

MEDIA RELEASE

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CHIEF SCIENTIST RECOGNISES YOUNG SCIENCE OLYMPIANS

Australia's Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb says our young team, recently returned from the 2012 International Science Olympiads, should be applauded for a world-class performance.

The team of 13 secondary school students returned with 12 medals – four silver and eight bronze - and one honourable mention.

This was a stand out effort given more than 1000 students from around the world compete in the Olympiad's three streams - Chemistry, Biology and Physics.

The gruelling competition sees students sit a five-hour theory exam and undertake five hours of practical laboratory tests.

"These young people should know their country is proud of them. Getting selected in the first place and then succeeding against some of the world's very best is no less an achievement than that of any other Olympian," Professor Chubb said.

Earlier this year the Office of the Chief Scientist released its publication *Mathematics, Engineering and Science in the National Interest*.

That report was in response to the Prime Minister's request for advice on encouraging greater participation in mathematics, statistics and science courses at university.

"Enrolments in these courses have been falling and Australia risks not having enough people trained in these crucial fields to meet future challenges," said Professor Chubb.

"Recognising the performance of high achievers like our International Science Olympiads team sends a clear message that this is a vital, vibrant area of competition with great rewards for those prepared to put in the work," He said.

Professor Chubb thanked Australian Science Innovations, the not-for-profit organisation that coordinated the program which saw the team travel to Singapore (biology) the U.S. (chemistry) and Estonia (physics) for the competition.

Professor Chubb said the results validated the government's commitment to continue to fund the program.

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