

# Media Release

## Garry Returns from Everest

15 May 2014

Garry Williams, of Kingsley, has recently returned from climbing Mount Everest, raising over \$15, 000 for the Women and Infants Research Foundation (WIRF) in the process.

Suffering acute mountain or altitude sickness (AMS) during his attempt to summit the world's highest mountain, Garry made it to 7000 metres high just 1848 metres shy of the top peak. "I attempted three times to ascend above the 7000 metre point, otherwise known as 'North Col', but the AMS made the journey any higher simply not physically possible", said Garry.

Although disappointed that he didn't make the top, Garry is proud of the funds he raised for WIRF and his summit to 7000 metres, higher than any mountain altitude in the world outside the Himalayas.

"Regardless of mental fortitude and physical fitness, it was ultimately the mountain, altitude and prevailing conditions that determined whether I made the peak", said Garry. "I feel privileged to have been able to follow in the footsteps of my mountaineering heroes, and proud to have flown the WIRF flag at 7000 metres".

Garry was in the process of climbing Everest when the recent avalanche claimed the lives of sixteen Nepali Sherpas, but he was thankfully on the north (Tibetan) side of the mountain. "I received the news about the avalanche on the southern (Nepalese) side and it immediately brought home the true dangers and volatility of Everest", said Garry. "My deepest condolences go out to the families of the Sherpas who really are the true heroes of Himalayan climbing".

WIRF's Executive Director, Professor John Newnham said "Garry's attempt to summit Mount Everest is nothing short of heroic and the Foundation is eternally grateful for the funds he raised for our research. The funds Garry raised will contribute toward a WIRF Starter Grant for preterm birth prevention research, a priority research area for the Foundation".

WIRF has been pivotal in establishing the careers of many high profile WA medical researchers, including Professor Fiona Stanley, through its' Starter Grants Program. Prof Newnham's own WIRF starter grant in 1988 was the seed that led to the development of one of the world's largest pregnancy and childhood datasets in the world, the Western Australia Raine Pregnancy Cohort. The Starter Grants program supports new researchers to conduct high quality research through various grant funding and scholarship opportunities.

Garry would like to thank everyone who supported his journey by donating to WIRF, including his work colleagues at Fortescue Metals Group (FMG).

**Media contact:** Sarah Cooper, 0416 228 722, [sarah@wirf.com.au](mailto:sarah@wirf.com.au)



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*Garry, May 2014, at 7000 metres with the Mount Everest peak in the background.*