



Australian Government

Department of Education,  
Science and Training



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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### **21 year Science Circus partnership wins Prime Minister's Award**

The partnership that has brought the *Shell Questacon Science Circus* to thousands of students and families across Australia has been recognised with a Prime Minister's Excellence in Community Business Partnerships Award last night.

Questacon, Shell and The Australian National University have formed a unique and enduring 21-year association which has meant that countless students and families in rural and remote Australia have been exposed to the joy of science through the *Shell Questacon Science Circus*.

"When Shell, ANU and Questacon joined forces 21 years ago, no one foresaw the incredible impact that the *Science Circus* would have on rural communities around Australia," said Graham Durant, Questacon Director.

The *Science Circus* was the brainchild of ANU Professor Mike Gore, Questacon's founding Director. He recognised that it "should not simply be another building but that it must develop programmes that will reach out to all Australians – both in our cities and in the remote rural areas".

With the support of all three partners, the *Science Circus* has grown from its somewhat humble beginnings to its current position as a world benchmark for science outreach programmes, producing an annual cohort of highly trained and sought after science communicators through the ANU Centre for the Public Awareness of Science.

"The principal strength of the *Science Circus*, and the reason it has remained as one of the world's leading science centre outreach programmes, is because of this partnership between two national institutions and the private sector," said Graham Durant.

This is confirmed by Russell Caplan, Chairman Shell Companies in Australia.

"We are proud of the inspirational educational programme that the *Science Circus* has delivered over the past 21 years and that this success has been recognised through the Prime Minister's Awards. Even after all this time, the *Science Circus* is still a great fit with Shell's

overall social investment programme which has a focus on environment, health and education,” he said

This sentiment was also supported by ANU Vice-Chancellor Professor Ian Chubb. “More than 250 science communicators have graduated from the programme via ANU to make a contribution in media, government and the private sector. The ANU Science Communication course at the Centre for the Public Awareness of Science is very much at the heart of the *Science Circus*,” said Professor Chubb.

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