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### **World-first Aussie innovations among finalists for prestigious research commercialisation awards**

A special X-ray to find gold, a varnish to preserve priceless artworks, a high tech app for patients in pain, and a COVID-19 vaccine candidate are the results of tireless work by finalists in the KCA Awards.

The Awards celebrate world-class research commercialisation that turns brilliant ideas into products and services to help humanity. They have the potential to save millions of lives and create thousands of jobs in our knowledge industries.

“Australian research is among the best in the world, but it takes skilled commercialisation professionals to translate it into valuable products to benefit society,” KCA Chair Dr. Erin Rayment says. “The KCA Awards recognise these dedicated people who bridge the gap between research and industry.” The finalists are:

- **CSIRO:** Imagine being able to quickly and accurately X-ray ore to see how much gold is inside. PhotonAssay uses high-energy X-rays to increase gold recovery by 1-3%, which is worth \$2 billion a year to this industry alone. There are no hazardous substances in this process, improving environmental impact and worker safety. Commercialised by Chrysos Corporation, this technology is returning equity to its creators at CSIRO to invest in more breakthrough science.
- **Curtin University:** Sadly, 85% of aged care residents with dementia experience pain but cannot verbalise it. The PainChek app, derived from research by Curtin University, uses AI to recognise micro expressions to calculate the severity of the pain, so carers can assess their patients. PainChek Ltd was listed on the ASX in 2016, and a government grant has made the app available to 100,000 people. The company has now expanded to NZ, Singapore and the UK.
- **CSIRO:** An Australian varnish created through ‘flow chemistry’ is being used to preserve priceless masterpieces in art galleries around the world. Six years ago the world’s best varnish - developed in the UK in 1959 - went out of production. No one knew how to recreate it. The National Gallery of Victoria approached CSIRO, which used its expertise in chemical synthesis to make a new and improved varnish: MS3. Melbourne company Boron Molecular bought the licence and exported MS3 to the world.
- **The University of Queensland & UniQuest:** In January 2020, as a response to the WHO announcing COVID-19 as a pandemic, UQ was tasked by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI) to produce a vaccine against COVID-19 and identify a partner for the late stage clinical development and distribution in an unprecedentedly short time. The first human subject was dosed with UQ’s COVID-19 vaccine candidate on 13 July 2020 and a strategic partnership agreement signed with UQ, CEPI and CSL, less than 6 months after the request from CEPI. Should the clinical trial and CSL’s subsequent development activities be successful, a vaccine could be available in 2021.

“Although a small proportion of the staff, technology transfer professionals are key to industry engagement and real-world impact,” Dr. Rayment says. “They facilitate the arduous journey from idea to reality, maximising social and economic benefits that result from billions of public dollars spent each year on research.”

On the 11th of September finalists will pitch their ideas to a judging panel, which will decide the winner.

Judges look for creative thinking, business insight, and overall impact on society. Sponsored by Phillips Ormonde Fitzpatrick, the Awards are judged by commercial leaders of innovation:

- Ross McFarlane (Partner, Phillips Ormonde Fitzpatrick)
- Dr. Tim Boyle (Director, Innovation and Commercialisation, ANSTO)
- Natalie Chapman (MD, gemaker)
- Dr Peter Devine (CEO, Uniseed)

- Sally-Ann Williams (CEO, Cicada Innovations)

“As the world recovers from the damage of COVID-19, the role of KCA in helping deliver the benefits of public sector research to our economy, and more broadly to our society, is more important than ever,” Ross McFarlane says.

*For more information and interviews, contact [tracey@gemaker.com.au](mailto:tracey@gemaker.com.au) (0411) 281 854.*

### **About Knowledge Commercialisation Australasia (KCA)**

Knowledge Commercialisation Australasia (KCA) is the peak body for organisations and individuals associated with knowledge commercialisation and exchange between public sector research organisations and business and government entities. We seek to link, enable and inspire our members, and provide the necessary tools and opportunities to spur on greater translation of research for economic and community benefit, and create a more vibrant and productive Australian economy. [www.techtransfer.org.au](http://www.techtransfer.org.au)