# MEDIA FACTSHEET

## Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize

1. The Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize is one of the key highlights of the Singapore International Water Week (SIWW), a biennial platform for global water leaders and experts to share and co-create innovative solutions to tackle urban water challenges.

2. Named after Singapore's founding Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, whose foresight and leadership enabled Singapore to attain a sustainable water supply, this prestigious international award honours outstanding contributions by individuals or organisations towards solving the world's water challenges.

3. Since its inception in 2008, the Prize has gained a standing in the global water area as the premier Water Prize amongst its peers, by focusing on innovative water technologies, policies or programmes that have been gamechangers in their real-world applications and benefit humanity.

4. The honour roll for the Prize includes Laureates with ground-breaking contributions and solutions in wastewater-based epidemiology, membrane technology, used water treatment, as well as holistic water policies and management that have benefitted the lives of millions. Their achievements represent the pinnacle in sustainable water solutions that have made a difference to cities and people around the world. Please refer to Annex A below for the list of past Laureates.

## Nomination Process

1. The selection of the winner of the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize 2026 follows a rigorous two stage process:
    - Stage 1: Nominator submits a citation of nominee.
    - Stage 2: Nominators of shortlisted nominees will be invited to provide full submissions with supporting documents.

2. The Prize Nominating Committee (refer to Annex B below), chaired by Professor Low Teck Seng, Senior Vice President (Sustainability and Resilience) at the National University of Singapore, will thoroughly evaluate all nominations received and make their recommendations to the Prize Council. Chaired by Chairman of the National Research Foundation, Singapore, Mr Heng Sweet Keat, the Prize Council (refer to Annex C below) will then decide on the prize winner.

3. All nominations received will be evaluated based on the (1) role of nominee, (2) innovativeness and merits of the technologies, policies, or programmes, and (3) impact on humanity.

## Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize 2026 Prize Award Ceremony and Prize Lecture

The 2026 Laureate will receive the Prize Medallion from Guest-of-Honour, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry, Mr Gan Kim Yong at the award ceremony held during the official opening of SIWW2026 on Tuesday, 16 June 2026, at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre. The Laureate will also deliver a keynote lecture the same day. The 2026 Laureate will also receive an award certificate and S$300,000, presented in partnership with Temasek Foundation.

## Presenting Partner of the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize

1. The Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize is presented in partnership with Temasek Foundation. Temasek Foundation supports a diverse range of programmes that uplift lives and communities in Singapore and Asia.

2. Temasek Foundation's programmes are made possible through philanthropic endowments gifted by Temasek, as well as gifts and other contributions from other donors. These programmes strive to deliver positive outcomes for individuals and communities now, and for generations to come.

3. Collectively, Temasek Foundation's programmes strengthen social resilience; foster international exchange and catalyse regional capabilities; advance science; and protect the planet. For more information, visit www.temasekfoundation.org.sg

For more information, please visit our website at www.siww.com.sg.

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## Annex A: Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize Laureates

- **Professor Gertjan Medema (2024)**
  Professor Gertjan Medema from the KWR Water Research Institute was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize for 2024 for his significant contributions in the field of wastewater-based epidemiology (WBE in short). His timely research breakthrough has global impact and enabled the use of wastewater surveillance during the COVID-19 pandemic to fight the spread of the virus.

- **Professor Kazuo Yamamoto (2020)**
  Professor Kazuo Yamamoto of Japan was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize for 2020 for his pioneering work in developing the submerged membrane bioreactor (MBR). The global application of his submerged MBR technology has fundamentally transformed the sewage treatment process and improved the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

- **Professor Rita Colwell (2018)**
  Professor Rita Colwell was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize in 2018 for her pioneering insights into microbial water quality surveillance, and her pivotal contributions in translating these insights into concrete practices and policies to better manage waterborne diseases and protect public health. Professor Colwell was an early and active proponent of the use of novel molecular methods for more accurate and comprehensive diagnostics of water pathogens.

- **Professor John Anthony Cherry (2016)**
  Professor John Anthony Cherry was awarded the 2016 Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize for his contributions to the advancement of groundwater science, policies, and technologies. A world-renowned hydrogeologist, his revolutionary research in collaboration with international partners has provided the global groundwater community with a better scientific framework to formulate policies and best practices. He has been a major influence in advancing global recognition of groundwater processes and the development of better field methods for monitoring groundwater contamination.

- **The Orange County Water District (2014)**
  The Orange County Water District (OCWD) was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize in 2014 for its pioneering work in groundwater management and water reclamation using advanced water reuse technologies, and achievements in public policy and community outreach that have advanced public acceptance on water reuse. The impact of OCWD's successful water reuse programme extends far beyond the United States and has also been replicated in countries such as Australia and Singapore to achieve water sustainability through water reuse, benefitting millions in the process.

- **Professor Mark van Loosdrecht (2012)**
  Professor Mark van Loosdrecht was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize 2012 for his breakthrough contributions in used water treatment, with a completely autotrophic nitrogen removal process known as “Anammox”. By pioneering an innovative biological process that serves as a cost-effective, robust, and sustainable way of removing pollutants in used water, Professor van Loosdrecht introduced a paradigm shift in the understanding of the used water treatment.

- **Dr James Barnard (2011)**
  Father of Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) technology, Dr James L. Barnard was honoured with the Water Prize in 2011, for his groundbreaking invention of the environmentally sustainable, biological method to treat used water. Dr Barnard’s BNR technology revolutionised used water treatment processes by using naturally occurring micro-organisms instead of conventional chemicals, protecting the water quality in lakes and rivers worldwide.

- **The Yellow River Conservancy Commission (2010)**
  The Yellow River Conservancy Commission (YRCC) was honoured in 2010 for its outstanding accomplishments in integrated river basin management. YRCC’s innovative policies and solutions have brought about widespread and sustainable social, economic and environmental benefits. This was the first time an organisation was awarded the prize.

- **Professor Gatze Lettinga (2009)**
  Professor Gatze Lettinga was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize 2009 for his breakthrough environmentally sustainable solution for the treatment of used water using anaerobic technology. His revolutionary treatment concept enables industrial used water to be purified cost-effectively and produces renewable energy, fertilisers and soil conditioners.

- **Dr Andrew Benedek (2008)**
  Dr Benedek was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize 2008 for his outstanding work in pioneering the development of low-pressure membranes in water treatment. Dr Benedek has redefined the way water can be treated and shown how drinking water can be produced from different water sources, even those that are highly polluted. This is a big leap that has benefitted people worldwide.

For more information on the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize, visit:
https://www.siww.com.sg/home/programme/lee-kuan-yew-water-prize

For more information on LKYWP Past Laureates, visit:
https://www.siww.com.sg/home/programme/lee-kuan-yew-water-prize/laureates

**Due to COVID-19, there was no physical SIWW in 2020, and the 2020 Laureate was instead honoured and presented the Prize at SIWW2022. Consequently, no new Laureate was awarded in 2022.*

## Annex B: List of Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize Nominating Committee

### Chairman

**Prof Low Teck Seng**
Senior Vice President, Sustainability and Resilience
National University of Singapore
Singapore

### Members

**Lucia Cade**
Independent Director
Urban Utilities

**Prof John Anthony Cherry**
Distinguished Emeritus Professor
University of Waterloo
Canada

**Prof Jean J. M. Fréchet**
Emeritus Professor of Chemistry,
Chemical & Biological Engineering
University of California Berkeley
United States of America

**Prof Hu Qing (Cathy)**
Professor, School of Environmental Science and Engineering
Southern University of Science and Technology (SUSTech) and
Director
SUSTech Engineering Innovation Centre (Beijing)

**Prof Hamanth Kasan**
President
International Water Association

**Prof Ma Jun**
Academician
Chinese Academy of Engineering, Civil, Hydraulic and Architecture Engineering Division
China

**Dr Ir Gerhard M. van den Top**
Mayor of Hilversum
Netherlands

**Prof Mark van Loosdrecht**
Chair Professor in Environmental Biotechnology
Delft University of Technology
Netherlands

## Annex C: List of Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize Council

### Chairman

**Heng Swee Keat**
Chairman,
National Research Foundation,
Singapore

### Members

**Dr Marcia McNutt**
President,
National Academy of Sciences,
USA

**Dr Noeleen Heyzer**
Social Scientist and Rector,
Ridge View Residential College,
National University of Singapore,
Singapore

**Patrick Blethon**
Executive Chairman,
SAUR Group,
France

**Lim Swee Say**
Board Member,
Temasek Foundation,
Singapore