

## MEDIA RELEASE

12 October 2017

### Meet Professor Graeme Clark, the brain behind the Bionic Ear

Professor Graeme Clark, the brilliant brain behind the Bionic Ear, will be keynote speaker at the [ARC Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science \(ACES\) Bill Wheeler Community Symposium in Wollongong on 16 October 2017](#).

Professor Clark's inspirational device has provided the gift of speech understanding to 450,000 profoundly deaf people across the world. Disabling hearing loss affects more than 5% of the world's population, this is about 360 million people worldwide.

"Giving deaf people the precious gift of hearing speech and spoken language, is a dream come true," Prof Graeme Clark said.

Among the audience at the Bill Wheeler Community Symposium will be ACES researcher Jo Williams and her eight-year-old son Felix who was born deaf and received the multi-channel Cochlear Implant developed by Prof Clark when he was five months old.

Ms Williams' research at ACES involves developing 3D printed dual drug delivery components which she hopes could be used in cochlear devices in the future. Her research will be recognised at the event when she is awarded the annual Bill Wheeler Award which is being presented in association with the [Graeme Clark Institute](#), to an outstanding student engaged in bionics research with a clear benefit to the public.

Mrs Lexie Wheeler will present the award which honours the life of her husband Bill Wheeler, an active member of the Illawarra Community who took a keen interest in new bionics research at the University of Wollongong.

The \$2000 community fundraised award is a celebration of past, present and future innovations in bionics research and assists the winning student with travel, to share their cutting edge research and build new collaborative relationships.

ACES Director Professor Gordon Wallace said he was extremely grateful for the support given by the Illawarra community.

"The support from our community is priceless. This year's Bill Wheeler event is very special as it features Graeme Clark. Bill's support of our early endeavours contributed to a long-lasting and highly productive collaboration with Graeme and his team in Melbourne," Prof Wallace said.

Many of the audience members attending the event have personally experienced the challenges of deafness and are looking forward to meeting the man that completely changed their lives, restoring hearing with the Bionic Ear.

This exciting community event will be held from at the Leon Kane-Maguire Theatre, AIIM Facility, Innovation Campus, North Wollongong from 5PM on 16 October 2017.

ARC Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science  
electromaterials.edu.au

Guests are able to register for the event [here](#).

**Media opportunity:**

Interviews with Professor Graeme Clark, Professor Gordon Wallace and Ms Jo Williams and her son Felix can be arranged from 4.30pm at the Innovation Campus.

Contact ACES Communication and Media Officers Lisa Hutton ([lhutton@uow.edu.au](mailto:lhutton@uow.edu.au)) or Sian Wright ([sianw@uow.edu.au](mailto:sianw@uow.edu.au)) to make arrangements. Phone: 02 4221 5960.

**The ARC Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science (ACES)**

Headquartered at the University of Wollongong's Innovation Campus, ACES is a multidisciplinary research group with a focus on developing functional devices for applications including batteries, solar cells and systems that interact with living tissue.