

MEDIA RELEASE

23 October 2009

Brisbane City Planner goes 'green' to win \$15,000 international planning scholarship

An urban planner with Brisbane City Council's City Planning branch is the third recipient of the \$15,000 international Young Planners Scholarship, funded by the Outdoor Media Association (OMA) and sponsored by the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA).

Michelle Willemse will travel to San Francisco and New York in the United States, and to Toronto, Canada, to investigate environmentally sustainable solutions for outdoor advertising. She has chosen these cities for their known use of landscaped freeways, 'living billboard' advertisements and green wall advertising.

Ms Willemse was chosen from 17 applications by a panel of four, comprising two of Australia's leading planning academics, and a representative from both the OMA and PIA.

Her success was acknowledged at a special event hosted today by Councillor Amanda Cooper, Chairman of the BCC's Neighbourhood Planning and Development Assessment Committee, and attended by the Chief Executive Officer of the OMA Helen Willoughby and the President of the Queensland Division of the PIA, Ms Dyan Currie.

Clr Cooper said environmental sustainability was a key area of focus for Council, which was planning for the future of Australia's fastest growing Capital City.

"I'm delighted one of our planners has the opportunity to conduct international research that could prove beneficial to Brisbane."

Ms Willoughby said Ms Willemse's topic was highly relevant to today's market environment.

"Members of the OMA, and the OMA itself, have been exploring opportunities for sustainable solutions for many years now," Ms Willoughby said.



“For instance, in the past 12 months we have significantly increased our efforts to recycle advertising skins by sending them to people in need, including the Victorian Bush Fire Recovery Unit.

“Ms Willemse’s research will be applicable to both the OMA and PIA’s activities given the importance of environmental sustainability to planners and industry.”

Ms Willemse is the second Queenslander in as many years to take out the scholarship following last year’s winning entry by Colleen Keegan, a town planner with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. Ms Keegan is currently conducting her research on the use of outdoor advertising in cities covered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) City of Design Network.

The President of the Queensland division of the PIA, Ms Dyan Currie, said she was delighted to see another of the State’s young planners win this exciting scholarship.

“This is an enormous opportunity for a talented planning student or recent graduate to expand their own knowledge, and to bring new ideas back to their own work environments,” Ms Currie said.

The scholarship requires the recipient to present their research findings at the NZPI/PIA International Planning Convention being held in New Zealand in early 2010.

Rachael Attwood, a town planner with Mildura Shire Council, was the scholarship’s first recipient. She presented her findings at the PIA Convention in Darwin in April this year.

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