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Media Statement

TALENTED YOUNG RESEARCHERS JOIN WA'S PREMIER MEDICAL RESEARCH TEAM

After securing three prestigious awards, two of WA's most promising young scientists have chosen to take on formal research roles within the state's premier adult medical research group.

Lesmurdie's Ross Thyer and Southern River's Muhammad Fazril Razif will complete their PhD studies within the West Australian Institute for Medical Research's (WAIMR) Laboratory for Mitochondrial Medicine and Biology under the supervision of Drs Aleksandra Filipovska and Oliver Rackham.

Mr Thyer – who completed his honours at WAIMR in 2008 – has taken out an Australian Postdoctoral Award allowing him to continue his research within the team and has also been announced the winner of the prestigious J.W.H. Lugg Prize in Biochemistry from The University of Western Australia (UWA).

The prize is awarded annually to the best student who has completed a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Biochemistry.

Mr Thyer said he was thrilled at the opportunities the awards were presenting him.

"To be given the chance to take my research to the next level, with the help of the expert team at WAIMR, is extremely exciting," he said.

"My research project involves the use of synthetic biology to study the role of proteins known as selenoproteins in breast and prostate cancer and to develop molecules that will target and block specific proteins that are dysfunctional in cancer."

After completing his honours degree with high distinction in February, Mr Razif earned himself three scholarships from UWA - the prestigious Scholarship for International Research Fees, the University International Stipend and a supplementary \$5000 scholarship - which will enable him to complete his PhD over the next three and a half years.

"I'm very grateful for the opportunity to continue my research which focuses on the development of gene therapy approaches for mitochondrial diseases caused by point mutations in the mitochondrial genome," he said.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken congratulated Ross and Fazril on their successes.

"It's wonderful to see promising young medical researchers making a real contribution to their field and we're pleased to be able to help them along their chosen career paths," he said.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nyssa Cherry, WAIMR Media Consultant, m 0412 865 345, o 9388 9280