

Thursday, 3 October 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED - 2019 NSW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AWARDS

International students and organisations that are driving cultural diversity, conducting research for sustainable farming practices for drought-affected communities, and fostering entrepreneurial development were among six winners at the 2019 NSW International Student Awards last night.

Addressing the audience at Government House, NSW Governor Margaret Beazley AO QC praised the Awards, now in their 6th year, for celebrating international students and organisations and their enormous contributions to NSW.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Industry and Trade John Barilaro congratulated the category winners.

"This year's NSW International Student Award winners are really inspirational," Mr Barilaro said.

"They have come to NSW to get a high quality education but are also making outstanding contributions to their local communities and helping others succeed. It's a great example of positive international relations building future global connections for NSW.

"The NSW Government is very proud to support our international education sector through Study NSW which works hard to improve the student experience here.

"International students mean so much for NSW, not only to our economy. More importantly they are helping us build stronger communities by volunteering, enriching our cultural capital, enhancing our workforce's global competitiveness, and fostering international research collaborations that drive innovation.

"Last year, NSW attracted 264,000 students from over 170 countries thanks to the strength and appeal of our educational institutions," Mr Barilaro said.

NSW Treasury Director—Trade and International Education, Peter Mackey, said there were 12 finalists from diverse backgrounds and countries for the awards with eventual winners from China, Chile, Brazil and India.

"Study NSW extends a warm congratulations to all our award winners and finalists. We would also like to acknowledge all those who took the time to nominate for the awards and recognise their efforts.

"Finally, thank you to everyone who came together to help us celebrate the wonderful achievements of our international student community. We would particularly like to extend our gratitude to our amazing sponsors Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand, Colourful Trips, Multicultural NSW, Sonder and Sydney Airport for their generous support," Mr Mackey said.

A full list of winners and descriptions including downloadable photographs are below.

Award category #1
NSW International Student of the Year - Schools

- [View finalists](#)
- Winner: Zehao Li (China), Knox Grammar School, Wahroonga
- [High resolution image of winner](#)
- Winner bio below

Zehao Li (China)
Knox Grammar School, Wahroonga

Zehao is greatly admired by staff and students within the Knox Grammar boarding community for his positivity and kind-hearted nature. He has willingly volunteered his time to mentor and assist new students, while his community-minded attitude led to the formation of the school's Cultural Immersion & Diversity initiative.

Zehao has been an active participant in the student committee. He has proposed culturally inclusive changes to boarding and the introduction of culturally oriented events, including arranging a huge Chinese banquet for 57 Year 12 boarders.

He has also taken an active role in community events such as The Red Shield Appeal and White Ribbon Day. Zehao's natural leadership and intuitive mentoring of both rural and international students demonstrates a maturity and understanding beyond his years.

Award category #2
NSW International Student of the Year - English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS)

- [View finalists](#)
- Winner: Daniel Carpentier (Chile), TAFE NSW, Wollongong
- [High resolution image of winner](#)
- Winner bio below

Daniel Carpentier (Chile)
TAFE NSW, Wollongong

Daniel already had a degree in Advertising and had founded an advertising agency in Santiago, Chile, yet he wanted a more meaningful vocation. After arriving in Australia, where he came to achieve a high level in English, Daniel quickly got involved in community activities.

While working on his Advanced English Language program at TAFE NSW Wollongong campus, he offered his services to three NSW organisations, all of which supported the personal development of others in the community.

Daniel is actively involved as a volunteer mentor in the regional Youth Frontiers Mentoring program, as an event coordinator to welcome and facilitate the integration of international students coming to NSW from Latin America, and as a soccer coach for Coniston Junior Soccer Club.

In 2008, Daniel suffered a traumatic accident that nearly left him paralysed. He was attending a scouts camp in the Chilean mountains when he dived into a river to rescue a young girl who was drowning, hitting his head on a rock and fracturing his C2 vertebrae. Daniel's friends dragged him to safety and a 36 hour evacuation was put into action to get him to hospital for emergency treatment, followed by nine months of intensive recovery. Daniel says his friends' lifesaving efforts and his grandmother's advice

that he was spared to do more with his life inspired him to focus on helping others.

Award category #3

NSW International Student of the Year - Vocational Education and Training (VET)

- [View finalists](#)
- Winner: Gustavo C. M. Martins (Brazil), TAFE NSW, Albury
- [High resolution image of winner](#)
- Winner bio below

Gustavo C. M. Martins (Brazil)

TAFE NSW, Albury

Gustavo was dedicated to community development in Brazil before his passion for sustainable farming practices, environmental protection and permaculture won him an Australian Endeavour Scholarship to study Permaculture at the National Environment Centre at TAFE NSW.

Gustavo's dedication during his course touched the lives of two local farmers he was working with growing food. Gustavo also played an important role in creating a Participatory Guarantee Scheme for small-scale permaculture and organic farmers. This provided a way for them to be certified locally as organic, while also helping them develop resilient farms and strengthen local food economies by providing peer-learning opportunities.

He is currently researching a perennial agroforestry system that mimics nature to help Australian farmers overcome the impact of drought. It includes planting trees and diversifying crops to help retain soil moisture, improve soil fertility, and provide sun and wind protection for livestock.

Award category #4

NSW International Student of the Year - Higher Education

- [View finalists](#)
- Winner: Amrit Pal Kaur (India), University of New England, Armidale
- [High resolution image of winner](#)
- Winner bio below

Amrit Pal Kaur (India)

University of New England, Armidale

After arriving in Armidale in northern NSW, Amrit rolled up her sleeves and looked for ways to support the community. She began her volunteering by supporting various club activities contributing to University of New England (UNE) open days, promoted social activities at UNE Life Saver Day, and arranged barbeques and annual dinners as the Badminton Club Secretary for student and community players.

Alongside her studies, Amrit joined the International Hub (UNE's local community outreach) at its inception in 2016. She also cooked enormous amounts of traditional food while on the organisation committee for three National Day events, cheerfully serving it while coordinating volunteers and the accompanying displays relating to Indian culture.

Amrit also volunteers at the Pedal Early Intervention centre, providing a therapy service for children 0-12 that are developmentally delayed or have a disability. Using her research, she engages children by showing sketches of her dung beetles and explaining their life under soil which the children love.

Award category #5

NSW International Student Community Engagement Awards - Business and Community

- [View finalists](#)
- Winner: Your Body, Your Choice, Sean Stimson—International Student Legal Service NSW, Redfern Legal Centre, Sydney
- [High resolution image of winner](#)
- Winner bio below

Your Body, Your Choice

Sean Stimson—International Student Legal Service NSW, Redfern Legal Centre, Sydney

The NSW International Student Legal Service has created a ground-breaking resource titled Your Body, Your Choice in collaboration with the City of Sydney and in consultation with Rape Crisis NSW, NSW Health Sexual Assault Service, and NSW Police.

The resource, which is available in 11 different languages, contains important information for students who have experienced sexual assault, and includes key messages specifically tailored to international students.

It takes students through the law in relation to sexual assault, outlining broad definitions of sexual assault behaviours and provides key contacts for free counselling, legal, medical and interpreter services. The key message of Your Body, Your Choice is that sexual assault is a crime and that students can find support through many avenues both safely and confidentially.

Award category #6

NSW International Student Community Engagement Awards - Education Providers

- [View finalists](#)
- Winner: UNSW Hero Program, Katie Gamon, Fengjie Wu and David George—UNSW Sydney
- [High resolution image of winner](#)
- Winner bio below

UNSW Hero Program

Katie Gamon, Fengjie Wu and David George—UNSW Sydney

The Hero program at UNSW Sydney focuses on entrepreneurship, industry exposure, and project development. The program brings together teams of incredible students and leading industry partners, developing skills to solve challenges at UNSW and in the wider Sydney community that are not taught in conventional classroom environments.

The program now has over 700 successful alumni, over 250 paid placements with industry or within UNSW, and generated over 70 new ideas eligible for implementation. It stands apart from many international student facing programs by ensuring that domestic and international students are teamed together on a ratio which is as close to even as possible.

The program challenges cohorts to solve issues on campus that can be sponsored for implementation once successfully pitched to industry partners and departmental heads.



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