



Dear Friends,

Firstly, let me wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe new year.

As we conclude our 10th year of service, I thank you most sincerely for your support and the privilege of working on your behalf.

My apologies for the close delivery of the Foundation's Spring and Summer newsletters. We have enlarged our content on both occasions to keep you informed and give you as much helpful and positive information as possible.

We are all excited about this edition of the newsletter, a "research special", with all kinds of interesting information.

We have a "**Research Update 2011**" insert which outlines the latest in research across the world on Macular Degeneration.

We also have all the details on the recipients of the Foundation's first **Research Grants Program**, launched in Macular Degeneration Awareness Week, as part of our "One Decade" celebrations.

The successful recipients were announced at an awards event at Admiralty House on World Sight Day by the Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce. The recipients are world

leaders in the field of Macular Degeneration and are undertaking exciting research which will give us answers and hopefully lead to a cure; which is what we all are working towards.

Your ongoing donations have helped to contribute to the funding of these vital research projects and I thank you. Hopefully through further donations, bequests and support, we can raise \$10 million in the next 10 years to continue the Foundation's contribution to world class research.

We thought some readers might like to offer a donation in lieu of a Christmas gift and so we have enclosed a special card, for yourself and/or family and friends, if you so choose. Our usual donation form is also included. Details are on the back page of the newsletter.

The Foundation also launched the Deloitte Access Economics Report "**Eyes On the Future**" on World Sight Day. This 144 page report was commissioned by the Foundation and is co-authored by the Foundation's leading world expert on Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), Professor Paul Mitchell. The report is the most comprehensive and thorough ever undertaken on AMD in Australia. A summary of the key findings is enclosed.

Thank you for supporting our postcard campaign for government funding. I urge you to please read the article enclosed "beaten by the post", it is very important.

Take care and have a joyous and safe time in the festive period.

Kind regards

Julie Heraghty
Chief Executive Officer



Macular Degeneration Foundation Research Inaugural Research Grant Announcement

The Governor-General of Australia, Ms Quentin Bryce, announced the recipients of the inaugural Macular Degeneration Foundation Research Grants at a morning tea at Admiralty House, Sydney, on World Sight Day, Thursday 13 October 2011.

At the announcement the Governor-General said, "The work of the Macular Degeneration Foundation is critical in raising public awareness of the disease and slowing its prevalence."

The 80 guests attending the announcement were all closely linked to the Macular Degeneration community and have keenly followed the development of the research program. We were thrilled to welcome many of our community who are living with Macular Degeneration to this event.

We need to find answers as to why Macular Degeneration is sending so many Australians blind. We know research works, helping to find reasons and answers for diseases and ultimately – a cure. This is why the Foundation is investing in critical research by pre-eminent world experts to help ensure that all Australians can see a future.

"I have a keen interest in health and medical research and would like to congratulate the Macular Degeneration Foundation on this important initiative."

**The Hon Mark Butler
Minister for Mental Health
and Ageing**



Jan Utzon with Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce



Mr & Mrs John and Patricia Tatham



Marcus Blackmore and Jean Kittson



Mr & Mrs Des and Jean Morton

Our Grant Recipients



Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce with grant recipients Professor Robyn Guymer, Professor Paul Mitchell and Dr Liubov Robman.

Professor Paul Mitchell, Millennium Centre for Eye Research, Westmead and the University of Sydney. Professor Mitchell is the principal researcher behind the landmark Blue Mountains Eye Study, which is one of the world's largest and most important studies looking at the incidence and risk factors for MD and other eye diseases.

The aim of this new, three year study is to gain a deeper understanding of the risk factor profile of people who are seeking treatment for late-stage Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD).

This study will shed new light on the link between modifiable risk factors such as diet, excess body weight and smoking and non-modifiable risk factors such as genetic predisposition or "family history". A key outcome of the research will be an improved ability to identify at an early stage those people who are at a high risk of disease progression.

Professor Robyn Guymer, Head of the Retinal Research Unit, Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA), Melbourne. Professor Guymer will be working with co-investigators Professor Greg Hageman from the Moran Centre for Translational Medicine

in the United States, and Associate Professor Paul Baird and Dr Chi Luu also from CERA.

We still do not have a good test which reliably predicts who is most likely to progress to the more debilitating forms of the disease. Professor Guymer's three year project aims to develop and validate a suite of novel, state-of-the-art imaging and functional tests to better describe and diagnose early AMD.

As a result of this research, people at high risk of progression can be monitored more closely and also be managed proactively with diet and lifestyle modifications and other treatments where appropriate, to ward off vision-threatening complications.

Dr Liubov (Luba) Robman, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Eye Research Australia, in Melbourne is the winner of the **Blackmores Dr Paul Beaumont Research Fellowship**.

Previous research has found strong associations between particular foods and risk of Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD). Dr Robman's new study aims to identify the associations between broader dietary patterns and AMD.

This study will provide a detailed analysis of the largest population ever analysed for the links between diet and AMD. This investigation will be complemented by the analysis of lifestyle habits, genetic predisposition to AMD and interaction between various risk factors.

By conducting these dietary patterns, lifestyle and genetic analyses in a large-scale study, more specific personalised advice on how to modify the course of AMD will be possible. It is hoped that this research will help limit vision-threatening complications of this devastating disease.

Deloitte Access Economics Report

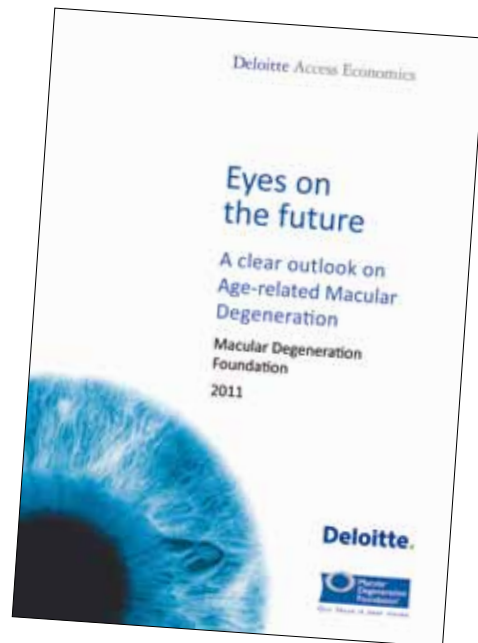
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This 144 page report was commissioned by the Foundation and is co-authored by the Foundation’s leading world expert on Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), Professor Paul Mitchell. The report is the most comprehensive and thorough ever undertaken on AMD in Australia.

This report provides the necessary factual information in advocating on behalf of the Macular Degeneration community to government and other stakeholders.

Report key findings:

- In 2010, approximately 1 million Australians over 50 years had some evidence of MD
- This number will rise by over 70% to 1.7 million in the next 20 years
- Approximately 17% of these people with MD could potentially lose vision in the absence of treatment and prevention efforts
- By 2030, the number of those with late stage disease (vision loss) could double from 167,000 to 330,000; in the absence of treatment and prevention efforts
- Prevention and treatment includes early detection, uptake of treatment, adoption of eye health diet and lifestyle behaviours and smoking cessation
- In relation to AMD, a saving of approximately \$247 million per year could be made if cigarette smoking was halved



- In 2010, the total economic cost of vision loss associated with AMD was in excess of \$5 billion. This includes health system costs, other financial costs and loss of wellbeing
- For every \$1 invested in the current treatment for wet AMD, there has been a \$2 saving in social benefit costs

Through further donations, bequests and support, we can raise \$10 million in the next 10 years to continue the Foundation’s contribution to world class research. Supporters can now elect to support the Foundation’s regular programs or research programs when making a donation.

For further information on the Macular Degeneration Foundation Research Grants Program and grant announcement visit www.mdfoundation.com.au or call the Foundation on 1800 111 709.

BEATEN BY THE POST... not yet!

Thank you to all those who sent the campaign postcard for increased funding to Minister Roxon. Unfortunately technology employed by Australia Post to read the address is in some cases causing the card to be returned. Our apologies for any inconvenience and thank you for your understanding and support.

However, it takes more than technology to beat us, so not to be outdone by technology we have had Australia Post give a first class tick to the enclosed postcard.

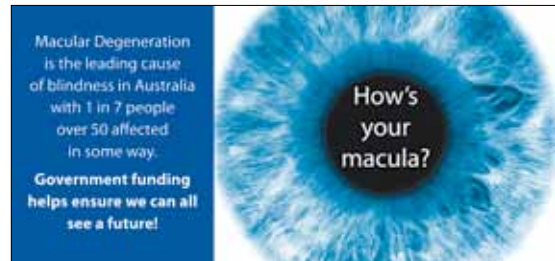


What to do?

- If you have successfully sent the postcard - thank you
- If you have had it returned, we would very much appreciate you completing the enclosed postcard and sending
- If your first postcard was successfully sent and you now have a spare postcard (as a result of the postcard enclosed) please pass it to your family or friends to post to support our campaign, so it is not wasted

However, it will still need an old fashioned stamp!

Since the last newsletter we have been informed by the Department of Health and Ageing that all applications for Federal funding must be submitted by 23 December 2011. So now your support has a renewed urgency and, as always, is critical.



Research Update 2011

We know you keenly await our Research Update each year, as it gives a clear overview of what Macular Degeneration research is currently taking place both here and overseas. This year's update (enclosed) examines the latest research into wet and dry treatments, gene therapy, stem cell research and much, much more. Like you, we are keen to understand what impact these research initiatives will have for those living with Macular Degeneration, and this update reinforces the importance of our new research grants program. Hopefully, one day, this update will report a cure.



A Special Christmas Gift

We have come up with an idea to help solve the eternal question of "What gift should I give this Christmas?" Why not make a donation to the Foundation and help save sight!

Enclosed is a Special Christmas Gift Card. You can make a donation to the Foundation in lieu of a present for a loved one, or alternatively, ask that your family and friends made a donation instead of a Christmas gift for you.

How does it work?

- Complete the donation details on the reverse of the card.
- Detach the perforated section and fill in your loved ones name and your name.
- Post the donation information to the Foundation in the reply paid envelope.
- Give your loved one the gift card you have personalised so they know a donation has been made in lieu of a gift.

For more information or additional Christmas Gift Cards call the Foundation on 1800 111 709.



Education across the Country

The Foundation has a large number of education sessions booked across the country in 2012 and you will be notified by invitation of any session being held near you. Don't forget, if you are a member of a community group and would like our Educators to attend your meeting, call the Foundation on 1800 111 709 to register your interest.

Donations

Thank you for supporting the Macular Degeneration Foundation. As a charitable organisation we rely on your generosity to service the MD Community across Australia.

If you are able to help us at this time a donation slip and reply paid envelope are enclosed for your convenience.

You can also make a secure online donation using your credit card at www.mdfoundation.com.au. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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