

Women in Technology recognised for innovative work

By **Guest Writer** - Sep 2, 2019



Note: This is a guest post written by Deanna Nott

A Queensland woman who aims to help 20 million of the world's most underprivileged children learn to read is amongst the winners at the 22nd annual Women in Technology (WiT) Awards, held in Brisbane.

Rebecca McDonald was nominated in the inaugural WiT Community Award for her work as Founder and CEO of Library For All, a scalable and cost-effective cloud-based free digital library application that delivers a curated collection of books and educational resources to schools and communities in the developing world.

Mrs McDonald left her construction industry job to volunteer in Haiti after the devastating 2010 earthquakes. It was there she discovered that millions of children across the globe did not have the opportunity to learn to read or have access to books in their own language. This led to the creation of Library for All.

Now back in Queensland, the mother of three continues to build networks in the developing world, has established a thriving not-for-profit publishing operation and has recently focused her attention on providing indigenous language books for children in remote Aboriginal communities.

Other WiT Award winners include Amy Chan, a PhD student from University of Queensland Institute for Molecular Bioscience (IMB), who was selected as the Life Sciences Young Achiever for her ground-breaking study of a protein called Caspase-4, which regulates inflammation in the human body. Ms Chan's research is focused on determining how Caspase-4 is 'switched on and off'. If successful in artificially activating or deactivating Caspase-4, doctors would be able to amplify

the immune response at the onset of infection to kill bacteria faster and also dampen damaging immune activity during septic shock.

WiT Co-President (Life Sciences) Dr Claudia Giurgiuman said it had been a particularly big year for the WiT Awards.

“This has been a record-breaking year for the WiT Awards, receiving over 150 applications across 12 categories and attracting almost 700 people to the presentations. There are some remarkable stories and ground-breaking achievements and the calibre of women nominated for awards is outstanding,” she said.

WiT Co-President (ICT) Joanna Field said WiT was a leading organisation for women in all branches of STEM in Queensland and filled an important niche in the professional resources and support available to women.

“WiT is Australia’s first organisation to bring women from all disciplines of science and technology together in a single, inclusive community,” she said.

“Our network of more than 6,500 associates and 21,000 supporters is one of the biggest in the nation with the strength and dedication needed to drive change for women in science and technology careers.

“The awards are really important because they recognise, showcase and applaud those women who are making their mark and provide the encouragement and inspiration for others to follow.”

As one of Australia’s most respected and active technology industry association, WiT is dedicated to supporting, developing, recognising and promoting the achievements of women in the technology.

WiT was founded in 1997 by a small group of Queensland women who came together to share their aspirations and find understanding and solutions for the unique challenges they faced as female pioneers in technology. To learn more about WiT visit wit.org.au

WiT Award 2019 Winners:

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| Name | Awards |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Mandy Ross | ICT Outstanding Achievement Award |
| Carla Wall | ICT Outstanding Achievement Award (Highly Commended) |
| Angela Jones | ICT Professional Award |
| Kelly Pedler | ICT Rising Star Award |
| Emily Entwistle | ICT Young Achiever Award |
| Vicki Clifton | Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award |
| Antje Blumenthal | Life Sciences Research Leader Award |
| Lisa Gillinder | Life Sciences Rising Star Award |
| Amy Chan | Life Sciences Young Achiever Award (Joint winner) |
| Hana Starobova | Life Sciences Young Achiever Award (Joint winner) |
| Rebecca McDonald | Community Award |
| Robyn Bull | Community Award (Highly Commended) |
| Megan Avard | Sue Wickenden Entrepreneurial Award |
| PWC | Employer of Choice Award – Corporate |
| Hall & Wilcox | Employer of Choice Award – Corporate (Highly Commended) |
| Field Orthopaedics | Employer of Choice Award – Small to Medium |

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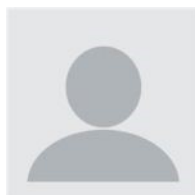
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Guest Writer

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