



Under the Microscope

With Prof Alasdair Millar

Protecting the rights of patients involved in research and clinical trials at RPH has been the driving force behind Clinical Prof Alasdair Millar for 15 years.

Prof Millar, who recently resigned after 10 years as Chairman of the RPH Human Ethics Committee is proud of the work he has done for the Hospital, the research community and the WA public at large.

“It has always been my view that the role of the Ethics Committee is to promote research as well as ensuring that it is ethical,” he said.

Prof Millar has presided over the fate of thousands of research projects in his tenure as committee chairman. Up to 130 trials are put before the 14-person Ethics Committee each year.

“It is both difficult and interesting work,” he said.

“There is a lot of discussion about issues such as patient confidentiality, scientific validity, consent and the quality of patient information sheets.

“Our aim is simple. It is to apply in practice what the community we live in accepts as a reasonable ethical norm in research.”

He said all research projects needed to ensure they were: safe, scientifically valid and that the patient are given the opportunity to provide consent to participate, and withdraw, from any trial.

The committee is duty-bound to ensure all clinical trials/research projects meet the requirements as set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

He said the Statement starts from the assumption that patients and volunteers must be protected from projects that place them at undue risk or involvement without full understanding of what a trial involves.

Prof Peter Leedman, RPH Director of Research said, “Prof Millar has been an outstanding Chairman, overseeing the provision of high quality ethical consideration of clinical studies at RPH over the last 15 years”.

“Alasdair has been an enormously hard working and committed Chairman, who has played a fundamental role in promoting substantial growth in clinical trials at RPH.

“The clinical investigators and researchers across the campus are greatly appreciative of all of his many years of service to, and leadership of, the RPH Ethics Committee.”

Prof Millar will continue to be an Ethics Committee member. He has been replaced as Chairman by Associate Prof Frank van Bockxmeer.



Clinical Professor Alasdair Millar