



Queensland's 2016 Women in Technology award winners crowned

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Queensland's science and technology movers and shakers were out in force to recognise the 2016 Women in Technology Award winners at the gala dinner on Friday 2 September at the Royal International Convention Centre in Brisbane.

More than 350 people attended the prestigious awards to be inspired by Queensland's most talented women making a difference in technology and life sciences.

WiT president Fiona Hayes said she continues to be amazed by the calibre of women nominated for the awards now in their 19th year.

"I feel privileged to be a part of the awards process – we're putting these passionate, powerful women on a well-deserved pedestal as role models for the future generation of women in tech and life sciences.

10 awards were presented including two brand new awards for outstanding women making a recognised contribution to the field of Life Sciences or ICT in rural or remote areas and for an outstanding female teacher/educator having positive impact on students in Infotech or Life Sciences studies.

"This year's winners are enthusiastic, engaging and empowering others." Fiona said.

Griffith University took out coveted **Employer of Choice Award** recognised for their inclusive culture, push for equality and impressive female workforce rates.

Associate Professor, AO, and all round high achiever Dimity Dornan claimed the **Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award** for her ongoing commitment to life sciences through her work as founder of Hear and Say and a pioneer of human bionics.

As always the competition between universities was fierce.

The University of Queensland claimed three wins and two highly commended awards including:

- **ICT Professional Award** - Mathilde Desselle, Program Coordinator, The University of Queensland
- **Life Sciences/ ICT Rising Star Award** - Nasim Amarilian, Advance Queensland Research Fellow, Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, The University of Queensland
- **PhD Career Start Award** - Laura Fenlon, PhD Student, Queensland Brain Institute, The University of Queensland
- **Highly commended**
 - **PhD Career Start Award** - Ludwika Nieradzki, PhD Candidate, The University of Queensland, Advanced Water Management Centre
 - **Outstanding Educator** - Robyn Bull, Program Manager - Wonder of Science, The University of Queensland

Griffith University added two awards to their Employer of Choice nod - Michele Burford, Executive Deputy Director, Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University won the **Life Sciences/ ICT Research Award** whilst Cara Beal, Senior Research Fellow, Smart Water Research Centre, Griffith University was awarded the inaugural rural and remote award for her work on remote and regional water-energy efficiency.

QUT Associate Professor Dr Richi Nayak won the **Infotech Outstanding Achievement Award** for her expertise in data mining and web intelligence obtaining over \$1.5 million in competitive external research funding over the past five years.

The **Sue Wickenden Entrepreneurial Award** went to Gemma Lloyd co-founder of Diverse City Careers, a niche job site that only advertises jobs at Australia's top companies, which are all committed to creating ideal workplaces for women.

“Since the first day of founding DCC, I have been faced with unfamiliar situations, yet I’ve always found the answer, whether through research, mentors or sheer determination and through trial and error.

“ In true entrepreneurial spirit, I’ve had to figure out how to do things I’ve never done before, such as marketing, finance, legal issues and a lot more.

“I believe that to be a successful entrepreneur, you need to first figure out why what you do is important, and then carve out a path to achieve those goals.” Gemma said.

The Outstanding Educator award went to Sarah Kirkland, Founder, Red Cat Science, an award winning program that includes Saturday and homeschool classes, holiday activities and science kits to bring learning through experimentation.

Like many of our winners Sarah juggles many hats – she is a mum, wife and teacher.

Sarah said “my mission is to ignite a love of science within children across Australia! I would like to have our holiday clubs, classes and science kits nationwide to start the "ideas boom" at the grassroots level. So often we focus on high school children but we need to instil the love of science in children before they reach high school so that it is a lifelong love that won't disappear when things get challenging”

WiT president Fiona said there isn’t too much time to bask in the glory of a successful gala awards night as planning for next year’s event kicks off shortly, with nominations set to open in July.

“Bring on 2017 – it’s actually our 20th year and that’s cause for a huge celebration” Fiona said.

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All winners and WiT President Fiona Hayes are available for interviews. Bios of winners provided below.

What is WiT?

Advance | Connect | Empower

WiT is the peak industry body for women in technology and life sciences within Queensland. WiT's vision is to advance, connect and empower women in technology and life sciences. Founded in 1997 with the support of just 10 women WiT is now a strong network of more than 3270 subscribers, members and affiliates. WiT runs events, mentoring, programs and awards.

- ✓ Board Readiness – gaining the skills needed in the boardroom
- ✓ Mentoring – one-on-one support and guidance
- ✓ Step Up Program – getting ahead, moving up in your career
- ✓ Outreach – promoting ICT and life sciences careers to young girls

For more information go to www.wit.org.au

2016 WiT Award Winners

Employer of Choice Award

Griffith University

Infotech Outstanding Achievement Award

Dr Richi Nayak, Associate Professor, QUT

ICT Professional Award

Mathilde Desselle, Program Coordinator, The University of Queensland

Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award

Dimity Dornan, Associate Professor, AO, Hear and Say, Human-Bionics Interface, Bionics SEQ

Life Sciences/ ICT Research Award

Michele Burford, Executive Deputy Director, Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University

Life Sciences/ ICT Rising Star Award

Nasim Amarilian, Advance Queensland Research Fellow, Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, The University of Queensland

Outstanding Educator

Sarah Kirkland, Founder, Red Cat Science

PhD Career Start Award

Laura Fenlon, PhD Student, Queensland Brain Institute, The University of Queensland

Rural and Remote

Cara Beal, Senior Research Fellow, Smart Water Research Centre, Griffith University

Sue Wickenden Entrepreneurial Award

Gemma Lloyd, Co-founder, Diverse City Careers

Highly commended

ICT Professional Award

Mai Nishitani, Senior Server Administrator, Queensland Health

PhD Career Start Award

Ludwika Nieradzic, PhD Candidate, The University of Queensland, Advanced Water Management Centre

Outstanding Educator

Robyn Bull, Program Manager - Wonder of Science, The University of Queensland

Bios

Employer of Choice Award

For the employer demonstrating commitment to providing an outstanding working environment for women



Griffith University is a comprehensive, research-intensive university, ranking in the top 3% of universities worldwide. Their teaching and research spans five campuses in South East Queensland and all disciplines, while their network of more than 120,000 graduates extends around the world. They have a commitment to inclusion and equal opportunity, welcoming all individuals and seeking to reflect the diversity of the community that they serve – in the composition of their own community, curriculum, and in their approach to teaching and learning, research and community service. Griffith employees contribute to the development of knowledge and learning in an attractive environment which values excellence, continuous improvement and innovation, equity and diversity. The University is proud to have been consistently recognised as an Employer of Choice for Women and now Gender Equality since the inception of these citations in 2001 and continues to strengthen and enhance support for staff through initiatives such as the Women in Leadership Program, the Leneen Forde Future Leaders program and participation in the SAGE Athena Swan pilot program. The total employee headcount (includes fixed term, continuing and casual) at 31 March 2016 was 6484, made up of 3965 (61.15%) women and 2519 men (38.85%). The total headcount of staff at the University in Senior Management roles at 1 March 2016 was 76 women and 102 men, or 42.7% women.

Infotech Outstanding Achievement Award

For women making a significant contribution to the growth and development of Queensland's ICT industry who serve as role models for others to aspire to. (15 years or more experience).



Dr Richi Nayak, Associate Professor, QUT, (Brisbane)

Dr Richi Nayak is Associate Professor of Computer Science in the Queensland University of Technology. She is an internationally recognised expert in Data Mining and Web Intelligence. She has combined knowledge in these areas very successfully with diverse disciplines such as Social Science, Science and Engineering, in order to technology transfer to real world problems to enhance or change their practices and methodologies. She has been successful in attaining over \$1.5 million in competitive external research funding over the past five years in the area of data mining. Her research and scholarship has resulted in about 120 refereed publications. She is steering committee member of the Australasian Data Mining committee. She holds several editorial appointments, including the International Journal of Knowledge and Web Intelligence, the International Journal of Knowledge-Based & Intelligent Engineering Systems, the International Journal of Data Mining, Modelling and Management. She is regular reviewer of several International Conferences and Journals in the field of data mining and web intelligence. She has supervised twelve HDR students to completion in the area of data mining. She is founder and leader of the Applied Data Mining Research Group at QUT. Members of this group have a strong interaction with real world industries and work on the multidisciplinary projects. She has received a number of awards and nominations for teaching, research and service activities.

ICT Professional Award

For women with more than 7 years but less than 15 years industry experience.



Mathilde Desselle, Program Coordinator, The University of Queensland (Brisbane)

Mathilde is an engagement professional in the space of science and technology. She is an experienced manager for biomedical research programs and facilities in the academic fields of genomics, bioinformatics and drug discovery, and is now the program coordinator - marketing and outreach for a global, award-winning, open-access, multi-million dollar antibiotics discovery program (CO-ADD) at The University of Queensland Centre for Superbug Solutions. She has been the life sciences director on the board of Women in Technology in 2014 and 2015, representing the life sciences membership on the board as Chair of the Life Science Chapter, and networking events, Queensland technology facilities tours and an annual technology showcase forum. She founded and ran the WiT Step Up Professional Development Program, and is now the director of sponsorship on the WiT board. In 2016, she joined the newly created board of the Tech Girls Movement, providing positive role models to school girls via the creation and distribution of 20,000 free books and a national app coding competition. Mathilde has a proven track record in delivering successful scientific programs through developing international partnerships, digital innovation, global outreach campaigns, and managing innovative products and research services portfolios. She is also an invited speaker on innovation technology, a passionate science communicator and an advocate for gender equity and open-access science. She enjoys the challenge of championing innovative initiatives, people and events driving transformational change and advancing scientific knowledge and technology solutions for future health.

Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award

For women making a significant contribution to the growth and development of Queensland's life sciences industry who serve as role models for others to aspire to (15 years or more experience).



Dimity Dornan

Associate Professor, AO, Hear and Say, Human-Bionics Interface, Bionics SEQ

Dimity Dornan AO is a Speech Pathologist and the Founder and Executive Director of Hear and Say, which enables deaf children to listen and speak. Hear and Say provides services for over 670 children and families. Dimity also initiated Hear and Say Research and Innovation, and Hear and Say WorldWide global professional training. Dimity has started a number of other groups including the Queensland Hearing Nexus (a Queensland-based hearing research group); and Human-Bionics Interface Frontiers, linking professionals in the Human Bionics field globally. Dimity has been named Associate Professor at University of both Queensland and Griffith University, an Honorary Fellow of Macquarie University and has been granted a number of awards including: Member of the Order of Australia (1998); Fellow of Speech Pathology Australia (1999); Paul Harris Fellow, Rotary International, 1999; Australian Medical Association Award of Distinction for Services to Medicine (1999); Ernst and Young Australian Social Entrepreneur of the Year (2005); Suncorp Queenslander of the Year (2010-2011); University of Queensland Alumnus of the Year (2011); Telstra Business Woman of the Year for Queensland (2011); Queensland Greats award (2013); Dame of Honour, Order of St John of Jerusalem (Knights Hospitaller); Officer of the Order of Australia (2014) and received the Lord Mayor's Business Awards, Lifetime Achievement Award (October 2014). In 2015 she became a

Board member of the Society for Brain Mapping and Therapeutics and received the McCullough Robertson Life Sciences Queensland Industry Excellence Award. 2014 • Member of the Key Scientist Advisory Group for the HEARing CRC 2015 • Awarded a 'Legend of Brisbane' by Lord Mayor Graeme Quirk • McCullough Robertson Life Sciences Queensland Industry Excellence Award • Appointed to Australian Board of the Society for Brain Mapping and Therapeutics (SBMT) • Appointed to AVUK (Auditory Verbal UK) Advisory Panel • Appointed Chair of Human-Bionics Interface Frontiers 2016 • Honorary Associate, Macquarie University

Life Sciences and/or Infotech Research Award

For women making a recognised contribution to the field of ICT or Life Sciences research and development.



Michele Burford, Executive Deputy Director, Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University

Prof Michele Burford is Executive Deputy Director at the Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University and an active researcher in the field of water quality. She works collaboratively with a wide range of government and industry groups, as well as national and international researchers to undertake ground-breaking research tackling the big environmental questions of our time. Michele also serves as a role model for early career researchers aspiring to be research leaders. She actively supports and mentors her colleagues and associates, regardless of their gender, position and affiliation.

Life Sciences and/or Infotech Rising Star Award

For women with less than 7 years industry experience in ICT or Life Sciences.



Nasim Amaralian, Advance Queensland Research Fellow, Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, The University of Queensland

Dr Nasim Amiralian is an early career researcher in the area of nanomaterials engineering. She currently holds the position of Advance Queensland Research Fellow at the Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, The University of Queensland. The focus of Nasim's research is processing and structure-property performance of novel materials, renewable-based polymers and nanocomposites. During her PhD, she discovered and patented a unique high quality cellulose nanofibre from spinifex, an Australian native arid grass, using simpler, cost effective, and more environmentally friendly methods. This patented spinifex-derived cellulose nanofibre technology is now at an early stage of commercialisation and validation for several commercial opportunities including ultra-thin and strong latex membrane for condom and glove applications, non-woven filtration media, and as a precursor for renewable carbon fibre. Nasim's research has also been instrumental in fostering linkages and delivering job opportunities for Indigenous Australians by developing remote harvesting production plants for the supply and primary processing of the spinifex grass-derived nanocellulose. While passionate about fundamental science and engineering, Nasim is strongly focused on pursuing commercial endeavours associated with spinifex-derived fibres. She is currently working with industry partners to advance and translate her technology into products that will benefit the economy and strengthen Australia's position in the global nanocellulose technology market.

Outstanding Educator working in the Life Sciences and/or Infotech Award **NEW

Outstanding female teacher/educator having positive impact on students in Infotech or Life Sciences studies.

Sarah Kirkland, Founder, Red Cat Science

Sarah has always been passionate about science, a trait passed on to her from her father. Sarah started studying Chemical Engineering but changed course as she felt that she wanted to share her passion of science and that being a chemical engineer (as much as she loved the science) wouldn't reach the people that she wanted to. Sarah completed my course in Science Education in 1999 and won the award for teaching excellence. Sarah has been teaching ever since, in South Africa, London and Australia. After the birth of her daughter Sarah wanted to start her own business. Partly for the flexibility it would allow her and partly because she wanted to be a role model for her daughter – someone who follows their dreams. She knew she wanted to continue her passion – sharing my love of science with others. Sarah wanted to show kids that science CAN be exciting and fun before they get disillusioned with it. Too many students walked into Sarah's high school lab for the first time with a preconceived idea that science is boring or that they "can't do science". Sarah's mission is to ignite a love of science within the future generation.

PhD Career Start Award

For PhD students working in IT or life sciences. Student must be in final year of PhD or have submitted their PhD after 1 January 2016.



Laura Fenlon, PhD Student, Queensland Brain Institute, The University of Queensland

Laura is a young and determined researcher currently undertaking a PhD at The Queensland Brain Institute, The University of Queensland. Laura's current research is focused around understanding how the brain forms connections during development. This research may provide particular insight into the basis of neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism and schizophrenia. During her PhD Laura has amassed six publications in some of the highest ranked international journals in the field of neuroscience. She has also won numerous living stipends and travel awards to present her research at international conferences and has been an invited speaker at three prestigious meetings. Laura has also been heavily involved in outreach activities such as the Australian and International Brain Bee Challenge, a competition that encourages high school students to get involved in neuroscience research. In the future Laura hopes to enjoy a career in academia where she can continue to investigate early brain formation and hopefully contribute to better prognoses and treatments for people with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Rural and Remote Life Sciences and/or Infotech Award **NEW

Outstanding women making a recognised contribution to the field of Life Sciences or ICT in rural or remote areas. (Based on non-metropolitan classified areas (M1/M2) per the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) classification, i.e. areas where the urban centre population is less than 100,000. Details found at aihw.gov.au)



Cara Beal, Senior research fellow, Smart Water Research Centre, Griffith University

Dr Cara Beal is a Senior Research Fellow at the School of Engineering, Cities Research Centre and Smart Water Research Centre at Griffith University. In the last 20 years she has worked across the public, private and academic sectors primarily in the field of integrated water and energy management. Cara is an applied scientist who is dedicated to translating scientific outcomes into tangible industry and community based sustainable outcomes. Cara is currently managing collaborative research projects employing mixed method approaches which integrate community-led qualitative research with 'big data' metering and monitoring technologies. Using these methods, the

last few years have seen Cara and her team travel to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities in Northern Australia to work on community-led sustainable water and energy use in remote Indigenous communities. Dr Beal has published over 60 peer-reviewed journal and conference papers and presented at numerous national and international conferences both as a delegate and an invited speaker. As a member of the Qld Government appointed Water Expert Panel she is responsible for identifying innovative research and development, in not only urban but rural, regional and remote sectors of Queensland. Cara is a current recipient of a mid-career Accelerate Fellowship for her work in remote communities.

Sue Wickenden Entrepreneurial Award

For outstanding women whose vision, leadership and initiative have created their own enterprise.



Gemma Lloyd, Co-founder, Diverse City Careers

Gemma is co-founder of Diverse City Careers (DCC), Company Secretary of the Diversity Practitioners Association, and has served on two not-for-profit Boards' including IT Queensland (youngest ever board member appointed) and Females in Technology and Telecommunications. In 2015, Gemma was a finalist in the 2015 ARN Women in ICT Awards in the Innovation category. Gemma is a regular speaker at events such as DCC's 'Better Ways of Working' meetups, Women in Digital and XX in Tech. Gemma has also delivered keynote speeches and sat on panels of events like Griffith University's "Leadership Engaging Diversity" and SOPAC 2016. After working in IT for nearly 10 years, Gemma co-founded DCC with the goal of helping women pursue rewarding careers across any industry, specialising in supporting women wanting to enter non-traditional industries. Since its conception, DCC has grown rapidly and is now regarded as one of Australia's leading authorities on gender diversity. The DCC jobs board is Australia's only exclusive jobs board, meaning employers must be pre-qualified before advertising to ensure they support women's careers. DCC works with leading companies focused on diversity including Dropbox, Xero, Deloitte, AECOM and Accenture.

Highly commended

ICT Professional Award



Mai Nishitani, Senior Server Administrator, Queensland Health (Gold Coast)

Mai Nishitani is a self-confessed tech nerd and connoisseur of 90's rap and R&B. Currently, she works at the Gold Coast University Hospital, finding solutions to complex technical problems, keeping life-critical systems running smoothly, and blurting out the occasional cheesy dad joke. Technology and its applications has been a lifelong passion for Mai -- choosing to tinker with electronics over Barbie dolls, working at IBM for several years, and completing a Masters in Information Technology at the Queensland University of Technology. Mai strives to maintain a well-rounded lifestyle through yoga, body combat, and weekly twerking classes. When she's not at work or at the gym, she's spending quality time with her five year-old daughter, Akira.

PhD Career Start Award



Ludwika Nieradzik

PhD Candidate, The University of Queensland, Advanced Water Management Centre

Ludwika Nieradzik has been working and studying and working in the field of wastewater treatment and drinking water purification for the past 6 years. While studying Civil Engineering at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany, Ludwika broadened her research interests in the biolab of the Department for Urban Waste and Wastewater Technology, as well as student exchange to Finland, international collaborations with Universities in the Netherlands and Australia, and pharmaceutical industry in Germany. After graduating with a Masters and her multiaward-winning thesis „Biofouling removal from RO-membranes“, she joined the German pharmaceutical and pesticide producer Bayer AG and managed the optimisation of wastewater treatment technologies in international production and formulation sites. In 2014, Ludwika started her PhD project “In-sewer biotransformation of micropollutants” at the Advanced Water Management Centre in Brisbane. Besides working on lab studies and modeling, Ludwika manages and chairs monthly meetings of two research groups, the homepage of the Sewer Research Group and well as homepage and submission system for UQ's EAIT postgraduate conference. In her free time, Ludwika enjoys travel, music and martial arts.

Outstanding Educator

Robyn Bull, Program Manager - Wonder of Science, The University of Queensland



Robyn Bull, Program Manager - Wonder of Science, The University of Queensland

Robyn commenced her career in education as a middle school teacher and science curriculum coordinator in the QLD Government school system. She was the recipient of a Peter Doherty Award for Excellence in Middle School Science Teaching in 2005. She joined the PrimaryConnections project at the Australian Academy of Science in 2006, taking on a dual role as a curriculum developer and Indigenous Perspectives Coordinator. In 2007 Robyn led the successful pilot of PrimaryConnections incorporating Indigenous perspectives, and following that the Australian Government Department of Education provided funding for development of the PrimaryConnections Indigenous Perspectives website and publication of her research report: Small study - Big success story which highlighted the impact of the program on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Robyn returned to Queensland in 2010 as a regional manager in the state-wide Science Spark Initiative which involved professional learning for all years four to seven state school teachers. During this time Robyn provided leadership and advice for Queensland's implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Science. She then accepted a role in Australian Curriculum policy; before taking up her current position in 2014, as Wonder of Science Program Manager, at The University of Queensland Diamantina Institute.

Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award



Susanne Schmidt

Professor, The University of Queensland, School of Agriculture and Food Science

Susanne completed a Bachelor in Agricultural Biology at the University of Hohenheim (Germany) and a PhD in Botany at The University of Queensland. A researcher, educator and mentor, she leads a vibrant research program at UQ across ecology, agriculture and biotechnology to develop bioproduction systems based on ecological principles. The intricate interface between plants, microbes and soil is where Susanne's research has been generating knowledge to improve nutrient efficient crop systems to avoid environmental penalties. She is developing novel NextGen fertilisers for Nutrient Stewardship to advance a circular nutrient economy without waste and pollution with repurposed wastes and novel biomaterials. Susanne is one of four initiators of the spinifex project that unites Indigenous entrepreneurs, material scientists and ecologists and that has led to the discovery of unparalleled material properties of abundant Australian desert grasses. Spinifex nanocellulose is now revolutionising material science with the thinnest ever condoms currently in the test phase. With an international standing at the cutting edge of life sciences, Susanne's vision is to foster cross-disciplinary research and development to advance sustainable bioproduction systems, the use and protection of native plants and ecosystems.