



The Thoracic Society
of Australia & New Zealand
LEADERS IN LUNG HEALTH

26 March 2023

Honouring Top Trans-Tasman Lung Health Experts

Tonight, Australia and New Zealand's top peak body for all lung health professionals honoured individuals who have displayed outstanding talent in the field. TSANZ President, Prof Anne Holland presented medals and awards to the six recipients at the Maurice Blackburn Lawyers TSANZ ASM Gala dinner.

"I'm incredibly proud to announce the winner of this year's esteemed Ann Woolcock New Investigator Award – a prestigious long-standing award that acknowledges excellence in the conduct and presentation of scientific research. Ms Rebecca Watkinson from Wal-yan Respiratory Research Centre is the 2024 winner for her critical research to aid the alleviation of paediatric wheezing," shares Prof Holland.

"The Maurice Blackburn Award, which provides an important grant-in-aid for occupational lung disease research is awarded to Dr Elham Hosseini-Beheshti from the Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute for her work titled *A Novel Approach for Early Silicosis Diagnosis*." Dr Hosseini-Beheshti's research is timely given the Australian government's pending implementation of an engineered stone ban and occupational respiratory disease registry.

"The 50th Anniversary Medal goes to Prof Gary Lee, the Research Medal to Prof Stephen Stick and Prof Sandra Hodge, and the Society Medal to Dr Graham Simpson. Congratulations to the esteemed recipients of these prestigious medals, it is an honour to have you working in and alongside the field of respiratory science and medicine and we truly value your longstanding commitment and excellence," adds Prof Holland.

"Special mention goes to all our supremely talented Ann Woolcock New Investigator Award finalists who presented their research findings this week. Their work adds important insight into respiratory illness research, improving the health of Australians and New Zealanders."

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Supplementary notes:

The 50th Anniversary Medal: *The 50th Anniversary for Education and Training Medal is awarded for recognition of outstanding contributions to respiratory education and training in New Zealand or Australia. The award recognises an individual who has demonstrated sustained excellence in education and training.*

Prof Gary Lee's is awarded for his outstanding contribution to education and training.

Prof Gary Lee is a Professor of Respiratory Medicine at the University of Western Australia and an NHMRC Leadership Fellow. He is Director of Pleural Services at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Perth where he set up and directs Australia's first centralized hospital pleural service.

The Research Medal: *The Research Medal is awarded each year in recognition of outstanding contributions to the advancement of knowledge in respiratory medicine or science carried out primarily in Australia or New Zealand. The award recognises an individual who has demonstrated sustained excellence in their field of research.*

Professor Sandra Hodge

The Research Medal recognises the sustained excellence and impact of Professor Hodge's research, and her significant contribution to advancing respiratory research in Australia and New Zealand.

Prof Hodge is Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Adelaide and Head of the Chronic Inflammatory Lung Disease Research Laboratory at the University of Adelaide and Royal Adelaide Hospital.

Professor Stephen Stick

The Research Medal recognises the impact of Professor Stick's research on the well-being of children affected by respiratory illnesses, and his broader contributions to respiratory research and innovation in Australia.

Prof Stick is a career clinical researcher and Director of the Wal-yan Respiratory Research Centre at the Telethon Kids Institute in Perth, Western Australia. His globally recognised clinical and research career has been dedicated to advancing our understanding of paediatric respiratory disease pathogenesis, especially asthma and cystic fibrosis and the translation into better health outcomes for these children. He is the Principal Investigator for the Australian Respiratory Early Surveillance Team for

Cystic Fibrosis (AREST CF). This collaborative consortium of clinicians and scientists is recognised as the global leading research team in early CF lung disease.

The Society Medal: *The Society Medal was conceived as an acknowledgment of excellence in fields other than research and was awarded to Dr Graham Simpson for his outstanding commitment to respiratory medicine in regional Australia.*

Dr Simpson took up his position in the Dept of Respiratory and Sleep Medicine at Cairns Hospital in 1993. As Director of Regional Tuberculosis Control Unit, he has played a pivotal role in measures to address TB in Cape York and the Torres Strait. Dr Simpson was central to the creation of the Clinical Trials Unit at Cairns Hospital, bringing opportunities for clinical trial participation for patients in north Qld.

The President's Award (announced earlier in the week): In recognition for A/Prof Michelle Jongenelis's work in tobacco and e-cigarette control that has advanced our understanding of the drivers of e-cigarette uptake, particularly amongst Australian adolescents and young adults.

A/Prof at Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences (Jan 2023 – present): Expertise in health promotion, intervention research, behavioural and clinical psychology.

Research fellow at the WA Cancer Prevention Research Unit, Curtin University (2014 – 2019).

Ann Woolcock Investigator Award: *The Ann Woolcock New Investigator Award is presented at the TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) to acknowledge excellence in the conduct and presentation of scientific research.*

Winner is Miss Rebecca Watkinson for her work on Aberrant nasal epithelial responses to rhinovirus in paediatric acute wheeze.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), (2019 – Present) Division of Paediatrics, School of Medicine, The University of Western Australia.

First Class Honours in Medical Research, (2018) Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences, School of Biomedical Sciences, The University of Western Australia.

Bachelor of Science in Pharmacology, (2014 – 2017) Department of Pharmacology, Pharmacy and Anaesthesiology, School of Biomedical Sciences, The University of Western Australia.

Maurice Blackburn Grant-in-Aid award: *This Grant-In-Aid aims to foster the development occupational lung disease research.*

The recipient of this year's Grant-in-Aid is **Dr Elham Hosseini-Beheshti** with her submission titled Liquid Biopsy: A Novel Approach for Early Silicosis Diagnosis.

Principal Scientist at the Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute (May 2023 – present)

Awarded the Redi Fellowship (2023) serving as an investment analyst at IP Group Australia.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Experimental science (2009 – 2015): University of British Columbia.

Master of Science – Health, nutrition, and food chemistry (2005-2008): University of British Columbia.

Bachelor of Science – Food science and technology: Islamic Azad University of Isfahan