

MELANOMA MATTERS

WINTER 2006

RAISING THE ROOF FOR MELANOMA



Rob Kirkbride, Bruce Yardley & Professor Peter Klinken

Cricket capers, Olympic insights and inspiring tales of survival were the order of the day at this year's Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre (SKMRC) annual fundraising luncheon and auction.

The event was a resounding success, with more than \$100,000 raised on the day, thanks to a generous donation of \$60,000 from a Perth family.

Held late in April, more than 300 people packed Subiaco Oval's Billy Walker Room to hear former Australian Test cricketer Bruce Yardley tell of his personal experience with melanoma.

The 58-year-old spoke of his love of life, nearly a decade after losing his left eye to the cancer.

"I was in Sri Lanka in 1997 coaching their cricket team when I realised that I was totally blind in my left eye," he said.

"I'd had problems with the same eye many years earlier and was helped by Professor Ian Constable at the Lions Eye Institute, so I immediately phoned the Institute again for help.

"I was on a plane back to Perth the next day, was diagnosed with melanoma of the eye and had the eye removed and replaced with an artificial one in an operation that saved my life.

"I was very lucky that the cancer hadn't spread to my lungs and liver, so now I consider it a priority to do what I can to ensure the rates of melanoma are brought down in our community."

Bruce also raised the roof with tales of his past cricket capers, while local Olympians Kylie Wheeler and Kym Howe shared their most significant sporting experiences with the crowd in question and answer sessions led by the day's host, Channel Nine's Mark Readings.

Our sincere thanks go to Mark, Bruce, Kym, Kylie, our organising committee, in particular Rob Salmon and Anita Boulazeris, everyone who attended the function, and the many supporters of our raffle and auction.

As well, a big thank you to John Soutar and all at Mustard Catering for organising the venue and luncheon. You have all been a wonderful support to us over the past 12 months.

The SKMRC is based within the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR).



Yvonne Kirkbride & Bruce Yardley



VOLUNTEERS LINE UP!

PhD student Matt Legge has had an overwhelming response from WA teenagers approached to take part in his new skin cancer study.

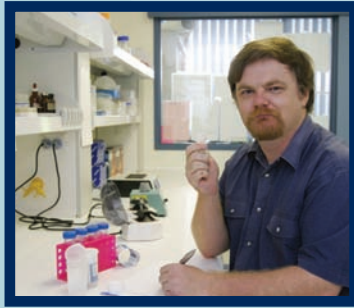
Professor Lyle Palmer, head of the SKMRC and WAIMR's Laboratory for Genetic Epidemiology, is overseeing the study, along with Dr Liz Milne at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research.

Matt said he'd been thrilled with the response from teenagers who'd been contacted to volunteer for the study.

"We approached people who'd earlier taken part in Dr Milne's landmark 'Kidskin' study and were delighted that so many of them were eager to again help with potentially groundbreaking research," he said.

"About 800 of the 1200 teenagers contacted have agreed to help with the 'Kidskin II' project, which is very exciting as this work could help us unlock the genetic causes of skin cancer and improve treatment and detection options."

Matt's work is focusing on the possible genetic causes of moles – concentrating initially on five genes believed to be linked to melanoma.



Matt Legge

SKMRC WELCOMES SARAH TO THE TEAM

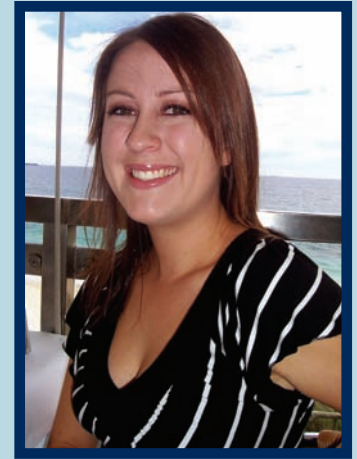
The SKMRC has a new team member.

23-year-old Sarah Ward joins the group as a research assistant.

Sarah boasts degrees in both Commerce and Science and completed an Honours degree in Anatomy and Human Biology at The University of Western Australia.

Her core role will be in working with the WA Melanoma Health Study to assist in the collection of health information from newly diagnosed melanoma patients.

Sarah will also be working with the Cancer Registry to identify potential volunteers and with clinicians to assist in developing the Study to allow the inclusion of previously diagnosed melanoma patients.



Sarah Ward

BUDDING DOCTORS JOIN SKMRC RESEARCHERS

A group of budding doctors is being given a hands-on, behind-the-scenes look at medical research while helping out at the SKMRC.

Three medical students in their fourth year of study have joined the WA Melanoma Health Study team which is led by WAIMR research officer Lara McDonald.

Ms McDonald said the study was exploring the genetic and environmental causes of melanoma and aimed to collect health and environmental information, as well as a blood sample, from all newly-diagnosed melanoma patients.

"These students are making a valuable contribution by looking at the study processes to ensure we're able to get the most out of this research for patients, clinicians and researchers," said Ms McDonald.

"By helping keep up the awareness of melanoma amongst clinicians and making sure they have the most up-to-date information, we are hoping to create some breakthroughs into

both the treatment and diagnosis of this disease.

"One of the biggest hurdles with melanoma is that often there are not many visible symptoms until it progresses to a late stage, so the deeper the understanding our doctors have of the deadly skin cancer, the more likely it is that cases can be diagnosed sooner and more lives can be saved."



Lara McDonald, Marie Hordijkeno, Janitha Jayawardena & Mutasser Islam

ANOTHER GOLF DAY SUCCESS AT WEMBLEY

During May, Wembley Golf Complex again played host to a charity golf day to raise money for the SKMRC.

Organised by the Victa and Surfside Golf Clubs, around 50 people took part on the day, that followed on from the success of last year's ABC supported charity golf event.

Thank you to the Victa and Surfside Golf Clubs for their continued support.

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All donations to the Centre over \$2 are tax deductible.

