



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **WMAA announces the 2016 WMAA Women in the Environment Award winner**

On 8 December 2016, the Waste Management Association of Australia (WMAA) awarded the 2016 WMAA Women in the Environment Award to Samantha Cross, Director Cross Connections Consulting.

The award began as an initiative of the WMAA Victoria Branch, and recognises the achievements of women in the environment industry. In 2015, the award – sponsored by Blue Environment – was opened nationally to all eligible women in the environment sector who have made a significant contribution to environmental sustainability in Australia in the past five years. This year, nominations came from almost every state of Australia, many of which reflected significant experience in the waste industry.

“While it is always hard as a judge to have to pick a winner, it’s also heartening to see the breadth and depth of women’s efforts for environmental improvement”, said Christine Wardle from Blue Environment.

Samantha Cross is a leader in the circular economy space across industry sectors. She presents waste generators, business and government with alternatives to landfill, facilitating opportunities to achieve enhanced sustainability and commercial outcomes.

Whilst working at Transpacific Cleanaway, Ms Cross implemented a strategy resulting in Unilever Australia achieving Zero Non-hazardous Waste to Landfill, an Australian first at its Tatura site. Unilever has received a Green Globe Award and APC award for the achievement.

She has developed logistics models to address barriers to landfill diversion, recently facilitating the establishment of five aggregation points for plasterboard waste (100% recyclable) going to landfill due to inefficiencies in collection and transport.

“I believe we as an industry, and as individuals, have a role to play in encouraging, supporting and fostering greater diversity. We want to attract a mix of people to make sure our industry continues to draw, develop and retain talent, challenges the status quo and supports the changing needs of our businesses and communities when it comes to better managing waste”, said Ms Cross.

As an appointed NSW EPA Circulate Program facilitator and preferred consultant to the OEHS Sustainability Advantage Program, Ms Cross has been involved in projects across numerous industry sectors.

One such project is the Plastic Police® Partnership program, which has been developing an innovative recycling and education program engaging local communities to divert soft plastic packaging from landfill. Once accredited as a social enterprise, the program’s expansion into communities across Australia can follow.

“Collaboration is equally important in ensuring greater resource recovery opportunities are realised in the circular economy as are product stewardship initiatives that deliver effective and sustainable outcomes”, continued Ms Cross.

“I would like to thank WMAA and Blue Environment for supporting and recognising all the amazing women who are part of our exciting industry. My appreciation is also extended to all those inspiring and supportive individuals, both male and female, who have been part of my journey to date and who continue to make a positive difference in our industry.”

Ms Cross is also the Chair of WMAA’s Hunter Regional Group in NSW and is a member of the Hunter Charitable Working Group.

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