



## Media release

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For immediate release

### Australia's brightest scientific students compete for prestigious awards

Student researchers from throughout Australia will compete for state and national titles in the country's leading competition for life science, biotechnology and bio-engineering students: the 2011 AusBiotech-GSK Student Excellence Awards. Applications are now open for the 2011 awards.

"The winners of today will go on to become the contributors of tomorrow in innovation, both in Australia and around the world," says AusBiotech CEO, Dr Anna Lavelle. "These awards provide an important boost at the point of researchers' careers when they need it most. The winners are recognised for their talent, commitment and provided with invaluable networking and mentoring opportunities."

With the support of GlaxoSmithKline, the AusBiotech-GSK Student Excellence Awards recognise the next generation of Australia's researchers and bio-innovators.

"GlaxoSmithKline is committed to fostering scientific skills and nurturing ideas in the quest for new medicines to treat and prevent illness. We are proud to support AusBiotech Student Excellence Awards which contribute to this discovery journey," said Camilla Chong, Medical Director GlaxoSmithKline Australia.

The awards are open in each state and territory of Australia. Six state winners will be invited to compete for the national title at the AusBiotech2011 Conference in Adelaide from 16 – 19 October 2011. Winners of the state awards will receive payment for travel, accommodation and registration to the conference.

The national winner will receive a **\$7,000 travel grant** to be used to present their research at an international conference (conditions apply). In addition, the national winner's principal supervisor will receive a **\$2,000 research grant**.

Last year's national winner, University of Adelaide student Natasha Rogers, won the award for her research into the facilitation of organ cell protection, following kidney transplantation surgery. Ms Rogers' research demonstrates the ability of curcumin, an extract of the spice turmeric, to protect kidney cells from organ damage from blood flow during surgery, called ischaemia-reperfusion injury (IRI).

"I am very grateful to AusBiotech and GSK," says Mrs Rogers. "The award enabled me to attend the American Transplant Congress, arguably the best international transplantation conference, in Philadelphia, to present my work to an international audience and receive valuable feedback."



In fact, Mrs Rogers was awarded a 'poster of distinction' at the conference. The young scientist has now gone on to receive a fellowship from the National Medical Health and Research Council of Australia and is studying alongside leading transplant researchers in two new laboratories in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. "I am broadening my skill base in two new laboratories, in transplantation immunology and vascular biology, and hope to bring these techniques and collaborations back with me to Australia," says Mrs Rogers.

Other 2010 award winners were:

**NSW - Adam Collison (University of Newcastle)** for research into the 'Modulation of a novel immune signaling pathway attenuates the development of allergic airways disease.'

**Queensland - Jeremy Barr (University of Queensland)** for research into 'Metatranscriptomic and metaproteomic comparison of floccular and granular sludges.'

**Tasmania - Vipul Agarwal (University of Tasmania)** for research into 'Synthesis of novel guar graft copolymer as pitch fixture in the pulp and paper industry.'

**Victoria - Gregor Frederik Lichtfuss (Monash University)** for research into 'Natural Killer cell defects in HIV infection: Supplying the tools to support the development of better HIV therapy.'

**Western Australia - Stephan Karl (University of WA)** for research into 'High sensitivity detection of malaria transmitting cells using high field gradient magnetic fractionation'

Applications are now open for the 2011 awards. The deadline for submissions is Monday 12 September.

For more information visit <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. The conference attracts over 1,400 delegates from across the world each year and is renowned for its agenda-setting programs, significant business analysis and world-class business matching program.

**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 \$52 million a year in research and development.

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