

Top Sydney scientists have their Eureka moment

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Eight University of Sydney people have been named finalists for the prestigious 2009 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes.

[Professor Bruce Sutton](#), Professor and Chair of Academic Board at the University of Sydney, is a finalist for research that untaps the potential of water that would normally be too salty for agricultural irrigation.

The 'Reverse Osmosis Capable Drip System' is a low energy irrigation system that efficiently delivers water when and where the plant needs it, potentially allowing Australian farmers to grow crops using saline water without damaging the soil.

Professor Sutton was jointly named with Associate Professor Greg Leslie from UNSW for the Land and Water Australia Professor Peter Cullen Eureka Prize for Water Research and Innovation.

[Kathy Belov](#), a geneticist in the Faculty of Veterinary Science, is a finalist in the People's Choice category for her work identifying the link between the genetic make-up of Tasmanian devils and contagious facial tumours threatening the species' survival. See previous [story](#).

[Professor Marcela Bilek](#), [Professor David McKenzie](#), [Professor Cristobal dos Remedios](#) and [Professor Anthony Weiss](#) are finalists in the ARC prize for interdisciplinary research for their work which combines physics and biology to create technology that binds active biomolecules to any synthetic surface.

The technology has the power to revolutionise medical diagnostics, biosensors, and implantable prosthetics as well as enzyme-based chemical and food industries.

[Professor Christopher Dickman](#) is a finalist in the Sherman Prize for Environmental research, recognising his "scientific commitment to protecting the delicate inhabitants of Australia's iconic desert landscapes."

Professor Dickman's innovative research into threats to the unique mammalian fauna of arid Australia is helping stem extinction rates.

[Professor Richard Christopherson](#) has been recognised for his "invention of an antibody microarray (DotScan) consisting of hundreds of microscopic antibody dots on a slide, enabling rapid and cheap profiling of the cell surface of leukaemias for diagnosis".

Professor Christopherson is in the running for The University of New South Wales Eureka Prize for Scientific Research.

The [Australian Museum Eureka Prizes](#) are presented annually by the Australian Museum. The prizes recognise excellence in scientific research, science leadership and innovation, science journalism and communication and school science.

The University sponsors the University of Sydney Sleek Geeks Science Eureka Prize, awarded for a short film that communicates a scientific concept in an accessible and entertaining way.

The winners in 18 categories, who will share in prize money worth \$180,000, will be announced in Sydney on 18 August.

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