monash University in Skills for Sustainability
- University of Western Sydney for their leadership in the Youth Eco summit in Social Responsibility.
- Macquarie University for their student led and inspired project, sponsored by Green Steps, for ‘Tap it – it’s fresh and free, significantly reducing water bottle use on campus.

All eight winners and ten highly commended achieved recognition for 13 Australasian institutions for sustainability excellence.

The Green Gown Awards Australasia are an inspiration within the educator sector, evidenced by the International Green Gown Awards. Now in their 3rd year, they see Australasia, the UK and French-speaking Europe go head to head in 3 categories. Taking out the top accolade this year was RMIT, with Hull College, UK and University of Strathclyde, UK winning Social Responsibility and Student Engagement respectively. This is the first year that Australasia has announced the Awards and many viewed the ceremony live online from around the world.

Commenting on the 2014 Awards, Leanne Denby – President of Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS) said “we are overwhelmed by the response to this year’s Green Gown Awards Australasia, with winners delighting at the prestige of their accolade. The calibre of initiatives within the sector is extremely high, with all nominees deserving commendation”.

Christine Milne also inspired the ACTS 14th International Conference delegation, along with Kelly O’Shanessy CEO of the Australian Conservation Foundation and Professor Stephen Sterling, Plymouth University, UK with highly inspirational and engaging key notes that ran alongside the Awards on the 5 – 7 November 2014 at the Hotel Grand Chancellor.

Notes to the editor

- A full list of the winning education institutions for the 2014 Green Gown Awards Australasia can be found in Appendix I (see below). Additional information is available from www.acts.asn.au
- The Green Gown Awards Australasia are run by ACTS – Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability and founded in the UK and administered by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC).
- ACTS is the sector champion for improving and promoting sustainability in the further and higher education sector. Representing 49 universities, TAFEs and polytechnics within Australasia which equates to 36% of the Australasian sector, and has seen unprecedented growth in membership since incorporating in 2006.
- The Award submissions were subject to strict judging by a panel of independent international experts comprising of representatives from 34 organisations such as universities Australia, TAFE Directors Australia, Centre for Sustainable Leadership, and the Association for tertiary education management (ATEM) the Association for

Advancement for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), USA and student representatives -the Australasian Youth Climate Coalition and fairly educated. The judges were extremely impressed with the quality and standard of entries

- The Sustainability Photography competition is in its 3rd year and all results can be found on www.acts.asn.au

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APPENDIX I

2014 Green Gown Awards Australasia Winners

Best Newcomer

Winner: University of Canberra

Highly Commended: Durack Institute of Technology

Carbon Reduction

Winner: University of the Sunshine Coast

Highly Commended: Western Sydney Institute of TAFE

Continuous Improvement – Institutional Change

Winner: RMIT University

Facilities & Services

Winner: University of Tasmania

Highly Commended: Griffith University

Learning & Teaching

Winner: Swinburne University of Technology

Highly Commended: James Cook University

Highly Commended: TAFE NSW – Northern Sydney Institute

Skills for Sustainability

Winner: Monash University

Highly Commended: RMIT University

Social Responsibility

Winner: University of Western Sydney

Highly Commended: James Cook University

Highly Commended: TAFE NSW – North Coast Institute

Student Engagement

Winner: Macquarie University

Highly Commended: University of Tasmania

Highly Commended: James Cook University

2014 ACTS Awards of Excellence

ACTS Award of Excellence – Institutional

RMIT University

ACTS Award of Excellence – Staff

Corey Peterson, University of Tasmania

ACTS Award of Excellence – Student

Oliver Lovell, University of Tasmania

2014 International Green Gown Awards

Continuous Improvement – Institutional Change

Winner: RMIT University, Australasia

Social Responsibility

Winner: Hull College, UK

Student Engagement

Winner: Manchester Metropolitan University, UK