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Media Statement

SECOND WAIMR SCIENTIST TAKES OUT TOP AWARD

Today, outstanding Nedlands medical researcher Associate Professor Kevin Pflieger has been named Young Scientist of the Year in the 2009 Western Australian Science Awards – the second Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) team member to take out the top award.

A/Professor Pflieger, who heads WAIMR's Laboratory for Molecular Endocrinology - G Protein-Coupled Receptors, accepted the award at a gala luncheon in the city today.

"I am thrilled to be named Western Australian Young Scientist of the Year!" said A/Professor Pflieger.

"This award acknowledges the incredible hard work and dedication of every member of my laboratory at WAIMR and the Dimerix management team over many years – I therefore accept this award on their behalf as much as mine."

The Young Scientist of the Year honour is given to a scientist under the age of 35 who has demonstrated excellence in their field in Western Australia.

A/Professor Pflieger's win 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.

The work 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 congratulated A/Professor Pflieger on securing the honour.

"Kevin is one of Western Australia's young research stars and this award will no doubt help him in his quest to uncover the benefits of his work so that we can help improve the health of many people," he said.

"Kevin's win follows that of another of WAIMR researcher – Dr Kristen Nowak – who in 2007 won for her globally-significant work into muscle disorders.

"I'm thrilled WAIMR is home to two such remarkable scientists and that they've been recognised publicly and I believe Kristen and Kevin are just the tip of the iceberg as our Institute is home to many more brilliant young researchers."

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