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Media Statement

**COMO STUDENT SIGNS UP FOR SUMMER RESEARCH**

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

The University of Western Australia medical 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 Kashani was awarded the WAIMR scholarship to research genetic diseases and the development of blindness caused by diabetes. Completing his final year of a bachelor's degree in medical science, Mr Kashani said the vacation program offered the ideal introduction to a career in academic medicine.

"Not only is this the first time I have worked on a retrospective case-control study, the WAIMR scholarship will also help me develop my skills in writing a professional paper for publication," Mr Kashani 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 lack of new knowledge," Professor Klinken said.

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

Research projects being undertaken by the students include researching the effects of genetic interactions on cardiovascular disease; the comparison of left and right sided colorectal cancers; 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.

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