

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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UTAS scientists celebrated for research excellence

A UTAS separation scientist and an epidemiologist were recognised at the Victorian and Tasmanian Young Tall Poppy Science Awards ceremony in Melbourne last night.

School of Chemistry researcher, Dr Emily Hilder, has been named Tasmanian Tall Poppy of the Year 2009, while Dr Seana Gall of the Menzies Research Institute received an award for research excellence and taking her science into the community.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Daryl Le Grew said these recent awards are a reflection of the dynamic research being undertaken by young scientists at the University.

“UTAS is a research-driven university producing international-standard research,” said Professor Le Grew.

“The recognition of two of our researchers as Young Tall Poppy scientists, shows the depth of opportunities at UTAS.

“I applaud both Dr Hilder and Dr Gall for this accolade earned through their scientific research, work to encourage younger generations to undertake careers in the sciences, and contribution to educating the community in their field of work.”

The Tall Poppy award for Dr Hilder of the School’s Australian Centre for Research on Separation Science (ACROSS), follows her recognition last week as a scientist of national significance with a Future Fellowship awarded by the Australian Research Council.

Dr Hilder’s research has contributed to significant separation science advances including, the groundbreaking diagnostic blood test to screen captive and wild Tasmanian devils before the Devil Facial Tumours appear, a world-first portable explosives kit assisting investigators with swift post-blast apprehension of terrorists, and new technology used for designing safer drugs and screening for impurities.

“What is special about research at UTAS is its strong connection to the Tasmanian community, allowing you to take science to the people more easily,” Dr Hilder said.

“This is the best place in the world to do what we do because of the critical mass of people where you can work with research teams and across disciplines, and not in isolation.”

Dr Gall has been employed as a Menzies research fellow for the Childhood Determinants of Adult Health (CDAH) study since 2006. Her current research focuses on the determinants of health risk behaviours such as smoking and poor diet and how these behaviours are related to cardiovascular risk factors in young adults.

“Being named as a Tall Poppy is both exciting and satisfying because this award acknowledges that being a scientist is not just about doing research – it is also about getting your findings heard by those who will benefit from it the most, be it policy makers, health care providers or the community in general,” said Dr Gall.

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