

02 March 2011

Elizabeth Finkel of Cosmos Magazine has won the Universities Australia Higher Education Journalist of the Year Award for 2011.

The award, which is conducted in conjunction with the National Press Club, was for her story 'The trouble with genes', dealing with the groundbreaking research undertaken by the University of Queensland's Professor John Mattick.

National Press Club President and Chair of the judging panel, Laurie Wilson said, "Elizabeth's story displayed all the hallmarks of outstanding journalism – she tackled an extremely complex topic, translated it into layman's language and turned into a great story."

'The trouble with genes' traces John Mattick's quest to decode genetic material and translate what was once considered 'junk DNA', something which Finkel says "puts him way ahead of the curve".

"We know he is leading the scientific world with his ideas and we really ought to be writing about them," says Finkel, who herself training as a geneticist, "but it is difficult to understand what he has discovered – one seems to require degrees in both computing and genetics."

The Higher Education Awards are judged in two categories each with awards for print and broadcast. The Journalist of the Year is selected from the category winners and wins a \$10,000 study tour.

The judges were – Laurie Wilson, President of the National Press Club; Dr Matthew Ricketson, author and former journalist who is now Professor of Journalism at the University of Canberra; Misha Schubert, NPC Vice-President and political reporter for The Age; and Malcolm Colless, journalist, media consultant and former Director of News Ltd.

The judges commented that they hope for more broadcast entries in future years.

Awards were presented at the address by Professor Peter Coaldrake. Professor Coaldrake reiterated how proud Universities Australia are to support these awards.

Award Winners are:

Category one – Award for excellence in communicating knowledge of Australia's University Sector

WINNER PRINT – John Ross Campus Review "Death by a thousand cuts"

SPECIAL COMMENDATION – Sarah Jane Collins The Age "foreign students in retreat"

SPECIAL COMMENDATION – Dinah Arndt The Examiner "Trouble at School"

Category Two - Award for excellence in communicating research and innovation, teaching and learning, equity and access, social inclusion or Indigenous education issues

WINNER PRINT – Elizabeth Finkel Cosmos Magazine "The trouble with genes"

SPECIAL COMMENDATION PRINT – Bernard Lane The Australian "Rudd's ANU China centre puts noses out of joint"

WINNER BROADCAST – Rebecca Baillie ABC TV 7.30 REPORT "Indigenous Doctors"

HIGHER EDUCATION JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR - Elizabeth Finkel of Cosmos Magazine

Further details are available on the press club website www.npc.org.au

STREET ADDRESS

16 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2600

POSTAL ADDRESS

PO Box 6184
Kingston ACT 2604

TELEPHONE

(02) 61212199

FACSIMILE

(02) 61212188

WEBSITE

www.npc.org.au

ABN

59 208 238 583