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# 2026 INDUSTRY AWARDS

## Award Winners

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## Bucher UrBin series 3 - Australia's most versatile rear loader

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Safer  
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maintenance

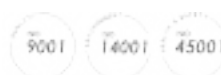
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# About the WRIQ Industry Awards

The WRIQ Industry Awards recognise outstanding individuals and projects contributing to Queensland's essential waste and recycling infrastructure and services.

The awards exist to celebrate the often 'unsung heroes' who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to championing the cause through their leadership, mentoring, advocacy, knowledge sharing and action. They inspire us through their achievements and motivate us to make our own contribution to Queensland's waste and recycling industry.

Through the WRIQ Industry Awards, we aim to showcase excellence in individuals and companies who are making a difference in the field of waste and recycling. The awards provide a unique opportunity to shine a spotlight on the innovative projects, initiatives, and partnerships that are helping to build a more sustainable future for Queensland.

Almost 280 industry professionals gathered at the voco Brisbane City Centre on Friday 4 September 2026 for the WRIQ Industry Awards Gala Dinner, celebrating excellence across eleven award categories.

*"The WRIQ Industry Awards are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the people and organisations whose dedication, innovation and commitment continue to strengthen our industry," Alison Price, CEO WRIQ said. "Congratulations to all of our finalists and, in particular, our 2026 winners. Their achievements are a testament to the expertise and contribution of Queensland's waste and recycling industry."*

## Judges

WRIQ thanks the 2026 judging panel for volunteering their time and expertise to select the 2026 finalists and winners:

- **Bret Collins**  
Former WRIQ Treasurer
- **Bob Eggleton**  
WRIQ Life Member
- **Rick Ralph**  
WRIQ Founder & Life Member

# 2026 Winner's Table

| INDIVIDUALS                              |                                                                   |                                                   |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | Winner                                                            | Highly Commended                                  |
| Driver of the Year                       | <b>Paul Cox</b><br>JJ's Waste & Recycling                         |                                                   |
| Industry Professional of the Year        | <b>Skye Hickman</b><br>JJ's Waste & Recycling                     | <b>Sandra Hammond</b><br>BMI Group                |
| Maintenance Employee of the Year         | <b>Colin Grace</b><br>Mil-tek Recycling & Environmental Solutions |                                                   |
| Plant and Equipment Operator of the Year | <b>Gotti White</b><br>BMI Group                                   | <b>Phoenix Elaine</b><br>Wanless Waste Management |
| Recycling Employee of the Year           | <b>Kellie Sharp</b><br>Gladstone Regional Council                 |                                                   |
| Trainee or Apprentice of the Year        | <b>Hector Ratukore</b><br>Phoenix Power Recyclers                 |                                                   |
| Lithium Battery Fire Hero of the Year    | <b>Chris Lloyd</b><br>Cleanaway Waste Management                  |                                                   |

| COMPANIES                            |                                                                                                 |                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                      | Winner                                                                                          | Highly Commended                                                                              |
| Best Recycled Product                | <b>Protecting Fruit.<br/>Protecting the Future.</b><br>EnviroPlas Recycling                     |                                                                                               |
| Environmental Innovation of the Year | <b>Environmental Risk<br/>Management Transformation</b><br>BMI Group                            |                                                                                               |
| Safety Innovation of the Year        | <b>Beyond Compliance – PAPR<br/>in Concrete Crushing</b><br>BMI Group                           |                                                                                               |
| Industry Collaboration of the Year   | <b>Greenovate – Materials<br/>Recovery Facility</b><br>Greenovate Pty Ltd &<br>Re.Group Pty Ltd | <b>Integrating LGI's<br/>biogas system &amp; BeneVap<br/>at Mackay Council</b><br>LGI Limited |

# Awards Sponsors

Thank you to our sponsors, who made the 2026 WRIQ Industry Awards program and Gala Dinner possible, and for their continued commitment to Queensland's waste and recycling industry.

## PLATINUM PARTNER

**Bucher Municipal**

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At Bucher Municipal, we understand the world is constantly shifting. It is why, since our first piece of equipment saw the light of day, we have been driven to keep improving. Driven to make our cities, infrastructure, and environments cleaner and greener. Driven to innovate and engineer new and better cleaning and clearing technologies and solutions. For operations within urban and residential environments, highways, roads, airports, construction zones and industrial sites.

For you, that means having a partner that will always be there to support you and your business. Not only when it comes to providing outstanding innovation, quality and reliability, but when it comes to delivering solid equipment and support to your team.

## SILVER SPONSOR

**NALG**



**NALG**

NALG is a cleantech business delivering advanced organic waste recycling infrastructure across Australia, New Zealand and Europe. Aligned with world-leading technology partners Kanadevia Inova and Mavitec, NALG converts organic waste into renewable biomethane, biochar and high-value fertiliser pellets using technologies proven across more than 700 operational facilities worldwide.

## CATEGORY SPONSOR

**Optimal Site Performance**

**Optimal**

**SITE PERFORMANCE**

Optimal Site Performance is a Queensland-based consultancy specialising in waste management, resource recovery, landfill operations and heavy equipment capability. They help organisations improve safety, productivity and environmental outcomes through expert consulting, operational planning, equipment operator training, verification of competency and practical, tailored solutions that deliver achievable, lasting and sustainable improvements.

## BRONZE SPONSORS

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& Circular Economy Expo

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reclaimed & sustainable architectural timbers

# Award Winners - INDIVIDUALS

## Driver of the Year

*This award recognises the outstanding performance of a professional truck driver, including driving skill, attitude and contribution to industry improvement.*

### WINNER

#### Paul Cox

JJ's Waste & Recycling



Paul Cox is recognised for his outstanding contribution as a Leading Hand, Driver and Driver Trainer at JJ's Waste & Recycling on the Sunshine Coast. Since joining the team in 2022, Paul has demonstrated strong leadership, initiative and an exceptional commitment to safety, efficiency and customer service. He identifies operational issues, improves collection runs and mentors fellow drivers across an 85-driver operation. Supported by multiple strong references, Paul's reliability, professionalism and genuine connection with customers make him exactly the kind of driver the industry can be proud of.

## Industry Professional of the Year

*This award recognises those who support the waste and recycling industry. Nominees may work in HR, accounts, safety, environment, quality, sales, weighbridge operations or administration.*

### WINNER

#### Skye Hickman

JJ's Waste & Recycling



As Administration Manager at JJ's Waste & Recycling's Brisbane depot, Skye Hickman has played a pivotal role in developing the people, systems and processes behind the depot's operational excellence. Through hands-on leadership, mentoring and a commitment to continuous improvement, she has built a culture of accountability, collaboration and high standards. Her leadership contributed to Brisbane achieving a remarkable 99.32% Business Audit score, the highest across the organisation. Skye's ability to develop people while consistently raising operational standards makes her an outstanding industry professional.

### HIGHLY COMMENDED

#### Sandra Hammond

BMI Group

## Maintenance Employee of the Year

*This award celebrates the knowledge and expertise of the individuals who work behind the scenes in the industry's plant, equipment and vehicle workshops.*

### WINNER

## Colin Grace

**Mil-tek Recycling & Environmental Solutions**



For more than eight years, Field Service Engineer Colin Grace has been the backbone of Mil-tek's service operations across Queensland and the Northern Territory. At 72, Colin continues to travel thousands of kilometres each month to keep customers' equipment operating safely and reliably. In one month alone, he travelled approximately 5,000 kilometres and serviced 60 balers, 18 air compressors and eight lift trolleys. His technical expertise, consistency, attention to detail and exceptional customer relationships have earned outstanding references and demonstrate a level of professionalism and dedication built over decades.

## Plant and Equipment Operator of the Year

*This award recognises excellent performance, initiative and all-round attention to detail of a plant/equipment operator.*

### WINNER

## Gotti White

**BMI Group**



Gotti White is an outstanding Fixed Plant Operator whose technical expertise, professionalism and commitment to safety have made him an integral member of BMI Group's BCC Crushing team. Over the past 12 months, Gotti safely operated the plant for 2,588 hours, contributing to the production of more than 500,000 tonnes of recycled aggregate and road base while helping maintain a Lost Time Injury (LTI)-free workplace. His deep knowledge of the operation, long-term commitment to safety and willingness to support safety innovation demonstrate the expertise and leadership that set him apart.

### HIGHLY COMMENDED

## Phoenix Elaine

**Wanless Waste Management**

## Recycling Employee of the Year

*This award recognises excellent performance, initiative and all-round attention to detail of an employee within a recycling facility.*

### WINNER

#### Kellie Sharp

Gladstone Regional Council



Kellie Sharp has transformed Gladstone Regional Council's reuse sheds from simple diversion points into welcoming community resource recovery hubs. Through vision, creativity and enthusiasm, she has redesigned layouts, improved product presentation, introduced themed displays, enhanced signage and created a more engaging customer experience. Her work has encouraged greater community participation in reuse, increased the recovery of quality items that might otherwise have been landfilled and helped drive positive behaviour change. Kellie's innovative and energetic approach demonstrates how thoughtful presentation, education and passion can make a real difference to resource recovery outcomes.

## Trainee or Apprentice of the Year

*This award is presented to an individual who is undertaking a traineeship or apprenticeship and has been outstanding in all aspects of their training.*

### WINNER

#### Hector Ratukore

Phoenix Power Recyclers



Hector Ratukore is an outstanding Mobile Plant Technology Apprentice whose dedication, reliability and work ethic have set him apart early in his career. He consistently demonstrates professionalism beyond his years, taking on challenges, solving problems creatively and supporting his team wherever needed. His exemplary attendance and positive attitude reflect a strong commitment to his work and development. Hector has also demonstrated impressive initiative and versatility in his role, earning the respect of colleagues and contractors. His determination, maturity and willingness to learn make him a deserving recipient of this award.

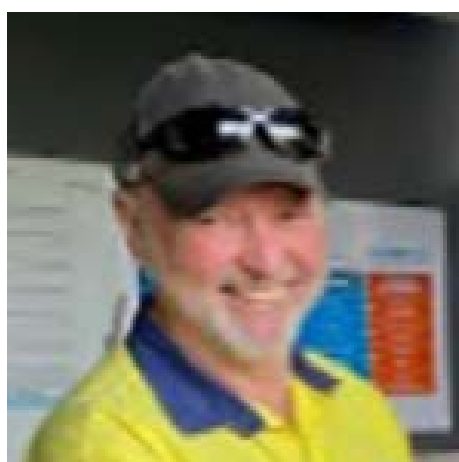
# Lithium Battery Fire Hero of the Year

*This award recognises an individual who has demonstrated safe and effective intervention in controlling and/or preventing a lithium battery fire to safeguard a facility, vehicle, or workers.*

## WINNER

**Chris Lloyd**

**Cleanaway Waste Management**



Chris Lloyd has led the development of a comprehensive hot load management program to address the growing risks associated with lithium batteries and other fire hazards in waste loads. Through driver education, practical training, emergency drills and dedicated hot load containment areas, the program has established a clear and repeatable response process. A key innovation is shifting decision-making from the driver to branch leadership, allowing drivers to focus on safe vehicle operation while supervisors coordinate emergency response and community protection. The initiative strengthens safety, environmental protection, business continuity and operational resilience.



## Best Recycled Product

*This award aims to raise awareness and showcase the latest product innovations and designs for recycled products, as well as progress in the application of recycled materials.*

### WINNER

## Protecting Fruit. Protecting the Future.

**EnviroPlas Recycling**



Protecting Fruit. Protecting the Future. is Global Fruit Protection's Australian-made agricultural plastic lifecycle system, combining recycled products with recovery, recycling and remanufacturing. The system includes 100% recycled plastic inserts, 100% recycled banana bags and 97% recycled ClipSlip® products. With scheduled collection and traceability built into the commercial relationship, recovered plastics are processed locally and returned to manufacturing wherever possible. The result is a practical and scalable circular solution that keeps agricultural plastics in productive use while supporting local manufacturing and reducing waste.

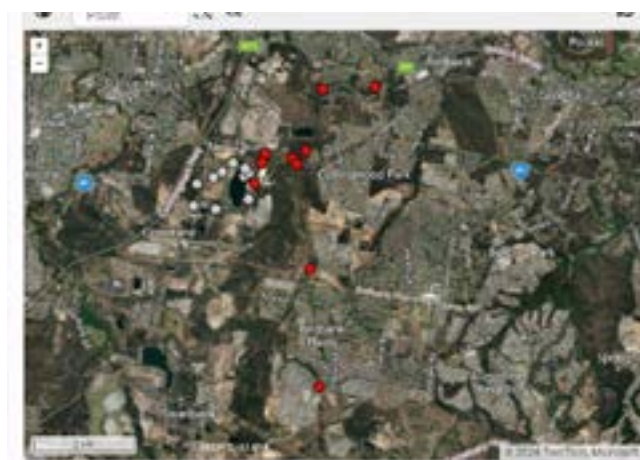
## Environmental Innovation of the Year

*This award seeks to spotlight innovations that are driving positive change in waste management, recycling and circular economy practices.*

### WINNER

## Environmental Risk Management Transformation

**BMI Group**



BMI Group has transformed its environmental data management by replacing spreadsheet-based records with Esdat, a specialist environmental database rarely used by operational waste businesses. The centralised platform brings together almost 200,000 data points across 10 sites, including surface water, groundwater and leachate monitoring locations. The system has improved data quality, accessibility, trend analysis and compliance assurance, while reducing the time and effort required to manage complex environmental information. It provides BMI with a stronger, more accessible foundation for environmental decision-making across its multi-site operations.

## Safety Innovation of the Year

*This award recognises excellence in developing and implementing an innovative solution to an identified health and safety issue.*

### WINNER

#### Beyond Compliance – PAPR in Concrete Crushing

BMI Group



BMI Group has introduced Powered Air-Purifying Respirators (PAPRs) for workers exposed to respirable dust, going beyond minimum compliance requirements following extensive exposure monitoring and risk assessment. The integrated system provides respiratory, eye and head protection while improving comfort, reducing heat stress and removing the need for fit testing. Most importantly, the initiative puts individual worker protection at the centre of safety decisions, helping mitigate the risks associated with silica, asbestos and other lung-related conditions. It demonstrates a proactive commitment to protecting workers in a challenging operational environment.

## Industry Collaboration of the Year

*This award recognises teams and partnerships that have successfully implemented innovative initiatives, policies or programs to advance resource recovery (including organics processing) in Queensland.*

### WINNER

#### Greenovate – Materials Recovery Facility

Greenovate Pty Ltd & Re.Group Pty Ltd



Greenovate brings together Logan, Ipswich and Redland City Councils in an innovative alliance with recycling specialist Re.Group to deliver an advanced, purpose-built Materials Recovery Facility at Browns Plains. Designed to meet the growing needs of the region, the high-capacity facility supports the recovery of multiple materials while strengthening long-term recycling infrastructure. The project demonstrates the value of collaboration across local government and industry, creating a practical model for delivering major infrastructure and improved recycling outcomes in a rapidly changing operating environment.

### HIGHLY COMMENDED

#### Integrating LGI's biogas system & BeneVap at Mackay Council

LGI Limited



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