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Media Statement

CLOSE SHAVE TO CURE SKIN CANCER

Doubleview man Mick Rae has lost his wild locks and raised more than \$10,000 to help researchers at the Nedlands-based Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre search for a cure for the deadly form of skin cancer.

Last weekend, the 52-year-old labourer went under the razor at Wembley Golf Complex to support the Centre, which is based at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) in Nedlands.

The centre was established a year ago and is allowing WA scientists undertake groundbreaking research into the genetic causes of melanoma.

It has been named in honour of young Perth golfer Scott Kirkbride who died from melanoma in December 2004 at the age of 27.

Mick, who knows Scott's uncle, said he'd been raising money for cancer research every year since his cousin in South Africa had battled breast cancer.

"I believe one person can make a difference, you know we all say we can't do it, but we've done pretty well here, we've raised over \$10,000," said Mick.

"Even if you do one good thing in your life, and this is my good deed once a year."

It took him just six weeks to raise the money – and just over half an hour to lose all the hair on his head and face – including his eyebrows.

"I've been growing it, and I'll then grow it again for next year," he said.

Scott's mother Yvonne Kirkbride, together with WAIMR Director Peter Klinken, thanked Mick for his efforts.

Professor Klinken said the generous contribution would help enable the Centre to become a world leader in the quest to beat one of the most deadly and prevalent forms of cancer.

"Melanoma is an insidious disease that strikes many age groups, and one of the biggest problems is that often there are few visible symptoms until the cancer has progressed to a late stage," Professor Klinken said.

"We are worried because melanoma is becoming more prevalent, in fact, in Australia it is now the third most common form of cancer.

"There are over 1000 new cases of melanoma diagnosed in Western Australia each year, and it is the cancer most likely to affect 15-39 year olds, so it's clear more needs to be done to stop the trend."

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The Centre has been made possible through fundraising efforts by the Kirkbride family, their friends and a generous commitment by the University of WA.

“Our research may well help us find that vital breakthrough we’re all waiting for in the treatment of skin cancer, just as has happened in so many other forms of cancer.”

Professor Klinken said while there were awareness programs relating to the dangers of spending too much time in the sun, there had been few new breakthroughs in the treatment of the disease once it was established.

“Because melanoma can move from a primary site to secondary sites, it can be very difficult to treat successfully,” he said.

Australia has one of the world's highest rates of melanoma, and Western Australia is second only to Queensland in incidence rates.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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