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WARR Awards winners announced



Doug Dean Leader of the Year – Adam Faulkner

Adam Faulkner, CEO of the Northern Adelaide Waste Management Authority (NAWMA), is the winner of the Doug Dean Leader of the Year award.

NAWMA, which provides local waste management and resource recovery services, switched on its MRF the same time as China announced its National Sword Policy. At the time, Faulkner was new to the role of CEO and he had the foresight to enact a plan that would not only provide NAWMA with a point of difference, but also ensure the financial viability and reputational credibility of the organisation.

He began a transformational business plan and crafted a strategy that drove NAWMA to pivot hard away from the export market, and keep our sorted recyclables onshore.

With the assistance of his senior management team, Faulkner led the board and constituent councils to publicly declare that 100 per cent of recyclables would be

processed in Australia by 2020. In addition, councils in NAWMA's jurisdiction would purchase a minimum of 50 per cent back through sustainable procurement.

NAWMA provides collection, processing, and disposal operations to about 30 per cent of South Australia. Owned by the City of Salisbury, City of Playford, and Town of Gawler, NAWMA is fast becoming an icon of best practice across the nation, and has a building international profile.

Faulkner has overseen the negotiation and market development for fibre and plastics in particular, and has transformed the way NAWMA conducts its recycling operations. He has more than 20 years public and private industry experience across NSW, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia.

"I fell into the industry (along with everyone else) after applying for a waste officer job near the Gold Coast so I could surf. Twenty years on, I believe it's the best industry in the world. We are a blend of big projects, strategic decisions, operational nous, and a reputation for getting stuff done," Faulkner said.

"I am most proud of marrying my wife and raising my family in the midst of navigating the testing world of waste and resource recovery. My greatest professional experience is a tie between spending seven years getting a greenfield landfill and recycling park approved in the green heartland of Tweed Shire Council, smack bang 15 minutes in either direction to Gold Coast international airport and Byron Bay; and working side by side with my current wonderful team in switching on a new MRF the same week China Sword hit – and riding the wave ever since."

Faulkner said that the greatest thing he has learned in his career is to listen more, speak less, continuously learn, and give everyone a shared purpose to work towards.

"Reward loyalty, invest in people, interact authentically, and surround yourself with genuinely good people who are bloody good at what they do.

"My single piece of advice for others starting out in their career is to look at the leader(s) within an organisation, and join those who have a sincere passion for what they are doing and demonstrate great care for their team. These two traits will inevitably lead to shared success, and just happen to be impossible to fake."