



All of the winners at the Australian Institute of Management WA Pinnacle Awards. Pictures: AIM WA

Leaders reach their Pinnacle

DANIEL NEWELL

Mineral Resources boss Chris Ellison and recently retired Water Corporation chief executive Sue Murphy have taken out top honours in the Australian Institute of Management WA Pinnacle Awards.

More than 450 people attended the glittering black-tie ceremony at The Westin hotel on Thursday night to acknowledge stand-out organisations across the corporate, government, community and not-for-profit sectors.

As a founding shareholder and managing director of the WA mining powerhouse, Mr Ellison is now steering MinRes towards its next goal of becoming a leading global supplier of lithium.

Shares in the company have been driven to fresh all-time highs in recent months on the back of increased shipments that last year rose 700,000 tonnes to 3.5 million tonnes.

New Zealand-born Mr Ellison left school at 15 and worked in Darwin before arriving in the Pilbara just in time to secure work on the construction of the North West Shelf gas venture.

He said he was honoured to receive an award that had also been won by such renowned WA business figures as Stan Perron and Nev Power.

Mr Ellison said the role leaders played in their organisation had evolved as employees' well-being and safety become key factors of success.

"In the early days we all had the approach, back in the 80s and 90s, to get the job done at any cost," he said.

"I think today how you get the job done is critical, and caring about your people, caring about their welfare and the culture and safety is critical.

"Your reputation is probably the most important thing that you own in our style of business, or any sort of business, and the people you surround yourself with . . . is always important."

Ms Murphy — who became chief tap-turner at Water Corp in 2008 and retired at the end of last year — agreed leaders were only as good as their teams.

Under her leadership, the utility has undertaken a program of capital works to diversify water



Business Leaders of the Year winners Sue Murphy and Chris Ellison with MC Monica Kos.



Gary Martin, centre, with Mathias and Hayley Cormann.



Rotttnest Island Authority's Shane Kearney



VisAbility's Clare Allen.



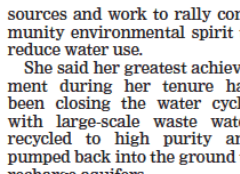
Appbot's Claire McGregor



P&N Bank's Jill Marks



Cockburn ARC's Stephen Cain



Black Swan Theatre's Linda Savage



Rio Tinto's Bernadette Murdoch and Elizabeth Spencer.



WACHS' Elyshia Lanza-Caricco and Michele Young.

sources and work to rally community environmental spirit to reduce water use.

She said her greatest achievement during her tenure had been closing the water cycle, with large-scale waste water recycled to high purity and pumped back into the ground to recharge aquifers.

Ms Murphy said leadership was about empowerment.

"Leadership these days is about making sure that everyone who works for you has the chance to be the best they can be and letting them rise," she said.

AIM WA chief executive Gary Martin said it was important to recognise outstanding leadership.

"The diversity that exists within the winners in this year's awards highlights the range of leadership talent that we have in Western Australia," Professor Martin said.

"From local and State government winners, to corporates and not-for-profits, we clearly have

exemplary leadership which will position WA for continued success long into the future."

Other winners on the night were:

- Hawaiian Corporate Social Responsibility Excellence: Rio Tinto
- SRG Group Customer Service Excellence: WA Country Health Service
- Kott Gunning Lawyers Emerging Business Excellence: Appbot
- RAC Green Business Excellence: Rotttnest Island Authority

- People2People Human Resource Management Excellence: VisAbility
- Curtin University Innovation Excellence: P&N Bank
- PrintSync Marketing Excellence: Cockburn Aquatic and Recreation Centre
- Perdaman Workplace Diversity Excellence: Black Swan State Theatre Company

The winners each receive leadership and management training to the value of \$20,000 to donate to a charity of their choice and an engraved Pinnacle trophy.



Premier Mark McGowan addresses the awards.