



ENGINEERS
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Media Release

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Power and electrical energy engineer honoured for outstanding career

Professor Vic Gosbell, one of Australia's most respected power and electrical energy engineers, was honoured by being awarded the M A Sargent Medal for the electrical engineer of the year for 2007, by the Board of Colleges of Electrical Engineers of Engineers Australia, in Melbourne on Friday 6 June.

The award was presented in recognition of Professor Gosbell's leading role in setting up the benchmark for a national power quality, and his valuable contributions in developing technical innovative changes to the power industry including National Standards.

Professor Gosbell is one of a handful of engineers in the world who have managed to achieve international recognition for both theoretical and applied contributions.

The M A Sargent Medal is named in honour of Dr Michael Anthony (Mike) Sargent, an outstanding Australian electrical engineer and former President of Engineers Australia. At the presentation dinner Dr Sargent said that creativity and a disciplined approach to problem solving are the hallmarks of a great engineer.

"For more than forty years Vic Gosbell has demonstrated these skills both nationally and internationally.

"His work and leadership has covered the spectrum of theoretical and applied innovations, and led to world-wide recognition for his work in the development of power quality standards.

"In addition to this, he has an enduring passion for engineering education – in my view one of the most important responsibilities of senior engineers."

Professor Gosbell's career, which began in 1961 as a Cadet Engineer with the Sydney County Council, has included involvement in Government funded research projects, developing consultancy reports, as invited lecturer for industry peers, technicians and academic audiences, alongside high level contributions on several key industry committees.

He served a three-year term as Chairperson of the Australasian Committee for Power Engineering, from which he received a lifetime achievement award in 2007. He became an Associate Professor in 1990 at the University of Wollongong and was strongly involved with the setting up and operation of the Pacific Power Centre for Energy Efficiency and the Integral Energy Power Quality Centre, until his official retirement in 2005.

In reflecting upon his experiences and his contributions to the power industry, Professor Gosbell said that technical innovation did not necessarily start from a direct path of research.

"We cannot always be confident that initial research work will lead to an immediate better understanding, or tangible benefit, but it can still be a highly valuable part of key experiences in your career.

"I have found that the willingness to have an idea or interest, and then to devote the time to researching it, will often deliver solutions to problems later on that you had not envisaged.

"The development of tools and concepts for application to one problem can position you to make breakthroughs in other apparently unrelated areas, sometimes many years afterwards.

"The award reflects that the work of me and my colleagues has been useful to addressing real problems for industry in Australia and overseas - in many cases, important breakthroughs emerged from initially unrelated research."

Professor Gosbell's report on the shortage of power engineering graduates has received widespread publicity and encouraged the development of the Australian Power Institute. His work has been published widely, including a vast array of journal and conference papers and 5 co-authored books.

Despite official retirement, he remains an active advocate for industry excellence and shares his knowledge widely. As well as being an Accreditation Visit Manager for Engineers Australia, he currently serves as an Industry Expert on the ENA Reliability and Power Quality Working Group, is a Technical Advisor for the Integral Energy Reliability and Power Quality Centre, and is a member of IEC Working Group 08 involved with PQ standards.

In 2008 he was appointed as the Honorary Professorial Fellow of the Centre for Renewable Energy and Power Systems with the School of Engineering (University of Tasmania). His work in Power Engineering and Human Resources and Education continues in his ongoing role at the University of Wollongong in NSW, and he is currently on leave as a Visiting Erskine Fellow at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

Professor Gosbell is a member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (USA), maintains Chartered Professional Engineering status and is a Fellow of Engineers Australia.

Other recent recipients of the MA Sargent Medal have included Dr Barry Inglis, Mr Noel Godfrey and Professor Richard Middleton.

The presentation dinner also included recognition of achievements of other individuals and projects. The Space Student Thesis Prizes were awarded to Daniel Bunker and Andrew Sutton. Andrew was also awarded the National Committee on Automation, Control and Instrumentation (NCACI) Student Thesis Prize with a Commendation Certificate to Thomas Wilson. Alcoa & Honeywell were awarded the NCACI Project Excellence Award.

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