

## hMedia Coverage

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A PhD student from The University of Queensland Diamantina Institute (UQDI), is one of six state winners of the AusBiotech/GSK Student Excellence Awards.

Jana McCaskill will compete next week for the national biosciences research award at the AusBiotech 2011 Conference.

The Queensland winner is developing a new drug delivery system that achieves efficient delivery of an anti-viral drug to the infected cells in the respiratory system.

“My research concentrates on the delivery and development of a new therapeutic agent to treat acute respiratory viral infections. It involves boosting the efficiency of our anti-viral therapeutic agent by recruiting our own immune system to fight infection,” Ms McCaskill said.

“This is an innovative approach and potentially offers a superior means to treat acute viral infections. I wanted to be involved in an industry that was at the forefront of discovery for the benefit of society.”

AusBiotech and GlaxoSmithKline hold the annual competition as a key initiative to encourage more students to pursue research and careers in bio-sciences and to reward early-career successes, recognising high achievement, unique work and innovations.

“We created these awards with the aim of making bio-sciences more attractive and to help young, promising scientists boost their careers at a critical time,” CEO of AusBiotech, Dr Anna Lavelle, said.

“It is a surprising paradox that Australia has an innovative and successful history of bio-scientific discoveries including the bionic ear and the cervical cancer vaccine, yet fewer Australian young people are entering science. We need to reward those who do make the decision to devote their lives to research.”

The six state winners from across Australia will now compete for the national title at the AusBiotech 2011 Conference in Adelaide from 16 – 19 October 2011.

Winners of the state awards receive payment for travel, accommodation and registration to the conference, where the national winner will be announced, and receive a \$7000 travel grant to be used to present their research at an international conference. In addition, the national winner's principal supervisor will receive a \$2000 research grant.

For more information on the awards visit [www.ausbiotech.org](http://www.ausbiotech.org)

**AusBiotech 2011** is the annual conference of AusBiotech and the premier biotechnology and life sciences conference for Australia and the Asia-Pacific, attracting more than 1400 delegates from across the world each year and is renowned for its agenda-setting programs.

**GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)** is a global research-based pharmaceutical and healthcare company with a proud history in Australia dating back to 1886. We collaborate with local researchers and doctors to discover new ways of treating and preventing disease, investing around \$56 million a year in research and development. We currently have over 30 discovery projects underway and our Medicines Research Unity is the only Phase 1 facility supported by a pharmaceutical company in Australia.