

Marine and Freshwater Research Annual Medal for Best Student Paper

In recognition of the contribution by students to innovative and significant research in the aquatic sciences, the Editorial Advisory Committee and publishers of *Marine and Freshwater Research* are awarding a medal to the author of the best student paper published in the journal each year. This is a significant award – the papers published by the journal are excellent by definition – and the winner receives A\$1000. Students from any location are eligible for the medal. The award is designed to highlight the quality of the papers published by younger scientists in the journal and to encourage authors to submit papers reflecting the interdisciplinary scope of *MFR*. Full details about the criteria for the medal are at the journal's web page <http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/126.htm>. Students are encouraged to submit their best papers to the journal, and to indicate that they are eligible in the covering letter at the time of submission.

It is my privilege to announce the inaugural winner of the medal in this editorial. A sub-committee of myself, Professors Andrew Boulton and David Hamilton and Dr Suzanne Ayzavian considered a shortlist of six papers (from students located around the world) and drawn up on the basis of the award's criteria: significance, originality and creativity of the research presented in them; scientific rigour and quality of design and analysis; the topical nature of the research and its relevance to aquatic science; the likely interest and relevance to a broad international readership and the explicit and potential implications of the work.

The high standard of all the papers published made the decision a very difficult task.

However, it was evident from the sub-committee members' recommendations that one paper was a deserving winner of the *MFR* medal. The paper examined the impact of the invasive polychaete species *Sabella* on associated soft sediment macrofaunal assemblages. Clearly, there is wide spread concern among terrestrial and aquatic ecologists about the impacts of invasive species, but the effects on native organisms are not always clear nor far from settled. The author designed a rigorous field experiment that used mimics of *Sabella* to test whether changes in the assemblage were due to physical structure or biological condition. The manuscript informs our understanding of invasion and ecological processes and, as the manuscript states, "... the effects of *S. spallanzanii* on larval abundances and colonisation may not be as significant as the effects on post-colonisation processes that structure macrofaunal assemblages in soft sediment habitats". There are evident wider implications and applications to the research. I am very happy to announce that the inaugural winner of the *Marine and Freshwater Research* Annual Medal for Best Student Paper is Allyson O'Brien of the University of Melbourne, Australia. Many congratulations to Allyson.

Dr Dugald McGlashan
Managing Editor, *Marine and Freshwater Research*