

July 2, 2009

Media Statement

**COMMUNITY WINNERS IN FIGHT AGAINST SKIN CANCER**

Today, the Nedlands-based Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre (SKMRC) was part of a team which award sun shade tents to 20 community winners, to help prevent skin cancer in the West.

SKMRC founder Yvonne Kirkbride joined cricketering great Adam Gilchrist to announce the winners of the Suncorp-funded SunWise Shade Tent Grant Scheme, each being presented with a \$4000 tent.

The Scheme was introduced as part of a Suncorp sunwise initiative which also saw the forming of a charitable partnership with the SKMRC – based at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) – to increase funding for research and awareness of melanoma dangers.

Among the winners were sporting and surf life saving clubs who will use the shade to protect their players and competitors, as well as schools that will use the tents for sporting carnivals, fetes and outdoor events, and environmental and guide groups who will use them to protect their volunteers as they go about their important community work.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken urged West Australians to keep the SunWise message top of mind throughout the winter months.

“Even though the temperature drops the UV levels still remain high – so it’s still important to heed the slip slop slap message while we’re out in the sun during winter, because you can still get a sunburn in a very short time,” he said.

“While we’re in the laboratory investigating the genetic links to melanoma, searching for better treatment and a cure, we hope West Australians will do their part to prevent melanoma and its heartbreaking effects, all year round.”

Annually around 130 West Aussies die from melanoma and more than 1000 new cases of the deadly cancer are diagnosed across the state<sup>^</sup>.

Speaking at the grounds of the Joondalup District Junior Cricket Club – one of the successful recipients – Gilly said he was thrilled the scheme had received such a positive response from a large cross-section of the community.

“I’m a big supporter of programs like this, because it’s one thing to talk about the importance of sun safety, but it’s another to offer practical ways to help protect the community,” he said.

Suncorp offered the shade tents as the major prize for the scheme based on research showing shade could reduce exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UV) by up to 75 per cent\*.

Gilly congratulated each of the recipients (*see full list of winners below*) saying competition for the shade tents had been fierce.

“It really shows how people are wising up to the dangers of the sun and taking precautions to safeguard themselves against its damaging effects and the huge community need for financial support to help provide shade,” he said.

“I hope each of the recipients gets plenty of good use out of the tents across the entire year because the sun can be just as deadly in winter as it is in summer, particularly here in the West.”

For more information about Suncorp’s SunWise campaign visit [www.suncorp.com.au/sunwise](http://www.suncorp.com.au/sunwise)

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## **09 Suncorp SunWise Shade Tent Grant Scheme recipients:**

- Alfred Cove - Tompkins Park Community and Recreational Association
- Bibra Lake - Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre
- Beverley - Beverley District High School
- Broome - 1st Broome Scout Group
- Bunbury - Bunbury Netball Association
- Cottesloe - Cottesloe Coastcare Association
- Esperance - Esperance Soccer Association
- Geraldton - Eadon Clark Management Committee
- Geraldton - Geraldton Surf Life Saving Club
- Iluka - Joondalup District Junior Cricket Club
- Kalgoorlie - South Kalgoorlie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (Juniors)
- Kalgoorlie - St Mary's Primary School
- Mandurah - State Emergency Service Mandurah St Johns Cadet Division
- Mirrabooka - Dryandra Primary School
- Mount Lawley - Mount Lawley Senior High School
- Nedlands - CanTeen - The Australian Organisation for Young People Living with Cancer (WA Division)
- Rottnest Island - Rottnest Voluntary Guides Association
- San Remo - Mandurah Surf Life Saving Club
- South Hedland - Town of Port Hedland - Recreation Department
- Waterford - Clontarf Aboriginal College

*\* Queensland Institute of Medical Research, 1998*

*^ Cancer Incidence and Mortality in Western Australia, 2006*

**-ENDS-**

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### ***About the SKMRC***

*The SKMRC, which is based within the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research, was established in memory of young Perth golfer, Scott Kirkbride, who lost his battle with melanoma in 2004 at the age of 27. The centre, based in Perth, aims to establish world-class resources to investigate melanoma, with the goal of pinpointing the genetic and environmental causes of the disease.*

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