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Media Statement

SECOND NOMINATION FOR YOUNG RESEARCH STAR

Nedlands researcher Associate Professor Kevin Pflieger has been named one of three finalists for Young Scientist of the Year in the 2009 Western Australian Science Awards – for the second consecutive year.

A/Professor Pflieger, who heads the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR)'s Laboratory for Molecular Endocrinology - G Protein-Coupled Receptors, is again vying for top honours for the prize awarded to a scientist under the age of 35 who has demonstrated excellence in their field in Western Australia.

The nomination recognises his contribution to medical research in developing improved technologies to identify new drugs and drug targets for a range of conditions, and his increased standing in the international medical research community following representation at international conferences.

A/Professor Pflieger helped invent a novel technology to identify and study 'G protein coupled receptors' – a family of 'receptors' found on the surface of cells that mediate communication with other cells, are extremely important in treating disease and are the target of about 50 per cent of all therapeutic drugs.

A/Professor Pflieger said he was honoured by the nomination and pleased it would draw attention to the important work being undertaken in the field of molecular endocrinology in Western Australia.

"It is a privilege to be considered for this award and to be included among such quality nominees," he said.

"The work we are undertaking at WAIMR in regards to G Protein Coupled Receptors is exciting and could potentially have important implications for treating a whole range of conditions including heart, metabolic, sleep and kidney disorders, with fewer side effects."

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken said he was thrilled by A/Professor Pflieger's ongoing success, and the continuing excellence being shown by WAIMR's young researchers.

"Kevin's selection as a finalist in the Western Australian Science Awards is due recognition for his very important, global contribution to medical research to date and we are very proud to have him on the WAIMR team," he said.

"WAIMR is developing a tradition of producing young research stars, with knowledge and expertise valued by the international community, and I am increasingly proud of WAIMR's standing in both the West Australian and International research communities."

A/Professor Pflieger's nomination follows on from the recognition in August of his colleague and co-research collaborator, Research Professor Karin Eidne, as one of the National Health and Medical Research Council's *10 of the Best Research Projects in 2009*.

"The research being undertaken by Kevin and Karin is highly regarded the world over, so I'm very much looking forward to more amazing scientific contributions in future," Professor Peter Klinken said.

The 2009 Western Australian Science Awards recognise the outstanding and groundbreaking achievements of WA's scientists, researchers, science teachers and facilitators of science outreach programs with winners announced on December 2.

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