

# MEDIA RELEASE



## AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM **EUREKA PRIZES 2021**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01AM AEDT  
THURSDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **FIRST NATIONS STEM EDUCATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND VACCINE MYTHS: CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAMS AND JOURNALISTIC ENDEAVOURS CELEBRATED AT AUSTRALIA'S LEADING SCIENCE AWARDS**

**Sydney, 2 September 2021:** The **Australian Museum** (AM) today announced the 15 finalists selected in the Science Engagement category at Australia's leading science awards, the **2021 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes**.

This year's AM Eureka Prizes celebrate important contributions to science through citizen science and journalism in the Science Engagement category, with five prizes up for grabs. Nominated initiatives bring awareness to a range of pertinent topics including vaccines, conservation and micro plastics.

Highlights of finalists for Citizen Science category include:

- **AUSMAP, Total Environment Centre and Macquarie University**, a nationwide citizen science program designed to collect scientific data and educate the public on the prevalence of microplastics around our waterways;
- **Corey Tutt, DeadlyScience**, for providing STEM resources and mentoring to remote Aboriginal and Torres strait islander students, including over 20,000 books to date;
- **Professor Veena Sahajwalla, UNSW**, Australia's leading voice in the 'science of sustainability,' who through rigorous research and her extensive outreach is shifting the mindset of the nation: to see unwanted materials not as waste, but as a resource.
- **EchidnaCSI Team, The University of Adelaide and Pelican Lagoon Research and Wildlife Centre**, who combine molecular and ecological research with a state-of-the-art community-based approach to investigate fundamental questions in echidna biology, ecology and conservation;

Finalists nominated for science journalism prizes include:

- **Dr Jackson Ryan, *The Coronavirus Vaccines***, a series of articles written to dispel myths around safety and help readers understand the underlying science behind new vaccine technologies, explaining how they'd see us through to a "new normal" post-pandemic;
- **Kate Cole-Adams, *Griffith Review***, who investigated the burgeoning new field of psychedelic therapy in exclusive reportage for *Griffith Review 72: Love and Fear*;

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**Australian Museum Eureka Prizes**  
1 William Street Sydney NSW 2010 Australia  
E [eureka@australian.museum](mailto:eureka@australian.museum)  
W [australian.museum/eureka](http://australian.museum/eureka)

**Media Contact**  
Matt Fraser, Original Spin  
[matt@originalspin.com.au](mailto:matt@originalspin.com.au)  
0401 326 007



Known as the 'Oscars' of Australian science, the AM Eureka Prizes offer \$160,000 in prize money, across a broad spectrum of research from environmental to innovative technologies, defence and mentoring.

The AM Eureka Prizes winners will be announced on **Thursday 7 October** at a live broadcast event. The event will be open to all audiences and free to stream online. Register to attend at [australian.museum/eurekaprizes](https://australian.museum/eurekaprizes).

## **THE 2021 AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM EUREKA PRIZE FINALISTS IN SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT ARE:**

### **Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources Eureka Prize for Innovation in Citizen Science**

#### **AUSMAP, Total Environment Centre and Macquarie University**

The Australian Microplastic Assessment Project (AUSMAP) is a world-first, national citizen science program that empowers people of all ages to document microplastic pollution. An immersive experience, participants are educated on the prevalence of microplastics around our waterways and trained to collect scientifically valid data that is used to design effective mitigation strategies for plastic pollution.

#### **EchidnaCSI Team, University of Adelaide; and Pelican Lagoon Research and Wildlife Centre**

Echidnas are one of Australia's most iconic species, yet fundamental questions about their biology and ecology remain unanswered. The Echidna Conservation Science Initiative (EchidnaCSI) combines innovative community-based research with molecular and ecological approaches. The project has generated unprecedented data and samples at a national level, providing new insights into echidna biology and conservation.

#### **Team SWAQ, UNSW**

Schools Weather and Air Quality (SWAQ) is the first school-based, comprehensive atmospheric monitoring network in Australia. With research-grade sensors deployed across schools in metropolitan Sydney, it provides real-time, publicly accessible, local meteorology and air quality data that can be used in science and maths curriculum-aligned classroom activities.

### **Finkel Foundation Eureka Prize for Long-Form Science Journalism**

#### **Kate Cole-Adams**

Psychedelic drugs may one day transform the treatment of intractable mental illnesses such as deep depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. But how much do we know about these stigmatised substances and their 'mystical' effects? In *Love and Fear*, Kate Cole-Adams plots the opportunities and risks as we move towards an Australian model of psychedelic mental health. Published by Griffith Review, 4 May 2021

#### **Dr Dyani Lewis**

In 2020, a little-known field of science was behind pandemic policies that upended life as we knew it. In *Role Models in a Time of Pandemic*, Dr Dyani Lewis explains how the fledgling discipline of mathematical disease modelling grew into the influential field it is today. Published by Cosmos, 4 June 2020

#### **Dr Jackson Ryan, CNET**

In *Journey to the Dragon Palace*, Dr Jackson Ryan follows the Japanese Space Agency as it plans to return ancient asteroid samples to outback Australia. The culmination of a decade-long mission across the solar system, this story is the result of unrivalled access to the scientists who made the historic return possible against incredible odds and during a global pandemic. Published by CNET, 17 March 2021

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## Celestino Eureka Prize for Promoting Understanding of Science

### **Dr Niraj Lal, Australian National University and Australian Energy Market Operator**

Science communication at its best showcases the wonders of our universe while sparking critical thinking. Dr Niraj Lal excels at both. Through mediums including prime-time television, ground-breaking podcasts and a popular children's book about gravity, he has increased understanding and appreciation of science among Australians of all ages.

### **Professor Veena Sahajwalla, UNSW**

Professor Veena Sahajwalla is Australia's top expert on materials sustainability. Through her 'microrecycling science,' she is delivering end-user awareness and solutions to waste, recycling and manufacturing challenges. Her research and advocacy, combined with dedicated industry and community collaboration, is shifting the mindset to see end-of-life products not as waste, but a vital resource.

### **Associate Professor Adriana Vergés, UNSW and Sydney Institute of Marine Science**

In a world defined by human impacts and unprecedented environmental change, entire ecosystems are at risk. The science communication and community engagement efforts of marine ecologist Associate Professor Adriana Vergés are supported by rigorous scientific evidence, providing a powerful narrative that conveys the feasibility of recovering and rebuilding marine ecosystems.

## Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Science Journalism

### **Nicole Hasham, Wes Mountain, Anthea Batsakis, Sunanda Creagh, Ben Clark and Michael Lund, The Conversation**

Flora, Fauna, Fire launched six months after the Black Summer bushfires. Editors from The Conversation teamed with leading scientists to show how Australia's plants and animals were faring after the tragedy. Through words, photos, maps and interactive graphics, the project tells of adrenalin-fuelled wildlife rescues, ingenious conservation efforts and wild places returning to life. Published by The Conversation, 13 July 2020

### **Patient Zero, Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

Patient Zero tells stories of disease outbreaks: where they begin, why they happen and how we found ourselves in the middle of one. From the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic to medical mysteries of the past, this eight-part series provides a new lens through which to view pandemics. Published by ABC Radio National on 21 and 28 August 2020; 4 September 2020; and 7 and 28 May 2021

### **Dr Jackson Ryan, CNET**

As the world raced to develop vaccines in response to COVID-19, misinformation and hesitancy ran rampant. Dr Jackson Ryan's reporting explores the astonishing new vaccine technologies, dispelling myths about safety, addressing fear mongering about virus variants and explaining how science will see us through to a "new normal" post-pandemic. Published by CNET, 24 November 2020; 16 and 21 December 2020; 29 January 2021 and 14 April 2021

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## Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources Eureka Prize for STEM Inclusion

### Little Scientists Australia

Child-led, play-based exploration in science, technology, engineering and mathematics is at the heart of Little Scientists Australia's philosophy. Its hands-on professional development ensures that early childhood educators can proficiently support children in discovering scientific phenomena. With a national network of skilled facilitators, the program aims to make inquiry-based learning accessible to all children.

### STEM Enrichment Academy, Flinders University

Lasers, Lego and robots – the STEM Enrichment Academy makes learning enjoyable by tapping into natural curiosity. Its inclusive programs have reached hundreds of girls in South Australian schools, reversing attitudes on the difficulty of STEM and driving participant enrolment in year 11 STEM subjects well above the national average.

### Corey Tutt and Team DeadlyScience

Driven by the belief that “you can't be what you can't see,” Corey Tutt and Team DeadlyScience are committed to increasing STEM participation among Indigenous Australians. Together, they have provided thousands of culturally appropriate science resources to schools in remote communities and connected nearly 10,000 young Indigenous people with mentors.

### EVENT DETAILS

**What:** Australian Museum Eureka Prizes Winners Announcement

**When:** 7pm, Thursday 7 October 2021

**Where:** [australian.museum/eurekaprizes](https://australian.museum/eurekaprizes)

For more information and a full list of 2021 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes finalists: [australian.museum/eurekaprizes](https://australian.museum/eurekaprizes)

Eureka Prize Press Pack and Images Available **HERE**

### SOCIAL MEDIA: #EurekaPrizes

**Twitter:** @eurekaprizes **Facebook:** @eurekaprizes

### MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Matt Fraser, Director of Communications

E: [matt@originalspin.com.au](mailto:matt@originalspin.com.au) M: 0401 326 007

#ENDS#

### About the Australian Museum

The [Australian Museum](https://australian.museum) (AM) was founded in 1827 and is the nation's first museum. It is internationally recognised as a natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. The AM's mission is to ignite wonder, inspire debate and drive change. The AM's vision is to be a leading voice for the richness of life, the Earth and culture in Australia and the Pacific. The AM commits to transforming the conversation around climate change, the environment and wildlife conservation; to being a strong advocate for First Nations cultures; and to continuing to develop world-leading science, collections, exhibitions and education programs. With more than 21.9 million objects and specimens and the Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI), the AM is not only a dynamic source of reliable scientific information on some of the most pressing environmental and social challenges facing our region, but also an important site of cultural exchange and learning.

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