

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Busy bees prepare for a challenge

Fifty-five outstanding year 10 students from 12 high schools across Tasmania are preparing for a day of neuroscience competition today, after winning a place in the Tasmanian State Finals of the Australian Brain Bee Challenge (ABBC).

The students will today take part in challenges and neuroscience quizzes at the UTAS Faculty of Health Science's School of Medicine to test their knowledge of the brain and how it works.

ABBC state finalists will also meet with neuroscientists at UTAS, including the Faculty of Health Science Wicking Dementia Centre and Menzies Research Institute Tasmania.

Neuroscience is the largest area of medical research at UTAS and involves understanding the brain and how it is affected by neurodegenerative disease as well as traumatic brain injury.

"This competition gives students a feel for what a career in neuroscience might be like. The very best students from around the state will be challenged in a fun and exciting competition," ABBC National Co-ordinator and neuroscientist Professor Linda Richards said.

"Neurological and mental illness account for a huge proportion of the disease burden in our community so we need to attract the best and brightest minds to take up a career in science."

5,550 students from 300 schools across Australia and New Zealand took part in the first round of this year's competition.

This year, more Tasmanian schools and students competed in round one than ever before, making this the largest Tasmanian final yet.

"We're excited to see more students than ever interested in the brain and neuroscience, at a time when Tasmanian brain research is rapidly growing in international standing.

"We hope these students will build on their neuroscience knowledge to join us in future studies to further enhance the state's contribution to this important field," said state coordinator, UTAS' Dr Matthew Kirkcaldie.

"Brain diseases such as Alzheimer's are critical health issues for the 21st century and Tasmanian initiatives such as the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre are at the leading edge of efforts to meet this enormous challenge."

The student who wins the individual state final will be offered a place in the Australian Brain Bee Challenge National Final, held in Adelaide next January at the Australasian Neuroscience Society's annual conference.

About the Australian Brain Bee Challenge:

The Australian Brain Bee Challenge is the country's only neuroscience competition for high school students. The competition is designed to test school students' knowledge about a range of topics, including intelligence, memory, emotions, sleep, Alzheimer's disease and stroke. ABBC is proudly supported by major sponsors, QBI and UQ, along with the Australian Neuroscience Society, Carl Zeiss and Generation One.
<http://www.abbc.edu.au/>

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