

Western Australian Cardiovascular Research Alliance Ltd (WACRA)

ACN: 634 299 193

Chair's Report for the Year Ended June 2021

Prof Livia Hool

It is with much pleasure that I submit the annual report for the 2020-21 year as Chair of the Western Australian Cardiovascular Research Alliance (WACRA). We are now two years old! Our first year resulted in several significant achievements and last year was no exception! Again I want to thank the many members who have supported the alliance as we mature and move forward together to build a strong cardiovascular research community in WA.

Following the establishment of WACRA as a legal entity in June 2019, we are now organised, we have a collective membership and we have an identity! The alliance represents cardiovascular researchers from all 5 universities, institutes and hospitals and we are the peak leadership body in WA advancing research into heart, stroke and vascular disease to accelerate translation and improve health outcomes for all Western Australians. Last year the lockdown periods provided an opportunity to engage (by Zoom) with each of the university's DVC Research and CEO's of Research Foundations and Institutes, and I am delighted to report that 12 institutions have now signed in support of the alliance.

Our web site (www.waheart.info) lists our partners, institutional members and individual members. One of our partner members is the Heart Foundation and I would like to warmly thank Sarah Fordham, CEO of WA Heart Foundation who continues to be outstanding in her support of WACRA. The Heart Foundation is keen to strengthen their relationship with Alumni in WA. In conjunction with our national partner ACvA, WACRA plans to hold a joint event with the Heart Foundation in October to celebrate our partnerships and inform the membership about new funding opportunities including the strategic funding from MRFF and The Heart Foundation.

Over the past year we have launched a number of new initiatives to support our members. Earlier this year we established a pre-submission grants review process. We engaged all the research offices at the 5 universities who have enthusiastically agreed to advertise the grant review process to their cardiovascular researchers. I want to thank the WACRA members who generously gave their time to review and provide feedback for applicants prior to submission. We are particularly grateful to our academic colleagues at the University of Edinburgh who have offered to provide peer review including Prof Andrew Baker, the Director of the Cardiovascular Centre himself! We have endorsed the ACvA mentor –mentee scheme and we are assisting in facilitated matching of ECRs to mentors. We congratulate Lauren Blekkenhorst (ECU) who was elected as our ECR representative in WA for ACvA, also Board Director Lee Nedkoff who is representing WACRA on the Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA).

I would also like to make special mention of the continued support from our members Ms Sandra Peterson and Ms Amanda Cox (RPH Research Foundation), Ms Dana Henderson (Spinnaker



WACRA

heart, stroke and vascular disease research

Foundation) and Dr Amanda Cleaver (Raine Research Foundation). They are providing WACRA members with funding opportunities, public speaking and media opportunities. We congratulate WACRA members Dr Catherine Bondonno, Dr Marcio Kiuchi Sim and Dr Marc Sim who were winners of the inaugural Career Advancement Fellowship Awards from Royal Perth Hospital Research Foundation. We are delighted to celebrate our members' successes!

This year we welcome Wendy Chen, who is providing administrative assistance to the Board. Her support has been incredibly welcome as we work with our partners to ensure WACRA members are kept abreast of the latest news and we establish opportunities to increase success for our members. She has undertaken the event planning for the AGM, advertised and coordinated the peer review of grants and the call for applications for the publication prizes at the AGM. It is outstanding that we have received 13 applications for publication prizes across the 3 categories and we look forward to hearing the flash talk presentations of the finalists at the AGM on August 17.

Our advocacy to the Health Minister Roger Cook continues. Despite the enormous burden of cardiovascular disease as the leading cause of death in WA, the government does not have a dedicated cardiovascular research plan. We will continue to advocate to the Minister to secure long term funding for WA cardiovascular researchers. We look forward to working with our partners and our members to make WA a national leader in cardiovascular research and healthcare.

With best wishes,

Prof Livia Hool
Chair Western Australian Cardiovascular Research Alliance Ltd