



MEDIA RELEASE

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Tuesday 15th August, 2017

Lighting up minds at Concordia College

Students from Concordia College will get the low-down on STEM careers—as well as learn more about lasers, laboratories and the life of a scientist at a school outreach event organised and run tomorrow by University of Adelaide researchers from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Nanoscale BioPhotonics (CNBP).

The event, celebrating National Science Week, will see a team of CNBP scientists and researchers visit Concordia College and present a variety of talks, DIY laboratory videos and science demonstrations to over 150 Year 9 students with an interest in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

CNBP researcher Dr Hannah Brown from the University of Adelaide's Robinson Research Institute, who will be part of the team visiting the school, and who was recently selected as part of the STA Superstars of STEM program, sees outreach as a key responsibility for the science community.

“Getting high school students interested and engaged in STEM subjects is critical—not only to inspire future generations of young scientists but also in supporting the Australian economy more generally. What we hope to do with our outreach efforts is to show that science and technology can be fun and exciting, and potentially rewarding as a future career choice as well.”

Dr Brown notes that decreasing participation in STEM subjects is a real concern across many Australian schools.

“Enrolments in science, maths and technology subjects are at increasingly low levels. Conversely, the fastest growing occupations in our society are requiring STEM skills and knowledge, so there is a real gap there that needs to be addressed.”

“Robotics, artificial intelligence, environmental engineering and medical device development are examples of exciting new job areas of the future,” says Dr Brown.

“And a strong foundation in STEM is a key requirement to accessing these smart jobs of the future—with that foundation being built in the school environment.”

Dr Joanne Rogers, Head of Science at Concordia College, is an enthusiastic supporter of CNBP's outreach activity.

"Over the last couple of years Concordia College has developed a strong relationship with the CNBP—our students visit the Centre's laboratories to see how an industry-level scientific environment operates. This will be the first time CNBP researchers have come to our school and we are excited to have them spend time with our students, giving talks and undertaking demonstrations to kindle student interest in science and technology."

"As a direct result of these outreach activities we've had a number of students alter their study choices and pick up additional STEM-related courses," she says.

Dr Rogers sees the opportunity for school students to regularly interact with CNBP scientists as a major benefit.

"We want to dispel the stereotypes around STEM and research—that it's dull, boring and solitary," she says.

"Engaging with real-life scientists is like opening a window into an entirely new world for many of our students. It shows them that scientists are regular people who have a passion for science and technology—and that a rewarding career in STEM is entirely accessible with the right application."

Investing in STEM is a high priority at Concordia College. Currently under construction and due to open in October 2017, is the school's Centre for Science and Discovery—a new facility that will transform teaching and learning of STEM subjects.

"This will be a wonderful building that will help young learners make sense of abstract and complex concepts and encourage collaborative and creative approaches to solving real-world problems," says Dr Rogers.

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MEDIA OPPORTUNITY:

Media are invited to attend the CNBP outreach session at Concordia College, to film or photograph activity and will be able to conduct interviews with CNBP researchers, as well as with Dr Joanne Rogers, Head of Science.

Location - 24 Winchester St Highgate SA 5063.

Date - Wed 16th August

Time - Outreach session 10:20am to 11:20am.

Please contact Tony Crawshaw before attending on 0402770403.

ABOUT CNBP:

The Centre for Nanoscale BioPhotonics (CNBP) is an Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence led by the University of Adelaide, with research focussed nodes also at Macquarie University and RMIT University. A \$40m initiative, the CNBP is focused on developing new light-based imaging and sensing tools, that can measure the inner workings of cells, in the living body. <http://cnbp.org.au/>

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