

Media release

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Tomorrow's biotechnology leaders receive accolades at AusBiotech 2010

The brightest student minds in Australian life sciences were recognised for their research at the AusBiotech–GSK Student Excellence Awards, presented this morning at the official opening of *AusBiotech 2010*. Natasha Rogers of University of Adelaide was the recipient of the inaugural AusBiotech Student Association (ABSA)-GSK National Prize 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).

"We hope that this research will translate into human drug delivery, as protecting organ cells after transplantation, will ultimately increase the number of successful transplants and transplant rates," said Natasha Rogers of her award-winning research. "At the completion of my PhD, I hope to continue my research in the United States, where a number of researchers are working in this important field."

The AusBiotech-GSK Student Excellence Awards aim to recognise and encourage promising research students and to raise awareness of research translation and applications. This year's winners show a promising future for the Australian biotechnology industry.

"With the support of GlaxoSmithKline, the AusBiotech Student Excellence Awards recognise the next generation of Australia's researchers and bio-innovators," said Dr Anna Lavelle. "Student research is a vital contributor to our industry, paving the way for new and innovative discoveries to ensure the future of Australian biotechnology."

"GSK is a company that has been built on scientific innovation. We are proud to support an initiative that enables young scientists to build their confidence and skills in translational science," said Dr

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Ashley Bates, Head R&D Alliances, GSK Australia and New Zealand. “GSK was very pleased to see the number of applications increase three-fold in 2010, highlighting the enthusiasm and engagement of research students across the country.”

The AusBiotech-GSK Student Excellence Award recipients in the states were:

NSW – Adam Collison (University of Newcastle) – for research into the ‘Modulation of a novel immune signalling 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.’

South Australia – Natasha Rogers (University of Adelaide) for research into the ‘Use of curcumin liposomes to facilitate cellular delivery and modify ischaemia-reperfusion injury and the immune response in organ transplantation.’

Tasmania – Vipul Agarwal (University of Tasmania) for research into ‘Synthesis of novel guar graft copolymer as pitch fixative 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.’

AusBiotech 2010 is the annual conference of AusBiotech and the premier biotechnology 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.

For additional event information visit the conference website at: www.ausbiotech2010.com.au.

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About AusBiotech

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AusBiotech is Australia's voice on biotechnology, and represents more than 3,000 members, encompassing medicines, medical diagnostics and devices, agriculture, alternative fuels and climate change.

For further information, interviews, or media registration for *AusBiotech 2010*, please contact:

Jessica Sealby
Buchan Consulting
P: +61 3 9866 4722
M: +61 435 635 442
E: jsealby@bcg.com.au