

# Riding the design wave

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Chris Fox wears his 9th Life design

Chris Fox's first-hand experience of the risks associated with water sports led him to design a self-inflating life jacket, which has just won a coveted James Dyson Award.

The '9th Life' wetsuit jacket monitors oxygen levels and automatically inflates when the user is at risk of drowning, bringing them into a safe upright position and signally for help via GPS, explained Chris, 23, who graduated last year with a Bachelor of Industrial Design with first-class honors.

It was the drowning tragedy of fellow Queenscliff surf club member Saxon Bird, who was knocked unconscious in a surf-ski accident on the Gold Coast, that highlighted the need for such a design, Chris said.

“My personal experience is through kiteboarding kilometers off shore in windy conditions – I realised that I'm vulnerable if knocked unconscious with no help close by.

“9th Life is unlike any other life jackets on the market today. It provides users with a high level of safety without restricting their mobility and fits in with the sporting style and beach culture,” Chris told The Sun Herald.



Craig Burke's Klinch tool tether

Chris's innovation won the silver prize in the student awards, presented recently in Melbourne as part of the 2011 Australian Design Awards.

“I like the challenge of solving problems and looking for solutions that will make a difference to people's lives. I also enjoy the hands on experience of designing, testing and building products.”

Chris was one of four finalists from UNSW's Faculty of Built Environment vying for the Dyson Awards.

Dr. Miles Park, Director of the Industrial Design Program, said, “This year's entries continued a very strong run of student design work – the

innovative thinking and attention to detail has been outstanding.”

It follows the outstanding success of Samuel Adeloju, who last year won the international James Dyson Award for his 'Longreach' flotation device launcher.

Other UNSW design alumni to be recognized in the Australian Design Awards were Craig Burke, who won the Housing and Building category for his recently launched product, Klinch tool tether, which allows the user to carry and use multiple tools safely without the risk of being dropped from heights.

“The significance of Craig's win is that it demonstrates how a design that he first worked on as a student can be successfully commercialized and be award-winning,” said Dr. Park.

Provided by University of New South Wales

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