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# Curtin's Professor Phil Bland named joint winner of Scientist of the Year

MEDIA RELEASE

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Curtin University has congratulated Professor Phil Bland on being named a joint winner of the Scientist of the Year at the 2019 Western Australian Premier's Science Awards.



Professor Phil Bland.

John Curtin Distinguished Professor Bland, a Professor of Planetary Science who leads Curtin's Space Science and Technology Centre, won the top honour in partnership with Edith Cowan University's Professor Robert Newton.

Dr Adam Cross, from the ARC Centre for Mine Site Restoration in Curtin's School of Molecular and Life Sciences, was also awarded the Woodside Early Career Scientist of the Year.

Curtin University Vice-Chancellor Professor Deborah Terry congratulated Professor Bland and Dr Cross on being recognised among the State's finest leaders in science.

"Professor Bland has assembled the largest planetary research group in the Southern Hemisphere at Curtin's Space Science and Technology Centre and led the team that built their own pocket-sized satellite to be launched into space next year," Professor Terry said.



“Dr Cross is already an internationally renowned expert on carnivorous plants and his research is working to rehabilitate mining landscapes into health ecosystems, offering Australia’s mining industry evidence-based outcomes to meet their regulatory requirements on landforms.”

Curtin University Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Professor Chris Moran said the

annual awards showcased the impressive leadership and achievements of WA’s science community.

“The Premier’s Science Awards celebrate research and engagement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and I am delighted that Curtin researchers continue to be recognised among the State’s finest contributors to the field,” Professor Moran said.

“Professor Bland and Dr Cross are making their mark on the world stage, inspiring the next generation of scientists to consider the exciting opportunities a career in STEM can offer.”

John Curtin Distinguished Professor Peter Newman, from the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute, was named the WA Scientist of the Year at last year’s annual awards.

The Premier’s Science Awards recognise and celebrate the achievements of the Western Australian science community during National Science Week.

The awards cover all fields of science, including natural, medical, applied and technological science, engineering and mathematics.



For more information about the Premier’s Science Awards, visit [here](https://www.jtsi.wa.gov.au/what-we-do/science-and-innovation/science-award-programs/premier-s-science-awards) (<https://www.jtsi.wa.gov.au/what-we-do/science-and-innovation/science-award-programs/premier-s-science-awards>).

Photo caption: Professor Robert Newton, Minister for Science, the Hon Dave Kelly, and Professor Phil Bland. Photo credit: MCB Photographics and Cathy Fogliani.

## 2019 Scientist of the Year: Professor Phil Bland

Professor Bland’s research explores the origin and evolution of the solar system through the analysis of meteorites. This work has taken Professor Bland to meteorite ‘hot spots’ across the globe, ultimately leading to the establishment of the Desert Fireball Network in

Western Australia, the multi award-winning Fireballs in the Sky outreach and citizen science program, and a partnership with global security and aerospace company, Lockheed Martin. Most recently, Professor Bland led the formation of the Space Science and Technology Centre at Curtin University – home to the largest group of planetary scientists in the Southern Hemisphere. The asteroid '(6580) Philbland' is named in recognition of Professor Bland's contributions to planetary science.

#### 2019 Woodside Early Career Scientist of the Year: Dr Adam Cross

Dr Cross is a passionate ecologist and conservationist whose research transforms sterile mining landscapes into healthy ecosystems. His techniques are currently assisting the Australian mining industry in meeting regulatory requirements on landforms for which no previous rehabilitation strategies existed, and for which no successful revegetation has been demonstrated globally. The results are practical, scalable and economical, ensuring fundamental restoration science has been translated into end-user outcomes for industry partners. Dr Cross is also an internationally renowned expert on carnivorous plants, considered the world authority on two iconic genera (*Aldrovanda vesiculosa* and *Cephalotus follicularis*). Recognition of Dr Cross's research excellence is highlighted by the award of the 2014 Perth Zoo Prize for Conservation Research for his seed biology studies.

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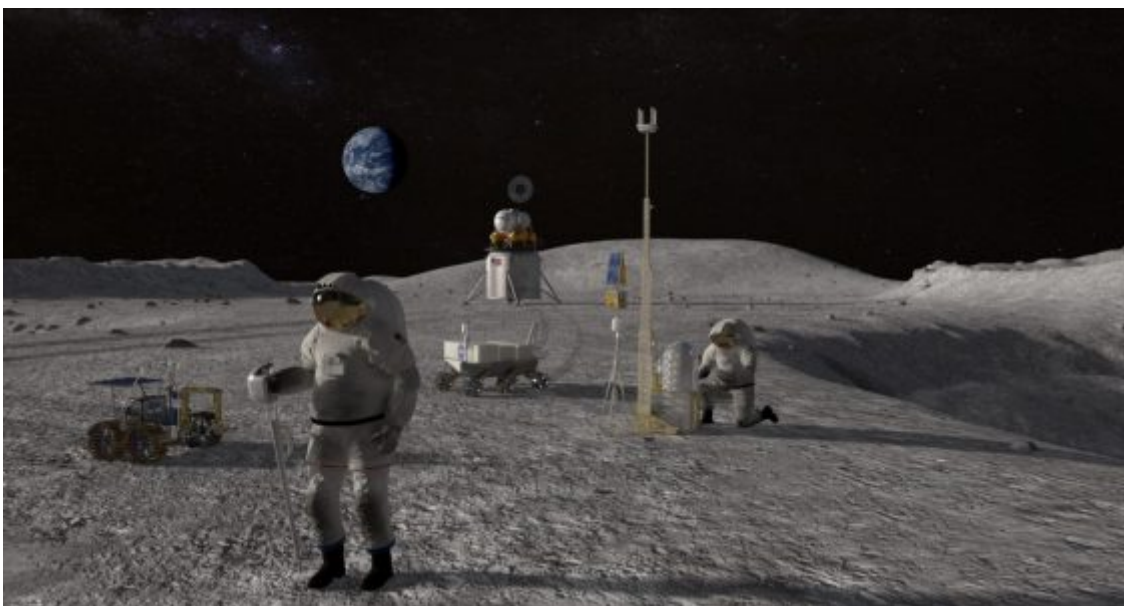
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