



Friday 6 February 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

WESTERN AUSTRALIA WINS \$9.7 MILLION TOP MEDICAL RESEARCH GRANT

A leading health and medical research team in Western Australia has won more than \$9.7 million of one of the Australian Government's most highly sought-after research grants.

The Western Australian funds are part of more than \$108 million in National Health and Medical Research Council 2010 Program Grants awarded to research teams across the country.

The five-year grants are sought after because they enable research teams to pursue the best research options in their field, knowing they have the time, funds and flexibility to respond to unexpected findings and opportunities.

Echoing NHMRC's slogan, 'working to build a healthy Australia', the grants reinforce the Australian Government's election health commitments of *Keeping People Well – Focus on Prevention, Closing the Gap on Indigenous Health, Fighting Cancer – Australia's Biggest Killer* and *Ageing – Meeting Challenges of the 21st Century*.

The WA 2010 Program Grant recipient is former Australian of the Year, Professor Fiona Stanley of the University of Western Australia, whose team will use the \$9.7 million to link birth, death and medical records to disability, education, justice and welfare records, bringing a new focus to how childhood development affects health and participation in society.

The NHMRC funding is an essential part of the Australian Government's plans to bolster health and medical research to improve the wellbeing of all Australians.

The importance of the grants was emphasised by the Prime Minister's advance naming of one recipient, Professor Angel Lopez of the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science in Adelaide, as part of a major announcement on cancer research in January 2009.

All the grants were awarded through an open competitive process carried out according to the NHMRC Act, subjected to rigorous peer review and approved by NHMRC's Research Committee and Council.

More information on the grants can be found at NHMRC's website, www.nhmrc.gov.au.

Details of the successful WA project are attached.

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WORKING TO BUILD A HEALTHY AUSTRALIA

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NHMRC 2010 Program Grant recipient in Western Australia

Professor Fiona Stanley, University of Western Australia, \$9.71m

Early Developmental Pathways Linking Health, Disability, Education, Welfare and Justice

This research will use information from birth, death and medical records for all births in WA from 1980 linked to records of disability, education, justice and welfare, to map, for the first time in Australia, the pathways to good and poor outcomes over a child's lifetime. This will bring a new focus on to how early development affects health and participation in society and will identify new ways to improve the lives of all children, regardless of their social circumstances.

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