



Chief Scientist

MEDIA RELEASE

PROFESSOR PENNY D SACKETT

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AUSTRALIA'S CHIEF SCIENTIST CONGRATULATES AUSTRALIAN NOBEL PRIZE WINNER ELIZABETH BLACKBURN

Chief Scientist for Australia, Professor Penny D Sackett, congratulates Australia's 11th and first female Nobel prize winner, molecular biologist Elizabeth Blackburn.

"My congratulations go to Professor Blackburn and her colleagues for their great collaborative work that has resulted in an important discovery that may lead to the development of new treatments for cancer and other diseases," Professor Sackett said.

Professor Blackburn, who was born in Tasmania, was awarded the 2009 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine, along with her colleagues in the United States Carol Greider and Jack Szostak for the discovery of how chromosomes are protected by telomeres (the protective caps on the ends of chromosomes), and the enzyme telomerase (which makes telomere DNA).

These discoveries have direct implications on the understanding of cell growth and the mechanism of diseases such as cancer. They have also stimulated the development of potential new treatments for cancer and other diseases.

"Winning the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine is a great acknowledgement for the lifetime of research Professor Blackburn and her colleagues have undertaken.

"Her achievement provides inspiration for all aspiring and practising scientists in Australia, particularly women who can face special challenges in pursuing a scientific career," Professor Sackett said.

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