

**Media Release – EMBARGOED UNTIL 5AM MONDAY 12 AUGUST**

**9 August 2019**

**SCIENCE WEEK CELEBRATION: WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY ANNOUNCES WiT AWARD FINALISTS**

In conjunction with one of Australia’s largest festivals, National Science Week, Women in Technology (WiT) is celebrating the remarkable achievements of women in STEM by announcing the finalists for the upcoming WiT Awards in Queensland.

WiT Co-President Dr Claudia Giurgiuman said Australia's annual celebration of science was the perfect time to announce the finalists for the 22nd annual WiT Awards, taking place on August 30.

The WiT Awards feature a number of scientific awards including Life Sciences Rising Star, Life Sciences Young Achiever, Life Sciences Research Leader and Life Sciences Outstanding.

“Science Week is about acknowledging the contribution of Australian scientists to the world of knowledge and inspiring others with an interest in STEM - what better time to introduce our finalists who are doing truly amazing work in their fields,” said Dr Giurgiuman.

“This has been a record-breaking year for the WiT Awards, receiving over 150 applications across 12 categories, and the calibre of women nominated for awards is of the highest quality.”

Brisbane-based Professor Vicki Clifton has been selected as a finalist for the WiT Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award in recognition of her globally groundbreaking work to improve the health of pregnant women and their unborn babies.

Her clinical work has contributed to the development of national and international guidelines for managing asthma in pregnancy, with two top 1% most-cited publications and ten top 10% most-cited publications worldwide.

Other finalists include Wonder of Science Program Director at The University of Queensland Robyn Bull, who has been nominated for the new WiT Community Award for her dedication to encouraging young people in Queensland to pursue STEM education.

Wonder of Science recruits, trains, mentors and mobilises PhD researchers as Young Science Ambassadors to lead the implementation of challenging STEM curriculum in Queensland schools and communities. This year the program will field 110 young scientists – of which 76% are female, as ambassadors and will reach almost 6000 Queensland students and over 200 teachers in more than 60 schools.

“My leadership of the Young Science Ambassador program is proving to have a two-way impact on STEM education in Queensland,” said Ms Bull.

“The emerging scientists impacted through the Young Science Ambassador and Flying Scientist programs are highly influential and positive STEM role models for both students and teachers, providing expertise in helping students to engage and experience success in STEM.”

WiT is Australia’s first organisation to bring women from all disciplines of science and technology together in a single, inclusive community, dedicated to driving change for women in STEM careers.

Focusing on the common ground shared by women in all areas of technology, WiT provides members collegial support to help build the confidence and skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.

Winners of the 22nd Annual WiT Awards will be announced at the WiT Awards Gala on Friday August 30 at 6pm at the Brisbane City Hall.

For more information or to register for the event visit <https://www.wit.org.au/event-3261803>.

**List of all finalists:**

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| Carla Wall - ICT Outstanding Achievement Award |
| Chamindie Punyadeera - Life Sciences Research Leader Award |
| Lisa Gillinder – Life Sciences Rising Star Award |
| Hall & Wilcox Lawyers - Employer of Choice Corporate Award |
| Amy Chan – Life Sciences Young Achiever Award |
| Sara Couperthwaite - Life Sciences Research Leader Award |
| Jyotsna Batra - Life Sciences Research Leader Award |
| ERM Power - Employer of Choice Corporate Award |
| PwC - Employer of Choice Corporate Award |
| Mandy Ross - ICT Outstanding Achievement Award |
| Angela  Jones - ICT Professional Award |
| Valerie Hagger – Life Sciences Young Achiever Award |
| Avril Robertson - Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award |
| Antje Blumenthal - Life Sciences Research Leader Award |
| Hailee Jamieson - ICT Young Achiever Award |
| Griffith University - Employer of Choice Corporate Award |
| Robyn Bull - Community Award |
| Catherine Lovelock - Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award |
| Flight Centre Travel Group - Employer of Choice Corporate Award |
| Janet Born - ICT Outstanding Achievement Award |
| Zoe Eather - Entrepreneurial Award |
| Expedia - Employer of Choice Corporate Award |
| Vicky Avery - Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award |
| Rebecca McDonald - Community Award |
| Coins Australia - Employer of Choice Small/Medium Business Award |
| Claudia Stocks – Life Sciences Young Achiever Award |
| Gemma Renton - Entrepreneurial Award |
| Ann Bui - ICT Rising Star Award |
| Hana Starobova – Life Sciences Young Achiever Award |
| Field Orthopaedics - Employer of Choice Small/Medium Business Award |
| Vine Street Digital - Employer of Choice Small/Medium Business Award |
| Aideen McInerney-Leo – Life Sciences Rising Star Award |
| Vicki Clifton - Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award |
| Camille Guillerey – Life Sciences Rising Star Award |
| Leonie Simpson - ICT Professional Award |
| Department of Transport & Main Roads - Employer of Choice Corporate Award |
| Moe Thandar Wynn - ICT Professional Award |
| Leigh-Ellen Potter - ICT Professional Award |
| Armagan Ersoz - Community Award |
| Megan Avard - Entrepreneurial Award |
| Armagan Ersoz - ICT Rising Star Award |
| Emily Entwistle - ICT Young Achiever Award |
| Jazna Rossi - ICT Young Achiever Award |
| Kelly Pedler - ICT Rising Star Award |

**MEDIA NOTE** – To interview Ms Giurgiuman or any of the finalists, contact WiT Media Deanna Nott on 0422 504540 or email media@wit.org.au

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**ABOUT WiT**

As one of Australia’s most respected and active technology industry associations, Women in Technology (WiT) is dedicated to supporting, developing, recognising and promoting the achievements of women in the technology industries through advocacy, networking events, breakfasts, professional development, mentoring and our prestigious WiT Awards.

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. It now has more than 6500 members from all branches of science and technology. To learn more about WiT visit wit.org.au.