

Media Release – Wednesday 19 September 2012

Public servants honoured at prestigious awards ceremony

Public administrators and academics from across Australia were honoured today at the 2012 IPAA National Awards Ceremony in Melbourne. The Awards Ceremony was held in conjunction with the IPAA 2012 International Congress.

Newly elected National President of the Institute of Public Administration Australia, Terry Moran AC, said the awards are to acknowledge individuals from across the country who have made an outstanding contribution to public administration.

“We are very fortunate to have such talented, dedicated and highly professional public administrators at all levels of government, and IPAA, as the professional association of the public sector, is proud to acknowledge and celebrate their achievements in this way,” Mr Moran said.

“To become a National Fellow of the Institute is the highest honour for IPAA members,” Mr Moran added.

Recipients of the 2012 IPAA National Fellow award are:

- Carmel McGregor (Australian Capital Territory)
- Andrew Metcalfe (Australian Capital Territory)
- Donna Rygate (New South Wales)
- Jennifer Westacott (New South Wales)
- Nazha Saad (New South Wales)
- Fran Thorn (Victoria)
- Peter Harris (Victoria)
- Barry Dunphy (Queensland)
- Professor Ian Thynne (Northern Territory)
- Mike Blake (Tasmania)
- John Comrie (South Australia)
- Dr Peter Wilkins (Western Australia)
- Grahame Searle (Western Australia)

“The 2012 recipients join a pre-eminent group of leaders from across jurisdictions and agencies, who capably demonstrate the qualities and attributes required of their profession. These individuals have also actively contributed to the work of the Institute,” said Mr Moran.

Other awards presented at the IPAA National Awards Ceremony included the Sam Richardson Award for the most influential article published in the Australian Journal of Public Administration (AJPA), and the IPAA Young Public Sector Leader Award.

Catherine Althaus took out the Sam Richardson award for her AJPA article *Assessing the Capacity to Deliver – The BER Experience*.

Nadine Williams, Coan Harvey and Cheryl George received the IPAA Young Public Sector Leader award which recognises the achievements of outstanding public servants under the age of 40 who have just completed the Executive Master of Public Administration program.

Information on award recipients follows. Further information about IPAA awards can be found at www.ipaa.org.au.

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About the award recipients – 2012 IPAA National Fellows

Carmel McGregor

Carmel McGregor is Deputy Secretary of the Department of Defence. She led a review into the performance and treatment of women in Defence following a series of negative events which occurred at the Australian Defence Force Academy in 2010. This led to work to better recognise the achievements and abilities of women and increase the representation of women in senior ranks and leadership of the ADF. Prior to this, Carmel was Deputy Australian Public Service Commissioner where she developed reforms that have had significant positive impacts for the APS.

Andrew Metcalfe

Andrew Metcalfe has made significant contributions to public administration during his 25 year public sector career, notably in the areas of national security, foreign affairs, machinery of government issues and immigration. He is a board member of the Australian Public Service Commission's Strategic Centre for Leadership, Learning and Development which was established in July 2010 to improve talent management, and strengthen learning and development to ensure a sustainable APS.

Donna Rygate

Donna Rygate is currently the Chief Executive of the NSW Office of Communities. Her work to promote best practice in integrity and accountability in the public sector was recently recognised by the Public Sector Risk Management Association with an "Innovation – Enterprise Risk Management Award" for a lobbyist contact protocol developed for the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure. She also initiated the highly successful IPAA NSW Young Professionals program and established a graduate policy trainee program to help foster young talent in the NSW public sector.

Jennifer Westacott

Jennifer Westacott is a talented policy practitioner who has worked in both the public and private sectors. She has worked for both the NSW and Victorian State Governments, leading significant change in housing, metropolitan planning and natural resource management. Currently Chief Executive of the Business Council of Australia, Jennifer previously headed KPMGs Sustainability, Climate Change and Water practice. She was the lead facilitator for the climate change discussion at the Federal Government's 2020 summit.

Nazha Saad

Nazha Saad is currently the Chief Executive Officer of St George Community Housing and sits on a range of high level advisory bodies including the Board of the NSW Federation of Housing, the NSW State Minister's Community Housing Advisory Committee and the Commonwealth Government's Advisory Panel on Housing Assistance Reform. Nazha has used her expertise in organisational culture change and capacity building to help improve service delivery and efficiency for key organisations including the Sydney Water Board, the Department of Commerce and the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

Fran Thorn

Fran Thorn is one of Victoria's most experienced public servants and has implemented significant changes in policy development and delivering services to improve the lives and health of Victorians. She has contributed more than 30 years of service to the Victorian Public Service, including eight years as Secretary of three Departments:

- Department of Health
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

Peter Harris

Peter Harris has had a long and varied career in the public sector, spanning state and Commonwealth government departments, statutory authorities and public sector organisations, as well as private business and international public administration. In his current role as Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Peter oversees the sizeable portfolio of ABC, SBS, Australian Communications and Media Authority, Australia Post and the National Broadband Network Company.

Barry Dunphy

Barry Dunphy is the head both nationally and in Queensland of the Clayton Utz Government Services practice. Barry is a very experienced Government Regulatory lawyer who has provided complex, high level advice to Ministers and government agencies at the Commonwealth, State and Local government levels. In the past decade much of this advice has been given by Barry in the context of major Government projects particularly in the water and transport sectors.

Professor Ian Thynne

Professor Thynne of IPAA Northern Territory has passionately contributed to public policy through his insightful research and enthusiastic teaching. Through his work with the Charles Darwin University and as the Immediate Past President of IPAA Northern Territory, he has educated a large cohort of Northern Territory public servants as students of the Faculty of Law, Business and Arts, while delivering a wide range of seminars, workshops and lecturers to public servants at IPAA-sponsored professional development events and formal NT Government training courses.

Mike Blake

Accountability, integrity and transparency are cornerstones of the public sector, and Mike Blake has been instrumental in promoting and influencing these principles in the Tasmanian public service, as well as interstate and nationally for over 35 years. Mike has been Auditor-General of Tasmania since May 2004 and has held senior management roles with Audit Offices in Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

John Comrie

John Comrie has held senior roles within both Local and State Government and has had a particular focus on improving financial governance and performance. This has included the development of key discussion papers on financial governance, budget management and governance. John is also the current Treasurer of IPAA SA.

Dr Peter Wilkins

Dr Peter Wilkins is currently the Deputy Ombudsman Western Australia, and one of the most experienced and respected public servants in Western Australia, having worked for a number of key agencies in senior roles including the Office of the Auditor General and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Graham Searle

Throughout his time in the Western Australian public sector Grahame Searle has made an outstanding contribution to improving the quality of public sector management and service delivery. In 2008 Grahame was appointed Director General of the Department of Housing and Works, now the Department of Housing. Since taking on the role Grahame has driven significant reform across the agency and has made a strong professional and personal commitment to fostering excellence across the public sector more broadly.

About the award recipients – IPAA Young Public Sector Leader Award

Nadine Williams

Nadine Williams is the Assistant Secretary of the COAG Deregulation Branch, Australian Public Sector. In this role Nadine has overall carriage of Commonwealth's inter-jurisdictional regulatory reform agenda, including delivery of COAG's Seamless National Economy National Partnership Agreement, and leading the development and delivery of a new suite of COAG reforms flowing from the recent Business Advisory Forum.

Coan Harvey

Coan Harvey is the Acting Director of the Western Australian Department of Treasury. In this role he acts as a primary contact between the Treasurer's Office and other parts of the Department; briefs the Under Treasurer and other members of the Department Executive on progress towards achieving Budget goals through the Budget Steering Group and Budget Management Committee; and oversees the passage of legislation relating to financial management requirements.

Cheryl George

Cheryl George is the Investment Manager, Technology Industries, Victorian Department of Business and Innovation. In this role, she has lead responsibility for the Victorian Government's investment attraction and industry development activities in relation to life sciences and technology industries.

About the award recipient – Sam Richardson Award

Catherine Althaus

Catherine Althaus joined the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria (Canada) as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow from 1 January 2008 and became an Assistant Professor from 1 July 2008. Catherine has held a number of policy posts in the Queensland Government in Australia within the Queensland Treasury department and Queensland Office of the Cabinet.

Her academic training is in economics and politics and public policy. She recently completed fellowships as an Associate Researcher with the Centre for Governance and Public Policy at Griffith University in Brisbane and as Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) Research Fellow with the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University in Canberra.

Catherine won the Sam Richardson award for her article *Assessing the Capacity to Deliver – The BER Experience*. This article appeared in the December 2011 issue of AJPA. It used the education sector to explore the ability of successive Commonwealth governments to more directly intervene and engage in areas which have traditionally been the responsibility of state and territory jurisdictions.