

# Media Release

## Symposium to tackle priority area in pregnancy care

**Wednesday, 9 August 2017**

A complication of pregnancy which accounts for more than two million deaths worldwide each year will be the focus of an upcoming symposium to be hosted by the Women and Infants Research Foundation (WIRF).

The 2017 Stars Symposium, *How we can prevent babies dying before they are born*, will examine stillbirth, how we can detect and identify contributing causes, and the potential for its prevention.

Stillbirths account for 70% of perinatal deaths. Each year in Australia and New Zealand, more than 2,000 babies are stillborn, occurring at a rate of approximately seven out of every 1000 births; amounting to about seven babies each day.

Visiting Professor, Prof Susan Walker, Director of Perinatal Medicine at Mercy Hospital for Women in Victoria, said that while infant mortality rates have continued to decline in Australia over the past two decades, there has been no overall reduction in the rate of stillbirth.

“Fetal growth restriction is the leading contributor to antenatal stillbirth, but identifying the baby that is small or poorly grown remains a challenge,” Professor Walker said.

“Through this presentation I will address how we can improve detection of the baby that stops growing before it is born in an effort to reduce the burden of preventable stillbirth.”

Prof Walker’s keynote presentation will be accompanied by talks from two local stars – Dr Scott White who will examine why some babies die before they are born, and Belinda Jennings who will talk about the evolution of the Perinatal Loss Service at King Edward Memorial Hospital.

The Stars event will be held on Wednesday, 13 September 2017 at the University of Western Australia, Banquet Hall. The following evening the Rising Stars event, a celebration and showcase of WA’s top emerging medical researchers, will be held at the Matilda Bay Restaurant.

The Stars events provide the Women and Infants Research Foundation the opportunity to showcase the most recent research findings in the fields of women’s health, reproduction and newborn medicine.

To register and for more details visit: [www.wirf.com.au/stars2017](http://www.wirf.com.au/stars2017)

**ENDS**

**Media contact:** Richie Hodgson, 0408 128 099, [richie@wirf.com.au](mailto:richie@wirf.com.au)

**Background:** The Women and Infants Research Foundation is one of Australia’s leading independent research institution dedicated to improving the health of women, infants and reproductive health. For more than 40 years our research and programs have directly contributed to a number of improved clinical practices and health outcomes in areas of critical need.