

MEDIA RELEASE

15 August 2018

*ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2018
BILL WHEELER AWARD WINNER
EMBARGOED UNTIL 7PM
THURSDAY 16 AUGUST 2018*

Celebrating 10 years of the Bill Wheeler Award

The latest in bionics research will be on display at the 2018 Bill Wheeler Community Symposium on Thursday 16 August, presented by the [ARC Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science](http://electromaterials.edu.au) (ACES).

This year marks the tenth annual public talk, where a high-achieving University of Wollongong Bionics student is awarded \$2,000 of community-raised funds to assist with travel to share their cutting-edge research and build new collaborative relationships.

ACES Director Professor Gordon Wallace said he was proud of the research that had been furthered by University of Wollongong students thanks to the Award.

“As I reflect on 10 years of the Bill Wheeler Award, I am impressed by the innovative thinking of our students to make a real difference in the world of bionics to improve people’s lives,” Gordon said.

“We have had the chance to recognise some remarkable students. Joanne Williams investigated ways to embed inflammatory drugs into the cochlear silicone implant utilising 3D fabrication techniques, and Katharina Schirmer was developing a method to fabricate conduits that help reconnect damaged nerves.

“The Bill Wheeler Award acknowledges the truly innovative work going on in our local area, and gives students the opportunity to take this work further and connect with other researchers and facilities across the world that can further this work into potentially practical and game-changing applications.

“Our 2013 winner Sina Jamali had the chance to work with a global medical technologies company to develop next generation stents from biocompatible and biodegradable materials. Willo Grosse in 2012 was able to travel to Korea to undertake further research into controlling the release of anti-epileptic drugs through brain implants.”

Other previous winners of the Bill Wheeler Award include Changchun Yu for her research into a new biocompatible battery that could help cancer patients heal after having a tumour removed, and Xiaoteng Jia for work on an implantable battery for bionic technology that ultimately leaves no trace in the human body.

Mrs Lexie Wheeler will present the award at the Symposium, 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 Symposium will acknowledge the 2018 Bill Wheeler Award Winner Luciana Yumiko Daikaura for her research into customisable skin regeneration solutions using bioprinting to treat complex wounds.

This year's guest speaker is Associate Professor Payal Mukherjee, who is an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Surgeon at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. Payal has been working with Prof Gordon Wallace to investigate the ability to regenerate cartilage for use in reconstructive ear surgery, with the hope of translating this research on a global scale.

The 2018 Bill Wheeler Community Symposium will be held on Thursday 16 August at 5pm at the AIIM Facility at the Innovation Campus, and is free and open to the public to attend. For more information or to register, visit www.eventbrite.com.au and search for 'Bill Wheeler'.

Media opportunity:

Interviews with Professor Associate Professor Payal Mukherjee, Professor Gordon Wallace and the winner of the 2018 Bill Wheeler Award can be arranged from 4.30pm at the Innovation Campus.

Contact ACES Communication and Media Coordinator Lauren Hood on 4221 5306 or at lhood@uow.edu.au to make arrangements.

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.