AUSTRALIAN MARINE SCIENCES ASSOCIATION INC.

Jubilee Award - 2022

Dr Peter Scanes

Estuaries and Catchments Science Unit
NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment

The 2022 Jubilee Award winner is Dr Peter Scanes, formerly of NSW Department of Planning and Environment, for his significant and impactful contributions to estuarine monitoring and process understanding.

Dr Peter Scanes has worked as an estuary and coastal river ecologist for over 30 years, most recently as the Senior Team Leader of the Estuaries and Catchments Science Unit at the NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment where he led a research team of 15 scientists who provide scientific and technical advice for management and regulation of estuaries in NSW. Much of Peter's career has been dedicated to development and implementation of a rigorous method of assessing and reporting the condition of estuaries in NSW. One of Peter's most recent contributions to research has been in the area of climate change impacts in estuaries in which he found that the response of estuaries to climate change is dependent on their morphology and an order of magnitude faster than predicted by global ocean and atmospheric models. Peter has also collaborated on emerging techniques, adopting e-DNA as a monitoring tool early on and employing precise new microbial source-tracking approaches to evaluate water quality within aquatic ecosystems. His work shows a common thread of working with local governments and communities to help find long-term solutions to improve the health of their coasts and estuaries.

Peter has played an integral role in the application of consistent standards related to marine monitoring. He developed the national standard for assessing end points of oil spill environmental response and ultimately termination of the response. This process has also been accepted in the NSW legal system and recognized and adopted internationally. His methods to assess and report on condition of NSW estuaries are now considered as industry standard. This is critical for government's management of estuaries because it identifies relative condition, facilitates priority setting, identifies appropriate directions for management and keeps communities informed about their local systems.