# MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. Tony Stewart MP
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)

****EMBARGOED UNTIL 6PM Thursday, October 23, 2008****

## YOUNG TALL POPPY AWARDS RECOGNISE NSW SCIENCE TALENT

Minister for Science and Medical Research, Tony Stewart, said the State's best young scientists were recognised and honoured tonight at the 2008 NSW/ACT Young Tall Poppy Science Awards at NSW Parliament House,

"Thirteen young scientists received awards this year at a ceremony attended by dignitaries including NSW Governor Marie Bashir and NSW Scientist of the Year Professor Martin Green," Mr Stewart said.

"The Rees Labor Government is a principal sponsor of the Young Tall Poppy Science Awards as they recognise our best and brightest, up-and-coming science and medical researchers, "Mr Stewart said.

"The NSW Government recognises the importance of investing not only in buildings and laboratory equipment, but also in our most important research asset - the brilliant young minds who will generate our future ideas and research knowledge.

"The 2008 NSW/ACT Young Tall Poppy Science Award winners are an exciting group of young talent conducting research in a wide range of areas including:

- effects of climate change on soil microorganisms and plant and animal species;
- how wildlife including Tasmanian devils are affected by a loss of genetic diversity;
- study of galaxies billions of light years away;
- impact of the drug 'ice' on young people;
- new methods for drug detection in sport;
- the ocean's role in absorbing carbon dioxide;
- combating challenges like antibiotic-resistant 'superbugs';
- trends in HIV; and
- use of nanotechnology for medical drug delivery.

"The Rees Government's investment in science education - through initiatives like the Young Tall Poppy Science Awards and Science EXPOsed - will ensure current and future generations of scientific researchers continue our tradition of research excellence here in NSW.

"In the coming year the Young Tall Poppies will visit schools across the State so thousands of students will hear first-hand about Australian science and the diverse range of career opportunities available in the science sector."

**Media contact: Barbara Blades 0423 784 557**

***(Note: Media are welcome to cover the awards from 6pm in the Parliament House Theatrette)***

# 2008 NSW/ACT Young Tall Poppy Science Award Winners

• **Associate Professor Ian Anderson**, 33, University of Western Sydney, studying the influence of CO2 levels on the abundance of fungi and their capacity to enhance carbon sequestration in Australian forests. His work will help to improve carbon accounting for current and future emissions trading schemes.
Email: i.anderson@uws.edu.au Tel: 0433 348 829 or (02) 4570 1933

• **Dr Kathy Belov**, 35, University of Sydney, studying immunity, health and disease in our native wildlife such as Tasmanian devils, wallabies, platypuses and koalas. She has found a direct link between loss of genetic diversity and the emergence of a new disease in the devils.
Email: kbelov@vetsci.usyd.edu.au Tel: 0422 152 909 or (02) 9351 3454

• **Dr Culum Brown**, 35, Macquarie University, researching aims to understand the evolution and development of fish behaviour and apply this to conservation and fisheries.
Email: cbrown@bio.mq.edu.au Tel: 0439 343 341 or (02) 9850 6292

• **Professor Bryan Gaensler**, 35, University of Sydney, stydying the static and crackle of the radio waves produced by stars and galaxies to study magnetic fields in the universe. He has received eight awards and fellowships including Young Australian of the Year (1999) and the NASA Long Term Space Astrophysics Award.
Email: bgaensler@usyd.edu.au Tel: 0430 129 997 or (02) 9351 6053

• **Associate Professor Rebecca Ivers**, 40, The George Institute for International Health, conducting studies to measure injury in motor vehicle accidents and contributing to effective injury prevention programs, with a focus on young drivers.
Email: rivers@george.org.au Tel: 0414 726 975 or (02) 9657 0341

• **Dr Rebecca McKetin**, 38, University of New South Wales, researching the impact of methamphetamine (‘ice’)use on society and how to treat this addiction.
Email: r.mcketin@unsw.edu.au Tel: 0406 538 259 or (02) 9385 0290

• **Dr Malcolm McLeod**, 38, Australian National University, conducting research into the synthesis of organic molecules to solve real world problems such as treating drug resistant ’super bugs‘ and catching sports drug cheats.
Email: m.mcleod@rsc.anu.edu.au Tel: 0420 351 726 or (02) 6125 3504

• **Dr Ben McNeil**, 32, University of New South Wales, researching oceanic carbon dioxide uptake and developing better greenhouse gas emission and energy policies.
Email: b.mcneil@unsw.edu.au Tel: 0401 336 857 or (02) 9385 7068

• **Dr Angela Moles**, 32, University of New South Wales, researching the different ecological strategies that plants use when they grow in different environments.
Email: a.moles@unsw.edu.au Tel: 0415 774 299 or (02) 9385 8302

• **Dr Ajay Narendra**, 28, Australian National University, researching the mechanisms that aid decision making in the day-to-day life of animals, particularly ants. This understanding can be used in artificial intelligence projects like creating planes that can navigate without pilots.
Email: ajay.narendra@anu.edu.au Tel: 0408 326 662 or (02) 6125 4799

• **Dr Peter Rutledge**, 35, University of Sydney, whose research crosses many areas of chemistry including developing new antibiotics, building improved technologies for detecting pollutants and designing new catalysts.
Email: p.rutledge@chem.usyd.edu.au Tel: 0410 720 368 or (02) 9351 5020

• **Dr Pall Thordarson**, 37, University of New South Wales, whose research interests are in developing new molecular devices and materials for applications in fields such as biosensing and tissue engineering.
Email: p.thordarson@unsw.edu.au Tel: 0417 459 348 or (02) 9385 4478

• **Dr David Wilson**, 30, University of New South Wales, developing models to describe and forecast HIV/AIDS epidemics, providing insight into key drivers and impacts on society.
Email: dwilson@nchecr.unsw.edu.au Tel: 0421 598 939 or (02) 9385 0900