Life-Saving Health Tech Disruptor Named Top Asia-Pacific Innovator

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A revolutionary electronic materials engineer from Australia has been awarded the 2018 APEC Science Prize for Innovation, Research and Education for opening up new ways of detecting health threats.

An Associate Professor at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Dr. Madhu Bhaskaran, was named the region’s top early career researcher for her development of wearable elastic electronics and sensors. Examples include the introduction of stretchable, optically transparent and ultra-thin devices that can alert a user to dangerous levels of UV ray exposure and help to prevent skin cancer, breakthroughs enabled by Dr. Bhaskaran’s cross-border research in the APEC region.

Dr. Bhaskaran was chosen by officials from a group of 13 finalists, each under 40 years of age, from an APEC member economy and drivers of collaborative research with peers in other APEC economies building smart technologies for healthy societies—the 2018 ASPIRE Prize theme.

The ASPIRE Prize winner was announced by science, technology and innovation officials from the APEC member economies, at their policy development meetings in Port Moresby to enable greater intra-regional research and trade.

“Dr. Bhaskaran’s research shows what’s possible when minds work together. It also underscores the importance of APEC work to seed new breakthroughs that can improve people’s lives in all areas of the region,” explained Papua New Guinea Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology Minister Pila Niningi.

“The electronic materials created by Dr. Bhaskaran will promote healthier and more productive Asia-Pacific communities,” added Christin Kjelland, Chair of the APEC Policy Partnership for Science, Technology and Innovation and an official with the United States State Department. “APEC’s goal is to keep groundbreaking innovation coming through regional collaboration.”

For her achievement, Dr. Bhaskaran was awarded a prize of $25,000 USD, supported by publishers of scholarly scientific knowledge, Wiley and Elsevier.

“Dr. Bhaskaran’s work changes the way we interact with electronic devices and sensors to address health challenges. We celebrate her achievements in developing life-saving applications that will broadly impact the region and the world,” said Brian Napack, President and CEO of Wiley.

“The ASPIRE Prize honors scientists driving future generations to innovate and provide creative solutions,” concluded Youngsuk “Y.S.” Chi, Chairman of Elsevier. “We are proud to honor Dr. Bhaskaran’s efforts that demonstrate a shared vision for outstanding research and international collaboration.”

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About APEC
The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum established in 1989 to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific. APEC's 21 members aim to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.

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