

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **BHP BILLITON AND CSIRO AWARD BRIGHTEST STUDENTS IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING**

BHP Billiton today joined some of Australia's top high school students, science teachers and research scientists in announcing the winners of the BHP Billiton Science and Engineering Awards at a ceremony in Melbourne.

The BHP Billiton Science and Engineering Awards are Australia's most prestigious school science awards. Operating since 1981, the Awards are a partnership between BHP Billiton, CSIRO and the Australian Science Teachers Association.

This year's finalists completed a range of projects including studies into the viability of biofuels, research into applications for honeybee silk protein and an investigation into improving the structural integrity and safety of houses in extreme weather events.

The 2015 top student Awards were taken out by Jackson Huang from Queensland Academy for Science, Mathematics and Technology and Dhruv Verma from Victoria's Scotch College. Both now have the opportunity to compete at the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in the US.

ISEF brings together more than 1,000 of the brightest scientific minds from around the globe to compete in one of the world's largest pre-university celebrations of science.

Drawing from their personal experience to create projects that solve real-life problems, Jackson Huang's work focused on understanding the interactions between different heartburn drugs and how they might affect one another. Dhruv Verma developed a simple and innovative solution to monitor the movements of elderly people so that they can remain independent in their own homes.

The top prize in the Teachers' category was awarded to Philippa Miller of MLC School in Sydney for her contribution to science education in the classroom.

In congratulating the finalists, BHP Billiton's Head of Technology, Geoscience and Engineering, Bryan Quinn, said that the partnership between BHP Billiton and CSIRO is an important celebration of young, inquisitive and aspirational minds.

"Science and Engineering studies are vital to our industry. It supports the innovation and technology that enhance our productivity, meaning we can extract resources safely and sustainably, seeking always to improve industry best practice," Mr Quinn said.

"BHP Billiton is committed to ensuring that we have a pipeline of sharp and agile minds to be tomorrow's problem-solvers, innovators and inventors supported by a high calibre of teaching professionals such as those recognised today.

“The Science and Engineering Awards provide students and teachers with encouragement, and help to develop their skills. Very importantly they increase all students exposure to experts who offer guidance and give them confidence about their future potential.”

CSIRO Board Member, Professor Tom Spurling was also on hand to congratulate the winners and said all of the projects were great examples of how the next generation is challenging what we think we know.

“I’ve been really impressed by the variety and quality of the finalists. These young students are tackling issues in high school that researchers are tackling in prominent scientific institutions around the world,” Mr Spurling said.

“They’ve taken on challenges such as cyclone resistance and recovery, pollution and our ageing population. They inspire us with their ingenuity and creativity.”

Further information on BHP Billiton can be found at: [www.bhpbilliton.com](http://www.bhpbilliton.com).

Further information on the Awards can be found at: [www.scienceawards.org.au](http://www.scienceawards.org.au)

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