

Prize winning experiment a pop-ular choice

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POPCORN is more than just a tasty snack for two Sebastopol College students who put their favourite brands to the test in the name of science.

Year nine students Rheannon Owen and Alex Kent experimented to see which type of popcorn delivered the best value for consumers by leaving the least amount of seeds not popped.

The pair competed against other projects related to fluorescent lightglobes, windmills and wireless electricity last Tuesday night to win the Committee for Ballarat's Peter Doherty Science Prize.

Rheannon, who hopes to pursue a career as a food scientist, said they experimented with different variables and found the microwave popcorn left the least seeds unpopped.

Alex said the prize was unexpected.

"We didn't think we'd have a chance when we saw the others," he said.

The pair won \$200 for their school, Sebastopol College.

Committee for Ballarat CEO, Doug Lloyd said the competition was for Year 9 and 10 students at state secondary schools.

He said the winners had done a fantastic job as they had asked important consumer questions.

The finalists had to give a presentation and answer questions on their project from an audience as part of the competition.

The prize is named after Professor Peter Doherty who won a Nobel Prize with Swiss colleague Rolf Zinkernagel for the discovery of how the immune system recognises virus-infected cells.