

## **Awards bridge gap between students and medical researchers**

Research Australia is giving budding scientists a unique opportunity to join leading medical researchers as part of a mentoring program.

The Research Australia Youth Ambassador for Health Research awards challenged students from around Australia to submit essays on the topic 'What young people can do to nurture their brains to be the best that they can be'.

Murdoch College student Alasdair Penman, 15, is this year's state winner, being named the Western Australian Research Australia Youth Ambassador for Health Research. His essay highlighted the importance of environmental factors in moulding the shape and function of the brain.

"Stress and worry has a major impact on the wellbeing of people," says Alasdair. "Long term exposure to stress related hormones...reduces the brains immunity against ageing, potentially increasing the probability of strokes," Alasdair said.

Alasdair will join researchers and scientists from Curtin University of Technology as part of the mentoring program.

Alasdair, along with state winners from all over Australia will take part in a special teleconference to develop a consensus statement as the voice of Australian Youth.

The national winner will be announced in October and will deliver the statement to Federal Government Ministers in Canberra.

The Chief Executive Officer of Research Australia, Rebecca James, congratulated Alasdair on an insightful essay. "The Youth Ambassador Program provides an ideal avenue to draw out the astute observations of some of our finest young students and hopefully lead them to careers in medical science," Ms James said.

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**MEDIA:** To arrange an interview or a photograph, please contact:

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### **About Research Australia**

Research Australia is a unique national alliance of over 190 member and donor organisations with a common mission to make health and medical research a higher national priority. For more information on Research Australia visit [www.researchaustralia.org](http://www.researchaustralia.org).

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Research Australia National Youth Ambassador for Health Research

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