

MEDIA RELEASE - editorial

2011 TALL POPPY AWARDS – BEST AND BRIGHTEST YOUNG RESEARCHERS IN SA

The Governor of South Australia will host a Reception celebrating the brightest young stars of scientific research in our State during National Science Week.

Fifteen exceptional young South Australian researchers have been shortlisted for this year's Tall Poppy Awards. Their research covers a huge diversity of issues including:

- How mining can cause so-called "natural" disasters such as mud slides and volcanoes.
- Using ochre to track the movements of ancient Australian Aboriginals.
- Making transport and energy systems quieter.
- Detecting disease using your iPhone.
- Treating obesity in women and children.
- Finding the causes of pain and hunger in your stomach.
- Controlling blood vessel growth to treat diabetes and create new stem cell therapies.
- Understanding and treating Parkinson's disease, strokes and breast cancer.

Nominees for the SA Awards, the longest-running in the country having been established in 1998, must be 35 years old or younger and have excellent credentials in both their research field and their commitment to communicating science to the community.

"Recognising our world-class scientists is critical to ensuring the sustainable future of our state," said the Governor of South Australia, Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, who is a strong supporter of the Campaign. "Their contribution to the global economy of knowledge will be the catalyst for the next generation of young researchers who will go out and change the world."

Winners of the 2011 Tall Poppy Awards will gain access to a range of exclusive professional and personal development opportunities over the 12 months following their Award including intensive interaction with South Australian business, political and education communities as well as the broader public.

Dr Ellen Nisbet, a 2010 Tall Poppy Award winner, experienced another aspect of the value of her Award while at a conference in Cambridge, England where she was congratulated on her achievement by Professors from prestigious US universities Harvard and Yale who noted the Tall Poppy Campaign as a world-class indicator of excellent research.

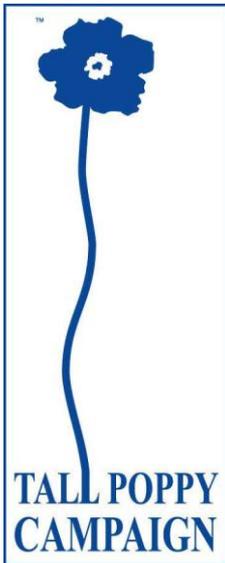
"My Award has been a great advantage when applying for grants to fund my continuing research," Dr Nisbet said.

"My research examines the evolution of the malaria parasite which infects several hundred million people worldwide each year and kills one million. Many of the key anti-malaria drugs are now ineffective due to the spread of resistance. Understanding how modern malarial cells developed is key to developing new anti-malarial drugs."

Previous winners have gone on to achieve great success in their careers proving the accuracy of the Awards in recognising true South Australian potential.

Professor Ross McKinnon, a Tall Poppy Award Winner from 2000, has recently been appointed Director of Research at the Flinders Centre for Innovation in Cancer. This follows roles as inaugural Director of the Sansom Institute, co-founder of pharmaceutical research company PharmaQuest and Professor of Pharmaceutical Biotechnology at UniSA.

"Receiving a Tall Poppy Award gave me a clear focus on the need to connect my research to the community, rather than simply satisfying our demanding peer review system" said Professor McKinnon.



"Tall Poppies are the ideal figureheads for science in our schools, communities, businesses and governments. As a member of the Board of Directors which administers the Tall Poppy Awards I can help identify the exceptional scientific and communication talents required to excel as these role models and to promote South Australia's scientific future."

One Tall Poppy will go on to win the annual South Australian Tall Poppy of the Year Award and receive a \$5,000 prize as part of the South Australian Science Excellence Awards, to be announced at a gala dinner on Thursday, 3 November, 2011.

Science and Information Economy Minister Jay Weatherill said of the Award, "We hope the Tall Poppies will inspire more young South Australians to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)".

2011 South Australian Tall Poppy Award Finalists – alphabetical order (with research topic)

Dr Stuart Brierley	Neuroscience, gastroenterology (Irritable Bowel Syndrome)
Dr Laura Brooks	Acoustics (Quieter transport and energy technologies)
Dr Lisa Ebert	Cell Biology (Stem cell therapies)
Dr Philip Gregory	Medical Research (Breast cancer)
Dr Alison Hill	Nutrition & Exercise (Cardiovascular disease)
Dr Claire Jessup	Diabetes & Transplantation (Diabetes)
Dr Michelle McDonnell	Neuroscience (Stroke victim recovery)
Dr Lisa Moran	Women's Health (Obesity treatment in women)
Dr Rachel Popelka-Filcoff	Analytical Chemistry/ Archaeological Science (Aboriginal history)
Dr Craig Priest	Microfluidics and Interfacial Chemistry (Disease detection)
Dr Tara Pukala	Biological Chemistry (Parkinson's disease)
Dr Erin Symonds	Gastroenterology & Nutritional research (Obesity treatment)
Dr Mark Tingay	Geoscience & Petroleum Engineering (Mining & natural disasters)
Dr Grant Tomkinson	Health Sciences (Obesity treatment in children)
Dr Roger Yazbek	Gastrointestinal Health (Inflammatory bowel diseases)

MEDIA CONTACT: **Rachel Crees, Manager, Tall Poppy Campaign – South Australia**
M 0433 288 147 | T 08 8207 8707 | E rachel.crees@sa.gov.au