



## **Attention all early career STEM researchers: FameLab is back! Apply now for a chance to win a cash prize and a coveted place at the UK finals**

**FOR RELEASE ON 27 NOVEMBER 2017:**

Applications for FameLab 2018 are now open! The British Council is looking for enthusiastic early-career STEM researchers with a passion for public engagement to present their research, live on stage, at FameLab Australia.

FameLab is the world's leading science communication competition. It aims to find and mentor young STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) researchers who want to share their stories with the world.

Contestants from around the globe take part armed only with their wits and a few props – the result is an unpredictable, enlightening and exciting way to encourage curiosity and find out about the latest research.

Applicants must submit a short video. If shortlisted they will be invited to perform live at one of four semi-final events across Australia in March and April 2018. The national final – hosted by astrophysicist and media personality, Dr Alan Duffy – will be in Western Australia on 10 May. The national winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and represent Australia in the international FameLab finals at the Cheltenham Science Festival, UK, in June 2018.

The rules are simple: contestants have just three minutes to convey their scientific concept on stage in an original, entertaining way and are judged by an expert panel on the content, clarity and charisma of their presentations. The cardinal rules of FameLab are no jargon and no PowerPoint. **Props and creative explanations, however, are encouraged!**

In 2017, a record 31 countries participated in FameLab International at the Cheltenham Science Festival, and **Australian microbiologist Dr Nural Cokcetin from the University of Technology Sydney was declared joint-runner up** with her research into the prebiotic potential of honey. Her success created a number of opportunities for Dr Cokcetin to communicate her research to expert and general audiences, including through media interviews and an invitation to speak on the TEDx Sydney stage.

Nural says, “The experience has been truly amazing - I feel so lucky to have been able to work with such a brilliant team of science communicators and advocates of the importance of science communication.

“FameLab taught me so many new ways to approach talking about research, and connecting with the public about the work we do. I can't recommend the FameLab competition highly enough to any and all students, early career researchers and those further along in their careers too. The training and networking opportunities alone have been invaluable to me.”

British Council Director Australia Helen O'Neil says:

“FameLab helps researchers become storytellers and advocates. It connects Australian researchers to global opportunities in making science part of public debates with expert training and experience in performance.

“FameLab is creating a close and committed partnership of universities, museums, science educators and science communicators to support and develop some of Australia's most talented and passionate researchers. This year we are delighted to welcome Australia's largest independent oil and gas company Woodside as our new major partner. Woodside is renowned for its extensive involvement in promoting

STEM through community outreach programs and is passionate about supporting innovation and technology.”

- Each semi-finalist will receive a half-day training session with a specialist science communicator, to develop their media, presentation and communication skills.
- The finalist will participate in a comprehensive, two-day presentation training masterclass.

If you're a spectator rather than a competitor, come along to the FREE FameLab events to see the country's best science communicators explain their research passion. Keep an eye on [famelab.org.au](http://famelab.org.au) as details of the live semi-finals are announced. Each will feature laughs, drama and surprises!

- Applicants can be current MSc or PhD students, graduate students up to five years post MSc or PhD, researching in any field of science, technology, engineering or maths.

**\*\*Video entries need to be submitted by Friday 16 February 2018 - To apply, visit [www.famelab.org.au](http://www.famelab.org.au)**

**Media enquiries: contact Siobhan Moylan, +61 422 755 785 | [moylan.siobhan@gmail.com](mailto:moylan.siobhan@gmail.com)**

FameLab International has been running annually since 2007. So far, more than 9,000 researchers from 31 countries have brought their science to live audiences on the FameLab stage.

FameLab 2018 is presented by the British Council and Cheltenham Festivals | Founding partners: Western Australian Museum and The McCusker Foundation | Major partner: Woodside Energy Ltd | University partners: Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University and University of Western Australia | Venue partners: Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, Queensland Museum, Museum Victoria, Western Australian Museum | QLD presenting partner: World Science Festival, Brisbane | WA presenting partners: the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science & Innovation and the Foundation for the WA Museum | UK Government partner: British High Commission | Media partner: Australia's Science Channel | Training and advocacy partner: Inspiring Australia

#### **Notes to editors:**

FameLab® is a competition owned and created by Cheltenham Festivals in the UK. The British Council has license to deliver the competition in over 30 countries overseas. Since its birth at the Festival in 2005, FameLab has grown into the world's leading science communication competition. A partnership with the British Council since 2007 has seen the competition go global with more than 9000 young scientists and engineers participating to date.

#### **About the British Council**

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 65 million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

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