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Media Statement

## **DIABETES RESEARCH WA UNVEILS NEW BOARD LEADER**

WA's peak diabetes research funding group, Diabetes Research WA, has announced the retirement of the long-standing chairman of its board, renowned resources leader Erica Smyth.

The charity welcomes Mount Gibson Iron chief financial officer Peter Kerr as its new chair with Perseus Mining Limited group accountant Janette Lano replacing Mr Kerr as honorary treasurer.

Woodside Energy CEO North West Shelf & vice president Australia Business Brad Russell-Lane has also been co-opted as a board member.

Diabetes Research WA executive director Sherl Westlund said the changes, which follow the appointment late last year of Jackson McDonald special counsel Sally Bruce and UWA communications consultant Liz McGrath to the board, signalled a new era for the group.

"Erica has done a tremendous job in steering our organisation over the past decade – her business acumen and clear vision for diabetes research in this state has allowed us to continue to grow our funding offering to local scientists over this period," she said.

"Like Erica, Peter is incredibly passionate about the need for WA to stay at the forefront of research into diabetes as all forms of the condition are on the rise in Australia.

"Janette and Brad also bring a wealth of expertise and continue the exciting process of board renewal so we have some fresh faces but our focus remains firm on contributions to research from wills and bequests, building more corporate partnerships centred on workplace giving, and growing a committed base of regular donors to help ease the burden of diabetes in the workplace and community."

Mr Kerr, who rejoined Diabetes Research WA in October 2015 after having served on the board from 1997 to 2000 before heading overseas, said he was thrilled to take on the role of chair.

"Diabetes Research WA has a rich history of delivering funds directly to research projects being conducted by leading scientists here in WA, backed by a committed volunteer group and donors," he said.

"Diabetes Research has a wonderful team behind it and that bodes well for us continuing to support top quality research and searching for a cure to diabetes here in WA."

Ms Smyth said she was proud to be leaving the board in such capable hands.

"WA scientists have, thanks to the funding provided by Diabetes Research WA, led or contributed to many terrific breakthroughs that edge us closer towards a cure and that have also delivered new knowledge helping to reduce the impact of diabetes," she said.

"It's been an honour to lead the board over the past 10 years and watch the organisation go from strength to strength and I've got no doubt that will continue into the future."

Diabetes Research WA, based at Royal Perth Hospital, was established in 1976 to stimulate research into diabetes in Western Australia and has distributed more than \$5.65 million dollars for this work, including funding 73 research projects.

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**Media contact: Natalie Caudle, 0407 984 435, [natalie@capturemedia.com.au](mailto:natalie@capturemedia.com.au)**