

TALL POPPY CAMPAIGN

Investing in Australia's Future

- MEDIA RELEASE -

Stopping the brain drain: Top medical researchers to inspire Sydney high school students about careers in science.

Three of Australia's most prominent medical researchers will present their research around the brain to 120 selected Sydney high school students TODAY, Thursday 2 August.

Professor Peter Schofield, Dr Kay Double and Dr Andrew Hill will share their research related to the human brain with students at the seminar to inspire them about careers in science.

As part of the Tall Poppy Campaign, the seminar will bring the results of medical research to young people, making high school studies in science relevant to real-life.

Professor Peter Schofield will discuss genetic and environmental factors that contribute to depression. His research has showed that stressful life events (long understood to cause depression) combined with genetic factors double the propensity for some people to develop depression over their lifetime.

"As Director of one of this state's major medical research institutes, it is important to recognise that attracting the best and brightest young minds into medical research is vital to the future success of this field," says Professor Schofield.

Professor Schofield is Executive Director and CEO at the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute.

Dr Kay Double, NHMRC Senior Research Fellow at the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute, will discuss the ageing brain and disease.

"Australians are now living longer than at any time in history so it is important to know how to keep our brains active and healthy as we age and how to best avoid common diseases of old age, such as Alzheimer's disease," explains Dr Double.

Dr Andrew Hill will talk about a unique group of neurodegenerative diseases like 'Mad Cow Disease' in cattle and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) in humans. Dr Hill's research has demonstrated the link between CJD and exposure to Mad Cow Disease through eating infected meat products.

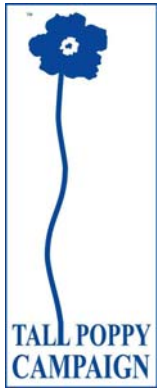
"Presenting medical research to young people at this seminar is a unique opportunity to let them know that you don't have to necessarily be a doctor to follow a career in biomedical research. Like many medical researchers, my degrees are in science. There are many varied and exciting careers in science with real implications for the health of our society," says Dr Hill.

Founded by the Australian Institute of Policy and Science

PO Box 145, BALMAIN NSW 2041 Ph: +61 2 9810 5642 Fax: +61 2 9810 2406 email: info@aips.net.au Internet: www.tallpoppies.net.au

The Tall Poppy is a metaphor for excellence and endeavour and symbolises Australia's pride in its outstanding achievers - in all fields.

ABN 71 000 025 507



Dr Hill is NHMRC RD Wright Fellow at the Bio21 Institute and Lecturer in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Melbourne.

The seminar is part of the Tall Poppy Campaign, a project of the Australian Institute of Policy and Science in partnership with the National Health & Medical Research Council and the NSW Department of Education and Training, which aims to highlight the work of Australia's best scientists and to inspire young Australians to see the relevance of science in today's world.

"There is a shortage of young people entering and graduating degrees in the sciences - the excitement and professional and personal rewards of science are often not recognised in our society," says Tall Poppy Campaign Director, Dorothy Davis.

"This seminar targets year 10 and 11 students who are beginning to think seriously about their tertiary education and career choices," Mrs Davis said.

"These scientists demonstrate to the next generation that a career in science in Australia can be exciting, rewarding and at the forefront of scientific developments worldwide" Mrs Davis added.

The Seminar will take place at the Sydney Children's Hospital (Lecture Theatre 1, entry via main entrance on High Street, Randwick) on Thursday 2 August from 10.00am – 12.30pm.

There will be a media photo opportunity at 12.30pm with the researchers, students and a model brain. Photos will also be available after the event.

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