

## **PREMIER'S SCIENCE AWARDS**

*Statement by Minister for Science*

**MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Science)** [9.17 am]: I rise today to advise the house of the winners of the Premier's Science Awards, which were held last night. The Premier's Science Awards recognise and celebrate the achievements of the Western Australian science community. Award recipients exemplify the outstanding scientific research and engagement taking place in this state. The awards cover all areas of science, including natural, medical, applied and technological science, engineering and mathematics.

I am pleased to advise the house that Emeritus Professor David Blair was inducted into the WA Science Hall of Fame in recognition of his extensive achievements in experimental physics. Professor Blair is renowned for pioneering a number of precision measurement techniques used for ultrasensitive displacement measurements, exceptionally low noise clocks and oscillators, and gravitational wave research. Professor Blair's work contributed to the detection of gravity waves in 2015—a discovery that has resulted in a Nobel Prize for fellow scientists in the field and was described as a discovery that shook the world.

Professor Peter Newman, AO, was recognised as the WA Scientist of the Year. Professor Newman is a Professor of Sustainability at Curtin University with decades of globally significant research and public advocacy on the science of cities and their sustainability. He has impacted public policy through government representation in local, state and federal government bodies, and was awarded Officer of the Order of Australia in 2014 for his contribution to urban design and transport sustainability, particularly in relation to Perth's rail system.

Dr Melissa O'Donnell was the winner of the Woodside Early Career Scientist of the Year Award for her work in the area of child abuse and neglect, and the ExxonMobil Student Scientist of the Year award was shared between Mr Arman Siahvashi from the University of WA and Mr Ryan Urquhart from Curtin University.

The Rio Tinto Naturescape at Kings Park was awarded the Chevron Science Engagement Initiative of the Year Award. What a wonderful facility we have in our state's own iconic Kings Park to foster a love for exploration and science among our kids, many of whom will one day go on to take on jobs of the future that are underpinned by science and innovation.

The Premier's Science Awards are now in their seventeenth year and are a fantastic way to showcase and applaud the outstanding scientists who work to improve the lives and environment and wellbeing of Western Australians. As Minister for Science, I am delighted to acknowledge these talented individuals and thank them for their remarkable achievements. I acknowledge all the winners and the exceptional finalists who were recognised last night.