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Media Statement

DESERT MARCH FOR MELANOMA

Three years after becoming the largest group of siblings to swim the English Channel, Swanbourne doctor Jamie Prendiville and his brothers have set themselves another mammoth challenge – a 250-kilometre run across the Gobi Desert to raise funds for skin cancer research.

In what is shaping up to be another record-breaking event, four Prendiville brothers and two family friends have entered The Gobi March in June, a foot race across the gruelling terrain of the Gobi Desert in northern China.

The race, which will reach heights of up to 14,000 feet in the mountains and traverse rivers, sand, rocks and donkey tracks in temperatures above 40 degrees, is part of the Racing the Planet event, which covers the four largest deserts in the world.

West Australians are being urged to sponsor their run and raise much needed funds for the Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre based in Nedlands at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR).

Dr Prendiville said his family had made a unanimous decision to support the Centre as the long-term recipient of their fundraising efforts because of their personal connection with Scott Kirkbride and the importance of melanoma research.

“Melanoma has a devastating effect on young people and their families and is a greatly under-funded area that relies heavily on community support,” he said.

“Scott Kirkbride, the young Mt Claremont golfer who died from melanoma at age 27, was a friend and patient of mine and an acquaintance of other members of my family, and it is a privilege to support the work done in his name.”

The Centre was established in March 2005 in memory of Scott and is dedicated to investigating the causes of melanoma.

Dr Prendiville said the Gobi March was shaping up to be the Prendiville family’s biggest fundraising event yet, with his younger brother already donating a large sum of his own money and a number of corporations already interested in sponsoring their efforts.

Scott’s mother, Yvonne Kirkbride, said it was an honour that the Centre was chosen to be the recipient of the Prendiville family’s fundraising efforts and urged the community to get behind them.

“These men are racing across one of the largest, most daunting deserts in the world and all we have to do is support them with a donation – I hope West Australians admire this spirit of adventure and courage to take on a challenge, and will give generously,” she said.

Dr Prendiville and his brothers Garry, Patrick, and Michael and friends Bill Biffin and Mark Dawson have spent more than a year-and-a-half training for the six day race.

To sponsor the Gobi March please visit www.skmrc.org.au/gobi.html or call (08) 9224 0324.

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Dr Prendiville will further support the Centre by addressing its annual fundraising luncheon at Subiaco Oval on Friday 9 May, which will feature special guests including Perth's own extreme sportsman Todd Mason.

Places are limited and bookings are essential. To reserve your place or table, please call (08) 9224 0333.

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