



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED: 8:00AM FRIDAY, 10th MARCH, 2017

SEARCH FOR AUSTRALIA'S TOP YOUNG SCIENCE TALENT

UNSW and ABC RN give science communicators a voice

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) and ABC RN today opened applications for the **Top 5 Under 40**, a partnership that gives a voice to a new generation of science thinkers.

The nationwide search is open to early-career researchers with a PhD, who are under the age of 40, working in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medical research, and who have a flair and passion for communicating their vital work.

The Top 5 Under 40 winners will undertake a 10-day residency in Sydney at ideas network ABC RN. They will receive training in the craft of radio and TV interviews, get a rare 'behind-the-scenes' insight into the ABC and work with some of Australia's best science journalists.

Following the national call out, the 10 most promising science communicators will be shortlisted for interview. The 2017 judging panel comprises **Robyn Williams**, presenter of RN's *The Science Show*, **Professor Fiona Stanley**, epidemiologist from the University of Western Australia, and **Professor Merlin Crossley**, UNSW Deputy Vice-Chancellor and former Dean of Science.

UNSW's Professor Crossley said: "We're delighted to once again partner with RN to celebrate the country's up-and-coming researchers and help them communicate their newest ideas. More than ever before, we need these talented scientists to lead the way by contributing to society through their knowledge and expertise."

Now in its third successful year, the initiative is supported by Top 5 Under 40 Ambassadors, **Dr Alan Finkel**, Australia's Chief Scientist, **Professor Emma Johnston**, marine scientist and incoming Dean of Science at UNSW, **Natasha Mitchell**, science journalist and broadcaster at RN,

and **Associate Professor Alan Duffy**, astrophysicist and Research Fellow at Swinburne University of Technology.

"Science communicators aren't born, they're trained," said Associate Professor Duffy. "Practise your message, hone your technique and learn from the best. RN and UNSW's Top 5 Under 40 gives the next generation the very best training. They learn the art of storytelling – and the science of communication – by doing."

"The support and resources in this incredible initiative compress a lifetime's learning into two weeks. I cannot recommend it highly enough."

In a timely indication of the program's success, two of the 2015 Top 5 Under 40 cohort are involved in new ABC podcasts. Astronomer **Dr Amanda Bauer** is now co-presenter of [Cosmic Vertigo](#), a conversational podcast about the dizzying marvels of space science. Chemist **Dr Alice Williamson** co-presents *Dear Science*, a light-hearted show that digs up 'agony aunt' letters and tackles them again – with science. Both podcasts are produced by the RN Science Unit and are launching in late March at the World Science Festival, Brisbane.

Top 5 Under 40 Key dates

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Applications open: | Friday 10 th March, 2017 |
| Applications close: | Friday 21 st April, 2017 |
| Residency at ABC RN Sydney: | Monday 3 rd to Friday 14 th July, 2017 |

Who can apply for the Top 5 under 40 program?

Top 5 Under 40 is open to early-career researchers working in Australian universities and research organisations across science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medical research. To be eligible for the scheme you will be under the age of 40 – see the [Top 5 Under 40 web page](#) for full details of the entry criteria and the application form.

If I am shortlisted where will the interviews be conducted?

Up to 10 applicants will be shortlisted and interviewed by Skype.

Will support be provided for Top 5 winners who live outside of Sydney to take part in the two-week media residency at ABC RN's studios?

Yes. Any of the five winners based outside of Sydney will be eligible for travel, accommodation and expenses for the two-week residency in July.

For more information please contact:

Wendy McKillop, Project Manager, Communications – Radio and Regional Marketing ABC
mckillop.wendy@abc.net.au or +61 2 8333 1642

Steve Offner, Communications Manager UNSW s.offner@unsw.edu.au or +61 2 9385 1583

About RN: RN exists to nurture the intellectual and cultural life of all Australians, and is a vital and integral player in the development of a national conversation around the ideas that matter. Known for its specialist content across arts and culture; business and current affairs; health, science and technology; Indigenous culture and issues;

and religion and ethics, with thought-provoking analysis delivered on air and across digital platforms, RN is a dynamic and world-class production house where innovative content is commissioned and made.

Find us on [facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About UNSW: UNSW is a leading Australian university committed to making a difference through pioneering research and preparing the next generation of talented global citizens. Ranked within the top 100 universities worldwide, UNSW has announced its 2025 Strategy to position itself as Australia's global university, among the world's best. Driven by innovation and excellence, UNSW has led via transformative social policy and public law and has contributed enormously to the cultural, artistic and intellectual life of our community, while also pioneering the global development of solar energy technologies, helping to control devastating epidemics such as HIV, developing new therapies for depression and anxiety, and making previously unimaginable breakthroughs in quantum computing.

