The Tall Poppy is a metaphor for excellence and endeavour. It symbolises Australia’s pride in its outstanding achievers in the sciences.
THE TALL POPPY CAMPAIGN

The Tall Poppy Campaign was established in 1998 by the Australian Institute of Policy and Science to promote public awareness of Australia’s intellectual achievements. An important component of the Campaign is the Young Tall Poppy Science Awards which recognise the achievements of outstanding young researchers in the sciences including technology, engineering, mathematics and medical research.

The Awards are made state-by-state and in 2011 are being made across all states and territories of Australia. The Tasmanian Young Tall Poppy Science Awards recognise the achievements of young Tasmanian researchers from a wide mix of scientific areas.

These prestigious awards uniquely acknowledge the recipients’ research achievements alongside their capacity and commitment to communicate science and its significance to the broader community. Awarders go on to demonstrate their value as role models by promoting and encouraging an interest and engagement in science within the education and community sectors through Tall Poppy Campaign initiatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

The Tasmanian Government is committed to the strategic development and sustainable growth of the science and research sector in Tasmania and, together with the University of Tasmania, is a proud sponsor of the TAS Tall Poppy Campaign.

The science and research sector generates significant benefits to the state, attracting offshore investment and providing high-quality employment opportunities. These have allowed us to establish a number of world-acclaimed institutions here in Tasmania. This is largely attributable to the unique geographical, lifestyle and community-based advantages that Tasmania enjoys.

It is not just the economic importance of the sector that is of benefit to Tasmania, but also the significant role that this sector plays across all industry sectors as well as the Tasmanian community. This is why we are committed to the development of a Science and Research Sector Strategy, which is currently underway.

The Tall Poppy Campaign will meet a number of the priorities outlined in this strategy. It will help develop scientific and research skills to encourage ingenuity, innovation, adaptability in all sectors of the economy, and help build science and research capability as an enabler across the Tasmanian economy and community.

On behalf of Tasmania, I would like to congratulate all the 2011 TAS Tall Poppy Award nominees and winners for their contribution to the sciences. All the nominees are exceptional role models and I hope they will enjoy engaging with young members of our community to inspire them to follow in their footsteps.

Lara Giddings MP
Premier of Tasmania
Dr Cleland’s work focuses on understanding individual, social and environmental influences on physical activity among women, children, those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, and rural populations. Verity’s research is trying to understand what stops people from being active, and the key things that could help them to be more active.

Being active can reduce the chances of many serious health problems like heart disease, diabetes, obesity, cancer, and mental health problems. More than half of all Australian adults are not active enough to get health benefits. Some groups, such as women, children, those facing financial hardship, and people living in rural areas, find it even harder to be physically active.

Verity has been proactive in disseminating her research findings in the community and through policy opportunities, including as an invited member of a Heart Foundation (Tasmania) advisory committee, the Tasmanian Premier’s Physical Activity Council and the Tasmanian Health and Medical Human Research Ethics Committee and has held advisory roles with committees of Tasmanian police and education departments. She has spoken at many fora, including Rotary Tasmania, the Monash Community Association, and Women’s Sport and Recreation Tasmania and featured on local radio and in newspapers promoting her research to understand environmental influences on physical activity among rural Tasmanian women.

Cigarette smoking results in around 15,000 deaths per year in Australia and is a leading cause of preventable death and disease, with one in five adults still smoking. The majority of smokers want to quit but most attempts end in failure.

Dr Ferguson’s research focuses trying to understand why smokers find it so difficult. In particular, he looks at how social and environmental facts – such as where people are, who they are with, and what they are doing – can influence the success of a quit attempt. Stuart’s research also tries to understand why quit smoking treatments work for some people but not for others, in the hope that such information can help us to improve the way that we help smokers and result in more people being able to quit for good.

Stuart is committed to ensuring a link between his work and public health stakeholders and the policy domain. His work has been featured in print media including the *Sunday Tasmanian* and he is an active member of two local tobacco policy groups: the ‘Tobacco Coalition’ and ‘Smoke Free Tasmania’. He hopes his research fellowship with the Cancer Council of Tasmania will help him to hone his science communication skills.
Plastic is now an integral part of human society. Despite better legislation and recycling to deal with its non-biodegradable nature, more than 20 million plastic items enter the ocean each day. Seabirds foraging over the ocean frequently mistake this for food. On Lord Howe Island, 96% of shearwater chicks (muttonbirds) contain plastic which can block or rupture the digestive tract and also contains toxic chemicals.

Dr Laver’s research is focused on determining whether the removal of plastic from seabird stomachs results in healthier chicks and increased survival. She hopes the results of this research will contribute significantly to the responsible use of plastic products as well as the management of wildlife at risk from plastic ingestion across the globe.

Jennifer is passionate about communicating science to the public. She writes for non-technical magazines and bulletins, maintains a professional website, coordinates community environmental activities for school groups and hosts dozens of science workshops and seminars every year. Jennifer has also helped develop interactive community education programs for the Tasmanian Mountain Festival, Young Tassie Scientists, Kids for Kids and Science at Sea, National Science Week programs and is partnering with the Bookend Trust and Southern Waste. Her research has been featured recently in numerous national television and radio media.

Left - Right
1) Sorting microplastics in the lab (from beach sand sample)
2) In the field with Kate, part of the winning Rosny College team for the 2011 Envirothon Competition
3) Stomach contents of a Flesh-footed Shearwater chick
4) Counting microplastics on the beach
5) Trying (very hard) to reach a Flesh-footed Shearwater chick inside its burrow (up to 3m long)
MORE ABOUT AIPS

The Australian Institute of Policy and Science is an independent not-for-profit first established in 1932 that works to:

- Increase public engagement in science and ensure people have a voice in decisions that affect them
- Promote excellence in research, innovation and the promotion and communication of science
- Inform and influence policy and policy-making through expert comment and input
- Invest in a scientifically inspired, literate and skilled Australia that contributes to local and global social challenges

Young Tall Poppies and other Institute stakeholders are engaged through working groups on issues such as health, energy, water and climate change as well as on challenges relevant to the development of the research sector and workforce. They participate in roundtables with policy makers and politicians and reach out to the broader community through the media and community engagement initiatives.

The AIPS flagship publication AQ: Australian Quarterly helps to bring politically and socially relevant issues where science has a role to play to a broader audience.

TALL POPPY CAMPAIGN SUPPORT

As a not-for-profit, our Campaign relies on federal and state government grants, sponsorship from universities and industry partners and valuable in-kind partnerships and collaboration.

Nationally, the Tall Poppy Campaign has a formal partnership with the Australian Science Teachers Association and the Australian Science Communicators Network while at state and territory level we work together with numerous education, government, industry and community partners.

In its fourteenth year the Tall Poppy Campaign is in a period of growth and development. Education, industry and research stakeholders with an idea for partnership, or wishing to access our initiatives, are encouraged to contact us to discuss their ideas and opportunities.

‘Feedback shows that 93% of teachers found content presented by Young Tall Poppies was relevant and engaged students’
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
AIPS thanks our 2011 TAS Young Tall Poppy Selection Committee

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Chair-TAS Tall Poppy Science Awards Committee
Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research
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Ms Robyn Aitken
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Professor Simon Foote
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