

## AusBiotech 2010 Chairman's Excellence Award – Dr John Ballard

Dr John Ballard received the AusBiotech Chairman's Excellence Award in recognition of his work as a long-standing pioneer in the biotechnology industry, both nationally and in South Australia.

Dr Ballard began his career fifty years ago. As a researcher at the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Tissue Growth and Repair, based in Adelaide, he played a key role in the discovery and commercialisation of Long™R3IGF-I, a recombinant protein used in the manufacture of biopharmaceuticals.

Long™R3IGF-I was commercialised by GroPep Pty Ltd, where Dr Ballard held the positions of Managing Director and CEO from inception in 1988 through the company's listing on the ASX in 2000.

"I began as a researcher, then a research manager, made a significant discovery and then followed a path into the commercial world," said Dr Ballard.

"Now, I am trying to further support the bioscience industry in a mentoring role."



Photo courtesy of AusBiotech Ltd.  
Photography by Ray Messner.

Today, Dr Ballard is a Director of BR-Angels Pty Ltd and has helped a number of bioscience companies to secure investment capital. He is considered one of the founding leaders of Australia's biotechnology industry.

"I am passionate about helping start-up biotech companies grow and thrive. I provide guidance to these companies on how to generate investment and how to use the money well," he said.

"I also invest directly into those companies, teaching them what not to do which is just as important as teaching them what to do."

Dr Ballard's award was presented at the AusBiotech national conference by AusBiotech Chair and CEO and Managing Director of Biomomics Limited, Dr Deborah Rathjen.

"We have some of the best biotech minds in the world," said Dr Rathjen. "This award carries with it global recognition and esteem."

## AusBiotech-GSK Student Excellence Award – Dr Natasha Rogers

Dr Natasha Rogers won the national AusBiotech-GSK Student Excellence Award presented at the AusBiotech national conference in recognition of her research as a PhD student at the University of Adelaide.

Dr Rogers is working to improve the success of organ transplants by investigating new ways to treat ischaemia-reperfusion injury (IRI).

IRI can occur where a sudden return of blood flow, together with oxygen and immune cells, causes damage in a newly transplanted organ.

"We hope that this research will translate into human drug delivery, as protecting organ cells after transplantation, will ultimately increase the number of successful transplant rates," said Dr Rogers.

Her work is using a turmeric extract, called curcumin, to counter damage from IRI. Since curcumin is not well absorbed by the



Photo courtesy of AusBiotech Ltd.  
Photography by Ray Messner.

body, Dr Rogers is developing a new technique to deliver curcumin, using microscopic fat particles called liposomes.

"With the support of GlaxoSmithKline, the AusBiotech Student Excellence Award recognises the next generation of Australia's researchers and bio-innovators," said AusBiotech Ltd CEO, 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."

Dr Rogers hopes to continue her research in the United States, on completion of her PhD in Adelaide.

"A number of researchers are working in this important field," she said. "Cross-fertilisation of ideas and collaboration are a great way to conduct productive research."