

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Students test their brainpower in national neuroscience quiz

Tasmanian secondary school students will join more than 9000 high school students from across Australia and New Zealand tomorrow (Wednesday, March 12) in round one of the 2008 Australian Brain Bee Challenge, designed to test their knowledge of the human brain.

It is the first time Tasmanian students have competed in the Brain Bee Challenge, which began in 2006 and is run by the Queensland Brain Institute (QBI). The University of Tasmania is coordinating the Tasmanian entries for the event, which coincides with Brain Awareness Week.

Round one tomorrow will see 120 Tasmanian students test their knowledge of the brain and neurological diseases, with the top-scoring students progressing to the state final to be held at UTAS in June.

State winners will receive microscopes from Zeiss Australasia and progress to the national final, to be held at the QBI in August. The national winner will have the chance to compete in the International Brain Bee in the US, in 2009.

Dr Lisa Foa, from the UTAS School of Medicine, said UTAS was delighted to be involved with bringing the event to Tasmania.

“Together with Brain Awareness Week, the Challenge helps to raise awareness of the brain, how important the brain is, how we can look after our brains and the ongoing research into how the brain works and how can we fix it after disease or trauma,” she said.

“We can all look after our brains in our day-to-day activities with diet, helmets, fitness and of course keeping our minds active!”

QBI Director Professor Perry Bartlett said he was pleased to see so many students displaying an interest in neuroscience.

“The Australian Brain Bee Challenge has quickly become one of the largest science competitions in the Asia–Pacific region and QBI is pleased to support an initiative that promotes neuroscience and involves so many talented young people,” he said.

While the competition is aimed at year 10 and 11 students, those competing from Dominic College, in Hobart, are aged only 13 to 14 and part of the school’s high achieving student program.

More information can be found online at www.abbc.edu.au

* Dr Lisa Foa, School of Medicine, is available for comment after 10am on (03) 6226 2681.

Photo opportunities:

Hobart: Dominic College, 204 Tolosa St, Glenorchy. Students from the high achiever program (aged 13-14) have created a model human brain, about 1m/sq, which will inspire them for the quiz. Contact Aimee Woodward, Head of Maths and Science, on (03) 6272 5011 to arrange photo/visual opportunities.

Launceston: Riverside High School, West Tamar Highway, Launceston. Year 10 student Nick Dennis will represent his school in the test at 1.30pm. Please contact William Briginshaw (after 10.30am) on 0429 318 770 or (03) 6327 3969 to arrange photo/visual opportunities.

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