



MEDIA RELEASE

8.30pm AEDT Wednesday July 19

Inaugural i3 Awards Presentation Honours Teacher Excellence

The I-Cubed Awards, a national science competition celebrating inquiry, innovation and ingenuity, of Australian school students, held its inaugural awards ceremony on 29 March 2023, recognising the brightest young minds in science and technology.

The I-Cubed Awards also recognises outstanding contributions made by classroom teachers to science education. This year, we were able to introduce and award the following two judging categories:

- ASTA Teacher Award
- 'Passionately Curious' Regional Teacher Award

Teacher finalists are selected from around Australia. A teacher is nominated by each Science Teachers Association (STA), chosen for their excellence in teaching, their support of open-ended student investigations and their suitability to represent their state or territory.

The nominees from each state demonstrated a strong commitment to lifelong learning, encouraging STEM learning beyond the classroom. Of the finalists, the judges selected and announced the winners at a special ASTA ceremony held at the CONASTA 70 National Conference for science educators in Adelaide, South Australia on 13 July 2023.

President Rosemary Anderson congratulated the highly deserving teachers in front of their esteemed peers and congratulated them for their dedication to inspire young people to be passionate about science and technology.

For more information, please visit <https://asta.edu.au/programs/asta-i3-awards/>

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2023 i3 Teacher Award Winners

1st Place: ASTA Teacher Award

Nicole Summer-McAlister from Maribyrnong Primary School, ACT



Nicole began her exciting journey into the classroom as a specialist science teacher back in 2003 when she joined the Questacon Science Circus. She went on to become an associate lecturer in Science Communication at ANU, which inspired her to bring her passion for science literacy and curiosity into the classroom. Her lengthy career also includes being a curriculum writer and professional learning facilitator for the Australian Academy of Science and working as a sessional tutor in Science Education at the University of Canberra. She works tirelessly to ensure that her

students are doing authentic STEM projects that are connected to improving their local communities.

1st Place: Passionately Curious Regional Teacher Award

Rachel Pillar from Kangaroo Island, SA



Rachel's passion for teaching began while she was tutoring at university whilst completing her PhD in Chemistry. This was further consolidated when she supervised post-graduate students. She went on to retrain as a classroom secondary teacher and began her teaching career at Kangaroo Island Community Education in 2015. Rachel re-established her school's participation in the Oliphant Science Awards in 2019 and had very strong results in her initial years. She continues to give back to her community by being a volunteer judge, being an active member of her STA's science awards committee while also inspiring the next generation of scientists by running community school holiday science programs for children aged 4+ on Kangaroo Island. Rachel goes above and beyond to connect with local industries and the science community to provide her students with authentic opportunities to engage with science and scientists.