

World Biotech Tour - Scitech Ambassador announced

Last night, 17 year old Shiya Huang of Willeton Senior High School was chosen to represent Scitech and Australia at the 2017 [Science Centre World Summit](#) in Tokyo, Japan, for her project created as part of the World Biotech Tour, held recently at Scitech.

Presenting her work in front of an audience of 110 fellow high school students and three judges, Shiya's project focused on 'The structure-function correlation of the human retina in health and disease'.

Speaking for 10 minutes, Shiya described how her research investigated the correlation between retinal structure and function in the human eye, in relation to two diseases (scotoma and distortion) which are the first symptoms of macular disease, one of the most common cause of irreversible blindness in Australia. Also, for patients with retinal toxicity, a side effect of using the drug HCQ (Hydroxychloroquine), prescribed for the treatment of conditions including rheumatoid arthritis.

Shiya's mentor Danuta Bukowska, an early career research fellow from the University of Western Australia, based at the Lions Eye Institute in Perth, provided relevant guidance and inspiration, based on her work constructing extremely sensitive tools for doctors to study and learn how retinal cells function and what changes occur in the progression of disease.

Alan Brien, Scitech CEO said "The projects created by our seven outstanding Ambassadors for the World Biotech Tour are incredibly impressive. Every one of them showed insight, ability and ambition to learn and grow their skills in the environment created for them by their Mentors and Scitech staff. It has been a truly inspiring experience taking part in the World Biotech Tour, as it links the important work Scitech already does with our international science centre colleagues."

"This initiative is just one in many that Scitech proudly presents to provide opportunities for Western Australians to learn and engage with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths in practical environments that offer meaningful pathways to innovative STEM careers."

Shiya's clear vision, understanding of the subject and ability to describe her project in easily understood terms impressed the judging panel, made up of [Associate Professor Kevin Pflieger](#), Laboratory Head of Molecular Endocrinology and Pharmacology at the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, [Dr. Miriam Sullivan](#), Associate Lecturer with the School of Biology at University of Western Australia and Craig Bloxsome, Scitech General Manager.

The World Biotech Tour is an initiative of the [Biogen Foundation](#) and the [Association of Science-Technology Centres](#) (ASTC) to showcase biotechnology in everyday life and career pathways, highlighting its contribution to the fields of health, medicine, agriculture and energy.

When

Thursday 1st September, 2016

Where

Scitech, West Perth

More information

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About the World Biotech Tour (WBT)

The WBT is a multiyear initiative that will bring biotechnology to life through hands-on learning opportunities at 12 select science centres worldwide from 2015-2017. The Tour will conclude at the 2017 Science Centre World Summit in Tokyo, Japan, where leaders in the biotechnology industry and science community will discuss the accomplishments of the tour and how programs offered by museums and science centres can continue to promote understanding of biotechnology worldwide.

The WBT pursues three main objectives: (1) Increase the awareness of the public about the importance of biotechnology now and in the future; (2) Create new vocations for youth to embrace biotech studies and careers; (3) Help participating science centres to adapt their communication about biotech to make it current and adapted to their audiences.

www.WorldBiotechTour.org

About Scitech

Scitech has been creating inspiring and enthralling STEM experiences (science, technology, engineering, maths) for Western Australians since 1988. World-class interactive exhibitions are designed and created for visitors to the Perth-based Discovery Centre, which also travel the world bringing the Scitech experience to audiences in North America, Asia and the Middle East. Scitech also present inspiring and engaging shows, workshops, activities and festivals to metropolitan and regional schools and communities, for students, teachers, parents and children, to promote the wonder of the world of STEM in education and careers.

www.scitech.org.au

About the Biogen Foundation, Inc.

The mission of the Biogen Foundation is to improve the quality of peoples' lives and contribute to the vitality of the communities in which the company operates, with a special emphasis on innovative ways to promote science literacy and encourage young people to consider science careers. www.biogen.com/foundation

About the Association of Science-Technology Centers

The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) is a global organisation providing collective voice, professional support, and programming opportunities for science centres, museums, and related institutions, whose innovative approaches to science learning inspire people of all ages about the wonders and the meaning of science in their lives. Through strategic alliances and global partnerships, ASTC strives to increase awareness of the valuable contributions its members make to their communities and the field of informal STEM learning. Founded in 1973, ASTC now represents over 650 members in nearly 50 countries, including not only science centres and museums, but also nature centres, aquariums, planetariums, zoos, botanical gardens, and natural history and children's museums, as well as companies, consultants, and other organisations that share an interest in informal science education.

www.astc.org