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Media Statement

TV STAR REVEALED AS FIRST DIABETES RESEARCH WA CELEBRITY AMBASSADOR

A Place to Call Home star Jenni Baird has been revealed as West Australian charity Diabetes Research WA's first celebrity ambassador.

A WA Academy of Performing Arts graduate who plays villainous character Regina Standish in FOXTEL's popular series, Baird has taken on the role after first being a VIP guest at a CinéfestOZ luncheon in Margaret River last August which raised funds for the group.

"One of my cousins has a son who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes around the age of eight and it has been hugely challenging for them as a family," said Baird.

"My cousin, who lives in the States, described it as swapping the diaper bag for a diabetes bag and never giving up the baby monitor. From what I understand, diabetes requires around the clock vigilance, which is no small burden for parents, grandparents, and the individual.

"Knowing about their experience and that all forms of diabetes are on the rise in Australia, it's clear more needs to be done to help raise funds for research into the conditions.

"Beyond finding a cure, which is the ultimate goal, research also leads to ways of living better with diabetes, lessening the burden of day-to-day maintenance and providing hope.

"Diabetes affects entire families and the research benefits extend beyond those with the condition. I will be so happy if I can help make a difference."

The charity's executive director Sherl Westlund said it was exciting to have such an exciting Australian actress on board.

"Jenni's passion for supporting diabetes research was obvious at our CinéfestOZ fundraising luncheon so it's wonderful to have her on our team and especially welcoming her in our 40th anniversary year," said Ms Westlund.

"Raising funds for research into diabetes is becoming more urgent with more Australian children than ever being diagnosed with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes and more women developing diabetes in pregnancy, putting the children born to those mothers more at risk of type 2 diabetes in later life."

Diabetes Research WA helps fund globally-significant locally-based research projects into all forms of diabetes. Based at Royal Perth Hospital, is the state's longest running diabetes research funding group, and has now distributed more than \$4.7 million dollars for this work.

For information, please visit www.diabetesresearchwa.com.au or call (08) 9224 1006.

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