



MEDIA STATEMENT

Verity Firth

**Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
Minister for Women
Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)**

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NSW TO RECOGNISE TOP SCIENTISTS

The achievements of the State's top scientists will be honoured with the creation of a new prestigious annual science award, Minister for Science and Medical Research Verity Firth announced today.

Ms Firth said public nominations would be called next month for the new annual "NSW Scientist of the Year Awards".

The awards will offer \$85,000 in prize money for cutting edge research that generates economic, health, environmental or technological benefits for NSW.

"Science is helping us move forward in a range of areas – from developing innovative new industries to improving health care and tackling environmental problems like global warming," Ms Firth said.

"These new awards will shine a spotlight on the work of our best and brightest while encouraging future generations to take up careers in science-related fields.

"Science is so much more than microscopes, white coats and labs - the work of our scientists touches and enriches all of our lives every day.

"Like awards for our local sporting heroes, tv stars, writers and artists – we want to put NSW scientists up on a pedestal acknowledging their contribution and inspiring others to join the field."

Ms Firth said the awards will include nine categories carrying prize money of \$5,000 each and an overall "NSW Scientist of the Year" award with a \$40,000 prize.

The first eight categories will recognise work undertaken in a range of science research fields – the environment, mathematics, physics and astronomy, biomedical, plant and animal research, chemistry, computer science and engineering.

The ninth category will reward outstanding ability and leadership by a secondary school science teacher.

“Science teachers across NSW work extremely hard to inspire the imaginations of their pupils and the Government wants to recognise that work,” Ms Firth said.

“The major prize of NSW Scientist of the Year will be awarded to the scientist whose research contributions are judged by an independent panel to be of the greatest benefit for NSW.”

Nominations for the NSW Scientist of the Year Awards will be called between April and June, with finalists announced in August and an awards ceremony held in September.

“I am encouraging entries from researchers who have undertaken leading scientific, technological or medical research in NSW within the last five years.”

Ms Firth said the NSW Scientist of the Year Awards will be linked with an annual competition for Years 7 to 10 high school students. The “Science EXPOsition” competition will challenge students to examine the work of top scientists in NSW and to explain how their work could improve the future.

“It is my hope that these Awards will encourage young minds to start imagining what they could achieve as top scientists themselves one day,” Ms Firth said.

More information about the Awards will be available through the NSW Office of Science and Medical Research at www.osmr.nsw.gov.au.

Media contact: David Boyd 0404 944 550