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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

December 2004

There are many things happening in public health in our State that impact directly on medical research and, therefore, WAIMR.

The appointment of Dr Neale Fong as Director General of Health in WA, is an important and strategic move by the Minister for Health. Dr Fong brings to the Department of Health, youth and energy together with a new and fresh approach to management.

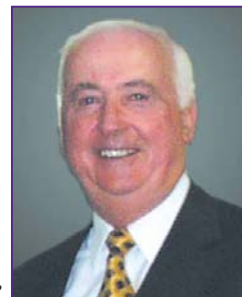
Ongoing funding for WAIMR remains a vexed issue with our present contract with the State of WA concluding in mid 2005. We are awaiting responses to several meetings, particularly with the Honourable Jim McGinty (Minister for Health) and the Honourable Clive Brown (Minister for Industry and Resources). Hopefully in the next few weeks a commitment to extend our present funding arrangements will be achieved.

WAIMR has now published its Strategic Plan. It is an important document and one which I commend to all interested in medical research in W.A. It will continue to grow, firstly in response to successes achieved, and secondly in response to the needs of both the W.A. community at large and the medical research fraternity.

Recently, WAIMR proposed the development of a Centre for Genomic Medicine and the establishment of clinical trial suites at both Sir Charles Gardner Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital to enable Phase I, II and III clinical trials for new therapeutic drugs in our community. This is further progress in our effort to develop an important knowledge based industry here in Perth, with all the benefits flowing directly to the community in the form of better health outcomes, together with a large, profitable and growing industry.

We look forward to further progress on these exciting developments.

**Mr Richard Lester - Chairman**




## DIRECTOR'S REPORT



How quickly another year goes by! This has been another exciting year for WAIMR – its hard to image that our staff numbers have grown from 35 at the beginning of 2003 to 158 currently. All of our laboratory and clinical research facilities are now full at the Nedlands Campus!

During the year WAIMR researchers attracted \$8m in competitive grants – most significant among these was an NHMRC enabling grant worth almost \$3m awarded to Professor Lyle Palmer. WAIMR teams have made significant

breakthroughs over the past year, particularly in our core area of defining mutated genes which cause disease (see overleaf).

The Institute has recently completed its Strategic Plan for the next 5 years – it aims to build on our strengths in genetics, by promoting genetic epidemiology and the wonderful health records in WA, leading into increased clinical trials for the community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of WAIMR, our staff and all researchers associated with the Institute for their wonderful efforts over 2004. We are indebted to our donors and sponsors (especially Wesfarmers and The University of Western Australia), supporters and advisors – without your help we wouldn't be where we are today.

I look forward to providing you all with another update soon on the new phase of WAIMR's progression.

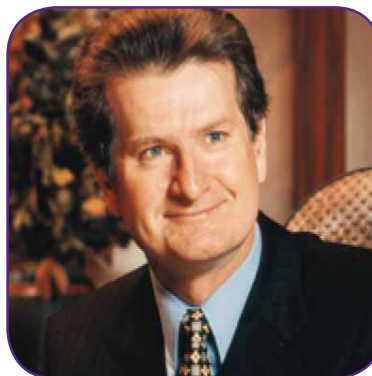
**Prof Peter Klincken - Director**



## The Marketing Centre Pty Ltd

Over the past year The Marketing Centre has generously been assisting WAIMR to develop its profile and marketing strategy. The Institute is extremely grateful to Mr Michael Smith, Mr Scott Pitman and Ms Ingrid O'Brien for all their help with this important activity for WAIMR's future development.

## MR TERRY BUDGE JOINS WAIMR BOARD

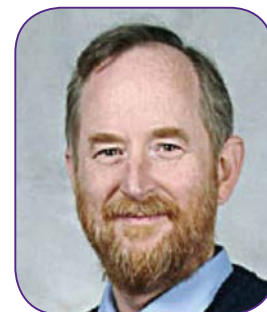


WAIMR is delighted to announce that Mr Terry Budge will be joining the Board at its December meeting. Mr Budge was the CEO of BankWest between 1997 and 2004, and it is wonderful to have someone of Mr Budge's caliber join the Board.

## PROFESSOR GRANT MORAHAN

### Chair in Diabetes Research

WAIMR is delighted to announce the appointment of **Professor Grant Morahan**, from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne, to the newly formed Chair in Diabetes Research. This is a wonderful joint initiative with the Diabetes Research Foundation of WA, The University of Western Australia and Royal Perth Hospital. Professor Morahan is an internationally-renowned geneticist who has uncovered genes involved in the development of diabetes. He will be establishing his laboratory base at WAIMR's Perth Campus.



RESEARCH AUSTRALIA AT WAIMR



Mr Peter Hughes

Research Australia, a co-ordinating body for researchers nationally, held a Thank You Day at WAIMR.

The event was organised by Research Australia's CEO Christine Bennett to recognise the efforts of researchers in improving the health of our community. Guest speakers were Mr Peter Hughes (victim of the Bali bombing), Professor Fiona Wood (Head, Burns Unit at Royal Perth Hospital), Chris Rogers (batsman of the WA Warriors cricket team) and Duncan Spencer (former member of the WA Warriors).



Professor Peter Klinken, Director, WAIMR and Dr Christine Bennett, CEO, Research Australia

MONOCLONAL ANTIBODY FACILITY



Kathy Davern, who currently runs the Monoclonal Antibody Facility at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute will be joining WAIMR in 2005. With the support of the Wind-Over-Water Foundation and The University of Western Australia, a new facility will be developed to generate monoclonal antibodies which are crucial for identifying disease causing proteins. Monoclonal antibodies are also being used for the treatment of increasing numbers of diseases.

PROFESSOR PETER LEEDMAN

Professor Peter Leedman was recently awarded the Asia-Oceania Medal from the UK Society of Endocrinology. WAIMR extends its heartiest congratulations to Prof Leedman on this prestigious award. Prof Leedman is seen here with his youngest son, Nicholas, at the Australian Society for Medical Research Expo held at Scitech in June this year.



NEW GENETIC DISCOVERIES IN WAIMR



Professor Luba Kalaydjieva and her team are interested in inherited forms of peripheral nerve disorders. Her group has studied the history and structure of isolated populations and have identified many new disorders and the genetic mutations that cause them.



Professor Nigel Laing's group have recently defined the genetic lesions which causes Laing early-onset distal myopathy. The mutation causing the condition is in a gene which makes myosin, one of the major muscle proteins.



Professor Lyle Palmer and collaborators at Harvard Medical School in Boston have very recently isolated a genetic fault which is involved in the development of asthma. This is a major advance in our understanding on the causes of asthma.

Collectively, these findings add considerably to WAIMR's goal of identifying genes which cause adult diseases, so that cures can be developed.

CENTRE FOR GENOMIC MEDICINE - CLINICAL TRIALS SUITES

WAIMR spearheaded a \$21m proposal to the State Government for a major research facility, aiming to develop a Centre for Genomic Medicine involving a whole-of-city collaborative effort. One of the major goals of this application is to develop new clinical trials suites, initially at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital. It is envisaged that, these facilities, together with our genetic expertise and excellent health records, will attract increased pharmaceutical industry clinical trials, allowing our community greater access to the latest treatments for adult disease.

*Merry Christmas and very best wishes for the New Year to all our readers*



PREMIER'S SCIENCE AWARDS EVENING

Senior WAIMR researchers attended the Premier's Science Awards evening. The Institute congratulates Professor Bruce Robinson on being awarded the Premier's Prize for Achievement in Science for 2004. This is great recognition for the outstanding efforts of Professor Robinson in early detection, understanding and treatment of mesothelioma.

ATTENDANCE AT AAMRI

Professor Peter Klinken & Dr Peta Tilbrook attended the Annual meeting of the Australian Association of Medical Research Institutes held in Brisbane in October this year. WAIMR was formally accepted into AAMRI last year.

How to find out more information..

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