

Perron Institute for Neurological and Translational Science

Reception to thank supporters

Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia

Thursday, 29th November 2018

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Good evening. Welcome to Government House for this special evening for the Perron Institute – a Western Australian organisation whose ground-breaking medical research work I'm proud to support as Patron.

This event is an opportunity to thank those giving their support to ensure that the Institute can continue to pursue its research into neurological diseases and conditions that affect the lives of so many in our community.

A vitally important part of this work is to find ways of translating this research into the delivery of disease treatments and improved symptom management.

There has been no greater supporter of the work of the Institute than the man whose name it bears – Stan Perron.

Stan, who sadly died last week aged 96, is a huge loss and our hearts go out to Jean and family in their bereavement.

As well as the very significant financial support provided to the Institute by the Perron family, the personal interest maintained by Stan – his belief in the value and potential of the research – has been an inspiration to us all.

We are deeply grateful.

I'd like to acknowledge several guests:

- Professor Lyn Beazley AO, Patron
- Professor Alan Robson AO CitWA, Chairman of the Perron Institute
- Mr Steve Arnott, CEO
- I also welcome Mr Torsten Ketelsen, Board Member and Chairman of the Perron Fundraising Committee.
- Others who deserve a very special mention are Professors Steve Wilton and Sue Fletcher and Emeritus Professor Byron Kakulas AO.
Their pioneering work has led to a treatment for the devastating muscle wasting disease, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

This is a breakthrough of monumental importance, putting the research team concerned and the Perron Institute on the world stage.

The drug now approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is extending the active lives of young boys previously consigned to wheel chairs, enabling them to continue to walk.

Perron's positioning statement "Where Hope Begins" is manifest in this trailblazing achievement.

For millions of people around the world suffering from life-threatening and chronic illnesses, medical research is the beginning of hope for cures and for advances that improve quality of life.

Investment in medical research is an investment in the future quality of healthcare. As well as achieving positive health outcomes, investment in research (enabling the development of centres of excellence such as the Perron) can lead to economic benefits (for example commercialisation) and savings in the health system.

A compelling case for continued community and government support.

It's very pleasing to note that as the State's premier neurological research institute, Perron is continuing to grow, attracting world class scientists from WA and overseas, expanding its research themes and achieving international recognition for areas of strength:

- Over the past three years new researchers joining the group have expanded the Institute's staff complement by 39 per cent.
- Publications have increased by 54 per cent and in 2017, the number of citations relating to the work of Perron Institute researchers grew to some 4,500.
- The number of PhD students linked to the Institute increased by from 10 in 2016 to 35 last year – an increase of 250 per cent.

I also congratulate Perron for the news that your leading peptide for stroke research is being applied to infant brain injury in a pre-clinical model, thanks to a Telethon Perth Children's Hospital Research Fund grant announced in October.

All West Australians can be proud of what the Perron Institute has been able to achieve.

The high calibre of the people on team Perron and the generous support received from the Perron family, other major donors and the broader community have been fundamental to this success.

As the Institute plans now to determine its priorities, it will be linking future growth with fundraising targets. Ongoing financial support to maximise opportunities and the achievement of goals will be essential. Laboratory space, further staff recruitment, research themes and possible areas for expansion into new research areas within the neurological field are among matters that will be considered in looking at future scope.

I would like to use tonight's occasion to recognise one of our pioneers, Professor Byron Kakulas. It gives me pleasure to introduce another great West Australian Dr Ken Michael AC who will provide a summary of the contribution made by Byron and to announce the Byron Kakulas Prestige scholarships.

Thank you.