

MEDIA STATEMENT

**FOR RELEASE:
Friday 15 March 2024**



Consult Australia Awards celebrate innovation and collaboration

Businesses finding solutions to Australia's most complex design and engineering challenges, together with leaders championing innovation in digital transformation, sustainability and diversity have been applauded at the Consult Australia Awards.

The awards, held at the ICC Sydney on Thursday 14 March 2024, honoured consulting firms operating across Australia's built and natural environment sectors. Fourteen awards were presented for projects and programs in 2023.

"Australia has close to 60,000 businesses providing highly technical and specialised engineering, design and advisory services. Without these businesses, Australia's infrastructure and construction projects wouldn't happen," said Consult Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Jonathan Cartledge.

"Innovation is mission critical as we address a host of challenges from skills shortages to the net zero challenge, and our awards applaud those who push boundaries and present new technical and technological solutions. But we also applaud those who find new ways to work collaboratively and in partnership with governments."

Among the award winners is Stuart Manley, recognised with the **Consult Australia President's Award**, who has made an enduring industry impact over a 35-year career. A former Consult Australia co-vice president and board member, Mr Manley was commended for his contribution to the association's strategy, charter and Code of Ethics.

Dr Michael Vinod, a Senior Geotechnical Engineer with EIC Activities clinched the **Future Leader Award** for his ground-breaking technical skills, dedication to innovation and integration of specialist radar technology into a diverse range of projects.

Geotron, an emerging structural engineering consultancy, took home the **Small Firm of the Year Award** for the second consecutive year. Geotron's intuitive technology platform, Gmetrik, was also awarded in the **Planning for a Digital Future** category for enabling sustainable and efficient designs, curbing rework and budget overruns. Geotron also won the **Small Business Excellence – Client Satisfaction** category.

Engineering and environmental professional services firm Tonkin was named **Medium Firm of the Year**. Tonkin's team was chosen for its work to construct temporary levees during devastating floods along the Murray River, achieved thanks to a collaborative relationship with governments in two states.

SMEC secured the **Large Firm of the Year Award** for its impressive work, including the development of a transformative pacemaker lighting solution on Melbourne's Burnley Tunnel that regulates speed, reshapes road safety, modifies driver behaviour and enhances energy efficiency.

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"The Consult Australia Awards honour not just the winners, but the spirit of collaboration that underpins innovation and propels our industry forward," Mr Cartledge concludes.

A full list of award winners is provided overleaf.

About Consult Australia

Consult Australia represents small, medium and large businesses in design, advisory and engineering. Members provide professional consulting solutions to individual consumers, private sector companies, and public sector clients across all three tiers of government. From building design to advisory services on major infrastructure, Consult Australia members shape, create and sustain Australia's built and national environments. See: www.consultaustralia.com.au

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Consult Australia Awards presented in 2024

Client Service Excellence

Pakenham Roads Upgrade, Princes Freeway Interchanges, Stage 1, BG&E Pty Ltd

These critical works to widen two kilometres of the Princes Freeway in Victoria introduced two new ramps, a two-span bridge, signalised intersections and safety features. During delivery of the works, principal consultant BG&E worked collaboratively with principal contractor Symal and client Major Road Projects Victoria. This robust collaborative relationship resulted in high-quality designs, dramatic improvements in safety and a team that outperformed against time, cost and quality key performance indicators.

Collaboration for Project Excellence

Sydney Modern, Arup

A complex, ambitious multidisciplinary project, Sydney Modern was delivered through close collaboration between multiple parties. Arup developed strong relationships with three clients, designers across various continents and time zones, and many project partners to ensure Sydney Modern opened on time, in December 2022. Arup's team overcame significant site constraints and challenged standard design practices to deliver innovative engineering solutions, none of which were possible without genuine, cohesive teamwork. The result? An extraordinary new public space for people to experience and enjoy art in all its forms.

Collaboration for Project Excellence – Working with Government

Engineering for flood mitigation, Tonkin

Civil, structural and asset management consultants from Tonkin's Adelaide, Mildura and Berri offices worked with state government agencies and 10 local councils across Victoria and South Australia before, during and after the 2022-23 River Murray flooding. While downstream communities had time to prepare, the predictions of peak water levels became more alarming as the water neared. With support from a range of stakeholders, including local contractors, Tonkin facilitated the rapid construction of temporary levees to protect Riverland communities and critical infrastructure from the flood waters.

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Future Leader Award

Dr Michael Vinod, EIC Activities

Dr Michael Vinod is Senior Geotechnical Engineer at CIMIC Group's specialist engineering and technical services business, EIC Activities. Michael's achievements include the completion of a groundbreaking PhD from the University of Technology Sydney in geotechnical engineering, with a focus on landfill settlement prediction for transport infrastructure. Michael's integration of Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar technology into monitoring strategies now extends to a diverse projects range of projects. In addition to Michael's technical prowess, the award recognises his mentorship of junior staff, publication of influential research papers and dedication to innovation.

Planning for a Digital Future

Gmetrik, Geotron

Gmetrik is an intuitive technology platform which increases productivity by connecting and integrating suppliers and contractors directly to a 'live' collaborative design team. Developed by boutique structural engineering consultancy Geotron, Gmetrik provides 'real time' project costings and environmental metrics during the design process. Importantly, Gmetrik generates median pricing to remove the guesswork at the tender stage. Gmetrik supports the development of sustainable and efficient designs, reducing rework and budget overruns and saving time, money and emissions.

Champions of Change Award for Diversity & Inclusion

Rich Hayers, Vice President – Asia Pacific and Middle East, Jacobs

As the Vice President and General Manager for Jacobs People and Places Solutions for Australia and New Zealand from 2018 to July 2023, Rich Hayers championed and amplified an ambitious diversity and inclusion agenda. Rich was the driving force behind several significant achievements, improving gender balance in key management positions, overseeing Jacobs' Reconciliation Action Plan and actively promoting the LGBTI+ Annual Workplace Equality Index. As a genuinely inclusive leader, Rich has inspired teams across Australia to be inclusive, fair and respectful by example.

Superior Sustainability

Net zero pathway work for NSW healthcare, Arup

Australia's healthcare sector accounts for 7% of national emissions. Arup was commissioned to support the aspirational 'net zero by 2035' targets of the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and the Northern Sydney Local Health District. Arup developed a clear decarbonisation roadmap, underpinned by detailed mapping of emissions across three scopes – the first time this work has been undertaken for health organisations in New South Wales. Arup's work transcends healthcare with applicability across other complex organisations and raises the bar for policy makers by providing robust data and models to drive decarbonisation at scale.

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People First

Arup Race, Ethnicity and Culture Action Plan, Arup

Recognising that racial equality requires proactive action, Arup made a fundamental shift from being a non-racist firm to an anti-racist one. In collaboration with Diversity Council Australia, Arup has developed a best practice Race, Ethnicity and Culture Action Plan. By centring the voices of racially marginalised people and hearing their experiences of workplace racism, Arup has developed an action plan that directly addresses the barriers and inequalities within its systems, processes and workplace behaviour.

Innovation for Excellence Award

Transurban's Burnley Tunnel Upgrade project, SMEC and Transurban

Melbourne's Burnley Tunnel features an innovative pacemaker lighting system that merges aesthetic design, data analytics and human factors to enhance road safety. Unlike traditional, static tunnel lighting, the pacemaker system, powered by LED lighting, adapts to real-time traffic conditions to optimise traffic flow and enable a safer and smoother driving experience. The impact on road safety has been compelling, with a 45% reduction in heavy vehicle breakdowns. Reductions to fuel consumption, fewer road incidents and lower maintenance costs, affirm the system's success.

Consult Australia President's Award

Stuart Manley

A former co-vice president and board member of Consult Australia, Stuart Manley is an experienced leader, director and engineer with a career spanning 35-plus years. Stuart has held executive, project delivery and governance roles in small and global businesses, and has delivered complex multi-disciplinary projects in excess of \$5 billion. Stuart was chair of Consult Australia's Nominations and Remunerations Committee and contributed to CEO succession planning and implementation, as well as important reviews of the association's strategy, charter and Code of Ethics. A mentor and advisor to many, Stuart has had an enduring influence on the engineering profession in Australia.

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The awards for small, medium and large firm of the year are awarded to the firms with the highest scores, in their categories, across all submissions.

Small Firm of the Year

Small Business Excellence – Client Satisfaction

Geotron

An emerging structural engineering consultancy, Geotron was established in 2015 by Peter Geoghegan. Today, Geotron has eight employees who have amassed an impressive portfolio of projects. These range from schools to sports facilities, mid-rise residential to bespoke homes, community infrastructure to industrial developments. Geotron's intuitive technology platform, Gmetrik, was presented with the Planning for a Digital Future Award for a solution that supports the development of sustainable and efficient designs, reducing rework and budget overruns. This is the second consecutive year that Geotron has been named Small Firm of the Year.

Medium Firm of the Year

Tonkin

Tonkin is an engineering and environmental professional services firm with more than 200 employees in eight offices across Australia. Tonkin's team is committed to serving local communities, and designs intelligent solutions for the buildings, environmental, land development, maritime and riverine, transport, waste, and water sectors. Tonkin's ethos was on display during its work to construct temporary levees to protect communities and critical infrastructure during devastating floods along the Murray River and was awarded the Collaboration for Project Excellence – Working with Government for its efforts.

Large Firm of the Year

SMEC

SMEC's origins date back over 70 years to the iconic Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme, recognised as one of the civil engineering wonders of the modern world. Today, SMEC is a trusted partner for major highway projects all over the world. SMEC's transformative pacemaker lighting solution on Melbourne's Burnley Tunnel was recognised with the Innovation for Excellence Award. SMEC's approach presents a blueprint for broader applications from highways to city streets, in Australia and globally, to regulate speed, reshape road safety, modify driver behaviour and enhance energy efficiency in infrastructure.

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Future Leader Program Project

The Consult Australia Future Leader Program runs for six months each year, during which time a cohort of young professionals attend workshops and work on joint projects to grow their skills and networks.

The joint projects asked each team to establish and document best practice fossil fuel free construction and maintenance in a technical review, to evaluate Transport for NSW current standard practice and suggest innovative fossil fuel free solutions.

Each joint project was judged by an esteemed industry panel, with 400-plus Consult Australia members also choosing a winning team in the 'People's Choice' category.

Judges' Award

Carbon Free Constructors

- Sarah Worley, Northrop
- Jackson Stokes, SMEC
- Nilesh Patel, KBR
- Jack Norris, TSA Management

The judging panel applauded the commitment and calibre of the teams in 2023. Among a close field of contenders, Carbon Free Constructors stood out for the quality of the submission and presentation.

People's Choice Award

Carbon Crushers

- Dean Garroway, Jacobs
- Anthony Salis, BG&E
- Dakshita Senaratne, Arcadis
- Ifeoma Ngwu, Aurecon.