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# TALL POPPY CAMPAIGN

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*Investing in Australia's Future*

**MEDIA RELEASE - EMBARGOED UNTIL 6pm, Thursday October 18**

## **2007 Tall Poppies of science: Award winners announced**

**Winners of the prestigious 2007 NSW/ACT Young Tall Poppy Science Awards will be awarded this Thursday October 18.**

Identifying genes that cause cancer, comprehending the impact of pollution on the Great Barrier Reef, treating inherited childhood nerve diseases with vitamin C and developing new molecules to help drugs attack cancer cells... These are just some of the advances in science made by this year's winners. And this is what they'll spend the year talking to high school students about.

Selected on the basis of research achievement and passion for communicating their work, thirteen scientists under 40 will be recognised with Young Tall Poppy Science awards on Thursday evening (winners listed on page 3).

What makes the Young Tall Poppy Science Awards unique is that instead of winning money or prizes, the scientists win the opportunity to take their research to high school students around NSW, ACT and across Australia.

As part of the Tall Poppy Campaign, the Award winners will undertake a program of school visits to inspire a new generation to get passionate about science.

Why? Because the number of students studying chemistry, maths and physics – subjects that feed key areas of workforce demand – are in freefall decline with enrolments now lower than in 1989<sup>1</sup>.

And the issue is a long way from simply upsetting science enthusiasts. With issues like climate change and cancer looming over a generation of young people currently in high school, the need for a science-educated population has never been more relevant.

"The Award winners demonstrate to the next generation that a career in science in Australia can make a real contribution to the health, productivity, sustainability and creativity of our society," says Tall Poppy Campaign Director, Dorothy Davis.

"They will target Year 10 and 11 students who are thinking seriously about their senior subject choices, their tertiary education and future careers," Davis explains.

"The Young Tall Poppy Science Awards recognise scientific achievers who are in the early stage of their careers and already making discoveries."

The Campaign now in its tenth year, numerous former Young Tall Poppy Science Award winners have gone on to win even more senior science awards, including three Eureka Prize winners and four *Cosmos* Bright Sparks Award winners this year alone.

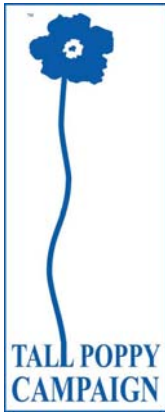
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**Founded by the Australian Institute of Policy and Science**

PO Box 145, BALMAIN NSW 2041 Ph: +61 2 9810 5642 Fax: +61 2 9810 2406 email: [info@aips.net.au](mailto:info@aips.net.au) Internet: [www.tallpoppies.net.au](http://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



“These are not only the brightest young people addressing the crucial issues facing humanity, they are also the best people for the job of inspiring the next generation in science,” adds Davis.

The Tall Poppy Campaign is a project of the Australian Institute of Policy and Science, with support from the NSW Office for Science & Medical Research and the NSW Department of Education and Training.

The Awards will be presented by the NSW Minister for Science and Medical Research, Verity Firth and the NSW Minister for Education and Training, John Della Bosca.

**The 2007 NSW & ACT Young Tall Poppy Science Awards will be held:**

NSW Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney  
Thursday October 18  
6.00pm – 7.00pm

**To attend the Awards, get further information or acquire photographs:**

- **Nikki Sullings, NSW Campaign Manager** – 0412 838 150 or 9810 5642.

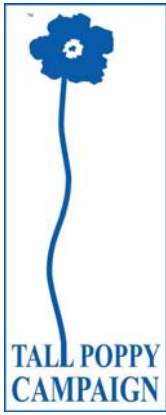
**For further comment on the Tall Poppy Campaign:**

- **The Tall Poppy Campaign - Dorothy Davis, Director** – 0417 240 603 or 9810 5642.

**LIST OF AWARD WINNERS ON FOLLOWING PAGE...**

**Reference**

<sup>1</sup> Australian Council of Deans of Science (2003). 'Is the study of science in decline?', Occasional Paper No. 3, <http://www.acds.edu.au/occas.htm>



## EMBARGOED 2007 NSW / ACT Young Tall Poppy Science Award Winners

- **Dr Joshua Burns**, 31, The Children's Hospital at Westmead, who is working on a world-first clinical trial to determine if vitamin C can help children with an inherited nerve disease that affects their feet and ankles.  
Email: [joshuab2@chw.edu.au](mailto:joshuab2@chw.edu.au) Tel: 0413 278 891 or (02) 9845 1228
- **Dr Vanessa Hayes**, 37, Garvan Institute of Medical Research, whose research focuses on how genetic differences increase the risk of developing cancers.  
Email: [v.hayes@garvan.org.au](mailto:v.hayes@garvan.org.au) Tel: 0405 556 918 or (02) 9295 8345
- **Dr Emma Johnston**, 34, University of New South Wales, who is investigating how contaminants and introduced marine species affect native marine life in locations including the Great Barrier Reef and Antarctica.  
Email: [e.johnston@unsw.edu.au](mailto:e.johnston@unsw.edu.au) (currently overseas – will respond to emails)
- **Dr Kate Jolliffe**, 37, University of Sydney, whose research work includes developing molecules to help cancer drugs attack cancer cells.  
Email: [jolliffe@chem.usyd.edu.au](mailto:jolliffe@chem.usyd.edu.au) Tel: 0403 932 342 or (02) 9351 2297
- **Dr Nadine Kasparian**, 29, University of New South Wales, who is studying how people with a strong family history of melanoma respond to genetic testing and is developing a web-based "Melanoma Risk Calculator".  
Email: [n.kasparian@unsw.edu.au](mailto:n.kasparian@unsw.edu.au) Tel: 0414 251 204 or (02) 9382 0110
- **Dr Brendan Kelaher**, 36, University of Technology, Sydney, who is researching the impact of over fishing, coastal development, pollution, desalination, invasive species and climate change on marine ecosystems.  
Email: [brendan.kelaher@uts.edu.au](mailto:brendan.kelaher@uts.edu.au) Tel: 0402 488 262 or (02) 9514 4068
- **Dr Craig O'Neill**, 28, Macquarie University, who has pioneered sophisticated computer modeling tools to simulate planet formation and better understand the differences between earth and non-inhabitable planets.  
Email: [coneill@els.mq.edu.au](mailto:coneill@els.mq.edu.au) Tel: 0448 550 080 or (02) 9850 9673
- **Dr Matt Taylor**, 27, University of New South Wales, who is developing novel approaches to fish stocking and release techniques to improve recreational and commercial fisheries.  
Email: [mattytaylor@unsw.edu.au](mailto:mattytaylor@unsw.edu.au) Tel: 0410 558 653 or (02) 9385 2079
- **Dr James Tickner**, 33, CSIRO Minerals, whose security scanning technology was used in a recently completed trial at Brisbane Airport.  
Email: [james.tickner@csiro.au](mailto:james.tickner@csiro.au) Tel: 0409 828 456
- **Dr Nicole Verrills**, 31, University of Newcastle, who is using state-of-the-art molecular biology techniques to identify genes and proteins that contribute to cancer.  
Email: [nikki.verrills@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:nikki.verrills@newcastle.edu.au) Tel: 0418 683 169 or (02) 4921 5619
- **Dr Carola Vinuesa**, 38, Australian National University, who recently discovered a gene that appears to be a crucial link in the development of autoimmune diseases such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and multiple sclerosis.  
Email: [carola.vinuesa@anu.edu.au](mailto:carola.vinuesa@anu.edu.au) Tel: 0423 267 920 or (02) 6125 4500
- **Dr Charles Warren**, 32, University of Sydney, who is examining factors that limit plant growth to help improve agriculture and environmental management.  
Email: [charles.warren@bio.usyd.edu.au](mailto:charles.warren@bio.usyd.edu.au) Tel: 0407 873 758 or (02) 9351 2678
- **Dr Lisa Wood**, 38, University of Newcastle / Hunter Medical Research Institute, who is investigating the role of diet in the management of asthma and the link between asthma and obesity.  
Email: [lisa.wood@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:lisa.wood@newcastle.edu.au) Tel: 0425 373 020 or (02) 4985 5677