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Media Statement

**WA SCIENTIST RECOGNISED IN TOP 10 MEDICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS**

A Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) scientist has taken out top national honours during National Science Week (August 15 to 23), being named among the top ten research projects for 2009 in a book launched in Canberra today.

Research Professor Karin Eidne has been recognised in the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC's) *10 of the Best Research Projects 2009*, unveiled this morning.

Professor Eidne won the honour for her work focused on G-protein coupled receptors (GPCRs) – proteins that enable the body's cells to respond to particular hormones and are the target of nearly half of all modern pharmaceuticals.

Professor Karin Eidne said she was thrilled the many hours the team had put into their research had been recognized so prestigiously.

"I'm so proud to have been given such recognition alongside some amazing scientists, especially considering the premium calibre of the many research projects being investigated across the country," she said.

"These molecules are very active in every organ and system – what we've been working on provides opportunity to find new therapy targets for a lot of diseases, and recognition for this project is very important."

In the new book, Professor Eidne states: "Although this research is painstakingly incremental and can be likened to 'watching paint dry', chasing the facts to expose precisely what is happening in living systems can generate enormous excitement."

Professor Eidne's research team, now led by Research Associate Professor Kevin Pflieger aims to identify protein targets for drugs, which will allow more effective treatment of conditions from metabolic, sleep and kidney disorders to addiction, heart disease and cancer, with fewer side effects.

In 2006 Professor Eidne and Associate Professor Pflieger led the invention of a new technology which utilises special light-emitting labels on proteins of interest, allowing specific interactions between proteins to be studied in real-time, in living cells, with important implications for drug discovery.

"We have made advances in detecting protein interactions in live cells, which has meant our laboratory has become one of the leaders in bioluminescence resonance energy transfer technology in the world, helping to maintain Australia as a global research leader," Professor Eidne said.

In 2002, the NHMRC invested \$685,500 in Professor Eidne's five-year Principal Research Fellowship.

Recently appointed as leader of WAIMR's Laboratory for Molecular Endocrinology - G Protein-Coupled Receptors, Associate Professor Pflieger said the honour had given the team a motivation boost.

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“Karin being named among the top ten projects in the country is a fantastic honour, and has given our team even more determination in our search for new drugs and drug combinations,” he said.

“We are using the technology we invented to address an urgent need for more specifically targeted therapeutics, and our work is starting to make a global impact as we receive acknowledgement like this.”

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken congratulated Professor Eidne on her achievements.

“Karin is a great demonstration of how WA medical researchers are making a national impact in medical science and it’s wonderful for both Karin and WAIMR to be given the opportunity to share cutting-edge science in such an important national publication” he said.

“The research being undertaken by Kevin and Karin is highly regarded the world over – they have a huge amount of promise, so I’m very much looking forward to more amazing scientific contributions in future.”

*10 of the Best Research Projects 2009* was launched by the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, the Hon Mark Butler MP today at an NHMRC event to celebrate Speed Science – part of CSIRO’s National Science Week (August 15 to 23) activities.

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