

Media release
The University of Auckland

Wednesday 24 March



University congratulates world class neuroscientist

The University of Auckland is delighted that neuroscientist Professor Richard Faull has been named Supreme Winner at the 2010 World Class New Zealand Awards.

Vice Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon says it is entirely fitting that Professor Faull should receive the supreme award.

“Richard is indeed world class – not only in his research and teaching, but also in the generosity with which he gives his time to roles in University governance, leadership and mentoring of others. His own scholarship, and the influence he has on others around the world, means that he has done much to bring New Zealand to the forefront on international scientific endeavour.”

“This award is just recognition of Richard’s skills not only as an outstanding researcher, but also as a scientific leader and an advocate for patients and families of those suffering with some of the most debilitating neurological diseases,” says Professor Iain Martin, Dean of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences.

“It is privilege to count Richard as a colleague. His passion and enthusiasm for science and science education have done much to encourage the next generations of researchers both in and beyond neuroscience. I can think of no more worthy recipient.”

Professor Faull is an internationally recognised expert on neurodegenerative disorders. During his 35-year career has made major contributions to scientists’ understanding of changes that occur in the brains of people with diseases such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Huntington’s and epilepsy, opening the way for the development of new treatments.

He is perhaps best known for research showing that the adult brain contains stem cells. This groundbreaking work countered the long-held belief that adults have a finite supply of brain cells that cannot be replaced once they have died, and offers hope to people with neurodegenerative disease or brain injury.

Professor Faull founded the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand Human Brain Bank, which houses brain tissue donated by people with neurological disorders and their families. It is a crucial resource for neuroscientists and an example of the strong links Professor Faull has forged with the community.

He is also Director of the University’s Centre for Brain Research. Launched in 2009, the centre is the realisation of Professor Faull’s vision for better research through partnership between scientists from across the University, New Zealanders affected by brain disease, and the clinicians who work with them.

Professor Faull is the recipient of numerous awards including the Royal Society of New Zealand’s Rutherford Medal in 2007 and the Health Research Council of New Zealand’s Liley Medal in 2005. He was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2005.

The World Class New Zealand Awards, now in their seventh year, recognise outstanding individuals who have made major contributions to New Zealand's success on the world stage. They are presented by Kea New Zealand with assistance from Trade and Enterprise New Zealand.

The 2010 awards were presented this evening at a gala dinner at the Langham Hotel in Auckland.

Notes

The Centre for Brain Research, launched in October 2009, investigates diseases of the brain and nervous system including stroke, epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, and muscular dystrophy. It brings together scientists from The University of Auckland with neurologists and neurosurgeons from District Health Boards in the Auckland region and community groups that support people affected by brain disease. Its goal is to develop treatments for brain disease through more integrated and collaborative research that draws on the strengths and expertise of the three partners.

For more information about the centre www.cbr.auckland.ac.nz

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