

BioFirst Commercialisation Awards

BIOFIRST COMMERCIALISATION AWARDS WINNERS

BioFirst Commercialisation Awards - 2006

The 2006 BioFirst Commercialisation Award was won by Chatswood company Neuromonics (www.neuromonics.com) for technology to bring relief to sufferers of the painful condition tinnitus.

Tinnitus is a medical condition that causes a ringing or humming sound in the ears, and creates pain and suffering for up to 18 per cent of the Australian population at some point in their lives.

Neuromonics has developed a device that desensitises the brain to these annoying sounds by playing music which has been digitally modified to change the pitch and add background noises.

Clinical trials have shown this treatment can reduce symptoms in up to 90 per cent of tinnitus sufferers.

The runner-up in the 2006 Biofirst Commercialisation Awards was Sydney company Evogenix which focused on developing antibody therapeutics.

Evogenix has since merged with long established Sydney biotech company Peptech, to establish Arana Therapeutics (www.arana.com).

BioFirst Commercialisation Awards - 2007

The 2007 BioFirst Commercialisation Award was won by MedCare Systems (www.telemedcare.com.au) of Rosebery for a web-based healthcare system that allows patients to receive expert medical supervision in their homes.

By using a web-based system, the TeleMedCare service allows health professionals to monitor and manage chronic diseases, such as congestive heart failure, lung disease or diabetes, without the patient having to leave their home or residential care facilities.

The system can be used to remind patients to take medications or perform regular checks on a range of clinical measurements such as electrocardiogram (ECG) tests, temperature, weight, lung function and heart rate.

Data is collected and returned to a central point for easy access by a care team.

For patients, this innovation enables them to better understand and self-manage their health or illness, reducing the amount of time they need to spend in hospital.

For health authorities and clinicians, it helps overcome problems faced by limited human resources, reduces response times, and will improve the management of health cost by reducing hospital admissions and rehabilitation periods.

The runner-up in the 2007 BioFirst Commercialisation Awards was Protech Research (www.protechltd.com), a biochemical development company that sells and licenses intellectual property, providing unique technical or cost advantages to the global food, beverage, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries.

Protech Research technologies include products that reduce salt by 30 per cent in dried consumer foods, control carcinogens in baked foods and deliver anti-ageing compounds in skin care.

BioFirst Commercialisation Awards - 2008

The 2008 BioFirst Commercialisation Award was won by Special Phage Holdings (SPH) of Brookvale, which has successfully used its technology to treat a patient suffering a multi-resistant bacterial infection in a trial at a major Sydney teaching hospital.

This was an Australian first. The medical trial used bacteria-eating viruses – phages – and after six months of monitoring, the patient remained free and clear of the infection.

One of the world's greatest medical challenges is the increasing resistance of different strains of bacteria to antibiotics. In Australia the annual cost of antibiotic resistance to the community is estimated to be over \$1 billion dollars – so the benefits are potentially enormous.

Phage therapy is set to help address this growing problem, and SPH's (www.specialphageservices.com.au) work in this field places it in strong position to become a leading player in this important market.

Phages have use not only in medicine but in veterinary medicine, agriculture, aquaculture and the environment.

There was no runner-up awarded in 2008.