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Media Release

**TOP WA GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP INSPIRED BY TRAGIC LOSS**

In October, a revitalised WA Open Golf Championship will honour the memory of a young Cottesloe golfer who lost his battle with melanoma and feature a unique showcase of the best West Australian tastes to raise funds for the Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre (SKMRC).

The Western Australian Golf Association, together with the PGA of Australia and the Cottesloe Golf Club have developed a new concept – the *2009 John Hughes Geely WA Open Championship* – in an effort to bring people to the game of golf, expose them to the best of WA produce, and at the same time raise awareness of the SKMRC.

Part of the Nedlands-based Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR), the SKMRC was established in 2005 in memory of Scott Kirkbride, a talented Cottesloe Golf Club member who tragically lost his life to melanoma at the age of 27, to investigate the causes of melanoma.

Cottesloe Golf Club general manager Brad White said both he and the Club were deeply saddened by Scott's passing, which was the motivation behind partnering the Championship with the SKMRC.

"Scott was a great mate and an amazing golfer – he was a club champion and worked for the WA Golf Association, so what better way to celebrate his life and contribution to our Club than to associate his name to such a prestigious championship," he said.

"Scott joined the Cottesloe Golf Club at just 14 years old and took out his first trophy at just 16, then starting at just 22 years old took out the Club championship at Cottesloe four years in a row, between 1999 and 2002, a feat only achieved by three others throughout the history of our Club.

"I know that if Scott was with us today, he would have been playing in this tournament and he would have been an outstanding competitor!

"I'm hoping this event not only raises much-needed funds for the SKMRC but helps get the message out to golfers about the importance of protecting themselves and their family from the sun."

SKMRC founder and Scott's mother Yvonne Kirkbride said the Cottesloe Golf Club had been a fantastic support to both the family and the SKMRC.

"The Club is and always has been, a very big part of our lives, so we're thrilled it is honouring Scott and generously supporting the SKMRC through this event" Mrs Kirkbride said.

"When Scott was being treated for melanoma he was in the running to take out his fifth championship but unfortunately couldn't complete the course because of his illness. I know he would be delighted that an event of this calibre was being held to help others avoid melanoma in future."

Mr White said this year's Championship would return to the PGA Tour of Australasia and the accompanying Festival of WA would feature a variety of marquees from local wine and food establishments offering samples of their produce for spectators.

"This year the event is much more than just a golf tournament and will not only showcase professional golfing talent from across the world, it will also feature WA's top local produce too," he said.

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“We’re hoping to attract 3000 spectators to come and see some world class golf and sample offerings from renowned WA brands like Howard Park, The Witches Cauldron, Indiana Cottesloe Beach and Ferngrove Wines, just to name a few.

“Not only have we received fantastic support from some of WA’s most recognisable brands but the corporate support from John Hughes and a number of other supporting sponsors has been fantastic – it promises to be a Championship to remember.”

The WA Open will be held at the picturesque Cottesloe Golf Club in Swanbourne from Thursday October 22 to Sunday 25.

Entry is free on Thursday and Friday with \$50 tickets available to follow the weekend play.

Included in the weekend ticket price is a gift bag with redeemable vouchers for food and drink samples on course.

For more information and tickets, please call the SKMRC on (08) 9224 0333 or the Cottesloe Golf Club on (08) 9384 3222.

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**Media contact: Sarah Hayward, SKMRC Media Consultant m: 0401 141 483, o: 9388 9280**