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Media Statement

BELMONT STUDENT WINS MEDICAL RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP

Belmont student Aline Nakagawa is one of three talented young WA scientists to win a sought-after scholarship handed out by the state's premier adult medical research institute.

The Curtin University of Technology student will be given the opportunity to carry out research in biomedical science when she steps into a six week summer vacation program at the Western Australia Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR).

Having just completed her final year of a Bachelor of Science in Molecular Biotechnology, Ms Nakagawa will investigate gene defects associated with a muscular disorder known as distal myopathy.

Ms Nakagawa said the scholarship was a practical stepping stone to further her career.

"The WAIMR scholarship will allow me to forward my own research and learn new skills and techniques that will give me valuable experience towards my Honours, which I plan to undertake at WAIMR," Ms Nakagawa said.

"I'm very honoured to have been given this opportunity."

From December 2008 to February 2009, Ms Nakagawa will work at WAIMR's Nedlands campus, under the guidance of Professor Nigel Laing and Dr Kristen Nowak who are world leaders in research into muscle diseases.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken said this was the fourth year WAIMR had offered vacation scholarships and was thrilled to welcome Aline, along with two more scholarship students, to the WAIMR team.

"Our aim is to help these young scientists expand their practical experience, fast-track their careers, and give them the best start to their chosen paths here in WA," Professor Klinken said.

"The program has not only proved successful for the students, it's also been embraced by our senior scientists who value the innovative ideas and fresh approaches the next generation of medical researchers bring to the table."

Other projects being undertaken by students within the vacation scholarships program include researching the rates and trends of merkel cell carcinoma – a form of skin cancer, as well as analysing the genetics of epilepsy.

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