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Media Statement

**INTREPID WESTERN SUBURBS CREW SURVIVE RACE TO POUR \$40,000 INTO RESEARCH**

WA's intrepid Prendiville family and their friends have survived the harsh conditions thrown up by the State's Kimberley region during a 250-kilometre foot race to raise nearly \$40,000 for melanoma research.

The final stage of the 2010 RacingThePlanet: Australia event – which required all competitors carry all their own equipment and food – wrapped up on Saturday May 1, with Jamie, Michael, John, Jeremy, Garry, Mark, Pat and Christian Prendiville, along with Katalin Pataki and Bill Biffin, claiming personal victories for their individual achievements and for supporting the work done by the Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre (SKMRC).

Michael came out on top amongst the SKMRC group, being the 27<sup>th</sup> competitor to complete the race.

A Swanbourne GP, Jamie said the event was so physically demanding that members of their team were forced in and out of the race on several occasions.

“With quite a few of us taking part in the Gobi March through Western China's Gobi Desert in 2008, we thought we were prepared for what was ahead, but the Kimberley was incredibly harsh,” Dr Prendiville said.

“It was so hot and humid that I needed to get fluid through a drip in my arm on the first day - it was Anzac day and competitors were falling like flies from the huge heat and terrain and everyone's feet had taken a pounding with blisters growing like mushrooms – what we were doing to our bodies could only be described as madness!

“Some of the top athletes from previous Racing the Planet series failed to make Day 1 or been reduced to a quivering mess, shaking their heads and saying that it had been the hardest day of their life.”

Despite the treacherous conditions, Jamie said it was heartening to know that their efforts were going towards helping WA scientists search for better treatments for the most aggressive type of skin cancer.

“We'd all made a choice to be out there in those conditions but when you get melanoma, there's no choice and the more we can know about the disease, the better chance we'll have of preventing it and fighting it more effectively,” he said.

In 2005, members of the Prendiville family became the largest group of siblings to swim the English Channel.

That event, the Gobi Desert race and this race have seen them raise more than \$70,000 for the SKMRC which is based at the WA Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) in Nedlands.

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