

8 July 2022

2022 Mahla Pearlman Australian Young Environmental Lawyer of the Year

The Law Council of Australia is pleased to announce the 2022 Mahla Pearlman Australian Young Environmental Lawyer of the Year has been awarded to Matt Floro.

Mr Floro is a Special Counsel advising on environmental, planning, climate change and administrative law at the Environmental Defenders Office. He has conducted litigation in the High Court, Federal Court, NSW Court of Appeal, NSW Land and Environment Court, Queensland Planning and Environment Court, and South Australian Supreme Court.

Law Council of Australia President, Mr Tass Liveris said Mr Floro demonstrates the impact lawyers can have.

“Mr Floro has been involved in a series of leading-edge climate law cases. These include the *Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action v NSW Environment Protection Authority*, where the court required the EPA to develop policies to protect the environment from climate change, and *KEPCO Bylong Australia Pty Ltd v Bylong Valley Protection Alliance*, in which he defended the Independent Planning Commission’s refusal to allow the Bylong Valley coal mine to proceed.”

Passionate about community, Mr Floro has led Out for Australia Victoria, the Australian Law Students’ Association and his university law society. He currently serves as President of the National Environmental Law Association and National Vice-President of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association.

“He has also made a significant contribution to the legal profession through his commitment to educating younger lawyers and mentors volunteers at the EDO,” Mr Liveris said.

With a record field of nominees in 2022, Chair of the Law Council’s Australian Environment and Planning Law Group, Ms Robyn Glindemann said this year’s Award highlighted the difference young lawyers across the country are making.

“It was an outstanding and inspiring field,” Ms Glindemann said. “Nominees came from around Australia and are focusing their work on important issues such as climate change, Indigenous rights, strengthening the protection of significant natural areas and examining the impact of natural disasters on animals.”

The Mahla Pearlman Award is named in honour of the former Chief Judge of the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales, and former President of the Law Council of Australia, the late honourable Mahla Pearlman AO.

The recipient is a young lawyer who has made a significant contribution to environmental law and to the legal and wider community. The award is conducted annually by the Australian Environment and Planning Law Group of the Law Council’s Legal Practice Section.

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