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Waste reduction projects clean up at VIC Sustainability Awards

October 24, 2016 by Annmarie Unwin

Solvup, Melbourne Health and Crown Melbourne were among the big winners at this year's Victorian Premier's Sustainability Awards.

Around 350 guests from a wide range of organisations across Victoria gathered at Melbourne's Plaza Ballroom last Thursday evening (20 October) for the awards dinner, where all the finalists were recognised for their sustainability projects.

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Organised by Sustainability Victoria and presented by Victorian Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio, this was the 14th year of the Premier's Sustainability Awards, which recognise and celebrates Victorians who are leading the way in activities that support and underpin sustainable outcomes.

Solvup, which is owned by TIC Group, won the Innovative Products or Services category for its cloud-based technology to power the sustainable aftersales service of retail goods.

Return rates of consumer goods – generally electrical products, such as laptop computers, smart phones and televisions – are increasing at an alarming rate, largely due to items being perceived as faulty when actually this customer hasn't understood how to operate them properly.

Solvup is a unique, efficient system that can handle all returns, replacements or repairs from a retail storefront, call centre or website. Using the technology allows customer service advisors to choose the correct course of action and track the items progress to a repairer and back, while troubleshooting at the point of return. This helps to avoid 'no fault found' returns while at the same time ensuring high customer satisfaction. It draws on a global network of vendors and repairers whilst delivering timely business insights.

In 2015, Solvup facilitated 711,673 cases – including 120,000 product repairs – that were either resolved with troubleshooting, repair or return/exchange.

"This prestigious award is recognition of the strong commitment Solvup and the wider TIC Group has to promoting sustainable solutions to retail and business problems," said Adam Joel, Managing Director of TIC Group's Reverse Logistics Business.

"So many retail products are returned when there is little wrong with them and a simple repair or troubleshoot will ensure the product reaches its extended life-span. TIC Group's innovative Solvup platform helps to reduce the number of retail goods being discarded or thrown on landfill. It's fantastic news for customers and the environment," he added.

Healthcare and Large Business awards

Melbourne Health secured the Health category prize for its program, "Reducing waste – one dialysis patient at a time".

Melbourne Health's Nephrology Environmental Sustainability Special Interest Group – its dedicated environmental sustainability multidisciplinary team – champions a range of waste reduction initiatives that help to significantly decrease the amount of waste the service as a whole, and its patients, produce each year. By seeking alternative disposal methods for PVC materials and by improving recycling, the nephrology service was able to make significant reductions in clinical waste, while educating staff and

24 BIR World Recycling Convention 2016

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patients about sustainable practices and appropriate waste segregation.

Melbourne's largest single site employer, Crown Melbourne, won the Large Business category for its Crown Earth program, which drives sustainability across all its operations. Crown Earth combines policy, strategy, plans, actions and outcomes that drive commitment to the environment across operations, from choosing suppliers to emptying rubbish bins. It focuses on energy efficiency, water conservation, materials and life-cycle management, part of a suite of initiatives demonstrating leadership in sustainable business practices in the gaming and hospitality industry.

The company has also invested significantly in educating staff, so that they are aware of its environmental objectives and understand how they can contribute. (See the *Waste Management Review* article – “Crown not gambling on recycling strategy success” – for more details.)

Winters Flat Primary School in Castlemaine won the top honour of the night – the Premier's Recognition Award – for its program developing sustainability programs that engage not only their school, but their local council, businesses, Indigenous groups and their whole community.

Bendigo Sustainability Group took the Premier's Regional Recognition Award for its region-wide program, which brings together a diverse group of stakeholders, empowering their community to drive a range of sustainability programs. The full winners of the Premier's Sustainability Awards 2016 are detail on the awards website.

Commenting on the finalists and winners, CEO Sustainability Victoria Stan Krpan said: “Our state has an excellent track record of delivering innovative projects that benefit our environment and the community through efficient waste management, resource recovery, and new technologies for clean energy.

“Congratulations to all of this year's winners. Your contributions will have positive long-term effects on our society and our way of life.”

Details of all the finalists and winners can be found on Sustainability Victoria's awards website.





News

◆ Crown, Melbourne Health, recycling, Solvup, Stan Krpan, sustainability, Sustainability Victoria, TIC Group, Victoria Premier's Sustainability Awards, waste reduction

◆ "Biggest-ever" Garage Sale Trail set for Saturday



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