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Media Statement

SUNCORP COMMITS TO FIGHT AGAINST SKIN CANCER IN WA

West Australian melanoma research received a huge financial boost today with the announcement of a partnership between the Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre (SKMRC) and one of the country's leading financial service providers Suncorp.

As part of the launch of its WA operations, Suncorp has committed to an alliance with the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) based Centre, promising staff donations as well as the support of several million customers to increase funding for its work and awareness of melanoma dangers.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken said Suncorp's support would go a long way towards the search for improved diagnosis and treatment of melanoma.

"Melanoma is a devastating reality for so many WA families, so Suncorp has shown a committed first step into our State by making a promise to help improve our health and support research into the aggressive cancer," he said.

"We're extremely grateful for the opportunity Suncorp has offered, which will help fund existing research projects and open up new avenues of investigations into how we can better diagnose and treat melanoma – in turn, we hope all West Australians will get behind Suncorp's effort to help ease the burden of skin cancer in WA.

"We're looking forward to the support all Suncorp's WA customers and staff, because I know we can make a big difference and save many lives into the future with their generosity behind us."

The SKMRC was established in memory of young Perth golfer, Scott Kirkbride, who lost his battle with melanoma in 2004 at the age of 27.

Scott's mother, Yvonne Kirkbride, who founded the centre and now works full-time to raise funds for research, welcomed Suncorp's support saying melanoma research was an area that needed greater attention and investment.

"It's wonderful to have the support of a company who believes in what we're trying to achieve. I think it will be a special relationship and I hope it will grow," she said.

"When Scottie was diagnosed, it just turned our world upside down. To see him fight this disease, with the determination and courage that he had over two years, changed our lives and made us, as a family, determined to try to do something to help others.

"You never in your life expect your children to go before you. As a parent it is the hardest thing to ever go through and we just miss Scottie more than words can say. This is what drives us to do what we do."

Australia has one of the highest rates of melanoma in the world, with Western Australia having the second highest rate behind Queensland. Melanoma is deadly and is the cancer most likely to affect 15 to 39 year olds.

Suncorp Group Executive Banking David Foster said the bank wanted to match its corporate commitment to Western Australia, where it now had seven branches, with a genuine commitment to the community.

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“Our 16,000 staff combined with the relationship we have with over seven million customers nationally, provides an established and strong community base from which to support the SKMRC,” Mr Foster said.

“Customers will be able to round up their bill or donate a nominated sum of money to the SKMRC when paying a bill online. We will also be listing the centre on our staff payroll giving register and be creating opportunities to encourage our customers to donate to the SKMRC in-branch.”

Mr Foster said Suncorp wanted to achieve the same success in WA with the SKMRC as it had in Queensland where they had lead a community awareness campaign about the deadly effects of sun exposure in Queensland and helped raise more than \$1.1 million for the Queensland Institute of Medical Research.

For more information about Suncorp’s SunWise campaign visit www.suncorp.com.au/sunwise.

Visit www.waimr.org.au for more information about WAIMR and the SKMRC.

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