**MEDIA RELEASE**

**FROM STEM INCLUSION, TO MAPPING NATIVE FUNGI AND BUSHFIRE REGENERATION:**

**SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT IS CELEBRATED AT AUSTRALIA’S LEADING SCIENCE AWARDS**

**Sydney, 27 July 2022**: The **Australian Museum** (AM) today announced the 12 finalists selected in the **Science Engagement** category at Australia’s leading science awards, the **2022 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes**.

Celebrating important contributions to science through citizen science programs and promoting the understanding of science and journalism in the Science Engagement category, there are four prizes up for grabs. Nominated initiatives bring awareness to a range of important topics.

Finalists nominated in the citizen science prize include:

* **The Dignity Project**, an online citizen science platform was created by — and for — people with disability to help address challenges in healthcare and social services.
* **Fungi Down Under**, an Australia-wide network of citizens who have observed and mapped thousands of species, uncovered endangered species, and increased understanding of why fungi are irreplaceable for our ecosystems.
* **The Environment Recovery Project**, where 1,600 volunteers have made more than 24,000 observations that help track bushfire damage and biodiversity loss while also gathering vital recovery data.

Finalists nominated in the STEM inclusion prize include:

* **Victorian Indigenous Engineering Winter School (VIEWS)**, a unique tertiary collaboration boosting opportunity for Indigenous Australians to be better represented in engineering and IT.
* **QueersInScience**, a volunteer-run network focused on connection and inclusion for LGBTQIA+ professionals and students in STEMM.
* **TapeBlocks**, invented by scientist Dr Kirsten Ellis as a fun way for people with a range of disabilities to learn about and create their own electronics.

The AM Eureka Prizes are the nation’s most comprehensive awards, offering $140,000 in prize money across a broad spectrum of research, from environmental to innovative technologies, citizen science, leadership and mentoring.

The winners of the 2022 AM Eureka Prizes will be announced on **Wednesday 31 August**at an awards ceremony held at the Australian Museum. An online livestream of the awards will also be open to all audiences to view on the night. Register for the livestream at [australian.museum/eurekaprizes](https://australian.museum/get-involved/eureka-prizes/).

For more information and a full list of 2022 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes finalists: australian.museum/eurekaprizes

**THE 2022 AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM EUREKA PRIZE FINALISTS IN SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT ARE:**

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

**The Dignity Project: Reimagining Disability, Griffith University**

The Dignity Project online citizen science platform was created by — and for — people with disability to help address challenges in healthcare and social services. Developed and managed in partnership with academics, the unique model enables citizens to shape the focus of research, how it is conducted and its application to their lives.

**The Environment Recovery Project, UNSW and the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research**

Studying the impact of the 2019-2020 bushfires that devastated seven million hectares of Australian bushland is beyond the scale of scientific teams alone. The Environment Recovery Project has mobilised 1,600 volunteers who have made more than 24,000 observations that help track damage and biodiversity loss while also gathering vital recovery data.

**Fungimap Inc., Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board; Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria; and University of Adelaide**

Most Australian macrofungi are yet to be discovered and formally named, but the environmental organisation Fungimap Inc. is changing this. Its Australia-wide network of citizen scientists, supported by ecologists and mycologists, have observed and mapped thousands of species, uncovered endangered species, and increased understanding of why fungi are irreplaceable for our ecosystems.

**Celestino Eureka Prize for Promoting Understanding of Science**

**Professor Euan Ritchie, Deakin University**

From live-tweeting field research to providing radio commentary and writing popular science articles, Professor Euan Ritchie is a sought-after voice. He explains biodiversity, the challenge of wildfires and the need for nature conservation and climate change action to broad audiences. An expert in Australian mammal conservation, he is a leading advocate for environmental research.

**Professor Veena Sahajwalla, UNSW**

Materials scientist Professor Veena Sahajwalla is the pioneering inventor of a new generation of ‘green’ materials and sustainable products. Through her rigorous research and extensive community and industry engagement, she is shifting the mindset of the nation to see unwanted materials not as waste, but as a valuable resource.

**Professor Toby Walsh, UNSW**

A world-renowned authority in artificial intelligence, Professor Toby Walsh explores subjects as diverse as self-driving cars and autonomous weapons. From TV and books to academic forums, he leads national and international debate about our AI-driven future: what it will look like, how we can prepare and what we should be trying to prevent.

**Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Science Journalism**

**Dr Dyani Lewis**

Why the WHO took two years to say COVID is airborne tells the story behind the World Health Organisation’s COVID-19 decision-making processes. Consulting a broad range of experts, Dr Dyani Lewis explains why critical scientific advice about the virus’ spread was slow to update, and shares lessons for future pandemics.

Published in Nature, 6 April 2022

**Dr Jackson Ryan, CNET**

One of 66 people on the inaugural voyage of Australia's icebreaker vessel RSV Nuyina, Dr Jackson Ryan explores Antarctica through the lens of the climate crisis. His series Journey to the Ice Kingdom offers a snapshot of life onboard a research vessel and explains how rising temperatures, tourism and loss of biodiversity threaten the southernmost continent.

Published by CNET, 1 - 5 May 2022

**Carl Smith, Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

This two-part radio series Chimeras in medicine explores the complex scientific, ethical and societal implications of using animals to solve challenging medical problems. Host Carl Smith consults practitioners to explore how xenotransplantation – growing replacement organs in genetically modified animals – might save thousands of patients awaiting human donor organs.

Published by ABC Radio National, 25 October and 1 November 2021

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

**Dr Kirsten Ellis, Monash University**

Scientist Dr Kirsten Ellis invented TapeBlocks as a fun way for people with a range of disabilities to learn about and create their own electronics. The colourful, easy-to-connect blocks build circuits that run lights, fans and buzzers, allowing users to enjoy creative electronics activities and build confidence, while challenging misconceptions about who can participate in STEM.

**QueersInScience**

QueersInScience (QiS) is a volunteer-run network focused on connection and inclusion for LGBTQIA+ professionals and students in STEMM. QiS is committed to reducing harassment and discrimination by supporting and promoting Australia’s vibrant pool of LGBTQIA+ science talent. QiS runs social and professional events to build community strength, peer connection and reduce gender stereotypes.

**Victorian Indigenous Engineering Winter School (VIEWS), University of Melbourne; Monash University; RMIT University; and Swinburne University**

Indigenous Australians are dramatically under-represented in engineering and IT, but a unique tertiary collaboration is boosting opportunity for students. Since 2016, the week-long VIEWS program has fired the ambitions of over 100 students from around Australia, introducing them to university life, STEM mentors and career possibilities while also connecting these pathways to their culture.

**EVENT DETAILS**

**What:** Australian Museum Eureka Prizes Award Ceremony

**Where:** Hintze Hall, Australian Museum, corner of College and William Streets, Sydney

Theatre style award ceremony attended by 400 guests and live broadcast online

**When:** Wednesday 31 August 2022

Live broadcast from 7:30pm AEST via [australian.museum/eurekaprizes](https://australian.museum/get-involved/eureka-prizes/)

**Interviews available with finalists**

**Media pack, including releases, finalist info, images and video** [**HERE**](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xxrqRxVsA8C3A9R0YnheHV3vUF2KJbn2?usp=sharing)

#EurekaPrizes

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

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

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### About the Australian Museum

The 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.