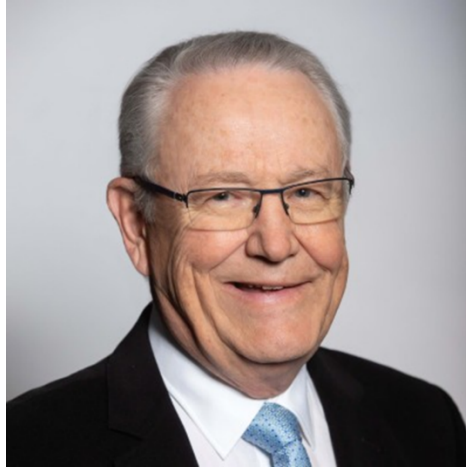


Roads Australia Ray Fisher Technical Excellence Award Information Notes

This Award was instituted in 2011, originally called simply the Award for Technical Excellence, the first recipient being Dr John Metcalf formerly Deputy Director Australian Road Research Board. To recognise the former RA President and now Life Member Ray Fisher, it was later given his name in 2019.



Ray Fisher

Among others, a leading source of inspiration for this Award came from the late Geoff Youdale DMR/RTA New South Wales. Among other achievements Geoff headed up the Austroads Pavement Research Group (APRG) for many years. He was a recipient of the Roads Australia John Shaw Medal for industry champions, and subsequently put forward the idea for an Award primarily for technical excellence as a companion to the John Shaw Medal. It was to be for legends of industry in the “engine room” of the industry. This was agreed to around 2010.

The issue arose; what physical form should the Technical Excellence Award take?

We have a combination of Ian Webb former Executive Director and Donna Findlay, former Roads Australia Policy Manager to thank for this.

From time to time Roads Australia holds functions in the Henry Jones (as in IXL jam – “I excel in everything I do”) Art Hotel on Hunter Street Hobart, next to the Drunken Admiral and close by Constitution Dock the finishing place for the annual Sydney to Hobart yacht race. At one such function in 2010, Ian noticed a particular striking piece of art/sculpture standing about 750mm high at the top of the stairs leading to the gallery in the hotel mezzanine floor.



Henry Jones Art Hotel, Hunter Street Hobart



Henry Jones Art Hotel



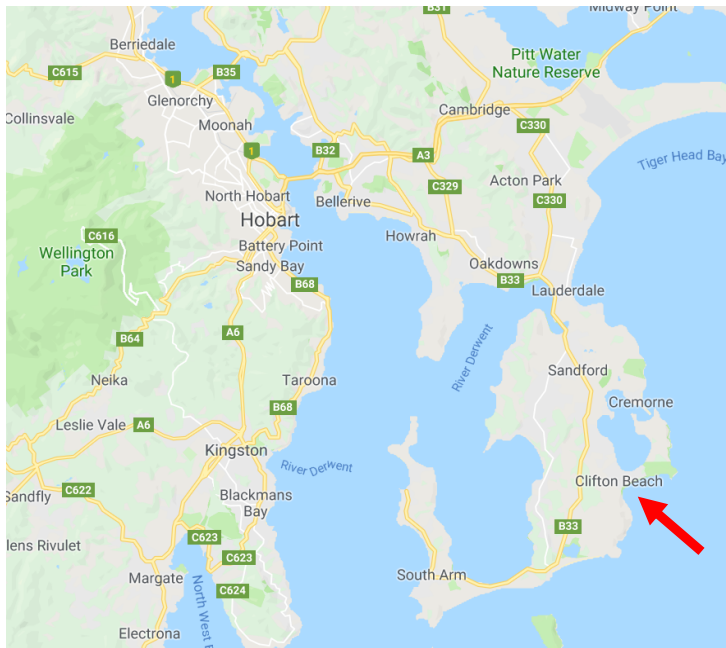
The source of inspiration (photo taken by JH March 2014)

Ian delegated to Donna a task to “make all enquiries”. The artist is Rebecca Coote who lives and has her art workshop/studio at Clifton Beach, east from Hobart. (Search internet : *Rebecca Coote Tasmania*.) Donna was commissioned to approach Rebecca and enquire as to whether she could design and make something similar but with a more “industrial/roads” theme. The resulting Award, includes a large perpetual trophy with the names of recipients held in the Roads Australia Office in Melbourne.

Smaller copies are presented to all recipients.



JH Award



Clifton Beach near Hobart



Rebecca Coote in her workshop/studio March 2014

The design on the reverse side is a facsimile perspective view of a road truck tyre tread pattern made into the spiral form that is a characteristic of much of Rebecca's work. The similarity and lineage to the model in the Henry Jones Art Hotel and inspiration is obvious. The design was made on computer software by Rebecca's husband. Unfortunately the required precision of laser cutting was not available in Tasmania. Stainless steel "flats" were sent to Melbourne and the design cut out. The flats were returned to Hobart where they were shaped into the current spiral in Rebecca's workshop. The stainless steel is a particularly high grade, with chromium content near the top of the range for this material. The distinctive red glass "flames" are all made in Rebecca's kiln in her workshop at her home. I was fortunate to be able to visit her in March 2014.

The perpetual trophy and an initial batch of ten personal trophies were made. A further batch of personal trophies has also been made, with Ray Fisher's name appropriately added to it. Ray and I go back to a NSW DMR Works Office in Sydney in 1971. The original perpetual trophy, considerably larger than the personal trophies and mounted on a timber plinth with the names of recipients, is located in the Roads Australia Office on St Kilda Road in Melbourne.



Perpetual Ray Fisher Award for Technical Excellence – 2019

My own trophy, from 2012, sits in a prominent position in my lounge room. It is an eyecatcher and, without exception, the subject of enquiry from visitors. The initial and inevitable comment, with a degree of uncertainty, is “what is that”? They are then asked to look closely at the front. This is invariably followed with a complimentary comment “I did not know Engineers could be so imaginative”. They come back down to earth when told that Engineers had nothing to do with the design, it was the result of the work of a lady artist in Hobart and two non-Engineers at Roads Australia in Melbourne. It is so brilliantly different.

Care and maintenance. The steel is a very high grade stainless steel. When moved or cleaned preferably use cloth gloves and a soft cloth. Finger marks will not harm the steel but can leave an obvious fingerprint mark. If this happens then a good treatment to remove it is a soft cloth very slightly dampened with kerosene.

John Hodgkinson AM

Recipient Roads Australia Ray Fisher Award for Technical Excellence 2012

Honorary (Life) Member Australian Society for Concrete Pavements 2013

Member Order of Australia 2017

Sydney, May 2022