

Perth Eye Foundation Ltd AGM 2022 Chair's Report

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the third annual general meeting of **Perth Eye Foundation Ltd** an independent self-funded, not-for-profit located in Western Australia, committed to a future where no one is suffering from a preventable eye disease. The annual statutory financial reports presented to you are prepared compliant with the Australian Accounting Standards, ACNC and ASIC legislation and are subject to external independent audit.

Perth Eye Foundation Ltd reported a net deficit for the financial year of (\$757,611). The reported deficit is after accounting for unrealised investment losses of (\$1,524,487). Before unrealised losses the Foundation reported an operating surplus of \$766,876. The net assets of the Foundation on 30 June 2022 were \$15,386,222 and with our liability-driven investment strategy, an approach that focuses the investment policy and asset allocation decisions on matching the current and future liabilities of the Foundation, we are well placed as the equity markets recover.

Our Program Partner Advisory Panel (PPAP) went through its third annual cycle of communicating with and shoulder tapping third parties who could deliver projects and



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programs consistent with our vision before then reviewing and evaluating applications against the criteria set down for grant submissions and against the purpose and objects of the Foundation.

Our strategic approach is to work collaboratively with our program partners to deliver research, education, and training to advance the prevention and treatment of blinding eye diseases in areas of unmet need.

After risk assessment and ethical evaluation, the Advisory Panel made a number of recommendations to the Board and the successful program partner recipients this year were...

The Women & Newborn Health Service - King Edward Memorial Hospital

***Recipient of The Helen Smith Award** – This is our third year of funding this project of retinal screening of pregnant women with type 1 or type 2 diabetes to improve detection and treatment of eye disease during pregnancy and to try to and determine why diabetic eye disease tends to worsen during pregnancy.*

Lions Eye Institute – Professor Chandra Balaratnasingham

A proposal was received from a team of researchers at Lions Eye Institute lead by Professor Balaratnasingham. This grant is for establishing a novel, non-invasive approach to detect injury to the retinal microcirculation (the smallest blood vessels in the eye that are less than 10 microns in diameter) in children with Diabetes Mellitus. It will also determine new ways by which changes to the retinal microcirculation can be used to predict the development of kidney disease. These findings will be used to reduce the rate of blindness and kidney failure in children with Diabetes Mellitus. This is a pilot study for a larger NHMRC grant which has the potential to attract millions of dollars in funding.

Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA) – Dr Rosie Dawkins

Funding was approved for a research team led by Dr Rosie Dawkins to conduct “Research into a Model of Comprehensive Care for People with Stickler Syndromes”. Stickler syndrome is a group of hereditary conditions characterized by a distinctive facial appearance, eye abnormalities, hearing loss, and joint problems. These signs and symptoms vary widely among affected individuals. A characteristic feature of Stickler syndrome is a flattened facial appearance.

The purpose of this research project is to develop a comprehensive care pathway for patients with Stickler Syndromes, to enable access to bilateral prophylactic cryotherapy and to improve access to ancillary services for this cohort. Stickler Syndromes are uncommon, but not rare, inherited collagenopathies of which Type 1 is associated with giant tear retinal (GRT) detachments. Vision outcomes from surgical repair of GRT retinal detachments have been variable, and often poor.

However, in recent years, evidence has shown that performing bilateral prophylactic cryotherapy can reduce the risk of retinal detachment from 40% to 8% in people with the COL2A1 mutation. For patients who have had a detachment in one eye, the risk reduction is from 70% to 8% in the other eye.

In addition, people with Stickler Syndromes also have other clinical issues associated with their collagenopathy. These patients need comprehensive care including regular review by ENT / audiology and rheumatology / physiotherapy. Patients often receive very disjointed care and spend a great deal of time attempting to access care. However, the number of patients who require care is by no means small – a conservative estimate of Type 1 Stickler Syndrome alone is 3,000 people across Australia.

Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital (SCGH): Dr Tom Cunneen and Dr Joel Mudri

An application was approved from Dr Tom Cunneen and Dr Joel Mudri seeking a capital grant to purchase a Heidelberg anterior segment OCT module which will facilitate “prospective case series of optical coherence tomography in diagnosis of ocular surface squamous neoplasia(OSSN) in a tertiary hospital”. This funding was to purchase an add on piece of equipment for use with existing equipment and processes held by Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital.

There is increasing evidence that Optical Coherence tomography (OCT) can assist in the diagnosis of ocular surface squamous neoplasia (OSSN) and correlates well with histological diagnosis. The project aims to prospectively analyse ocular lesions that appear clinically consisting with OSSN with the Heidelberg Spectralis anterior segment module and compare these findings with histological diagnosis following excision.

The project aims are:

- **Primary**

To validate the use of the Heidelberg anterior segment OCT in diagnosing OSSN at SCGH by comparing preoperative analysis of OSSN with histological diagnosis following excision

- **Secondary**

- Obtain baseline data of demographics and clinical assessment of patients with suspected OSSN at SCGH.*
- Characterise preoperative OCT features of OSSN compared to the existing literature.*

University of WA Medical School

This is our second year of contributing, along with the Spinnaker Foundation, to the funding a research team led by Professor Tim Davis studying the longitudinal relationship between macrovascular disease and retinopathy in type 2 diabetes. The primary objectives of the study are to determine whether carotid disease is a predictor of new or worsening diabetic retinopathy in people with type 2 diabetes and secondly to determine whether carotid disease predicts a change in retinal vessel density assessed by optical coherence tomography angiography (OCTA).

Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia (ORIA)

Perth Eye Foundation provide ORIA with a research grant each year to enable

ophthalmologists and vision scientists working in university departments to improve the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases through clinical research. ORIA report the outcomes of all the research support and promote best practice ophthalmic medical care.

Royal Australia New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO)

The medical college is responsible for the training and professional development of ophthalmologists in Australia and New Zealand. RANZCO seek to reduce avoidable blindness through the education and improvement of local training institutions that will, in turn, improve the eye health workforce through increased knowledge and expertise. RANZCO work in collaboration with other stakeholders like PEF to ensure projects are sustainable and accessible to everyone. Perth Eye Foundation provide RANZCO with an annual grant to jointly further these objectives.

I would like to record my sincere thanks to the Program Partner Advisory Panel members for their hard work in evaluating these worthy recipients and putting them forward for recommendation to the Board. It would be remiss of me to not mention Anne Russell Browne for her role as Liaison Officer to our Advisory Panel.

Anne resigned from the role at the end of the financial year, and we thank her for her dedication, professionalism, tireless efforts.

The Board has appointed Jacqueline Clay to the role, Jac has a wealth of experience in the field and will ensure that the advisory panel functions smoothly and that our program partners are well supported. I know you will join with me in wishing her every success in the role. This year the Board approved the appointment of three new members to the Program Partner Advisory Panel. We welcomed Eileen Nichol, Bev Tysoe and Margie O'Neill to the Advisory Panel.

Eileen has extensive experience in ophthalmic nursing in the outpatient and perioperative environment and has worked in a number of senior nursing positions in Australia and the UK. Bev works for a Non-Government Aboriginal Health Service and organises multidisciplinary specialist medical teams travelling to remote Aboriginal Communities on the Ngaanyatjarra (NG) Lands up to 24 weeks per year. Margie is an Eye Clinic and Ear Health Coordinator based in the Kimberley in WA. Margie was primarily responsible for getting optometrists and ophthalmologists working together to get West Australia's remote eye health service off the ground.

The Board takes its governance responsibilities very seriously and as part of our governance framework, we have built on our suite of policies with the development of a number of new policies including; a records management policy, delegated authority policy, board induction policy and recently a complaints management policy and register. This year the Board undertook a comprehensive performance evaluation review and completed a skills matrix to ensure that the Board was operating effectively and efficiently with the appropriate skills required to execute the objects of the Foundation.

I would like to acknowledge my fellow Directors for all their hard work again this year, it is both a privilege and a pleasure working with you. A very special thanks to Liane Papaelias who resigned from the Board on the 31 December 2021. Liane worked very hard on behalf of the Foundation, and we will miss her wise counsel. Simon Martin was appointed to replace Liane as Company Secretary. Simon is an experienced executive with over 25 years of experience including Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of WA Primary Health Alliance, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Cystic Fibrosis Australia and General Manager of Network Ten Perth (Channel Ten).



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The Perth Eye Foundation is well placed to deliver on our strategic plan and meet our charitable objectives. That brings me to the end of my report, and I look forward to serving the Foundation as we establish ourselves into the future. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Liam Roche

14 December 1010