

INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

Statement by Minister for Innovation and ICT

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Innovation and ICT) [12.19 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I stand today to advise the house about the 2021 Western Australia Innovator of the Year winners, having attended the program's award ceremony on 3 November. The program is the state's flagship innovation program. It is a very valuable initiative that provides support to innovators and entrepreneurs while promoting job creation and economic diversification in Western Australia. Since its inception by the Carpenter Labor government in 2006, Innovator of the Year has showcased innovative and entrepreneurial individuals, businesses and creative minds.

This year's awards were particularly exciting as a brief hiatus of the program took place in 2020 due to COVID-19. The major aim of the program is to acknowledge and reward exceptional innovators in Western Australia who have developed an outstanding innovative product, technology or service that is at the emerging innovation or growth phase of development. The program involves cash prizes, promotional videos and photography, business capability training, and networking, which assists successful applicants to take their innovation from its current stage of development to commercialisation.

Vision Pharma Pty Ltd, a subsidiary company of PYC Therapeutics and the Lions Eye Institute, was named the WA Innovator of the Year 2021 and was awarded \$70 000. The RNA therapeutics startup received the award for developing the world's first precision medicine to treat the blinding eye disease retinitis pigmentosa type 11. Winners were named in five other categories and shared in prizes totalling an additional \$70 000. In the Rio Tinto Growth Category, the award went to Roofus Tools Pty Ltd for its multipurpose angle square. In the Rio Tinto Emerging Category, the award went to Navier Medical for its advanced coronary artery assessment project. The Business News "Great for the State" Platinum Award went to VeinTech for its VeinWave project; the Wesfarmers Wellbeing Platinum Award went to VitalTrace Pty Ltd for its novel device for monitoring babies during childbirth; and the Woodside Oil and Gas Platinum Award went to Sapien Cyber Ltd for its building management systems cybersecurity project.

The WA Innovator of the Year is one of the new industries fund's key programs. At the awards ceremony, I announced that the NIF will receive an extra \$16.7 million over the next four years to continue supporting innovation in WA as part of the larger \$100 million investment attraction and new industries fund election commitment.