



Celebrating our Sustainability Stars!

News Release

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Sustainability leaders from across Australia and New Zealand were on the edge of their seats last night, as the winners of the 2015 Green Gown Awards Australasia were announced live from the spectacular waterfront venue - The Pier - in Geelong, Victoria.

43 finalists from 22 institutions were holding their breath as ACTS president, Leanne Denby, and Vice President of Resources, Corey Peterson, announced 16 winners representing 11 institutions from across Australasia.

Every year the Awards bring together the most inspirational projects from across the sector and 2015 was no exception. First time winners the University of Melbourne took home not one, not two, but three awards! Winners of the Facilities & Services category for their highly successful furniture reuse scheme, they also beat others to win the prestigious Continuous Improvement category for Integrating Sustainability at Melbourne – A whole of university approach.

Speaking about their win, Professor Glyn Davis, Vice-Chancellor, The University of Melbourne said "A thorough congratulations is due to the staff and students of the University of Melbourne, for it is their passion, hard work and determination over many years which delivered this prestigious award. The University of Melbourne is acutely conscious of our leadership role in sustainability and this award echoes the strong focus that has been placed on achieving sustainability across our operations."

The University of Melbourne will now go forward to the International Green Gown Awards in the Continuous Improvement category to compete on an international scale, against the UK and French-speaking Europe and Canada for the most coveted of awards.

Another first time winner and multiple recipient was Victoria University of Wellington. They received the highest accolade from the judging panel for their 'Decarbonising Vic' project in the Carbon Reduction category. The judges gave it the highest level of commendation for their truly outstanding achievements and labelled it an exemplar project at the highest level. Professor Grant Guildford, Vice Chancellor also won the inaugural sustainability Leadership Award, aimed exclusively at senior leaders, for showing outstanding commitment to sustainability since his appointment at Victoria University of Wellington in 2014.

"On behalf of Victoria University of Wellington I would like to record our appreciation to ACTS for its foresight in establishing the Green Gown Awards and for the dedicated work of its membership towards inspiring best practice in sustainability in the tertiary education sector. I would also like to thank all Victoria University staff who through their daily actions right across our teaching, research and campus operations are committed to ensuring a

more sustainable future for our community. We are honoured to accept the awards" Professor Grant Guilford, Vice Chancellor, Victoria University of Wellington said.

Central Institute of Technology, from WA also won the second inaugural Award for 2015 in the highly anticipated 'Built Environment' category with their Green Skills Training Centre, a 6 Star Green Star design rated facility enabling student leadership from within.

Guests at the highly engaging and fun packed evening, now in their sixth year, included sustainability professionals from the tertiary education sector in Australasia, New Zealand and UK, as well as Leaders from the sector, such as Universities Australia, TAFE Directors Australia, Environment Education Victoria and the National Tertiary Education Union. Conference hosts, Deakin University were also represented by Professor Lee Astheimer (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, and Acting Vice Chancellor who attended and presented the three international Awards).

Speaking about the Awards, Kate Harris, Chief Executive of the Centre for Sustainability Leadership said, "the Green Gown awards are an important part of recognising the leadership, innovation and dedication that individuals and organisations have achieved within the tertiary sector. Driving and implementing sustainability is not an easy task and it is important not only to celebrate these successes but for all of us to learn, co-create and collaborate with each other, in order for everyone to benefit from these successes"

A snap shot of some of the other winners :

- La Trobe University partnering with Whittlesea Council for their Easy as Pi! A project using e-waste to support learning opportunities for under privileged school students.
* This project is an international finalist.
- Australian Catholic University showing how to be sustainable in a fast growing university.
- A team of collaborators known as the Sustainability Consortium for Learning Standards, led by the University of Newcastle won the Learning, Teaching & Skills category for building a national consensus for essential learning in tertiary sustainability education.
- James Cook University won the student engagement category for their 'new love for unwanted bikes' student led scheme, repurposing unwanted bikes for re-use.
* This project is an international finalist.

The Green Gown Awards Australasia is an inspiration within the educator sector, evidenced by the International Green Gown Awards. Now in their fourth year, they see Australasia, the UK and French-speaking Europe go head to head in three categories. The top accolades will be announced at a ceremony in the UK on 26 November, at Brunel's Old station in Bristol, home of the European Green Capital. New for 2016 will be the addition of the USA to the international line up.

Commenting on the 2015 Awards, Leanne Denby – President of Australasian Campuses towards Sustainability (ACTS) said, "I'm continually inspired by the work of the sector and in particular by those who have been recognised through the Green Gown awards Australasia. My heartfelt congratulations to everyone who nominated, to those who were shortlisted and those who won. We are all behind those institutions who also move into the international awards and wish you the best of luck. We'd also like to wish the three Australian finalists: University of Melbourne, La Trobe University and James Cook University, the best of luck in the International Green Gown Awards.

Tanya Ha, commentator and author, John Thwaites, Chair of Climate Works Australia and the Monash Sustainability Institute, and Kate Harris, CEO of the Centre for Sustainability Leadership, also inspired the 15th international ACTS Conference delegation, with their highly inspiring and engaging key notes that ran alongside the Awards on the 21-23 October 2015 at Deakin Universities Waterfront Campus.

We'd also like to thank our award sponsor for the Facilities and Services category, Envizi, who demonstrate commitment and loyalty for their long term association and support of the Awards.

The end

Notes to the editor

- ❑ A full list of the winning education institutions for the 2015 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 over 90% of universities, and other TAFEs and polytechnics within Australasia the organisation 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 35 organisations such as universities Australia, TAFE Directors Australia, Centre for Sustainability Leadership, the Association for tertiary education management (ATEM) the Association for Advancement for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), USA, WWF and 1 million women. The judges were extremely impressed with the quality and standard of entries
- ❑ The ACTS Sustainability Photography competition is in its 4th year and all results can be found on www.acts.asn.au

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APPENDIX I

2015 Green Gown Awards Australasia Winners

Best Newcomer

Winner: Australian Catholic University

Built Environment

Winner: Central Institute of Technology

Highly Commended: University of Tasmania

Carbon Reduction

Winner: Victoria University of Wellington

Continuous Improvement: Institutional Change

Winner: The University of Melbourne

Community Innovation

Winner: La Trobe University

Facilities & Services

Winner: The University of Melbourne

Highly Commended: University of the Sunshine Coast

Learning, Teaching & Skills

Winner: Sustainability Consortium for Learning Standards, led by the University of Newcastle

Highly Commended: Deakin University

Leadership

Winner: Professor Grant Guilford, Vice Chancellor – Victoria University of Wellington

Student Engagement

Winner: James Cook University

Highly Commended: RMIT University

Highly Commended: University of Melbourne

ACTS Award of Excellence – Staff

Colin Hocking, La Trobe University

ACTS Award of Excellence – Student

Lucy Graham, James Cook University

International Green Gown Award Categories – Australasian Finalists

Continuous Improvement: Institutional Change – The University of Melbourne

Community Innovation – La Trobe University

Student Engagement – James Cook University

The winners from Australasia, UK, French-speaking Europe and Canada will compete for the international titles. The winners will be announced and streamed live at a ceremony hosted by the [EAUC](#) on Thursday 26 November 2015 from the European Capital of Europe for 2015 – Bristol.