

2021 NSW Environmental Education Awards

NSW Tertiary Educator of the Year Award

The Tertiary Educator of the Year Award recognises individual educators from the tertiary sector who have exhibited leadership and made notable achievements to further environmental education.

HIGHLY COMMENDED - Tertiary Educator of the Year Award:

Simone Blom

Simone Blom is an academic at Southern Cross University in the Faculty of Education. She has recently been successful in gaining funding from the NSW Environmental Trust to establish a state-wide mentoring program in Regenerative Agriculture at SCU in collaboration with Local Land Services, the Dept of Primary Industries and local councils. Simone has been publishing frequently in environmental education journals over the last couple of years while completing her PhD looking into teachers' perceptions of nature and how it informs their pedagogy. She has recently co-authored a STEM curriculum package on SCU's *Electric Kombi Conversion* project to be shared with schools.

WINNER - Tertiary Educator of the Year Award:

Lisa Siegel from Southern Cross University

Lisa Siegel is an Associate Lecturer and Doctoral Candidate at SCU. Lisa has been instrumental in the move to make environmental education a core subject for all education students at the university, not just an elective. Lisa has been part of the organising committee for two national AAEE Research Symposiums. She also co-facilitated a workshop at the 20th AAEE Research Symposium in 2018, which resulted in a published article in the Australian Journal of Environmental Education. Lisa is in the leadership team of the Sustainability, Environment, and Arts Education (SEAE) Research cluster at SCU, and has presented her academic work nationally and internationally. She was the recipient of the Higher Degree Research award for Best Publication in both 2018 & 2019 for her publications relating to waste education and pro-environmental behaviour.

2021 NSW Environmental Education Awards

NSW Government Educator of the Year Award

Our Government category covers local Government as well as State Government agencies for nominees who have exhibited outstanding commitment, leadership and made notable achievements to further environmental education in this sector.

HIGHLY COMMENDED - Government Educator of the Year Award:

Jordan Moy

Jordan Moy is the Sustainability Education Officer at North Sydney Council. Jordan has been a trailblazer in online learning (even before Covid) organising many webinars, including a professionally filmed and recorded electric vehicle webinar with over 500 participants, who all found the session personally motivating. Jordan has since utilised these skills to develop instructional videos including how to make rain gardens, as Covid significantly restricted participant numbers at hands on face-to-face workshops. Jordan has exhibited his leadership in a collaborative way by coordinating the Northern Sydney Environmental Education Network (NSEEN) for the last 4 years. He was also an instrumental executive committee member of the community Sydney Library of Things who successfully launched a tool library at the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability this year. Jordan's Harvest Collective food gardening program was recognised as best practice when it won the 2019 Keep Australia Beautiful Response to Climate Change Award.

WINNER - Government Educator of the Year Award:

Liana Kay

Liana is the Lead Education Officer at the Sydney Olympic Park Authority. Liana has effectively delivered both face to face and virtual environmental education programs to over 10,000 students over the past 5 years at the Park. Liana has assisted in delivering a site based fieldwork skills workshop for secondary teachers at the NSW Geography Teachers Association annual conference. She has been working with Aboriginal artists to produce a series of artworks that are displayed across the Park and now on huge gateway signage, that tell of the diverse stories of Sydney Olympic Park through the eyes of Indigenous people. Liana delivers professional development for teachers and other environmental educators in both fieldwork and the delivery of environmental education in a live and interactive virtual setting. She was instrumental in the pivot to digital learning for the Olympic Park Authority during Covid and is a whizz at IT troubleshooting, filming and directing for online educational materials. In 2020, Liana provided professional development to educators across 12 organisations to allow them to deliver environmental education workshops at the Youth Eco Summit (YesLive 2020) event.

2021 NSW Environmental Education Awards

NSW Community Educator of the Year Award

The Community Educator of the Year Award recognises individual educators from the community sector who have exhibited leadership and made notable achievements to further environmental education. The judging panel was overwhelmed with the number of wonderful nominations in the Community Educator category this year.

HIGHLY COMMENDED - Community Educator of the Year Award:

Sami Bayly

Sami Bayly is an incredibly talented natural history illustrator and author. As you can see from the wonderful pictures in the slideshow, Sami loves to delve into the lesser-known and under-appreciated corners of the natural world. Her illustrations convey the intrinsic beauty and highlight the utterly extraordinary adaptations that can be found all around us in nature, if only we are looking carefully enough, and with our minds wide open.

Sami has encouraged this way of seeing and understanding through her publications, including *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Ugly Animals*, *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Dangerous Animals* and *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Peculiar Pairs in Nature*. Since publication, 60,000 copies of Sami's first two books have been printed, reaching children across Australia from all walks of life. Her books strongly encourage awareness of flora and fauna and inspire care for their conservation. Almost every bookshop stocks her books, which have won many prestigious awards and have also been published in the UK, the US and Russia.

Sami has been a keynote speaker at many conferences, made presentations at more than 40 schools, appeared on numerous TV news programs and in national publications. Her work with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust has sharpened her scientific focus, bringing the spotlight onto Australian species and their complex relationships in her most recent book. Not everyone receives letters from Sir David Attenborough in appreciation of their work, but if you are an emerging national treasure like Sami then you probably have two sitting on your desk!

WINNER - NSW Community Educator of the Year Award:

Jane Smith from the Central Coast Environmental Education Network (CCEEN)

Jane has been involved with community organizations for 20 years including CEO of the Community Environment Network and a founding board member of the Central Coast Marine Discovery Centre. She has served on a range of Boards and committees including Gosford Council committees.

She has been a leader in the Central Coastal Environment Network, a key advocate and campaigner for NSW Waterwatch, NSW marine education and waste education, collaborating across many sectors and involving a huge number of stakeholders. Jane has been a passionate environmental educator in her work with both the

Marine Discovery Centre on the Central Coast and at Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre. She is a long-time member of AAEE NSW executive, and long-time member of the Nature Conservation Council board.

As inaugural Mayor of Central Coast Council, Jane displayed her passion for good governance and effective planning to support many local environmental initiatives, and to safeguard the local environment for the future. Jane has always fostered a spirit of collaboration and constructive dialogue to her roles, which is key to her effectiveness as an environmental educator. One of her early statements in her role as Mayor was, "It's about bringing people together and not letting division take over".

WINNER - NSW Community Educator of the Year Award:

Lisa Siegel from the Centre for Ecological Learning

Lisa is an enabler in the community of environmental educators and works to elevate the voices of others. She was instrumental in helping a group of students establish Bellingen Environmental Youth Experience (EYE) in 2007, which was a youth-led environmental education and nature connection group based around wilderness camp experiences. Lisa has mentored hundreds of young people and helped facilitate local action groups, such as Plastic-Free Bellingen and Youth Against Plastic, Bellingen Shire Learning Alliance, Coffs Coast Regional Science Hub, Eco Outings, Eco Workshops, NatureConnect camps, Nature Play Mentor Training, Waste not Bellingen, Composting Workshops, Wild Camps and Young Naturalists Club. Lisa co-founded the not-for-profit, registered charity group CEL (Centre for Ecological Learning). Lisa has always maintained a strong focus on youth-led activism. Whether it was facilitating a meeting between the teens and their hero Bob Brown, arranging for them to take part in youth-led climate action in Sydney, or supporting their campaign fundraising to make Bellingen a plastic-free town. Hundreds of local young people who attended the Youth Experience and CEL's weekend bush camps continue to reach out and keep in contact with Lisa, years and decades later. Many have written attesting to the critical influence of EYE or CEL's camps as the force behind their decision to study environmental tertiary degrees or dedicate themselves as activist campaigners on climate and social justice.

2021 NSW Environmental Education Awards

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS NSW TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Sustainable Schools NSW Teacher of the Year Award recognises individual educators who have worked towards implementing Sustainable Schools initiatives in a NSW primary or high school. This award celebrates educators who have shown excellence in embedding sustainability within their school and in the broader community in line with the values of Sustainable Schools NSW.

HIGHLY COMMENDED - Sustainable Schools NSW Teacher of the Year Award:

Nicole Hext from Bringelly Public School

Nicole Hext runs the school garden with compost and worm farms. She oversees the school's EcoSchool committee with a focus on recycling and waste reduction. While she was not a gardener before taking over the running of the school garden, her Principal supported her in re-establishing the school vegetable garden with a focus on student wellbeing. She has networked with the local environmental education centre to upskill herself in running a productive school garden and to learn about how to compost and worm farm effectively.

The EcoSchools committee allows her to oversee education of students in the areas of waste reduction and recycling, including their Return and Earn project. She has networked with the local council and organised for council to come into the school and present workshops to students on food waste, composting and recycling, and is working towards a successful RedCycle program.

WINNER - Sustainable Schools NSW Teacher of the Year Award:

Jayne Alba from Oxley Park Public School

Jayne Alba has displayed strong and continued leadership, bringing her school community together to achieve their sustainability goals. Jane has contributed to a positive school culture, with sustainability integrated into the school's approach to student wellbeing.

Environmental initiatives are integrated into the schools' strategic direction and planning, including school wide positive behaviour for learning initiatives. Part of the school's ethos or motto is "Bee Greener", something that has been embedded since 2019. Jane has led a process that is evidence based, setting and evaluating sustainability goals. Since 2017, Jayne has been leading the Eco Team's Action Plans, Waste Audits and applying for grants. She maintains all the records and evidence, aligning them to NSW Curriculum outcomes and the UN Sustainability Goals.

Jayne documents the school journey, via social media, videos for a YouTube account. Jayne has a strong sense of partnerships and engages with external environment programs. Jayne has been involved in multiple pilot programs such as the NPSW Junior Rangers, Cooling the Schools, and No Bees No Future projects. She has been instrumental in her school achieving Bronze and Silver Awards as part of their Eco Schools membership, and in 2021 Oxley Park was first school in NSW to achieve a Green Flag. Jayne's work also led the school to be recognised this year on Sunrise TV show for its sustainable practices and habitat garden.

2021 NSW Environmental Education Awards

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS NSW SCHOOL OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Sustainable Schools NSW School of the Year Award recognises a school that has shown excellence in embedding sustainability within their school and in the broader community in line with the values of Sustainable Schools NSW.

Highly Commended - Sustainable Schools NSW School of the Year Award

Caddies Creek Public School

This school has worked hard to embed sustainability across the curriculum with many project-based learning outcomes across a range of Key Learning Areas. Real-life projects have included making pet rocks to sell to the school community to support Native Animal recovery after the bush fires, and students have planned and implemented a project to transform an overgrown, unused place in the school into an outdoor learning space to support wellbeing.

Other projects have included habitat creation, growing food, planting for biodiversity and waste management. Caddies Creek Public School also won solar panels to through Origin Good Energy sustainability competition. The school's Eco Crusaders have led the way with initiatives such as No Waste Wednesday, community sustainability days and showcasing initiatives at community events. Return and Earn, Bread Tags for Wheelchairs, Colgate Oral Care Recycling Program and stationary recycling through TerraCycle campaigns are also run at the school.

WINNER - Sustainable Schools NSW School of the Year Award:

Aldavilla Public School

For over a decade, Aldavilla Primary School has been working to continually improve their school sustainability. Sustainability is integrated in their curriculum, part of their school grounds and runs through their community.

The school has adopted a holistic sustainability focus – taking action in many areas including water, waste, biodiversity, food gardens and Indigenous culture. The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program has been embedded in curriculum for over ten years, with Years 3-6 participate in a 90-minute cooking class and 45-minute garden class each fortnight. The school has a green canteen, with reusable containers and homemade food and promote nutrition and healthy eating. They manage green waste with worm farms and composting, which feeds their vegetable and bush tucker gardens.

Aldavilla have a positive approach to student engagement and leadership, with an active Environmental Team. This strong, 16 student team has an elite standing in school and sort our school waste everyday rain, hail or shine – this includes recycling, soft plastics and return and earn collections. Sustainability is explored through linked curriculum – including science, HSIE, maths, CAPA and links with the Quality Teaching Framework.

Aldavilla have a strong focus on partnerships and engagement with community groups and other environment programs, with their achievements recognised through many awards. They are connected with local Indigenous groups, TAFE groups, take part in Tree Planting days, programs with their regional waste board and Macleay community events and local shows. They have successfully implemented a range of grant programs and have been awarded for their sustainability efforts.

2021 NSW Environmental Education Awards

SUSTAINABILITY CONNECT NSW BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award recognises a business that has excelled in ambition and delivery of their environmental products and services in NSW. The award shines a light on the innovative work being done in this sector to promote environmental stewardship and the Sustainable Development Goals in the broader community.

HIGHLY COMMENDED - Sustainability Connect NSW Business of the Year Award:

Seed Harvest Spoon

Seed Harvest Spoon registered as a not-for-profit education foundation in 2014 to share a vision and passion for gardening, permaculture, natural environments, healthy soil and early childhood education. Seed Harvest Spoon's intention is to engage, inspire and empower educators and children in leading the way to make a difference and to live healthy sustainable lives.

Seed Harvest Spoon connects children, school principals, teachers, educators and families of: Primary Schools, Family Day Care, Early Childhood Learning Centres, Out of School Hours childcare (OOSH) and community stakeholders across the Sydney metropolitan area. The program delivers outdoor lessons firmly built around required NSW curriculum priorities of Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, along with many of the other capabilities supporting key syllabus and skills/learning outcomes of student curriculum. Seed Harvest Spoon's professional development programs help teachers and educators to meet their professional development need and specialised pre-school environmental education workshops for Early Childhood are tailored to the learning development needs and interests of younger children.

WINNER - Sustainability Connect NSW Business of the Year Award:

OzHarvest Food Education and Sustainability Training - (FEAST) Program

OzHarvest developed FEAST to educate and inspire primary school-aged students (aged 9-12 years) about healthy eating, reducing food waste, and sustainable eating practices in the home and at school. Students are tasked with designing a 'School Cookbook' to address these topics while educating and engaging their community. FEAST is aligned to the Australian Curriculum Key Learning Areas STEM and the cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability.

Since 2019 the program has achieved tremendous impact in NSW primary schools including: 212 schools enrolled, 330 teachers have been provided training to deliver FEAST, 618 classes have engaged in FEAST, 15,455 years 5 & 6 students have been inspired to reduce food waste and eat healthily Nationally, and 420 schools have been engaged across Australia. FEAST is a 2020 Banksia Sustainability Award winner, a Global Compact Network Australia SDG program, and has received international recognition by the peer-reviewed journal BMC Public Health. The FEAST program actively targets 7 of the 17 Sustainability Development Goals.