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NEWS.COM.AU ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 2009 GREEN AWARDS

National news website, *news.com.au* has announced the winners of the 2009 *news.com.au* Green Awards.

The winner of the inaugural People's Choice award, based on almost 20,000 *news.com.au* reader votes, is the biodegradable "Environmental Toothbrush" created by Queensland dentist Natalya Taylor.

Dr Taylor hit on the idea of a toothbrush made from sustainable bamboo after seeing how much waste was produced by plastic brushes while working with the RAAF relief effort in East Timor. The Environmental Toothbrush also impressed the expert judging panel to win the hotly contested Green Invention category.

In other categories, Huw Kingston from Bundanoon in the New South Wales Southern Highlands has won the major award of Green Hero for his successful campaign to ban bottled water in his town.

His efforts have helped spearhead a move to reduce the waste from an industry that produces millions of plastic bottles a year. The campaign even inspired the NSW State Government to follow suit, banning commercial bottled water in all government departments and agencies.

In the Junior Hero category, West Australian teenagers Jessica Gill and Laura Ryan have taken out the award after starting an energy reduction competition for their school project. The La Salle College Year 11 students decided to turn their "Switch Off" initiative into a reality, organising sponsors and prizes and getting more than 60 schools involved.

The winners were announced in an online video ceremony featuring special guests Ian Kiernan, Erin McNaught, Yumi Stynes and Melissa Hoyer.

The *news.com.au* Green Awards are designed to recognise and celebrate those everyday Australians tackling the environmental challenges facing our country and the world through clever, adaptable innovations.

News.com.au editor and judging panellist David Higgins congratulated each of the winners and all those who took part in this year's awards.

"From over 600 nominations to 37 finalists across Australia, we have chosen 11 outstanding Australians who have clearly demonstrated their commitment in facing up to the environmental challenge," Mr Higgins said.

"These winners are examples of everyday Australians who have proven that simple ideas can make huge differences to the community when it comes to limiting the effects of climate change and helping the planet."

The winners of the 2009 *news.com.au* Green Awards are:

- The *news.com.au* Green Hero Award – Huw Kingston

- The *news.com.au* Junior Green Hero Award – Jessica Gill and Laura Ryan
- The *news.com.au* Green Invention Award – The Environmental Toothbrush
- The *news.com.au* Green Town Award – City of Salisbury (SA)
- The *news.com.au* Scientific Breakthrough Award – Carnegie Energy
- The *news.com.au* Green Business Award – Rentachook
- The *news.com.au* Environment 2.0 Award – Swapstyle.com
- The *news.com.au* Australian Solution Award – Global Communications Services
- The *news.com.au* Green Household Award – Eriks and Judy Celmins
- The *news.com.au* Can Do Better citation – Family First Senator Steve Fielding
- The *news.com.au* Green Awards People's Choice Award – The Environmental Toothbrush

Each winner (except for the Can Do Better category) will receive an environmentally friendly Toshiba Portégé R600 laptop worth more than \$3000.

As well as Mr Higgins, the other judges on the panel were University of Adelaide climate change expert Professor Barry Brook and News Limited's Department of Environment and Climate Change Manager Dr Tony Wilkins.

The People's Choice was awarded by *news.com.au* readers voting for their favourite out of all the finalists.

To watch the virtual Green Awards winners ceremony and read more about each of the winners, visit <http://news.com.au/greenawards>.

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