



MEDIA STATEMENT

Monday 3 August 2015

NEW COLLABORATION OFFERS SUPPORT FOR CHILD HEALTH RESEARCH

BrightSpark, the Raine Medical Research Foundation and The University of Western Australia have joined forces to contribute to vital child health research.

Through the collaboration, important areas of child health research will be further supported such as children's illnesses in Aboriginal and remote communities.

UWA Adjunct Professor and BrightSpark Foundation Fellow Dr Holly Clifford, who in 2014 was awarded a Raine Priming Grant, has undertaken significant work in researching lung disease in children.

Studies have shown that Aboriginal children are more likely to die from lung disease than non-Aboriginal children and through the alliance, researchers including Dr Clifford will receive assistance to make headway in this important area.

The new collaboration will help Dr Clifford continue her work, researching environmental factors (such as dust exposure) that are affecting children and encouraging communities to invest in measures to minimise these environmental impacts.

UWA Professor Robyn Owens, Chair of the Raine Medical Research Foundation, said the alliance would direct community funds into the State's brightest children's health research projects.

"We know that, particularly when it comes to medical research breakthroughs, collaborations between researchers and the pooling of funds are essential," she said.

"We hope this initiative will encourage others to invest in projects that will make a real difference in the lives of our children, their families and the community."

BrightSpark Chairman Graham Dowland said through first-class leadership and the wise investment of combined funds, the collaboration would offer more opportunities for WA researchers.

"It will allow them to enhance existing treatments and make progress in the battle against childhood illness," he said.

BrightSpark and the Raine Medical Research Foundation have provided much-needed but hard to get financial support for young researchers.

Many have become WA's most distinguished scientists, including a Nobel Laureate, chief scientists and leaders of research teams discovering solutions to important child and adult health issues.

The Raine Medical Research Foundation is one of the State's most highly regarded independent research funding bodies, contributing more than \$36 million in grants to State medical researchers since it was established in 1957.

Formed more than 40 years ago, BrightSpark also has a proud history as an independent foundation, funding emerging Western Australian based researchers in child health.

MEDIA REFERENCE

[Jess Reid](#) (UWA Media and Public Relations Manager)

(+61 8) 6488 6876

[Graham Dowland](#) (Brightspark Chairman)

(+61 8) 9380 2750

[Dr Holly Clifford](#) (UWA Adjunct lecturer/BrightSpark Foundation Fellow)

(+61 4)34 865 066

For more information about UWA: www.uwa.edu.au