Air-quality study among 10 winners

A research project investigating the health risks posed to people living close to expressways – and the fumes emitted by vehicles – is among 10 that have each won US$10,000 (S$12,300) in cash.

Over a period of five years from 2005, Dr Mano Kalaiarasan, 46, monitored the air quality of six high-rise buildings next to major thoroughfares such as the Central, Pan-Island and Ayer Rajah expressways.

His findings that the residents could be subjected to significant respiratory health risks will enable town planners and policymakers to fine-tune town planning and building design.

His completed PhD thesis joined four others from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and five others from the National University of Singapore (NUS) that won the cash awards given by the World Future Foundation (WFF), a charitable organisation started by Chinese entrepreneurs that is based here. It aims to fund environmental technologies and sustainable development.

The winning theses are related to the environment, sustainability and metropolises of the future.

The cash prizes from WFF are the highest given out at Singapore universities and the only ones available for students pursuing their doctorates.

This is the second year the awards have been given out.

On Thursday, Dr Feng Lun, chairman of the WFF board, joined NUS vice-provost (education) Tan Thiam Soon and NTU associate provost (graduate education) Peter Rainer Preiser in presenting the awards to the winners at NTU.

The research findings of one of last year’s winners drew interest from ministries and agencies such as JTC Corporation, the Housing Board and the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

Dr Steve Jusuf, 33, had zoomed in on identifying the temperature conditions of urban areas to facilitate urban planning.

Janice Tai