Media Release
Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Thursday, 14 September 2017

Young scientists showcase their innovations

More than 300 aspiring young scientists from 14 local schools will descend on the University of Tasmania’s Sandy Bay campus today to present the results of their research and experiments.

The Science and Engineering Investigation Awards is an annual statewide competition challenging school students in years 5-12 to present and explore a research topic of their choice.

After spending hours both in and out of the classroom collecting and analysing data, students will be presenting their findings to judges through discussion and a poster display at the University.

The projects are judged by more than 40 volunteers - all local scientists, engineers, educators, postgraduate students and industry professionals - who will speak with the students about their results.

Projects on display this year include investigating how to grow the biggest vegetables; the effect of fuel reduction on forest ecosystems; how music affects heart rate; improving the efficiency of motors; how to make the best slimes; and whether smiling is contagious.

Southern Coordinator Dr Adele Wilson said the awards are designed to allow students to use a scientific approach to investigate a topic that interests them, with an aim of encouraging students to pursue further studies in science.

"The students will be engaging with local scientists, engineers, educators and industry representatives, which gives them insight into a world of career opportunities which stem from science," she said.

"It builds the students’ confidence, and can even lead to future projects or work experience."

Professor Brian Yates, Dean of the University’s Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology, said the awards also encourage participants to start thinking about future opportunities and careers in the STEM disciplines.
“Students are invited to discover science and engineering, and beyond that, we hope they are inspired to start considering higher education in these fields, particularly as they engage with our campuses,” he said.

Award winners will be presented with their prizes at the presentation evening on 21 September.

The Northern and North-West Science and Engineering Investigation Awards were held last week.

The competition is supported by the University’s Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology as well as local individuals, industry and community organisations which have generously donated cash prizes for the event. The Tasmanian Women in Agriculture support the awards statewide.

**Today - media opportunity for vision/photos/interviews:**

**What:** Science and Engineering Investigation Awards (South)  
**When:** Thursday, 14 September: 11am – 12.30pm  
**Where:** Activities Centre, University of Tasmania Sandy Bay campus

**Contacts for media:** Dr Adele Wilson, 0449 013 689 (*Science Investigation Awards Coordinator – South*); Jeremy Just, 0448 381 875 (*Science Investigation Awards Host & MC – South*).

**Information released by:**  
University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office  
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au