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**Media release**

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**House of Science wins international award for contribution to chemistry education**

A team of scientists from New Zealand have been named the winner of the Royal Society of Chemistry’s (RSC) Horizon Prizes for Education.

‘House of Science New Zealand’ was chosen by the RSC’s prestigious panel of judges for the development of a vast library of hands-on, bilingual science resource kits that enable thousands of primary school teachers across New Zealand to deliver life-changing science lessons.

The Royal Society of Chemistry receives applicants from all over the world for their awards which acknowledge individuals, teams and schools across primary, secondary, further education and higher education, for their exceptional contributions to chemistry education.

The group – led by House of Science Charitable Trust Resource Developer, Jane Hoggard, and including professionals from SCION, New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre and the New Zealand Environmental Protection Authority – have now become winners of the Royal Society of Chemistry’s Horizon Prize for Education, for their outstanding work in making science education more accessible.

By bringing together the skills of eDNA experts, science communicators, educators and community engagement experts, the team were able to create a library of hands-on, bi-lingual science resource kits that give teachers the tools and confidence needed to deliver life-changing science lessons.

The kits – which contain all the equipment, instructions and consumables needed to deliver engaging hands-on lessons that are linked to the curriculum and to current science research – are distributed and maintained by volunteers on a fortnightly basis to hundreds of schools and thousands of teachers each year.

Reflecting on the award, Jane says it is both a surprise, and an honour, to receive international recognition for the House of Science initiative.

“I am proud of the work we are doing with both teachers and students throughout New Zealand fostering wonder and curiosity in the world around us. I consider it a privilege working alongside scientists to help them with the delivery of their outreach programmes to primary school students.”

“I am proud of Jane and the team for all their efforts - this award is so well deserved,” said founder and Chief Executive Chris Duggan.

Dr Helen Pain, Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Chemistry, said: “It’s of vital importance that we recognise the crucial role that educators play in the advancement of the sciences, and that we commend their ability to inspire and nurture the next generation of bright young minds, so that they can go on to make new discoveries and innovations.

“Society faces many challenges, and educators give us the tools we need to advance our understanding of the world around us and solve many of the problems we encounter. The House of Science New Zealand team’s work to deliver engaging and accessible lessons that incorporate the curriculum demonstrates an outstanding commitment to chemistry education, and it is our honour to celebrate their considerable contribution.”

There are 19 House of Science centres across New Zealand, each with their own library of bi-lingual science resource kits, that are distributed and maintained by volunteers on behalf of the local community. Each fortnight, hundreds of these kits are delivered to schools and tens of thousands of children partake in science lessons as a result.

ENDS

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**Notes for Editors:**

* House of Science is a charitable trust which gives primary school aged children access to comprehensive, bilingual resources to improve scientific literacy in the classroom. It was established in 2014, by CEO Chris Duggan, a biochemist and secondary school science teacher for 15 years after she developed a growing sense of concern about the lack of science knowledge students had when arriving at high school. Such statistics include:
* In 2013 73% of primary schools did not have an effective science programme in place.
* In 2017 only 20% of 12 year-olds were at the expected curriculum level in science, making this the worst taught subject in the country's primary schools.
* Primary students' science results have declined for many years on national and international monitoring studies (TIMSS and PISA).
* Most primary teachers in New Zealand do not have expertise in science and lack the confidence and resources to teach it. The House of Science resource library has filled a gaping hole in the country's education system and is making serious inroads in alleviating the issues above.
* Nearly 10 years on, House of Science has grown to 19 branches around New Zealand, and more popping up when the funding allows. To donate or volunteer please visit <https://houseofscience.nz/>
* The Royal Society of Chemistry’s prizes have recognised excellence in the chemical sciences for more than 150 years. In 2019, the organisation announced the biggest overhaul of this portfolio in its history, designed to better reflect modern scientific work and culture.
* For more information about the RSC’s prizes portfolio, visit https://rsc.li/prizes

**About the Royal Society of Chemistry**

An international organisation connecting chemical scientists with each other, with other scientists, and with society as a whole. Founded in 1841 and based in London, UK, they have an international membership of over 50,000. They use the surplus from their global publishing and knowledge business to give thousands of chemical scientists the support and resources required to make vital advances in chemical knowledge. They develop, recognise and celebrate professional capabilities, and bring people together to spark new ideas and new partnerships. They support teachers to inspire future generations of scientists, and speak up to influence the people making decisions that affect us all.