

April 28, 2010

Media Statement

FIRST-CLASS YOUNG SCIENTIST HONOURED WITH MARSHALL MEDAL

As he prepares for a mid-year trip to Switzerland to be a guest speaker at an international conference, WA's current Young Scientist of the Year Kevin Pflieger has had another honour bestowed on him.

Associate Professor Pflieger has received the top award for young researchers given out by the organisation he works for – WA's premier adult medical research institute, the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR).

A/Professor Pflieger accepted the Marshall medal – named after West Australian Nobel Prize-winning scientist Professor Barry Marshall – at WAIMR's annual general meeting held yesterday (Wednesday April 28).

WAIMR director Peter Klinken congratulated A/Professor Pflieger, who along with colleagues in his laboratory invented a novel way of studying 'G protein coupled receptors' - a family of 'receptors' that mediate communication with other cells - using the natural bioluminescent and fluorescent properties of proteins found in sea pansies and jellyfish.

"Kevin is an exceptional scientist – his work into 'G protein coupled receptors' is world-class and he is proving to be a very inspirational member of the WAIMR team so it's fitting he be honoured with the Marshall Medal," said Professor Klinken.

It is only the second year the Marshall Medal has been awarded – the first year it went to another WAIMR researcher and former WA Young Scientist of the Year Dr Kristen Nowak.

A/Professor Pflieger, who heads WAIMR's Laboratory for Molecular Endocrinology - G Protein-Coupled Receptors said he was pleased to be recognised by the Institute.

"I'm very proud of what my team at WAIMR has achieved and we're continuing to pursue the exciting opportunities presented by G Protein-Coupled Receptors or GPCR's in helping treat disease, as they are the targets of about half of all medications people take," he said.

In June, A/Professor Pflieger will head to the GPCR Congress 2010 being held in Montreux, Switzerland after being invited to share his knowledge with the conference attendees and chair a panel discussion on the clinical relevance of his work.

"Research into GPCR's has taken exciting new directions in recent times and being invited to present at conferences such as this shows that the work we are doing here in WA is at the very cutting edge of where this field is going," he said.

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