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Media Statement

WA SCIENTIST AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS MEDAL

West Australian Professor Bruce Robinson been recognised for his lifetime achievement in researching respiratory disease, awarded the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand Research Medal, 23 years on from receiving the Society's Young Investigator Award in 1985.

Professor Robinson, the Scientific Director at the National Research Centre for Asbestos-Related Diseases (NRCARD) based at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) in Nedlands, received the medal in March, which is an annual prize for outstanding contribution to the advancement of knowledge in respiratory medicine.

Professor Robinson, who was introduced as the head of the world's leading research group in asbestos related disease, said he was proud to accept the award which he hoped would help encourage young doctors to consider entering the field of medical research.

"It's both amazing and humbling to be recognised for doing what I love to do, but this award really recognizes our terrific NRCARD team, not just me," he said.

"I was drawn to medical research by my curious nature and to this day, I'm still driven by those 'eureka' moments, uncovering something that no one else in the world has ever known.

"For me, research is exciting and important because of its potential to help so many people, which is why I hope this medal will encourage young doctors to try their hand at medical research – I believe people with ability and skill should use their talent to help the world."

Professor Robinson was awarded the prestigious medal at the Society's annual scientific meeting in Melbourne where he presented his ideas on future directions of mesothelioma treatment as well as personal journey in the field.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken said the recognition Professor Robinson had received was well-earned and particularly topical given the new wave of asbestos victims predicted to occur over the next few years.

"Professor Robinson is a great asset to respiratory research in WA and the work he is undertaking in relation to mesothelioma will be increasingly important into the future," he said.

"It is predicted that the need for improved treatments will be heightened in the coming decade as cases of asbestos related diseases are expected to increase because of a wider exposure to asbestos from products used in building, carpentry and household renovations."

A member of the Thoracic Society for 24 years, Professor Robinson is also respiratory physician at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and conducts teaching and research through The University of Western Australia's School of Medicine and Pharmacology.

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