



**Rob Stokes**

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

**Sarah Mitchell**

Minister for Education

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday, 21 August 2019

### **YOUNG STARS PROTECT OUR NIGHT SKY**

The sky's the limit for a team of young astronomers from Lidcombe Public School who will be recognised today for their efforts to protect the State's starry night sky.

Planning and Public Spaces Minister Rob Stokes and Education Minister Sarah Mitchell today announced students Ashley Clavecillas, Ethan You, Nicholas Vo and Yagin Ha had won the Government's first Dark Sky school competition.

"These star-gazers from western Sydney have developed creative ways to reduce light pollution and protect the dark night sky," Mr Stokes said.

"It's fantastic to see our next generation of astronomers so enthusiastic about the environment and full of innovative ideas to decrease light pollution across the State."

Ms Mitchell also highlighted an entry from students in northern NSW, which includes a community guideline that the Tweed Shire Council is considering adopting.

"This is an incredible outcome and shows the power of curiosity among student scientists in shaping the future of their communities," Ms Mitchell said.

About 4500 students across NSW entered the inaugural Dark Sky school competition, where they were encouraged to build on the key lighting principles outlined in the Government's Dark Sky Planning Guideline while consulting with experts in the fields of astronomy, physics and lighting design.

The entries were judged by astronomy experts and specialists from the NSW Department of Education, and the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

The winning team from Lidcombe Public School won \$3000 for their school, a telescope and astronomy-related book each, and an astronomy-related book for their school library.

The Government's Dark Sky Guideline was developed to help protect the superior star gazing conditions at Coonabarabran's Siding Spring Observatory but has since attracted global interest from Canada, China, Ireland and the United Kingdom.