

March 11, 2009

Media Statement

WA SCIENTIST WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Following a prestigious university prize win, WA scientist Juliana Hamzah is set to take the next step in her medical research career, accepting a sought-after position in the United States.

Juliana Hamzah from the Perth-based Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) has accepted a post-doctoral position at the Burnham Institute for Medical Research in Santa Barbara, California, to begin in May.

In December 2008, Research Associate at WAIMR's Laboratory for Cancer Medicine, took out The University of Western Australia (UWA) 2009 Raine Research Prize, which included \$5,000 travel allowance to further develop her science career.

"It's wonderful, not only to be awarded with such a prominent award, but to be given the opportunity to use this prize to enhance my career and hopefully expand medical research development in WA," Dr Hamzah said.

"It's a big honour to be recognised for my contribution to our team's world-first discovery last year, which found the 'RGS5' gene can reverse the growth of blood vessels inside life-threatening tumours.

"I plan to use the prize money to travel to the U.S. and continue investigating this important WA research, looking at how we can further manipulate tumour blood vessels for more effective anti-tumour therapies – then I plan to return to WA with new medical research skills and technologies."

In April 2008, the team's discovery was published in *Nature* – one of the world's most influential scientific journals, and received world-wide recognition.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken said he was delighted Dr Hamzah had been acknowledged for her efforts and given the opportunity to broaden her knowledge internationally.

"It is fantastic to see Juliana recognised for the hard work she puts into her research and her great contribution to this huge discovery," he said.

"We are very excited that Juliana will be given the opportunity to travel abroad and further develop her career, which will also offer strong international collaborations that will not only help improve medical research projects at WAIMR, but across the world."

The Raine Research Prize is awarded annually by UWA to the top, published medical or health science research paper, of work based at the University or an affiliated institution.

-ENDS-

MEDIA CONTACT: Sarah Hayward, WAIMR Media Consultant, m 0411 404 415, o 9388 9280