

## Flinders Bioremediation "on the cutting edge"

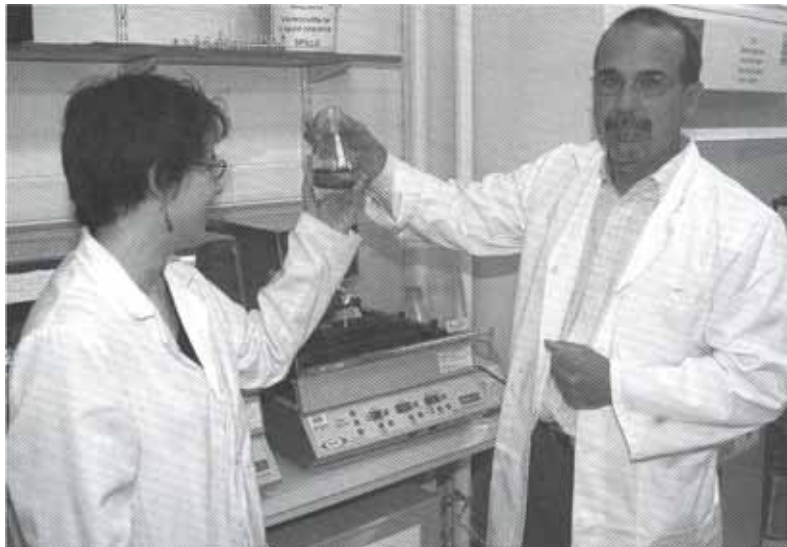
A leading international expert in bioremediation has given Flinders Bioremediation a tick of approval.

US-based Dr William Mahaffey, founder and President of Pelorus Environmental Biotechnology Corporation, was in Adelaide recently as a guest of Flinders Bioremediation, with contributions from the Cooperative Research Centre for Contamination Assessment and Remediation of the Environment (CRC CARE) and the Australian Contaminated Land Consultants Association (SA).

He said Flinders Bioremediation was "very much on the right track".

"They have put together a team of individuals with expertise at the cutting edge of where things are moving with respect to environmental biotechnology," he said.

"Bioremediation has historically been engineering-driven. What Flinders has cottoned on to is the importance of the biotechnology aspects and so they are using a genomics approach to understand microbial populations in the waste



*Honours Student Jessica Half with international bioremediation expert, Dr Bill Mahaffey*

matrices and ways of optimising microbial communities to create more efficient processing."

"They are really quite far along and once they achieve a critical mass they "will be doing some really good things."

Dr Mahaffey's resume includes consulting on bioremediation and logistics in the early phases of the Exxon Valdez crisis in Alaska - one of the main drivers in the push for bioremediation solutions.

"The United States is probably the furthest ahead at this time, simply because our regulatory process drove us there," he said. "The Exxon Valdez disaster drove us even further. It was probably the single

biggest global event that pushed bioremediation forward as an industry."

Another big driver was "when the US Federal Government realised they were one of the biggest holders of contaminated real estate, that really helped to accelerate the whole remediation, clean-up agenda".

Dr Mahaffey believes the biggest global problem that bioremediation can solve - or at least

mitigate - is petroleum hydrocarbon impacts.

"They are so wide spread and I've have known for a number of years with a lot of the oil spills that micro-organisms grow on these compounds - it's a food source for them, and there has been a great deal of research into how micro-organisms degrade these compounds."

While in Adelaide, Dr Mahaffey visited the Environment Protection Authority (SA), CRC CARE, CSIRO Land and Water, Compost SA and the Australian Contaminated land Consultants Association, and was the keynote speaker at Flinders Bioremediation annual corporate networking function on Friday June 16.