



PURPOSE: Dr Kathleen Pishas has been recognised for her work on ewing sarcoma.

Picture: ROY VAN DER VEGT

Fighting to provide second chance at life

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FOR Kathleen Pishas, making her mark in science is not about personal recognition. It is about the children she may one day be able to save.

Dr Pishas, a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Adelaide, has devoted four years to researching treatment for little-known disease

ewing sarcoma, an aggressive bone cancer that mainly affects people under 18.

This month Dr Pishas, 26, won the PhD Research Excellence award at the 2014 SA Science Excellence Awards.

"It gives me great satisfaction that I can make a difference and leave my footprint," Dr Pishas, of Seaton, said.

"I have a purpose and I see it as a cause, not a job."

Her lab is the only one in Australia studying ewing sarcoma. She hopes the award will help secure more funding for research, which is leading to development of targeted drugs to treat the disease.

Dr Pishas says despite chemotherapy, radiation and surgery treatments, only 20 to 40 per cent of patients with ewing sarcoma survive more than five years.

In 2010 she was awarded a \$75,000 research scholarship set up in memory of ewing sufferer Tom Wood, 28, who died a year after he was diagnosed.

"I hope my findings will one day benefit patients and provide second chances for them, which Tom didn't have," she said.

The awards recognised nine South Australians for achievements in science research, engineering and education.