

press release

Eight women shaping the future of science named finalists for 2026 Marie Krogh Young Women in Science Prize

Sydney, Australia, 16 September 2026: Eight outstanding early to mid-career women researchers from Australia and New Zealand whose work is tackling some of the most pressing challenges in health and medicine have been named finalists for the 2026 [Marie Krogh Young Women in Science Prize](#).

The finalists' research spans a diverse range of disciplines, from detecting malaria and colorectal cancer to using artificial intelligence to uncover hidden health risks and advancing precision eye care, highlighting the breadth of scientific innovation being led by women across Australia and New Zealand. This is also the first year researchers from New Zealand have been eligible to apply, with two New Zealand scientists named among the eight finalists.

Established by Novo Nordisk, the Marie Krogh Young Women in Science Prize recognises and supports the next generation of women in science. Each finalist will receive AUD\$5,000 and access to an ongoing alumni network that provides opportunities for connection, collaboration and mentorship, while the winner will receive AUD\$50,000 to further support their research.

Selected for their Innovation, Impact and Leadership, the finalists represent some of the most promising women researchers across Australia and New Zealand.

The 2026 Marie Krogh Young Women in Science Prize finalists:

2026 Finalists	Research Focus
Dr Danuta Sampson Researcher Lions Eye Institute and The University of Western Australia	Precision eye care: Developed world-leading retinal imaging tools and international standards that support earlier detection, monitoring and treatment of eye disease.
Dr Meagan Carney Senior Lecturer The University of Queensland	AI and predictive health: Uses mathematics and artificial intelligence to identify difficult-to-detect health risks, including bacterial infections, long COVID and dangerous blood glucose fluctuations.
Dr Odunayo (Lola) Mugisho Senior Research Fellow Above-the-Bar The University of Auckland	Neurodegenerative and retinal disease: Uncovering links between diseases of the eye and brain, with discoveries translating into potential new therapies for patients.
Dr Rachel Purcell Principal Investigator and Senior Research Fellow University of Otago	Colorectal cancer research: Advancing earlier diagnosis and more personalised treatment of colorectal cancer through research into tumour biology, the microbiome and immune response.
Dr Rhea Longley Viertel Senior Medical Research Fellow and Laboratory Head, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI)	Malaria elimination: Developed innovative tools to detect hidden malaria infections, informing World Health Organization guidance, outbreak responses and malaria control programs worldwide.

Associate Professor Stephanie Harrison Associate Professor, Health Services and Epidemiology Flinders University	Aged care quality and safety: Driving improvements in aged care through research that has informed national quality indicators, policy reform and safer use of medicines.
Associate Professor Susann Beier Biomechanics Engineer University of New South Wales	Heart disease detection: Pioneered imaging, artificial intelligence and blood-flow modelling technologies that uncover hidden cardiovascular disease risk and support better patient outcomes.
Associate Professor Yet Hong Khor Research Fellow, Respiratory and Sleep Medicine Monash University	Respiratory health: Transforming care for people with interstitial lung disease through research influencing international guidelines and clinical practice in more than 27 countries.

The finalists were selected by an esteemed panel of leaders across medical research, science, healthcare and government:

- **Dr Ana Svensson**, Senior Director Medical, Novo Nordisk Oceania
- **Professor Gemma Geoghegan**, Webster Family Chair in Viral Pathogenesis, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, University of Otago
- **Dr Jesse Bergman**, Acting Senior Manager – Strategy Programs, Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer
- **Dr Rolf Gomes**, Founder and Director, Heart of Australia; Cardiologist, Medihearts and 2026 Australian of the Year (Queensland)

“The calibre, diversity and impact of this year’s finalists reflect the incredible contribution women are making to science and medicine across Australia and New Zealand. Through the Marie Krogh Prize, we are proud to recognise and invest in women researchers whose work is helping shape the future of healthcare,” said **Dr Ana Svensson, Senior Director Medical, Novo Nordisk Oceania**.

“As the Prize expands to New Zealand, we look forward to creating even greater opportunities for women researchers to be recognised, connected and supported as they build the careers and scientific breakthroughs of the future,” Dr Svensson added.

The Marie Krogh Young Women in Science Prize was established by Novo Nordisk and named in honour of Dr Marie Krogh (1874–1943) – a pioneering Danish physician, physiologist and co-founder of Novo Nordisk. The Prize celebrates her legacy and commitment to advancing women in science.

The 2026 winner will be announced at the Marie Krogh Young Women in Science Prize awards dinner in Canberra on Tuesday 13 October.

About Novo Nordisk

Novo Nordisk is a leading global healthcare company founded in 1923 and headquartered in Denmark. Our purpose is to drive change to defeat serious chronic diseases built upon our heritage in diabetes. We do so by pioneering scientific breakthroughs, expanding access to our

medicines and working to prevent and ultimately cure disease. Novo Nordisk employs about 68,800 people in 80 countries and markets its products in around 170 countries.

Novo Nordisk has been operating in Australia since 1976. We deliver medicines to more than 1.6 million patients in Australia for the treatment of diabetes, obesity, rare diseases and other serious chronic diseases. For more information, visit www.novonordisk.com.au

About the Marie Krogh Young Women in Science Prize

The Marie Krogh Young Women in Science Prize is a prestigious award that aims to recognise and celebrate outstanding women in science and medicine who embody the core pillars of Innovation, Impact and Leadership. It aims to highlight groundbreaking scientific research that demonstrates originality and advances knowledge through creative approaches and novel solutions.

The Prize also aims to honour contributions that have a measurable impact on healthcare – improving patient outcomes, shaping public health policies or transforming clinical practices and seeks to acknowledge exceptional leadership and community engagement, particularly in fostering collaboration, mentoring future leaders and empowering young women in science and medicine.

Through these pillars, the Marie Krogh Young Women in Science Prize seeks to inspire a legacy of excellence and transformation in health research and beyond.

www.mariekroghprize.com.au

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