

MEDIA RELEASE

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Award to sound out future leader in bionics research

A future leader in bionics research will be recognised and a past patron remembered at *Wired for Sound – the 2014 Bill Wheeler Community Symposium* hosted by the University of Wollongong's Intelligent Polymer Research Institute on October 2.

The symposium, which is open to the community, this year showcases innovations in the bionic ear.

Guests will be treated to a presentation by one of Australia's leading cochlear implant surgeons and researchers, Professor Stephen O'Leary, who will explain how the technology has progressed from providing sound to the profoundly deaf, to now include those of us with partial hearing loss.

Presentations will also be made by Illawarra local Jo Williams whose son Felix owes his hearing to the cochlear implant as well as the winner (announced on the night) of the 2014 Bill Wheeler Award.

The annual award of \$2,000 is donated by the community in memory of Illawarra local Bill Wheeler who was passionate about the University of Wollongong's bionic research program, and recognises an outstanding PhD candidate whose project will benefit the community in the future.

Last year's winner, Sina Jamali, who works in the University's Intelligent Polymer Research Institute, will use the funds to present his findings at an international conference in Korea in November.

"The conference is a great chance to share my findings with world leading scientists and extend my professional network which is essential to my future career development," Sina said.

Sina's research is relevant to the Illawarra Community, which was recently identified by the National Heart Foundation as a region of high risk for cardiovascular disease.

"The ultimate goal of my research is to understand and control the function of biodegradable magnesium in the human body towards creating a new generation of cardiovascular stents for more effective treatment of narrowed or weak arteries," he said.

"The Bill Wheeler award and the attention that my research has received from the community have inspired me greatly and made me more mindful of the difference that my research can potentially make in people's lives."

Bill Wheeler's passion for helping the community continues through the Bill Wheeler Award, assisting young researchers such as Sina to develop real solutions for the community.

Tickets (free) are available via electromaterials.edu.au or 02 4221 3788.

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