

2019 ALGA Industry Excellence Awards

Award 7 Submission: Outstanding Contribution by an Individual

Dr John Hunt

"I was born to be a scientist. My earliest memories are of laying in my bassinet in the backyard and looking up at the clouds through the gum tree leaves and pondering, 'Why is it so?' I also recall taste-testing different kinds of soil from the garden with a teaspoon – an act which promptly resulted in my mother confiscating my teaspoon!" John Hunt, PhD, CEnvP SCS

a. Demonstrated involvement in advancing the knowledge of peers in the industry.

Dr John Hunt is widely regarded as a leading expert on the remediation of contaminated land. His knowledge and experience in characterisation, delineation and remediation is unsurpassed, and he is often asked by Federal and State agencies such as the Department of Defence, NSW EPA and the Barangaroo Delivery Authority, to name a few, to advise and guide them on dealing with the uncertainty involved with the remediation of their sites.

The remediation industry has benefited from Dr Hunt's 27 years of direct experience in the field, as well as his 20 years in the resource sector. Dr Hunt is a regular speaker at ALGA forums and workshops, and at Australian and international conferences. He was an early member of the ALGA NSW Committee, and co-organised and spoke at many early forums in Sydney and interstate, particularly about remediation problem definition and the collection of appropriate remediation data, as opposed to assessment data. He has also organised, spoken at and co-chaired several Australian environmental conferences, including EcoForum and CleanUp.

Dr Hunt is known for his exceptional analytical ability and his application of fundamental scientific and engineering principles in designing remediation solutions. He acts with the utmost integrity in the way he approaches challenges, and in that respect, he has been called upon to act as an expert witness in cases of dispute.

Dr Hunt is a wonderful teacher and there are many industry professionals and employees at his Ventia workplace who benefit from his guidance. Internal competition is fierce to work on projects and assignments with him. Two quotes about Dr Hunt from current Ventia staff are provided below.

"It is a real privilege to work with one of the gurus in our industry. John has been instrumental in teaching me the art of data interrogation from a remediation perspective. He is always willing to spend time discussing lessons learnt during his lengthy career and this is invaluable to my career development in the remediation industry. For this I am truly grateful." Matthew Clutterham, CEnvP SCS, Principal Environmental Scientist

"Dr John Hunt is a central pillar of truth, honesty, patience, innovation, and integrity. As a young scientist who could barely spell 'dioxin', John mentored and taught me to apply critical thought to complex processes so that now, decades later, I am comfortable taking on the toughest of challenges and can now pass on applied knowledge to others in our organisation." Kate Cole, MAIOH, Certified Occupational Hygienist (COH)[®]

b. Demonstrated success in their role on a project involving remediation.

Dr Hunt has been at the forefront of the industry since the early 1990s and has been responsible for the introduction and acceptance of many technical solutions in the country, including ex-situ thermal treatment technologies for the remediation of chlorinated compounds in soil. He has provided technical solutions to almost all of the high-profile and complex remediation projects ever to be completed in Australia, including the

Rhodes Peninsula remediation projects, Orica's projects at Botany and Villawood, the Hunter River Remediation Project, the Macdonaldtown, Platypus and Brompton gasworks remediation projects, and the remediation of Sydney's Barangaroo precinct. By delivering technical solutions on successful projects totalling in excess of \$1 Billion, Dr Hunt has provided industry leadership second to none.

Dr Hunt's work on the characterisation and distribution of contamination at the Barangaroo site was instrumental in the project being secured by remediation contractor Ventia, and both the construction contractor, Lendlease, and its client, the Barangaroo Delivery Authority, greatly benefited from his insight. It is extremely likely that if Dr Hunt had not been involved in the project, the cost and scale of the remediation works would have been greatly underestimated, resulting in potential delays and possible legal disputes.

Additionally, Dr Hunt's analysis of and insights into the distribution of contaminants on the Rhodes Peninsula, at the Macdonaldtown and Platypus Gasworks sites, and in the Hunter River was instrumental in convincing the owners of the sites to select Ventia to undertake these remediation projects.

Another of Dr Hunt's skills, community engagement, has helped many diverse community stakeholders understand the complexities and challenges of remediation solutions, and feel more at ease during projects.

Kate Hughes, PhD, former Independent Advisor to the Rhodes Community Consultative Committee, Rhodes Remediation Projects says, *"Dr John Hunt is an expert with the common touch. Whether it's explaining conceptual site design, contaminant risks or regulatory issues, he invariably manages to explain things well. John can communicate by simplifying concepts and processes, but he does not 'dumb down' the risk message. His skill in mentoring younger experts is one of his most significant contributions to the industry, as is his understanding of how people in local communities experience contamination situations. In other words, from the community perspective, John Hunt really gets it! We appreciate people like him a lot."*

c. Demonstrated success in advancing improvements to the regulations, practices and technologies, research, sampling, testing, assessment or remediation.

Dr Hunt's leadership, enterprise and applied thinking concerning the characterisation, modelling and remediation of contaminated sites has created industry best practice. He has spoken at numerous conferences around the globe regarding the inherent risk and uncertainty involved with remediation, and how the current site assessment model has many data gaps when it comes to remediation design. His demonstrated leadership in this area has been recognised by many.

Peter Nadebaum, BE, MASC, PhD, Environmental Auditor (Victoria), says, *"I think John Hunt is regarded as the person in our industry who stands out as providing the most informed and balanced view on all matters concerning the remediation of contaminated sites. He has continuously devoted himself to advancing the industry, both from a technical perspective and from a broader sustainability perspective. I can safely say that his personal commitment to supporting the remediation industry over the years has been at a higher level, both in terms of effort and thought, than anyone else."*

With a view to the future, Dr Hunt sought out international speakers who delivered workshops and keynote addresses on soil washing and in-situ thermal remediation methods at the EcoForum and CleanUp conferences between 2010 and 2015. The first significant Australian projects using these technologies are now in advanced planning and early full-scale testing stages.

Dr Hunt is a past President and Honorary Life Member of ALGA, and a long-standing committee member of the Sustainable Remediation Forum, part of a global network of professionals seeking to make remediation practices more sustainable. He has published over 20 technical and scientific papers in the areas of environmental planning, coal geology, petroleum geology, environmental assessment and clean-up technologies, and he has presented at local and Australian industry events on numerous occasions.

Annexure: Photographs of Dr John Hunt. Available in high resolution for use by ALGA if required.

