



women & infants  
research foundation  
*Western Australia*



**WIRF's VISION**  
is for all Western  
Australian women  
to enjoy the  
best health for  
themselves, their  
pregnancies and  
their babies.

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## AIMING LOW: OPTIMISING STERIOD USE IN PREGNANCY

An international team of researchers led by the Women and Infants Research Foundation's, Dr Matt Kemp are undertaking pre-clinical trials to optimise steroid treatments for women at risk of preterm delivery.

**In Australia today, preterm birth (delivery before 37 weeks' gestation) is the leading cause of death and disease in babies and young children. Worldwide, some 15 million babies are born preterm each year, and of these, over 1 million will die.**

The lungs of preterm infants are underdeveloped, making breathing difficult. A clinical trial completed in the early 1970's demonstrated that injecting pregnant women at imminent risk of preterm birth with a combination of steroids rapidly matured the fetal lung, making breathing easier for preterm babies and significantly reducing their risk of death and disease.

Steroid therapy in pregnancy was a remarkable discovery, and is responsible for saving the lives of countless thousands of preterm babies. However, the use of steroids in pregnancy is not without controversy.

The same treatment used in those first studies nearly 50 years ago remains the standard of care for women at immediate risk of delivering preterm today. Steroid use in pregnancy has never been optimised, meaning that a 50kg woman early in pregnancy is given the same dose of steroids as a 100kg woman close to term.

Because steroids are powerful drugs that target many organs, some researchers have become concerned about potential side-effects of excess steroid exposure on the mother and the unborn baby.

Today, a world-leading consortium of scientists and doctors led by ourselves here in Perth, and together with colleagues in Cincinnati (USA) and Sendai (Japan), are undertaking much needed studies aimed at personalising steroid treatment to individual pregnancies, and ensuring that the lowest possible dose of antenatal steroids is used to mature the fetal lung.

Supported by WIRF, GlaxoSmithKline and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and led by local Perth-based researcher Dr Matt Kemp, the consortium is now completing its second year of pre-clinical trials. The team's findings to date are extremely promising, and have generated significant international interest. The preliminary findings of this work will be presented during a meeting at the WHO (Geneva) later this year.



From left: Masatoshi Saito, Haruo Usuda, Matt Kemp and Claire Loughran

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## WELCOME to the latest edition of WIRF News

The year has begun with a huge amount of excitement surrounding WIRF's 40th anniversary and King Edward Memorial Hospital's (KEMH) Centenary celebrations. The Gala Ball in July and the KEMH Centenary Honour Wall, have generated considerable interest among the hospital and health community, key media outlets and the general public.

We have had a fantastic response since the launch of the Centenary Honour Wall which provides women whose babies were born or treated at KEMH the opportunity to be a lasting part of the Centenary celebrations.

Our 2016 Stars Events, to be held on 14-15 September, will once again showcase the most recent research findings in the fields of women's health and reproduction, and newborn medicine.

This year's visiting Professor, Prof Don Wilson, urogynaecologist and Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Associate Dean at the University of Otago, will present 'Prediction and Prevention of Pelvic Floor Dysfunction.'

Prof Wilson's presentation will review the evidence supporting the view that pelvic floor damage may be prevented or alleviated. Possible strategies include more liberal use of caesarean section, pelvic floor muscle training and modifiable risk factors/lifestyle interventions.

I look forward to meeting many of you during our busy events season and hope you enjoy reading about some of WIRF's recent news and activities in this newsletter.

Professor John Newnham AM  
Executive Director

## HONOUR WALL TAKES FLIGHT WITH MILLY'S GOLD BUTTERFLY

To commemorate her and her daughter's journey at King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH), Emi Rodoni and the Rodoni Family purchased the first Gold Butterfly of the KEMH Mum's Honour Wall. Emi and Milly's story is below.

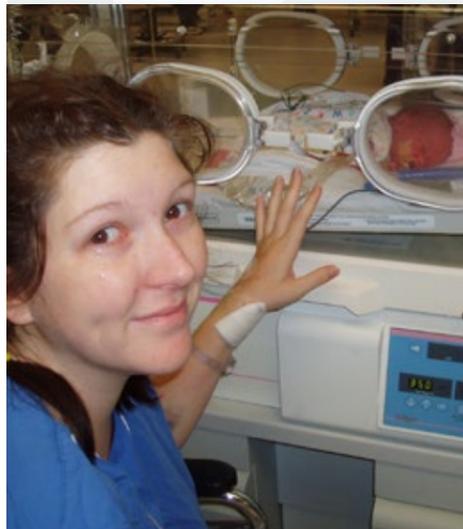
When Milly Rodoni was born at just 30 weeks, her fight to survive began.

Delivered by emergency caesarean section, Milly was resuscitated at birth and then had to stay on a ventilator and continuous positive airway pressure for the first two days of her life.

Milly's mother Emi had been in hospital bleeding for two days prior to this, and after losing too much blood, the decision was made to deliver Milly early.

"I was given exceptional care for the two days I spent in the intensive care ward and I continued to have amazing care while on the ward for the next five days I was at KEMH," Emi said.

"All the nurses in the neonatal rooms were incredible. Having to leave our baby girl every day was one of the hardest things we have ever done, but knowing she was in the safest hands possible always gave us a little more comfort and confidence to go home each night. We could not have done it without them all."



Emi Rodoni and daughter Milly in the NICU



Milly at age 5

Despite her tough start to life Milly went on to thrive, and at seven and a half weeks, was able to go home. Today, the very happy full of life five year-old has hit every developmental milestone and has no health issues from being born premature.

When Emi heard that the Hospital was planning to erect an Honour Wall, she and her family knew they needed to be a part of the commemorative project.

"We wanted to be part of the Centenary celebrations and show how thankful we are for everything King Eddies has done for us. Our family (Nanny, Poppy, Nanna T, Poppy Dave, Aunty Ashe, Uncle David and Uncle Zac) all generously donated so that we could have a Gold Butterfly and help towards an amazing cause - research to prevent preterm birth."

Whether you are a mother, daughter, aunty, grandmother, great grandmother or sister, KEMH would love you to be a lasting part of their Centenary celebration as a record of your special time at King Eddies. Choose from four fabulous options for yourself or as a gift to someone else - Gold and Silver Butterflies, a colourful flag on the Bunting or a Digital Wall entry (online only).

To be a part of the Centenary Wall, and for more information, visit the Centenary Wall website: [www.wirf.com.au](http://www.wirf.com.au)

## PERTH ICONS LAUNCH POSH FROCKS FOR PREMMIES APPEAL

Perth Lord Mayor, Lisa Scaffidi and local celebrity, Famous Sharron, have joined the Women and Infants Research Foundation (WIRF) in calling for all fashionable women across Perth to get behind the Foundation's Posh Frocks for Premmies 2016 Appeal.

The Appeal, which is raising much needed funds for the Western Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative, is asking women to scour their wardrobes for pre loved ball gowns, bridesmaid dresses, and formal dresses as part of the donation ask.

Ambassador, Famous Sharron pointed to the Appeal as a fantastic way for people to make a real difference and clear up some much needed closet space.

"We understand that many people today are already involved in regular giving or are unable to donate money directly for a number of reasons. The Posh Frocks Appeal is all about supporting research to prevent preterm birth in an entirely different way," she said.



From left: Appeal Ambassador Famous Sharron, Pamela Jones with son Matthew, Perth Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi and KEMH's Assoc Prof Graeme Boardley

## + SAVE the dates!

### STARS EVENTS Stars 2016 (14th & 15th September 2016)

#### "The Pelvic Floor: Supporting WA Women"

Pelvic floor dysfunction affects millions of women worldwide and has a significant effect on quality of life. It may cause urinary incontinence, faecal incontinence or pelvic organ prolapse. The Stars event this year will focus on the main prevention strategies for this major problem in women's health.

More details: [www.wirf.com.au/stars2016](http://www.wirf.com.au/stars2016)

### KING EDWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL CENTENARY GALA BALL

King Edward Memorial Hospital is celebrating 100 Years and we would love you to join us for the Centenary Gala Ball.

Bring your friends and family to help us celebrate this remarkable milestone with exquisite food, fine wines and entertainment at Crown.

Book: [www.wirf.com.au/ball](http://www.wirf.com.au/ball)



## THE WHOLE NINE MONTHS MAGAZINE

On Wednesday, 23 March 2016 the second edition of the preterm birth prevention educational lift out was published in The West Australian.

This magazine provides an insight into how the world-first WA Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative is impacting on health care and women in WA and how we are educating and informing parents and health providers on new interventions. Hard copies of the magazine are available upon request.

## WIRF ON SOCIAL MEDIA



To keep up to date with the latest WIRF research, outreach and community activities, please like, tag and share with us on social media. We can be found at these addresses:

**Facebook** - Women and Infants Research Foundation

**You Tube** - Women and Infants Research Foundation

**Twitter & Instagram** - WIRFWA

WIRF also coordinates Facebook pages for the King Edward Memorial Hospital Op Shop and the Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative - The Whole Nine Months.

# WIRF AND KEMH VOLUNTEERS WORTH \$465,000



From left: Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AO, Kay Lodge, Carol King, Beattie Raamel, Pam Imms, Maggie Cooper, Helen Robertson and Prof John Newnham

**The contributions of more than 100 volunteers to the Women and Infants Research Foundation and King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH) were celebrated as part of a recent event to mark National Volunteers Week.**

Patron of the Women and Infants Research Foundation, Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AO, Governor of Western Australia, attended as the guest of honour and said the event was a fantastic opportunity to recognise an exceptional group of people.

"Volunteers at KEMH perform countless tasks that add that extra special touch to a mother and newborn's journey. They form an invaluable resource, making a significant contribution to the ability of the Hospital to deliver the highest level of service," Mrs Sanderson AO said.

"This annual event is all about recognising the contribution and achievements of this amazing group of volunteers."

Executive Director of the Women and Infants Research Foundation, Professor John Newnham said during the past year, WIRF had grown its volunteer base from 95 to 113.

"This team of volunteers contributes over 10,000 hours each year which is valued at a staggering \$465 000," Prof Newnham said.

"The work of our volunteers extends to many of the Hospital's departments. By engaging in patient and client activities, volunteers are a vital link between the clinical and nursing services, and together form a holistic approach to the quality health care that people need."

As part of the event, volunteers celebrating 10 and 15 year long service awards were recognised. 10 year recipients were: Beattie Raamel and Carol King. 15 year recipients were: Yvonne Neurauter, Kay Lodge, Suzanne Draper, Pam Imms, Helen Robertson, Helen Roatch and Maggie Cooper.

Volunteers at WIRF and KEMH provide vital services across a range of departments and services including: the hospital's café and gift shop, op shop, perinatal loss service, social work, physiotherapy, the centenary clinic and nurseries.



Telethon supports WIRF research that will change our world



## More than 2800 Western Australian babies are born too early

See how WIRF is helping to prevent preterm birth at [www.thewholeninemonths.com.au](http://www.thewholeninemonths.com.au)

### WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN:

Save the lives of WA babies

Prevent lifelong disabilities

Reduce the risk of preterm birth

### Please donate

to the Women and Infants Research Foundation and help premmie babies in WA.

[www.wirf.com.au/donate](http://www.wirf.com.au/donate)



WIRF King Edward Memorial Hospital, Bagot Road, Subiaco, 6008

## ONE SMALL GESTURE CAN HELP US

**Preterm birth remains the single greatest cause of death and disability in children up to five years of age in the developed world. Funding for research for preterm birth prevention is a priority for WIRF.**

Research for treatments and cures is an expensive endeavour and funding for our preterm birth prevention is a priority. Your donation is an investment in our community's future.

[www.wirf.com.au/donate](http://www.wirf.com.au/donate)