



September 10, 2019

Media Statement

### **VALE WA DIABETES RESEARCH PIONEER PROFESSOR ALEX COHEN**

Diabetes Research WA is saddened at the passing of one of our most passionate supporters, past President Professor Alex Cohen AO.

A former Chancellor at The University of Western Australia and Clinical Professor of Medicine, Professor Cohen was a key member of our organisation from 1975.

He studied medicine at Adelaide University, graduating in 1950, and went on to train as an endocrinologist with a focus on diabetes.

From that time on, much of his life was dedicated to people with diabetes, including being a driving force in the creation of WA's Centre for Diabetes Research.

To honour his tireless support of West Australian diabetes research, we established the Alex Cohen Diabetes Scholarship, which was presented to two recipients - Lakshini Weerasekera and Nicole Milne for research into diabetic retinopathy and work identifying markers of cognitive decline in type 2 diabetes.

Some years back, Professor Cohen told us:

*"I wanted to be a physician – there's nothing else I have ever wished to do. My dream is partly fulfilled already – to have in Perth a centre of great excellence in diabetes which scientists and specialists from all over the world wish to come and learn."*

In 1995, Professor Cohen received an Order of Australia medal for his efforts in improving WA diabetes research and care.

He was also a wonderful mentor to our Executive Director Sherl Westlund for a very long time.

"I feel incredibly privileged to have been able to continue our friendship long after he left his role with us. May you rest in peace now, Alex," said Ms Westlund.

"Thanks, Alex, for your inspiring contribution over so many years. Your legacy will live on."

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