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Media Statement

**BECKENHAM STUDENT SIGNS UP FOR SUMMER RESEARCH**

While most university students will be enjoying a break over the summer holidays, Beckenham resident Joel Choon Wei Tan will be hard at work alongside research staff at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) in Nedlands.

The University of Western Australia health science student was one of five budding bioscientists to be offered a research scholarship within WAIMR's six week summer vacation program.

This is the third year WAIMR has offered students the opportunity to conduct real-world research in the biomedical area.

By offering comprehensive support and dedicated supervision, WAIMR aims to foster confidence in science students to aspire to breakthroughs in the discovery of the genetic and environmental causes of a range of diseases.

Mr Tan has been awarded a WAIMR scholarship to investigate colorectal cancers. Currently in his third year of a bachelor's degree in health science, Mr Tan said the vacation program would be a beneficial stepping stone toward further study.

"I have a deep interest for research which attempts to uncover new knowledge about the bowel. The WAIMR scholarship will equip me with improved investigative and analytical skills required to solve health issues with confidence," Mr Tan said.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken said the community could be heartened to know the range of research projects proposed by the students showed a great fortitude for innovative discoveries.

"The principal obstacle impeding effective health care is a lack of new knowledge," Professor Klinken said.

"The current generation of students brings further fresh ideas and lateral thinking to the area of biomedicine."

Research projects being undertaken by the students include researching genetic diseases and the development of blindness caused by diabetes; the effects of genetic interactions on cardiovascular disease; investigating mitochondria as targets for cancer chemotherapy and examining the abnormalities in mitochondrial function in schizophrenia patients.

As Western Australia's premier adult medical research institute, WAIMR has made a number of internationally-important discoveries and in 2008 it celebrates 10 years since its inception.

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Natalie Papadopoulos, WAIMR Media Consultant, m 0407 984 435, o 9388 9280**