

**4 August 2008**

**Scholarship brings awesome overseas opportunity**

How many high school students get the opportunity to travel overseas on an all-expenses paid trip? Edgewater College student Anne Yu can count herself one of the lucky few.

Anne and Manurewa High School student Megan Gildersleve were the inaugural recipients of the NRCGD-Brown Student Travel Award, which enabled the Year 13 students to attend the Biofutures conference in Brisbane in July. The science conference brought together 80 high school students from Australia and New Zealand for a week of lectures, discussion, and hands-on exploration of cutting edge technologies.

“We sampled everything from pharmacology to physiology, and had a great time doing it,” says Anne. “We played with real human organs in anatomy labs, extracted DNA from strawberries, attended lectures and practical labs in forensic science, and learnt about the science of colour.”

The students’ entire trips were sponsored by the National Research Centre for Growth and Development (NRCGD), a Centre of Research Excellence headquartered at The University of Auckland’s Liggins Institute.

The awards were established by the NRCGD in recognition of the contribution that Judge Michael Brown—a former Board member of the NRCGD—has made to young people, education, and the support of scientific research in New Zealand. Judge Brown has played a significant role in establishing the Liggins Education Network for Science (LENS) programme, a unique initiative that brings schools and scientists together. The NRCGD is a major funder of the LENS programme.

“We wanted to create a fitting tribute to Judge Brown when he retired from the Board last year,” said NRCGD and Liggins Director Professor Peter Gluckman. “He is renowned for championing opportunities for young people and has been pivotal in establishing the LENS programme.”

Judge Brown is a former District Court Judge and Principal Youth Court Judge. He was also Chancellor of The University of Auckland from 1986–1991, is an adjunct Professor of Law at Waikato University, and a member of the LENS Stakeholder Committee.

A Royal Society of New Zealand judging panel selected Anne’s application from the 120 received on the basis for her passion and aptitude for science. She is very enthusiastic about her experience in Brisbane, and would encourage anyone considering a career in science to apply for the award next year.

“It may sound like a geek camp, but it’s so much more than that,” she says. “I met so many great people and I also learnt heaps. I’m really grateful to the NRCGD for giving me this opportunity.”

***For further information:***

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