

Dr Elizabeth Finkel - 2019 ASMR Medallist

Dr Elizabeth Finkel is a trailblazing Australian science communicator, who has received numerous prestigious awards for her science journalism, and has a PhD in biomedical research.

At the National Press Club today, she said -

“The values of journalism – to report without fear or favour, to drill down till you find the complex and difficult truth of a story – are familiar to anyone hammered by the rigours of the scientific method. And there has never been a more important time to broadcast the scientific method to the general public.

We have entered the post-truth era. We’re back to a dark age, where people seem unable to differentiate between fanatical hype and the evidence of experts. Witness the victory for the anti-vaxxers in the US measles epidemic - currently at 970 cases. Measles was declared eliminated in the US in 2000.

As a science journalist I feel a particular sense of mission to do my bit to blow away the dark, dangerous fog of our times.”

A gifted story teller and communicator, Dr Finkel was the co-founder of Cosmos Magazine. She is also the author of ‘Stem Cells: Controversy at the Frontiers of Science’ which not only provides a clear lay explanation of just what stem cells are, but why they are important for medical research and how Australia found itself in the forefront of stem cell research.

She has also authored ‘The Genome Generation’ which covers genetic developments in diverse areas such as medicine, agriculture, and evolution, clearly contextualising their relevant applications to our society.

“The sort of things I used to do to fruit flies at USCF – supply them with new genes – are now being done in people to achieve ‘biblical’ results. Toddlers born with SMA (spinal muscular atrophy), who should be crippled or dead, are walking.

Dr Finkel brings a human face to the science of gene therapy, that bold and amazing idea of treating inherited diseases by replacing the missing gene.

The ASMR Medal was first awarded in 1998 to Professor Peter Doherty, and has since been awarded annually to eminent national and international scientists and advocates including two Australian Nobel Prize winners.

WHO: Dr Elizabeth Finkel, ASMR Medalist 2019
WHAT: Address to the National Press Club, “Gene therapy: cure but at what cost?
and presentation of the ASMR Medal
WHERE: National Press Club, Canberra
WHEN: Wednesday 5th June 2019, 12pm

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Interview opportunities

Background and bio at <https://asmr.org.au/asmr-mrw/media/>