

UQ stem cell researcher leads high school activity for National Science Week

8 August 2012

A University of Queensland stem cell researcher will lead a discussion of Year 10 students from around Australia, covering genomics, bioinformatics and stem cell research on Thursday, August 16 for National Science Week.

Associate Professor Wells, who works at UQ's [Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology](#) (AIBN) says curiosity is the key to unlocking the mysteries of the science world – and asking questions is the method.

But she believes people stop asking questions as they grow up and don't take part in the kind of discussions needed to push scientists to new discoveries.

She hopes to reverse this in her discussion in Melbourne on August 16.

Co-hosted by [Quantum Victoria](#) and [Stem Cells Australia](#), the event will be streamed around the country online and will also feature [CSIRO](#) stem cell researcher Dr Andrew Laslett.

" I love having students who want to be part of the dialogue," Associate Professor Wells said.

" Science is really the next great place for moving forward and having important discussions about the world we will inhabit in years to come," she said.

" There are lots of different ways to be involved in science. It is not only about men in white lab coats.

" There is a greater opportunity to be a scientist at a computer, asking questions, exploring, visualising and analysing data."

Associate Professor Wells said students should consider studying science at school, even if they did not plan to have a career in traditional flow-on areas such as medicine, pharmacy, dentistry or research.

" Skills needed in science, such as analysis and critical thinking, were also valuable in business, law and politics," she said.

" Studying science at school could also open doors to a life-long interest in science and involvement in discussions about future scientific endeavours, even if people did not work in the field.

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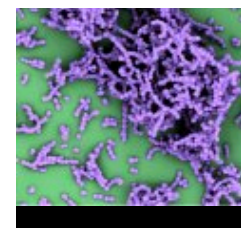


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" Lots of people are interested in science, in areas such as stem cell research. There is so much we don' t yet know about the human body, but that will change dramatically in the coming years."

Associate Professor Wells is researching the networks of genes that drive cellular differentiation and activation. She has discovered the function of several genes involved in the fight against infection and regulating inflammation. Her group works to understand stem cell biology and innate immunity.

AIBN

AIBN is based at UQ and has research groups working at the interface of the biological, chemical and physical science to alleviate problems in human health and environmental issues.

Quantum Victoria

Quantum Victoria is a Centre of Excellence and a Specialist Science and Mathematics Centre, at Macleod West in Victoria, delivering programs to middle and senior school students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Stem Cells Australia

Stem Cells Australia is an Australian Government funded Special Research Initiative in stem cell science, bringing together the country' s leading experts in bioengineering, nanotechnology, stem cell biology, advanced molecular analysis and clinical research. UQ is a partner in the Stem Cells Australia initiative.

For more information about the discussion forum on August 16, visit

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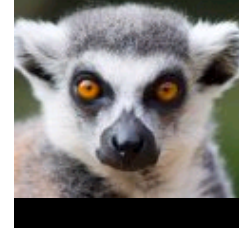
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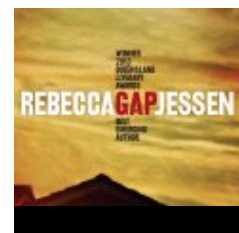


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