

MEDIA RELEASE

19 March 2007

Leading haematologist questions long term outlook for blood

A leading Sydney haematologist has questioned whether there will be enough blood in Australia to meet the medical needs of Australians in the future.

Professor James Isbister, Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Sydney and Emeritus Consultant in Haematology and Transfusion Medicine at Royal North Shore Hospital believes the increasing demand for blood is a significant challenge.

“A government report released late last year estimated that demand for blood will increase by more than 100% in the next decade,” Professor Isbister said.

“Australia has a voluntary, safe blood supply system that is arguably one of the best and most cost effective in the world.

“Blood transfusion and blood component therapy plays an integral part in modern medical practice and undoubtedly there will be challenges in store for medical science, health care professionals, the community and politicians alike.

“But the key challenge will be ensuring that there are enough people in the community who are willing and able to step up to become blood donors to make sure our needs are met.”

Professor Isbister will be the keynote speaker at a public lecture to be delivered in Adelaide on 9 May on ‘Everything you wanted to know about blood but were afraid to ask’ as part of the annual transfusion medicine conference of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (ARCBS).

“Blood transfusion has unquestionably been a major medical advance during the 20th century. Bleeding patients survive, major surgical procedures have been made possible, people with haemophilia live longer and better lives, and bone marrow failure is survivable.”

Professor Isbister will be joined at the conference by a group of international and domestic speakers from the medical community to discuss the challenges and latest developments in the international blood sector.

The conference has an impressive three day program covering many areas of blood transfusion including sessions on; ‘delay or avoidance’; ‘complacency’; ‘wasting scarce resources’, ‘fit for surgery’ and ‘postoperative care.’

For more information about the Transfusion Update conference and its speakers visit www.transfusion.com.au.

For all other information on blood donation or to make an appointment to give blood, call 13 14 95 or visit www.donateblood.com.au

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Jenny Burr, ARCBS, 02 9333 3203 or 0404 341 040

About the Australian Red Cross Blood Service

The Australian Red Cross Blood Service is a national not-for-profit organisation, supported by the governments of Australia, responsible for providing the Australian community with safe, high quality blood and blood products.

This is possible through the support of more than half a million voluntary blood donors.

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About Professor James Isbister

James Isbister is an Emeritus Consultant in Haematology and Transfusion Medicine at Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital and Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Sydney as well as an Adjunct Professor of Medicine at the University of Technology, Sydney.

His contributions to haematology and transfusion medicine in Australia are well known and have been acknowledged by several awards. He has over 100 publications in scientific literature, is the author of three textbooks on haematology and transfusion medicine and has contributed chapters to several major textbooks.

Professor Isbister has a special interest in medical teaching and is in regular demand as a national and international speaker and is well known for some of his iconoclastic views.

Professor Isbister is a past-president of the Australian and New Zealand Apheresis Association and was president of the 8th congress of the World Apheresis Association held in Perth in 2000.

He is Chair of the Advisory Council, and a member of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service Board. He also is also a board member on the Society for the Advancement of Blood Management (US based) and the Medical Society for Patient Blood Management (European based).

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