



Australian Government



THE PRIME MINISTER'S  
PRIZES FOR SCIENCE

# Professor Anthony Steven Weiss AM FTSE FRSC FRACI CChem FRSN FAIMBE FAICD FBSE FTERM

University of Sydney, New South Wales

## 2021 PRIME MINISTER'S PRIZE FOR INNOVATION

- Professor Anthony (Tony) Steven Weiss AM is the world's leading authority on tropoelastin, the protein building-block that gives human tissue its elasticity.
- For the past two decades, he has pioneered global research into tropoelastin and elastic fibres, which are found in human tissues ranging from the skin to the lungs and arteries. Elastic fibres play a significant role in the repair of the human body.
- When Professor Weiss began his research program in the 1990s, many believed that it was impossible for tropoelastin to become a successful medical biomaterial.
- He proved them wrong by designing synthetic tropoelastin-based biomaterials, to accelerate and improve the repair of human tissue.
- In 2008, Professor Weiss founded the company, Elastagen, which allowed him to commercialise his research and inventions. The company raised \$35 million in venture capital and grant funding, completed clinical trials and scaled-up production.
- Ten years later Elastagen was sold to Allergan, one of the world's biggest biopharmaceutical companies, for a total of \$334 million. This remains one of the largest transactions ever completed in Australia's life science sector.
- Allergan has since been acquired by AbbVie, which estimates sales for 'next generation bio-stimulatory tropoelastin' at more than \$100 million per product. This is expected to drive significant long-term growth.
- Professor Weiss remains in a scientific advisory role with AbbVie, expanding the intellectual property portfolio for tropoelastin applications. His inventions have generated an incredible 163 granted patents in 21 patent families around the world.
- He is also regarded as an ambassador for Australian innovation, and has given his time to mentor Australian researchers. He offers insight on every aspect of science commercialisation, inspiring both Australian investors and incubators to support the next generation of life science technologies.
- Through his scientific and commercial endeavours, Professor Weiss continues to build capabilities and create jobs in Australia across relevant fields.





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### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- 2021 President, Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine International Society
- 2021 Weickhardt Medal, Royal Australian Chemical Institute
- 2020 National Health and Medical Research Council Leadership Fellow
- 2019 Clunies Ross Award for Knowledge Commercialisation, Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering
- 2018 Elastagen sold to Allergan for \$334 million
- 2018 Order of Australia
- 2018 NSW Premier's Prize for Science & Engineering (Leadership in Innovation)
- 2018 Eureka Prize for Innovation in Medical Research
- 2018 Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence, University of Sydney
- 2018 Innovator of Influence Award, Australian Science and Innovation Forum
- 2018 Fellow, Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine International Society
- 2017 Fellow, Royal Society of New South Wales
- 2016 Fellow, Biomaterials Science and Engineering, The International Union of Societies for Biomaterials Science and Engineering
- 2015 Fellow, Royal Australian Chemical Institute and Chartered Chemist
- 2015 Applied Research Medal, Royal Australian Chemical Institute
- 2014 Fellow, Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering
- 2014 Entrepreneurship Award, Federation of Asian and Oceanian Biochemists and Molecular Biologists
- 2014 Research Excellence Award, Australasian Society for Biomaterials and Tissue Engineering
- 2014 McCaughey Chair in Biochemistry, University of Sydney
- 2013 Fellow, Royal Society of Chemistry UK
- 2013 Fellow, American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering USA
- 2013 Barry Preston Award, Matrix Biology Society of Australia and New Zealand
- 2011 The Australian Innovation Challenge Award
- 2008 Founder, Elastagen
- 2006 NSW Commercialisation Expo Prize
- 2005 Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors
- 2001 David Syme Research Medal
- 1999 AMRAD Pharmacia-Biotech Medal