

Media Release

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Female researcher wins Fun Fearless Female awards

Dr. Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino from the Monash Institute of Medical Research (MIMR) received two awards at the *Cosmopolitan* Fun Fearless Female awards night. She was announced the winner of the Inspirational Role Model category and the overall 2009 Fun, Fearless Female: Woman of the Year.

The Fun Fearless Female awards recognise 11 categories of women's achievements in TV, radio, fashion, sport, music, business and inspirational role models.

Over two months, the public voted for a selection of nominees who reflect a true celebration of women who successfully combine career, intelligence, business, entrepreneurial skills and passion. Nominees included some of Australia's most recognised women, such as Sarah Murdoch, Kate Ritchie, and international sports stars Lauren Jackson and Layne Beachley

Voters chose Tu'uhevaha as the outstanding representative for the Inspirational Role Model category.

At only 28, Tu'uhevaha is a young scientist who has dedicated her research career to discovering why some women suffer from heavy, painful and prolonged periods. She completed her PhD at Prince Henry's Institute in 2007; a feat made even more impressive considering she gave birth to her daughter midway through her studies.

Tu'uhevaha joined the Centre for Women's Health Research at MIMR in 2008 and is investigating the role stem cells play in problem periods. Her research will increase understanding on how adult stem cells function in regenerating the endometrium (lining of the uterus), and will also provide vital insights into the failure of adequate endometrial repair in abnormal uterine bleeding; a condition that affects around four million Australian women.

Tu'uhevaha says "I just can't believe it. I wasn't confident that I would win my category of Inspirational Role Model, let alone win the Fun, Fearless Female: Women of the Year award. I was sitting at the table getting my camera ready to take a photo of the famous celebrity who was bound to win, and all of a sudden I heard my name. I was so surprised, and so honoured"

Tu'uhevaha says she wants her award to be an encouragement to young women to continue their studies. "Even when life throws obstacles your way, keep going, because if you want something enough then anything is possible" she explains.

"We were all thrilled to see Tu'uhevaha win the overall Fun, Fearless, Female Woman of the Year award. She's not only talented in her field, but a warm, lovely person, who impressed the crowd of celebrities and other deserving finalists when she spoke about her work. We're certain she would have inspired the many *Cosmopolitan* readers who voted for her" said *Cosmopolitan* Deputy Editor Jessica Parry.

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