Queensland women in technology and life sciences sparkled at the 18th annual Women in Technology Awards on Friday 28 August at the Royal International Convention Centre.

More than 300 people attended the prestigious awards to be inspired by Queensland’s talented women making a difference in technology and life sciences.

WiT president Fiona Hayes said the awards, now in their 18th year, were a massive success with nominations up 50% across nine award categories.

“Every year the awards grow – in status, nominations, support from sponsors and attendees.

“The professionalism, intelligence and ambition of these women is just extraordinary. Pioneering lifesaving medical research, developing vaccines and medicines, driving global conservation and running successful and innovative businesses these women are leading the way in technology and life sciences.” Fiona said.

The judges had the challenging job of selecting just nine winners from 30 amazing finalists.

The Queensland Government’s Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation took out the Employer of Choice Award with fierce competition from QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute and the ICT area of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

QIMR Berghofer still had reason to celebrate with their young and ambitious cutting-edge nanomedicine researcher Michelle Tianqing Liu taking out the Rising Star Award.

This year the calibre of entrants was so impressive in the Rising Star category that WiT awarded two winners. Dr Melina Georgousakis from the Franklin Women/ National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance was the second recipient recognised for her extensive health and medical research in the field of vaccine development.

Professor Pamela Russell AM, FAHMS, from the Queensland University of Technology, was the winner of the Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award. Pamela is a leading health and biomedical researcher. She was the first to treat autoimmune disease using cyclophosphamide therapy and is internationally recognized for generating bladder and prostate cancer models for study.

The Sue Wickenden Entrepreneurial Award went to Karen Sanders from Real Serious Games. The company uses advanced visual technologies to assist industries to plan, communicate and teach complex or high risk concepts, using Real Time 4D Visualisations, Animations and Serious Games.

Dr Tafline Ramos from K.J.Ross & Associates received the Professional Award for her vital role in international standardisation for software and systems engineering. Tafline highlights the travel, income and pure enjoyment that can be derived from working in the ICT industry.

“In my career I have been fortunate enough to be able to travel around Australia and internationally. Never settle for second best! If you have a dream goal in mind for your career, be determined and don’t give up until you achieve your dreams and beyond” Tafline said.
Rio Tinto Quality Manager Heidi Uytendaal received the Infotech Outstanding Achievement Award. Heidi is a champion for the establishment of a Rio Tinto global gender inclusion program.

The University of Queensland had two award winners. Kerrie Wilson went home with the Life Sciences Research Award for the major influence her research has had on conservation policy internationally and Angie Jarrad received the PhD Career Start Award for her research on the development of antibiotics to fight gut pathogens.

Gillian Fisher from the Eskitis Institute for Drug Discovery at Griffith University received a highly commended in PhD Career Start category. Gillian started studying science at the age of 40 and is now a nationally recognised researcher in the field of adult stem cell biology, cell and molecular therapies and parasitology and antimalarials.

This year there wasn’t a winner in the Infotech Research Award however Leigh Ellen Potter from the School of ICT, Griffith University received a commendation for her research in user experience, emerging technology, and project management.

Kate Richards was also recognised as the WiT Volunteer of the Year for her ongoing contribution to WiT and advancing, connecting and empowering women in technology and life sciences.

“I am so proud of everyone involved in the awards and can’t wait to see what 2016 brings” Fiona said.

Nominations for the 2016 WiT awards will open in July next year.

Media contact: Sarah Smith, Women in Technology, 0405 991 282, media@wit.org.au

All winners and WiT President Fiona Hayes are available for interviews. Bios of winners provided below.

What is WiT?

Advance | Connect | Empower

WiT is the peak industry body for women in technology and life sciences within Queensland. WiT’s vision is to advance, connect and empower women in technology and life sciences. Founded in 1997 with the support of just 10 women WiT is now a strong network of more than 3270 subscribers, members and affiliates. WiT runs events, mentoring, programs and awards.

✓ Board Readiness – gaining the skills needed in the boardroom
✓ Mentoring – one-on-one support and guidance
✓ Step Up Program – getting ahead, moving up in your career
✓ Outreach – promoting ICT and life sciences careers to young girls

For more information go to www.wit.org.au
2015 winners

Employer of Choice Award
Queensland Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation

Professional Award
Dr Tafline Ramos, K.J.Ross & Associates

Infotech Outstanding Achievement Award
Heidi Uytendaal, Rio Tinto

Infotech Research Award
no winner awarded

Rising Star Award
Dr Melina Georgousakis, Franklin Women/ National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance
Michelle Tianqing Liu, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute

Life Sciences Research Award
Kerrie Wilson, School of Biological Sciences, The University of Queensland

Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award
Professor Pamela Russell, AM, FAHMS, Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, Queensland University of Technology

PhD Career Start Award
Angie Jarrad, The University of Queensland

Sue Wickenden Entrepreneurial Award
Karen Sanders, Real Serious Games

Highly commended

Infotech Research Award
Leigh Ellen Potter, School of ICT, Griffith University

PhD Career Start Award
Gillian Fisher, Eskitis Institute for Drug Discovery, Griffith University
Bios

**Employer of Choice Award** - *For the employer demonstrating commitment to providing an outstanding working environment for women*

Queensland Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI)

Total number of staff 368.48. 38.5% female. In the senior staff roles – senior scientists and managers - 28.4%.

The Science Division of DSITI has a strong focus on providing the best possible opportunities for staff to balance their life and work arrangements. DSITI recognise that it is important to retain highly skilled staff as their lives change with added family responsibilities. Flexible work arrangements policy and procedure and includes compressed hours, cultural leave, job sharing, lactation breaks, carers leave, parental leave, purchased leave, staggered start and finish times, telecommuting and time off in lieu.

DSITI runs a program called “Women connect” which is designed to ensure women within the Department are effectively networked with one another and have access to opportunities for development and ultimately promotion. DSITI also runs a mentoring program to help people realise their fullest potential by providing an opportunity to engage in a mentoring partnership with a more experienced colleague.

**Professional Award** - *For women with more than 7 years but less than 15 years industry experience.*

Dr Tafline Ramos, K.J.Ross & Associates

Tafline has played a vital role in the international standardisation for software and systems engineering. Her work has provided the software testing community around the world with an internationally agreed set of concepts, processes, documentation, and techniques for software testing. Tafline is also chair of the Software and Systems Engineering committee at Standards Australia.

Tafline highlights the travel, income and pure enjoyment that can be derived from working in the ICT industry. “In my career I have been fortunate enough to be able to travel around Australia and internationally. “Never settle for second best! If you have a dream goal in mind for your career, be determined and don’t give up until you achieve your dreams and beyond. For my future career choices, this means I will strive to achieve a successful work-life balance so that I can continue to further my career in software testing, whilst still spending quality time with my family.” Tafline said.

**Infotech Outstanding Achievement Award** - *For women making a significant contribution to the growth and development of Queensland’s life sciences industry who serve as role models for others to aspire to (15 years or more experience).*

Heidi Uytendaal, Rio Tinto

Heidi has worked as a SAP consultant, Integration lead and Quality Manager involved in the method, mechanics and process of delivering large, integrated and complex projects. Heidi has helped define, document, train and govern key delivery methodology for projects in both BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto. She has continuously improved Quality Assurance through consistent processes and the mentoring of a passionate delivery team. Heidi is responsible for all global changes within the Business Solution being moved through systems into production, covering multiple timezones, 10 releases a year and over 400 quality assessments for system changes.

“BELIEVE IN YOURSELF........Be proud of what you do, and don’t undersell your job or yourself” Heidi said.

**Rising Star Award** - *For women with less than 7 years industry experience in ICT or Life Sciences.*

Dr Melina Georgousakis, Franklin Women/ National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance
Melina is a health and medical researcher in the field of vaccine development. Her PhD was in the design of novel vaccine candidates for the bacteria group a streptococcus, which overcome some of the barriers in delivering vaccines to developing country settings. Melina provides technical advice to the Commonwealth Department of Health on vaccine policies through support of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation. She was involved in policy for the expansion of the national HPV vaccine program to include adolescent boys. Melina is also the technical editor of Australia's national guideline on immunisation, The Australian Immunisation Handbook. Melina was recognised for her science communication as a QLD finalist for Young Australian of the Year. Melina has also established a professional community for women in health and medical research field, called Franklin Women.

Michelle Tianqing Liu, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute
Michelle is a young and ambitious researcher focused on developing cutting-edge nanomedicines which can target certain organs for drug delivery. Her work has been highly productive and recognised internationally (10 original research publications, including six first author articles in leading journals in the field). Michelle has received a seed funding grant ($25,000) which is designed to be awarded to early stage (pre-Team Head) researchers. Michelle is a steering committee member of Australia Chinese Association for Biomedical Science (ACABS)-Queensland Node and a committee member of Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR)-Queensland.

Life Sciences Research Award
- For women making a recognised contribution to the field of Life Sciences research and development.

Kerrie Wilson, School of Biological Sciences, The University of Queensland
Kerrie’s research informs conservation spending at global, national, and local levels. Early in her research career Kerrie led an Australia-wide prioritisation project for the Federal Department of Environment, Heritage, Water and the Arts. The underlying theory and data from this project has had broad implications for how the sector operates and has since been used by CSIRO, State and Federal Environment Departments, and NGOs. Kerrie is the UQ node leader of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions and is regularly engaged in scientific and community service roles ensuring that her research directly translates into practical outcomes.

Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award
- For women making a significant contribution to the growth and development of Queensland’s life sciences industry who serve as role models for others to aspire to (15 years or more experience).

Professor Pamela Russell, AM, FAHMS, Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, Queensland University of Technology
Pamela is a leading health and biomedical researcher. She was the first to treat autoimmune disease using cyclophosphamide therapy and is internationally recognized for generating bladder and prostate cancer models for study. She directed the Oncology Research Centre, Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney for 17 years, and is now at the Australian Prostate Cancer Research Centre – Qld, as a member of the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, Queensland University of Technology, based at the Translational Research Institute. She has published over 200 papers, international patents, has procured $34m in grants and mentored postgraduates and 31 postdoctoral fellows. Discoveries include antibodies to diagnose, image and treat prostate cancer, use of theranostic nanotechnology to improve imaging and treatment, and innovative gene therapy. Regularly invited to collaborate, present worldwide, contribute book chapters, edit specialist journals, review and join global scientific committees, Pam also helped to found the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, and educates patients and their partners about prostate cancer. Awards include Australian honours (AM) for research contributions. She was recently made a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.
PhD Career Start Award - For PhD students working in IT or life sciences.

Angie Jarrad, The University of Queensland
Angie is a passionate researcher with over eight years’ experience in biological and chemical sciences. Angie’s research is focused on the development of antibiotics to fight gut pathogens. She has skills in drug discovery, organic synthesis and microbiology as well as in project management, communication and writing. Angie is a Young Science Ambassador for the ATSE Wonder of Science program and an IMB Science Ambassador. Her PhD research is focused on developing novel antibiotics to fight anaerobic bacteria. Angie is also an Australian Postgraduate Award recipient.

Sue Wickenden Entrepreneurial Award - For outstanding women whose vision, leadership and initiative have created their own enterprise.

Karen Sanders, Real Serious Games
Karen is the co-founder of Real Serious Games. The company uses advanced visual technologies to assist industries to plan, communicate and teach complex or high risk concepts, using Real Time 4D Visualisations, Animations and Serious Games. Spatial gamification provides the opportunity to create highly interactive learning environments, where the trainee is able to explore and interact within a spatially accurate environment. Karen has participated in an Austrade trade mission to Innotrans 2015 and partnered with Rail Skills Australasia. Real Serious Games has become a key innovation business to both Austrade and Trade and Investment Queensland.

Karen started out with a small team (a programmer and a creative director) on a self-funded, shoe-string budget, creating low end games to sell into the civil construction market. Six years later, the company has grown to a team of twenty, is recognised as an industry leader and Karen gets one day off a month.

Highly commended

Infotech Research Award - For women making a recognised contribution to the field of ICT research and development.

Leigh Ellen Potter, School of ICT, Griffith University
Leigh’s research has been conducted in user experience, emerging technology, and project management. Leigh is the team lead for the Seek and Sign project, established to develop technologies to enhance the communication environments of very young Deaf and hard-of-hearing children and to explore design issues with that client group. The project is recognised internationally and Leigh is considered an expert in this area. Leigh is also team lead for the Emerging Experiences Lab a new research project working with emerging technology.

PhD Career Start Award - For PhD students working in IT or life sciences.

Gillian Fisher, Eskitis Institute for Drug Discovery, Griffith University
Gillian started studying science at the age of 40 and is now a nationally recognised researcher. In 2004 Gillian was awarded a Griffith University Equity Scholarship and enrolled in a Bachelor of Forensic Science degree, she received the Griffith Award for Academic Excellence in 2005, 2007 and 2008. Gillian’s research has focused in the field of adult stem cell biology, cell and molecular therapies, parasitology. Gillian applied for and won a highly competitive NHMRC Post Graduate Scholarship followed by several top up scholarships from Griffith University and the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute (total funding $107,000). In 2015 Gillian was selected as a finalist in the postgraduate student category of the prestigious ASMR Queensland Health and Medical Research Awards. Gillian is now focused on malaria research and drug discovery, antimalarials.