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WAIMR 5 YEAR CELEBRATION AND WELCOMING FREMANTLE HOSPITAL

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS AT THE WAIMR 5 YEAR CELEBRATION - 1 OCTOBER 2003

It is with pleasure that I welcome the Honourable Jim McGinty as Minister for Health and as Member for Fremantle, as this evening my main responsibility is to welcome the Fremantle Hospital as a full Member of the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research. So it is most fitting, Mr Minister, that it be on this occasion that the teaching hospital in your electorate is welcomed as a full member to our Institute, and as such joins the other two major teaching hospitals in our community; Sir Charles Gairdner and Royal Perth Hospitals; as a full member.

The membership of Fremantle Hospital of our Institute has been under review for several years; mainly I must say by the hospital. With recent acceptance of our invitation to join our Institute, which we made some years ago, has concluded this program, which is of importance to us. We have with us tonight Mr Len Hitchen, Chairman of the Fremantle Hospital Research Foundation; and the recently appointed Chief Executive Officer of Fremantle Hospital, Mr Shane Kelly. Welcome to you both.



We look forward to an ongoing relationship with you gentlemen and your hospital into the future and welcome you as a full member of the Western Australian Institute of Medical Research.

WAIMR is all about co-operation, it's all about inclusiveness and accountability and its all about efficiency in the use of resources and funds, both public and private. WAIMR is all about research for improved health outcomes for all Western Australians; about the efficient use of resources.

WAIMR is leading in the development of a major knowledge based industry here in Perth. Capitalising on the unique resources that we have in our community, particularly the very extensive database, maintained to a high level of detail by our Health Department, now over many years. And ongoing clinical trials funded by major pharmaceutical companies to the tune of \$10-15 million per annum. This is no "cottage industry" it is a "serious growing industry" adding to the database and testing susceptibility to disease and the response to drugs - both new drugs and old drugs used in new and innovated ways - within our community.

WAIMR is in the forefront of creating an environment where researchers, both old and young; mature and starting out in their career; are encouraged; are able to return to Western Australia and settle and continue their career work to the benefit of our community.

We can refer to this situation as "the reversal of the brain drain" if we want to, but I choose to think of the 6 new professors and the 35 postgraduate doctoral fellows, all working away in a range of laboratory and clinical research environments, all focused on better health outcomes for our community.

Community support for WAIMR has been excellent and sustained. I wish to refer and acknowledge again tonight, the support of our founding sponsor, Wesfarmers Limited, who contributed a total of \$5 million over 5 years; the largest single corporate donation ever made in Australia, I understand. And I acknowledge the presence with us here tonight of Mr Trevor Eastwood, the Chairman of Directors of Wesfarmers Limited. Trevor, your company's generosity is most appreciated and has been acknowledged by all as most generous and timely support of our Institute and one which has enabled out establishment and growth. It has been put to good use. But there are many others. We have one person in our community who personally, as an individual, has committed \$3.5 million in sponsorship to WAIMR and through WAIMR he is supporting research and researchers in specific areas of health science in our community. There is another who has pledged \$1 million to support a targeted research program within WAIMR and we are currently arranging for that work to be undertaken.

In addition, there are the many private donors in our community who supported our major public fundraising campaign and on behalf of WAIMR and all associated with the Institute, I thank you sincerely. Peter Klincken has given you an outline of our way forward. It's into the field of Genomics, it's more of the same. It's where our new staff of 6 professors and many doctoral fellows are focussing their attention.

The future beckons us.

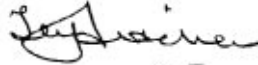


Mr Richard Lester - Chairman



MESSAGE FROM FREMANTLE HOSPITAL

Fremantle Hospital's membership of WAIMR had long been the vision of former WAIMR Chairman Harry Perkins (AO) and the Founder of the Fremantle Hospital Medical Research Foundation, Warren Jones (AM). Discussions took place over several years and sadly both Harry and Warren left us before these plans came to fruition, however Fremantle Hospital's membership now stands as a monument to the foresight of these two great West Australians. I believe I speak on behalf of the entire research community at Fremantle Hospital when I say that we look forward to continuing and building upon our collaborative research efforts with WAIMR, to the great benefit of biomedical research in this state and indeed the people of Western Australia.



Mr Len Hitchen
Chairman, Fremantle Hospital Medical Research Foundation



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The WAIMR 5 year celebration was a fantastic event. The evening was memorable for many reasons. First, the Minister for Health, the Hon Jim McGinty was the guest of Honour, and it was wonderful to have him attend, especially as he is the Member for Fremantle. Second, it was exciting to see several hundred donors, supporters, sponsors and researchers gathered together, mingling freely at the occasion. Third, the link between WAIMR and Fremantle was formally cemented in public. Fourth, the achievements of WAIMR over the past 5 years were highlighted.

Not only has WAIMR raised funds for adult medical research from all sectors, but it has delivered measurable outcomes. New research facilities have been built covering over 4000m². Strategic re-locations of excellent research teams with complementary expertise has taken place, creating a critical mass. Strong partnerships have been forged with many Institutions and Foundations. As a consequence we have some of the best researchers in the State co-located, and 6 new Professorial positions have been appointed in the past 18 months. The 'brain drain' has been reversed by recruiting ex-patriots Western Australians and national/international experts to the State.

The Institute has almost filled its research facilities and is now looking forward eagerly to the next phase of its evolution. Having established a strong core of basic researchers focussed on various genetic aspects of disease, WAIMR is now expanding its support into other areas of research. With the appointment of Prof Lyle Palmer as the Foundation Chair in Genetic Epidemiology (through the generous patronage of a donor), WAIMR now is promoting research which maximises use of WA's unique and powerful health databases. In addition, WAIMR is actively encouraging more clinical trials, so that the Western Australian community can have access to the latest drugs, treatments and diagnostics. We have defined the pathway from database analyses, through genetics and into clinical trials as a 'Genomic Roadmap'. This blueprint has the potential to produce significant health benefits, as well as develop a 'knowledge-based industry' in Perth. There are very exciting times ahead of us as we strive to provide the Western Australian Community with health outcomes.

None of this would have been possible without your support. WAIMR is indebted to every donor, sponsor, supporter and researcher who has contributed to the development of the Institute. Thank you for all your efforts, and we look forward to updating you soon on the next exciting instalment in WAIMR's evolution.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone of you a very merry festive season, and trust you have a peaceful and restive summer.



Prof Peter Klinken - Director

How to find out more information..

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