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Two Distinguished University Of Melbourne Researchers Elected As Fellows Of The Australian Academy Of Science

The Australian Academy of Science has honoured two University of Melbourne researchers with election to the Academy for their internationally significant achievements.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor James McCluskey FAA, from the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, and Professor Frances Separovic, FAA, from the School of Chemistry, Bio21 Institute, have been elected Fellows of the Australian Academy of Science.

Professor McCluskey was recognised for his work on immune system proteins (histocompatibility proteins) and how they protect against infection and influence transplantation rejection and autoimmune disease.

Professor McCluskey said he was thrilled and very honoured to be elected to the Academy. He noted that the Academy was started in 1954 by Australian Fellows of the Royal Society and was initially led by distinguished physicist, Sir Mark Oliphant who he met on several occasions during his time in Adelaide.

"I consider this honour reflects contributions from over 30 PhD students and a dozen or so research fellows who have supported my research over 25 years," he said.

Professor McCluskey's discoveries have helped improve transplantation matching and our understanding of the basis of several autoimmune reactions. His work continues to be funded by an NMHRC Program grant shared with six other researchers, three of whom are also fellows of the Academy of Science.

Professor Frances Separovic was recognised for her work on understanding how small proteins get into cell membranes using the cutting edge technique of solid-state nuclear magnetic resonance. Her work has applications for developing antibiotics and understanding more about the process of Alzheimer's disease.

"I feel both humble and proud as well as deeply honoured to be a member of the Australian Academy of Science," Professor Separovic said.

"It is especially rewarding to have my area of research, biophysical chemistry, recognized and to raise the profile of women in science."

The new Fellows will be admitted to the Australian Academy of Science and present summaries of the work for which they have been honoured at the Academy's annual three-day celebration, Science at the Shine Dome, on 2 May in Canberra.

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