

MEDIA RELEASE

Under embargo until: 11pm, Friday 30 May 2008

AUSTRALIAN DESIGN AWARD-DYSON STUDENT AWARD South Australian student takes top prize

South Australian student inventor Michael Ng has been chosen by a panel of Australian design industry experts, as this year's stand out Australian industrial design student talent.

Michael, from the University of South Australia, has taken Gold in the **2008 Australian Design Award-Dyson Student Award**, with his Compact Crutch walking aid which solves the simple problem of crutches being uncomfortable.

The Australian Design Award-Dyson Student Award was announced at Standards Australia's Australian International Design Awards held in Sydney on Friday 30th May. The Awards program recognises and promotes design excellence and innovation in Australia.

South Australia has a strong history of design excellence. Lance Hill, designer of the now iconic Hills Hoist clothes line, a fixture in most Aussie backyards, was born in South Australia, and another universally adopted South Australian design, the flexible wine cask bag, was developed by Thomas Angrove in 1965.

About Compact Crutch walking aid

Anyone who has had to rely on crutches will agree their rigidity creates an unnatural and uncomfortable walking movement. For short rehabilitation periods it's bearable; but for long-term users who rely on walking aides for their daily independence, crutches are in need of some serious design modifications.

Michael's Compact Crutch walking aide was conceived to improve comfort and delay the onset of some severe health effects associated with the long-term use of elbow crutches including wrist tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome caused by repetitive jarring.

The design features some clever innovation:

- A 'crutch tip compressor' which isolates the frame from the ground and taking inspiration from prosthetic limbs, allows the tips to roll like ankle joints, effectively absorbing the impact.
- Large angled handgrips to create a more natural wrist angle by distributing bodyweight load over a greater area of the palm to improve blood circulation - and reduce pressure on the carpal tunnel.
- Complicated spring lock pins have been replaced with locking collars to quickly and easily collapse or adjust height.

'The design was about evolving a product that clearly hasn't changed in a long time. I wanted to help improve the quality of life for people involved in rehabilitation, so they remain social, active and positive,' says Michael Ng.

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Judges were impressed with the sound and clever-thinking behind Michael's design. Judges comments included:

'It's a good design, there's newness to it.'

'It's not only adjustable, but it also remembers your height and snaps back into that position – that's a major innovation.'

'The foot is better and definitely not as jarring – why would someone not have done this already?'

Michael wins a prize package, which includes a trip to the United Kingdom to visit Dyson Research Design and Development Centre, home of inventor and engineer James Dyson.

As the winning entry of this year's Australian Design Award-Dyson Student Award, the Compact Crutch is now in the running for the James Dyson Award, an international student design competition.

Other prizes awarded:

The **Silver** prize was awarded to Alicia Mintzes from the University of New South Wales for Sharpsafe - a community needle disposal bin for injection drug users that utilises material and technology innovations to improve safety aspects, and aesthetic street furniture language to enable a better, non-threatening, fit in public spaces.

The **Bronze** prize was awarded to Brook Tait-Styles from the University of Technology Sydney for PV-1 Exhaust Fume Filtration Unit; a new and innovative portable unit to protect mechanics and at-home car enthusiasts from potentially harmful exhaust fumes. The PV-1 filters particle emissions from the air and converts them into less dangerous, naturally-occurring substances.

A **Highly Commended** prize was awarded to Mark Antony Sorrenti, also from the University of Technology Sydney for S.A.M. Brace; a post operative shoulder rehabilitation brace that allows controlled movement for faster full rehabilitation.

About the Australian Design Award-Dyson Student Award

The Australian Design Award-Dyson Student Award has been running for seven years as a joint collaboration between the Australian International Design Awards and Dyson Appliances (Australia).

Past winners have gone on to secure positions with leading Australian and international design houses including Ford Motors (US), CMD Product Design & Innovation (Australia) and Yamaha (Japan).

Winners of the Australian Design Award-Dyson Student Award are automatically entered into the James Dyson Award, a global student initiative of the James Dyson Foundation.

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Embargo Agreement

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The Australian International Design Awards is a division of Standards Australia. Standards Australia is recognised by the Government as Australia's peak Standards body. It coordinates standardisation activities, develops internationally aligned Australian Standards of public benefit and national interest and accredits other Standards Development Organisations. Through the Australian International Design Awards it promotes excellence in design and innovation. www.standards.org.au www.designawards.com.au