

27 November 2020

**MEDIA RELEASE - For immediate release**

Science was the winner

Last week scientists, innovators and researchers came together from across the Waikato, Rotorua and the Bay of Plenty to celebrate science excellence and achievement at the prestigious Kudos Science Excellence Awards.

Winners in eight categories including Medical, Education, Environmental, Engineering, Primary industries and the exciting new Vision Mātauranga award were announced in front of over 300 of their peers and representatives of the science industry.

In an unusual turn of events for the awards, the coveted supreme Kudos Lifetime Achievement award went to not one but three Waikato science leaders, Professor Bruce & Dr Bev Clarkson and Dr Rob Bell, whose research careers represent a major contribution to science regionally, nationally and internationally.

Husband and wife team, Professor Bruce Clarkson and Dr Bev Clarkson are outstanding leaders in terrestrial ecology, and have dedicated their careers to understanding and protecting our special landscapes.

Collectively, the Clarksons have attracted approximately \$26 million in research funding, written nearly 200 peer-reviewed papers, supervised over 25 postgraduate students, supported many major community environmental/conservation advisory organisations and provided senior leadership in two of our region's prominent science providers, Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research and the University of Waikato.

Dr Rob Bell has devoted his professional life to protecting New Zealanders from water-related hazards.

Principal Scientist and Programme Leader at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), Dr Bell's remarkable career began with a series of engineering projects to clean up wastewater outfall discharges into our coastal waters. 106 scientific publications, 140 consultancy reports and more than 150 external presentations later, he is now regarded as Aotearoa's leading expert on coastal hazards and risk.

A long-term member of the NZ Tsunami Experts Panel, Dr Bell was instrumental in improving our tsunami early warning systems, building on knowledge gained from visiting Indonesia after the 2004 Boxing Day disaster. He subsequently led the development of the RiskScape tool, which can analyse potential economic and social impacts from multiple natural hazards.

The University of Waikato Vision Mātauranga award, acknowledging the interweaving of Maori knowledge with western science approaches was another first for the awards. It resulted in a stellar line up of finalists, including public health innovator Dr Nina Scott, marine scientist Assoc Prof Kura Paul-Burke and the Manaaki Taiao team from Manaki

Whenua. The award went to Tuwharetoa, Te Arawa scientist Dr Ian Kusabs, who proved that a traditional Māori fishing method stacks up scientifically for monitoring the health of lakes and streams. Dr Kusabs' work has seen the technique adopted internationally, taking Mātauranga Māori to the world.

“Kudos celebrates our science champions and shines a light on their enormous contributions to the real challenges facing our world today. They have played a critical role in keeping us safe during the lockdown and they will continue to guide us through big issues like climate change,” says Kudos Science Trust Chief Executive Soteria Ileremia

“But the Kudos are about more than giving out awards, starting in our schools, through to our tertiary institutions and then into industry and the service sector. I think that tonight you will see how science is driving much of our local economy,” said Chair of the Kudos Science Trust, Professor Ross Lawrenson.

“In the post-Covid era we need to continue to develop a high value economy based on a wide range of scientific skills. At the same time we have all become more aware of the value of embracing different paradigms and recognise how diversity of thinking leads to greater innovation.”

#### **Winners of the 2020 Kudos Awards**

Wintec Secondary Science Teacher/Educator Award

Winner: Greta Dromgool, University of Waikato

Hill Laboratories Laboratory Technologist Award

Winner: Neil Standley, LIC

Hamilton City Council Primary Industries Award

Winner: Improving Dairy Fertility Genetics, DairyNZ

Waikato Regional Council Environmental Science Award

Winner: Dr Adam Hartland, University of Waikato

DATAMARS Engineering Science Award

Winner: Alexios Kavallaris, Waka Kotahi NZTA

Waikato DHB Medical Science Award

Winner: Dr Nina Scott, Waikato DHB

University of Waikato Vision Mātauranga Science Award

Winner: Dr Ian Kusabs, Kusabs & Assoc Ltd

The Kudos Lifetime Achievement Award

Prof Bruce Clarkson & Dr Beverley Clarkson

Dr Rob Bell

Media contact

Soteria Ileremia

Kudos Science Trust

027 282 5571

Projectmanager@thekudos.org.nz