

Eureka Prize

Winners

Science met showbiz at the glittering galah Australian Museum Eureka Prize dinner for 2002, held on 13 August at the Fox Studios in Sydney. Compered by Amanda Keller and Adam Spencer the evening saw almost \$180,000 awarded to 18 Prize winners.

Welcoming the 700 guests, who included leading figures from the worlds of science, commerce, politics, journalism, and a coven of raucous Skeptics, Mike Archer, Director of the Australian Museum said:

The Australian Museum Eureka Prizes, begun in 1990, are now Australia's pre-eminent and most comprehensive national science awards. They raise the profile of science in the community by acknowledging and rewarding outstanding science-related achievements across science, engineering, journalism and education.

Brian Sherman, President of the Australian Museum Trust, congratulating the winners, said:

The Eureka Prizes are made possible through a unique partnership between the NSW State and Federal Governments, major private sector organisations and institutions. I pay tribute to these groups and to their commitment to the pursuit of scientific excellence in Australia.



Richard Saunders announcing the winner of the Skeptics Eureka.

The Winners

Australian Skeptics Eureka Prize for Critical Thinking

President of Australian Skeptics, Richard Saunders, announced the winner, **Dr Robert Morrison** from Adelaide University Media Unit, for *Trust Me, I'm a Science Communicator* – a study examining how the mechanics and requirements of successful science communication differ

sharply from those of formal scientific research reports, and so bias science communication towards the sensational, speculative, hyperbolic and even fanciful. Dr Morrison is also President of the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia. His winning paper can be read elsewhere in this issue.

Reed New Holland Eureka Science Book Prize

Another result of particular interest to Skeptics, where the Prize went to our favourite geologist, **Professor Ian Plimer**, for his new book *A Short History of Planet Earth*, published by ABC Books. From Big Bang to life on Earth took nature several billion years, yet Ian covered the ground in just 250 pages. After the announcement the editor of this journal was startled to find himself being enfolded in an affectionate embrace by the prize-winning Prof. Bemused, he had to be reminded that it had been him who had nominated *A Short History* for the prize.

The University of New South Wales Eureka Prize for Scientific Research

Dr Elizabeth Harry, a University of Sydney microbiologist, who has discovered a key secret of the reproductive success of bacteria. Her fundamental findings may well lead to new drugs as well as tools to detect lethal bio-attacks.

Eureka Winners

Education, Science and Training Eureka Prize for the Promotion of Science

Working through the Commission for the Future, the science academies, Vichealth, and many other bodies, **Professor Ian Lowe** has made a remarkable contribution to science communication in Australia.

Education, Science and Training Michael Daley Eureka Prize for Science Journalism

Dr Norman Swan and **Ms Katrina Bolton** won for their two reports on ABC Radio of allegations of scientific fraud, financial misconduct, workplace bullying and institutional cover-up at the University of New South Wales.

The Sherman Eureka Prize for Environmental Research

Won by University of Newcastle chemical engineers, **Eric Kennedy** and **Bogdan Dlugogorski**, inventors of a technique for turning ozone depleting halons into ozone friendly and valuable chemicals.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Eureka Prize for Biodiversity Research

Dr Bob Pressey assists in resolving conservation disputes around the world. His key negotiating tools are his computer and his award winning conservation software.

Adam Spencer/University of Sydney Eureka Schools Prize for Lateral Thinking

Year 12 students, **Peter Clarke** and **Sandan Amardoru** from Mount Waverley Secondary College, Melbourne, won the inaugural Prize for their action plan to overcome the problems facing Australia through the community's lack of commitment to research and development.

University of Sydney Faculty of Science Eureka Schools Prize for Biological Sciences

Frogs are disappearing around the world. **Ling San Lau**, a year 11 student from Rosny College in Tasmania wanted to know why. Her investigation won her the Prize for the second year in succession.



Richard Saunders presenting the Prize to Dr Rob Morrison

The Australian Computer Society Eureka Prize for ICT Innovation Application

Won by ACT company **Seeing Machines**, whose *faceLAB* technology can scan the faces of drivers and detect signs of them falling asleep.

Australian Catholic University Eureka Prize for Research in Ethics

The inaugural winner, University of Melbourne philosopher **Dr Jeremy Moss**, claims the Federal Government's unemployment policy is "punitive" and sets Australia in the "wrong direction".

Institution of Engineers Australia Eureka Prize for Engineering Innovation

Professor Robert Amin from Curtin University turns the gas industry on its head with the LNG Microcell, a cheap, efficient way to quickly convert natural gas into liquid natural gas.

Allen Strom Eureka Prize for Environmental Education Program

The world's teachers are key agents for bringing about sustainable change. **Griffith University**, working with UNESCO have created a comprehensive teacher education program.

Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Industry

The **Eco Manufacturing Centre of Fuji Xerox** has developed practical ways of turning trashed office machines into "good as new, if not better than new" components. Their win is acknowledged for all time through the naming of a new species through the Australian Museum's Immortals Program.

Ecomanufactua, a newly discovered species of fresh water crustacean, was found in warm artesian springs in southwest Queensland and is a survivor of an ancient group that once inhabited the continent of Gondwana 238 million years ago (or last Friday if you are a creationist).

Macquarie University Eureka Schools Prize for Earth, Environmental and Planetary Sciences

At age 12, **Matilde-Jane Oke** is the youngest ever winner of a Eureka Prize, for her study of the effect of dust on eucalypt trees.

Environment Australia Peter Hunt Eureka Prize for Environmental Journalism

The **Wimmera Mail-Times** won for its "North to Nowhere" series which galvanised a community to protect the Wimmera River.

Institution of Engineers Australia Eureka Prize for Engineering Journalism

Peter Lewis won for a selection of ABC TV *Landline* stories exploring the role of positive engineering solutions to challenges facing Australian agribusiness.

Pfizer Eureka Prize for Health and Medical Research Journalism

The Age "Gene Discovery" team, for a comprehensive series of news stories, features, and editorials exploring the impact of gene technology on our lives.

Complete information on each prize winner is available at the Australian Museum's website at www.amonline.net.au/eureka

