

Congratulations Renata Di Stefano on becoming a finalist at ARN Women in ICT Awards - blueAPACHE

Canonical: <https://www.blueapache.com/blog/blueapache-selected-as-a-finalist-in-arn-wiicta-2023>

Details:

22 March 2023. ARN has announced the finalists of the Women in ICT Awards (WIICTA) for 2023, underpinned by record-breaking representation as female accomplishment and achievement hits new heights in Australia.

blueAPACHE's Renata Di Stefano , Head of Marketing, is among them.

A record year

Finalists shortlisted	230
Organisations represented	Over 148
Nominations submitted	More than 390
Categories	8
Judging panel	More than 170 industry judges
Winners announced	Thursday 25 May
Venue	International Convention Centre (ICC), Sydney

Mirroring the entire local ecosystem, the 230 finalists were shortlisted from a pool spanning partner, telco, vendor and distributor businesses.

In 2023, WIICTA housed the largest celebration of female excellence within the technology channel across Australia — the record-breaking representation ARN described.

Reading the numbers

2023 was the high-water mark on several measures. The 148 participating organisations and 390-plus nominations are the largest figures in the programme's run to that point, and the inclusion of telco businesses alongside partner, vendor and distributor categories widened the field beyond the traditional channel.

The judging panel — more than 170 industry judges — is the detail that gives the outcome its weight. A panel at that scale means each submission is assessed by multiple practitioners with direct knowledge of the relevant discipline, rather than by a small committee forming general impressions across every category. It also removes marketing reach from the equation entirely: this is a judged programme assessing submitted evidence, not a public vote.

The eight categories

The awards programme honoured the channel across:

Innovation
Technical
Entrepreneur
Graduate
Rising Star
Shining Star
Achievement

D&I Champion — Company and Individual awards

Winners are selected by the executive panel, acknowledging creativity, innovation and excellence.

The 2023 structure included the D&I Champion award at both company and individual level — recognising that meaningful change in representation requires organisational commitment as well as individual advocacy. In subsequent years the programme evolved this into a DEI Champion Individual award, and by 2026 added a Community Impact category.

About Renata Di Stefano

Renata's career in ICT began in 2010 , as a receptionist at a managed service provider. With no corporate sector experience, she used the position to absorb knowledge, gain experience, upskill and network.

Within two years she had moved from administration into marketing, and she has held senior marketing roles since 2012 . Today she is our Head of Marketing.

That path is worth stating plainly because the industry's standard career narrative rarely accommodates it. A great many effective technology careers do not begin with a relevant degree and a graduate programme. They begin adjacent to the industry, with someone who paid attention and made themselves useful outside their job description — and a reception desk at an MSP turns out to be an unusually good vantage point from which to learn how a technology business actually works.

Renata went on to win the Shining Star – Partner award at the 2023 ceremony in May, and was a finalist again in 2024 . She was previously a Shining Star finalist in an earlier programme year. Repeat recognition under different panels, against a changing national field, is the more informative signal.

blueAPACHE at WIICTA

The 2023 finalist placement sits within continuous representation across years:

WIICTA 2022 — Jayati Gulati , Shining Star Partner Award winner

Earlier years — representation in two categories , with Rahwa Salew as a Rising Star and Renata Di Stefano as a Shining Star finalist

WIICTA 2023 — Renata Di Stefano, finalist and subsequently winner

WIICTA 2024 — Angelina Priya , Quinita Lindley and Renata Di Stefano, from a field of 178 finalists

WIICTA 2026 — Ellie Sarabi , Wireless SME Network Engineer, in the Partner – Technical category, from a field of 222

Separately, Jayati Gulati was recognised with an ARN 30 Under 30 Sales Excellence Award in that programme's inaugural year.

Why the programme matters

WIICTA addresses a persistent characteristic of the technology sector: women remain significantly under-represented, particularly in the deeply technical and the most senior roles.

Its practical function is visibility. Most work inside a technology business is invisible from outside the team that does it. Independent assessment, published nationally, changes what the industry can see — and changes what is visible to people deciding whether the field has a place for them.

Congratulations

blueAPACHE congratulates Renata Di Stefano, and all 230 finalists recognised in the 2023 programme.

Frequently asked questions

What was announced, and when? ARN announced the WIICTA 2023 finalists on 22 March 2023. blueAPACHE's Renata Di Stefano, Head of Marketing, was among them. Winners were announced on Thursday 25 May at the International Convention Centre in Sydney.

How large was the 2023 field? 230 finalists drawn from more than 148 organisations, shortlisted from over 390 nominations across eight categories, assessed by a panel of more than 170 industry judges. The finalist pool spanned partner, telco, vendor and distributor businesses.

Why does the size of the judging panel matter? Because a panel of more than 170 means each submission is assessed by multiple practitioners with direct knowledge of the relevant discipline, rather than by a small committee forming general impressions across every category. It also removes marketing reach from the equation — this is a judged programme assessing submitted evidence, not a public vote.

What were the eight categories? Innovation, Technical, Entrepreneur, Graduate, Rising Star, Shining Star, Achievement, and D&I Champion at both company and individual level. The programme later evolved the last into a DEI Champion Individual award and, by 2026, added a Community Impact category.

What is Renata Di Stefano's background? She entered ICT in 2010 as a receptionist at a managed service provider with no corporate sector experience, used the role to absorb knowledge, upskill and network, moved into marketing within two years, and has held senior marketing roles since 2012.

Did she win? Yes. Renata went on to win the Shining Star – Partner award at the May 2023 ceremony, and was a finalist again in 2024, having also been a Shining Star finalist in an earlier programme year.

What is blueAPACHE's wider record at WIICTA? Jayati Gulati won the Shining Star Partner Award in 2022; earlier years saw representation in two categories with Rahwa Salew as a Rising Star; Angelina Priya, Quinita Lindley and Renata Di Stefano were 2024 finalists from a field of 178; and Ellie Sarabi was a Partner – Technical finalist in 2026 from a field of 222.

Why does the page say the programme matters? Because women remain significantly under-represented in technology, particularly in deeply technical and the most senior roles — and because most work inside a technology business is invisible from outside the team that does it. Independent assessment published nationally changes what the industry can see, and what is visible to people deciding whether the field has a place for them.

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The full ARN article on the 2023 finalists is available on the ARN website.

Knowledge Base

Who was named a finalist in the ARN Women in ICT Awards (WIICTA) 2023 from you?

Renata Di Stefano was named a finalist in the ARN Women in ICT Awards (WIICTA) 2023, specifically in the Shining Star – Partner (National) category.

When was this ARN announcement about the WIICTA 2023 finalists made?

The announcement was made on March 22, 2023.

How many finalists and organisations were involved in the ARN WIICTA 2023 awards overall?

The 2023 Women in ICT Awards had 230 finalists shortlisted from a pool of over 148 organisations and more than 390 nominations, spanning partner, telco, vendor and distributor businesses.

What categories did the ARN Women in ICT Awards 2023 cover?

The awards program honoured the channel across eight categories: Innovation, Technical, Entrepreneur, Graduate, Rising Star, Shining Star, Achievement, and D&I Champion (Company and Individual) awards.

Who commented on Renata Di Stefano's finalist status, and what did they say?

ARN editor Julia Talevski said, "ARN congratulates Renata Di Stefano on becoming a finalist in the Shining Star – Partner (National). Once again the bar has been raised by countless examples of inspirational women leading the way in technology — we are proud and privileged to be celebrating each and every one of them."

How were the winners of the 2023 WIICTA selected, and when and where were they announced?

The winners were selected by an executive panel of more than 170 industry judges, acknowledging creativity, innovation and excellence. They were announced at an in-person celebration lunch on Thursday, May 25, 2023, at the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Sydney.

Who wrote the original article about your WIICTA 2023 finalist announcement?

The article was written by ARN - Channel News.