

JUDGES

2023 HUNTERNET FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAM AWARDS

Suzie Leask

Partner – Hall & Wilcox

Suzie is a Partner at Hall & Wilcox, a leading independent Australian law firm. Suzie leads the Corporate and Commercial practice in Newcastle and works with businesses and organisations across Australia, and is a Director on the Board of Hunternet.



Winner of Private Practice Lawyer of the Year 2019, Commercial Team of the Year 2020 and Australian Law Firm of The Year in 2022 and 2023, Suzie is known for her strategic approach to negotiating transactions and her commercial insight into the extensive range of risks and legal issues facing businesses. Suzie is an experienced director and company secretary, holding a number of NFP board roles locally and with national organisations, Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia and has specialist expertise in corporate governance, business sales & acquisitions, shareholder agreements, commercial contracts, intellectual property, ESG and privacy law. She is a sought-after presenter including the popular Business Contracts and Director Masterclass training, and is passionate about assisting companies, government bodies, not-for-profits and industry associations and their boards, management and key business stakeholders to comply with corporate governance and regulatory compliance obligations; helping businesses maximise revenue while minimising risk.

James Hunt

Honorary Lecturer – University of Newcastle

Honorary Senior Lecturer in
Leadership & Organisational
Behaviour



Former MBA Director & Assistant Director of Postgraduate
Business Programs University of Newcastle, Australia

With over 30 years of experience, James Hunt is an esteemed academic known for his exceptional contributions in Leadership and Organisational Behaviour. During his tenure at the University of Newcastle, Australia, he played a pivotal role as MBA Director and Assistant Director of Postgraduate Business Programs, designing and delivering courses that have shaped future leaders. His expertise spans a wide array, including Leadership, Organisational Behaviour, Organisational Development and Change, Human Resources Management, Organisational Structures and Design, Management Consultancy Intervention Strategies, and Strategic Management.

James's impact transcends borders, as he has lectured and conducted research at renowned international institutions in the UK, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, and the USA. His unwavering commitment to advancing knowledge in Leadership and Organisational Behaviour has garnered global recognition, making him an exceptional candidate for this prestigious award.

James's dedication to academic excellence, passion for education, and his role in nurturing future leaders solidify his status as a luminary in his field.

Ryan Stephenson

Managing Director – Bohemia Interactive Solutions



Ryan has been running a successful Defence SME for the last 11 years. As Group General Counsel for the global Bohemia Interactive Simulations group and Managing Director of Bohemia Interactive's Australian-based operations, Ryan has lived experience of growing and sustaining a Defence business through long procurement cycles.

With more than 20 years' experience as a commercial lawyer in IP-focused environments, Ryan spent the early part of his legal career working in the film, TV and multi media industry in the UK. On moving to Australia in 2003, he broadened his areas of legal practice to encompass work in software and technology licensing, a path that led to his current roles.

In 2010, Ryan was appointed as Group General Counsel for the Bohemia Interactive Simulations Group, and shortly after also took up the role as MD for BISim's Australian and New Zealand operations, where he has overseen the maturing of the business into an established and trusted supplier to the ADF.

Ryan is a firm believer that modelling and simulation, especially simulation tools which leverage computer game technology, are key future enablers which all industries should embrace. He also agrees with Billy Bragg that in life there is no real substitute for a ball struck firmly and squarely!

Shaelee Welchman

Director Community and Economy – Muswellbrook Council



Shaelee has over 20 years' experience in economic development and organisation strategy and is the Director of Community and Economy at Muswellbrook Shire Council responsible for the economic diversification of the Upper Hunter.

Shaelee oversees the Hunter Innovation Precinct which includes the Melt Advanced Manufacturing Centre and STEM Lab to prepare the region for future opportunities in renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, intensive agricultural and viticulture, and waste and recycling. She also has tourism, events, libraries, Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery, Aquatic Centres, community partnerships and marketing and communications as part of her portfolio.