

Media Release

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RISING STARS OF ROAD RESEARCH GRANTED

Across Australia and New Zealand engineering and science students have been awarded a share in a \$15,000 prize pool for presenting the most innovative ideas for roads and infrastructure research projects.

ARRB (formerly the Australian Road Research Board), in partnership with Roads Australia, has announced the regional winners of its annual ARRB Student Transport Research Prize Scheme.

Key themes to emerge from this year's ARRB Academy prizes were solutions for extreme weather impact, innovative and sustainable road surface materials, and pedestrian safety.

Mike Shackleton, Executive Manager of ARRB Academy said the prizes were designed to recognise talented trainee researchers with the hope that this will encourage them to pursue a career in science, technology and engineering, given the current decline in applications for STEM related undergraduate degrees.

"There is a constant need for talented engineering and science professionals in the road research and infrastructure industry. Over the coming decades both ARRB and road agencies face the challenge of making this a desirable career choice for young engineers and scientists, made even more challenging by the waning interest in STEM qualifications. On top of that, few of these professionals recognise research-driven innovation as the basis of a successful career.

"The only way to achieve the necessary expansion and ongoing maintenance on our road networks with a restricted pool of funding is to invest in innovation through a process of research, development and implementation," Shackleton said.

As part of the award submission students were required to draft an "elevator pitch" to a road agency chief executive, aimed at attracting interest in the research findings and demonstrating how they could assist the agency achieve their goals for the road network. Succinct communication of benefits is every bit as important as the research work itself.

The prizes of \$2,500 each have been awarded to students across several regions, totalling \$12,500 in recognising research talent that presented new ideas and technologies to help road agencies better manage road networks and in so doing, improve both the road users' journey experience and the economic return on investment in the network.

The regional prizes were awarded to:

- **New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory:** Iman Mohammadi, University of Technology Sydney: Investigation on the use of crumb rubber concrete for rigid pavements

- **New Zealand:** Abbe Hyde, Otago University: The future of transport in New Zealand: a call for sustainable transitions
- **Queensland/Northern Territory:** Masuda Sultana, Griffith University: Assessing the impact of extreme weather events on pavement deterioration and relevant solutions
- **Victoria/Tasmania:** Alireza Toranpour, RMIT University: Modelling Pedestrian crashes at mid-blocks
- **Western Australia:** Karlson Hargroves, Curtin University: The use of sustainability rating tools to enhance efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in road and transport projects

“We want to cultivate the brightest minds who can solve the complex series of challenges that come with roads and infrastructure research, and who can communicate those solutions clearly and concisely to those who will implement them” Shackleton said.

The winners are now eligible for the peak Australasian Prize, comprising a further \$2,500 prize for the successful winner. The candidates will be required to submit an article based on any aspect of their research, suitable for consideration by a peer-reviewed journal.

The National Prize will be judged by a panel drawn from ARRB and industry research experts and will be announced in late 2015.

While entries are now closed for 2015, ARRB encourages students from across Australia and New Zealand to enter the competition next year. Due the success over the past two years, ARRB expects a significant number of entries from talented engineering and science students in 2016.

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ARRB is a leading expert globally in road research and technology. For the last 55 years we've been helping transport, road and infrastructure bodies to identify and adopt best practices for developing and maintaining safe and sustainable roads.

For more information, images or to speak with an ARRB spokesperson, please contact Sarah Robertson or Georgia Harrison at Keep Left:

sahr@keepleft.com.au | georgia@keepleft.com.au | 03 9268 7800 | Sarah: 0419 410 901 | Georgia: 0423 617 372