

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter, and a happy Easter to you – the years are flying by and we are 10 years old in May!

One Decade Old!

To celebrate this occasion we are having a **One Decade Gala Fundraising Dinner** on 20 May at the Sydney Hilton Hotel to celebrate the MD Foundation's achievements over the last ten years. We will also acknowledge the dedication of so many, especially founding Director, Dr Paul Beaumont. We are hoping many will come for the celebration and if you cannot attend, make sure you spoil yourself with a piece of cake and a glass of something good to toast yourself for your continued support of the Foundation, which has enabled us to help so many. Thank you. Inside is more information.

MD Foundation Research Grants Program

At our Gala Fundraising Dinner, as part of our plan for the next ten years, we will launch our first ever large MD Foundation Research Grants Program to fund major research into Macular Degeneration, to help find reasons and answers for this disease. Funds raised at the dinner will go to our research funding pool. Applications will be open to researchers on 23 May 2011. More information inside on how you can help.

Julie Heraghty
CEO, MD Foundation

MD Awareness Week 2011

Introducing the mEYE World Photographic Competition

This year we will be doing something very different and special to highlight MD Awareness Week with the inaugural mEYE World Photographic Competition. We want you, your family and friends to be involved. More information is enclosed, read about Dr Bob and give the information flyer enclosed to your family or friends. Let's have some fun to raise awareness of MD in Australia.

National TV & Radio Campaign

We are pleased to announce another national TV and radio campaign supported by Novartis will be aired over February, March and April. It will again call upon Australians over 50 to have their eyes tested and macula checked, as we all know early detection can save sight.

Take Care

Unfortunately the year started with such sadness in terms of floods in Australia and earthquakes in New Zealand. Our thoughts have been with all our clients who have had to deal with the extreme weather conditions across Australia over the last few months and our NZ MD Foundation friends. To those affected, take care, stay safe and please know that we are here to help.

Celebrate our 10 Year Birthday in 2011!

The One Decade Gala Fundraising Dinner will celebrate the MD Foundation's achievements over the last ten years, as we set our "eyes on the future" for the next 10 years. We will also acknowledge the support of our valued partners including donors, volunteers, government, corporations, health care professionals, foundations and industry partners.



**Dr Paul Beaumont,
our founding Director.
10 years of
commitment.
Thank you!**

MD Foundation Research Grant Program

At our Gala Fundraising Dinner on 20 May we will launch our first ever large MD Foundation Research Grants Program to fund major research into Macular Degeneration. Funds raised at the dinner will go to our research funding reserve. Applications will be open to researchers on 23 May 2011.

We are conscious of the need to develop a large separate stream of funding to our normal operational funding to maintain this important research over the next ten years.

Contributions of a substantial nature from benefactors, philanthropists and bequests are the major means of funding this scale of research to ensure longevity and sustainability of the program.

If you would like to discuss major funding towards research, please contact the MD Foundation's Chief Executive Officer, Julie Heraghty on (02) 9261 8900.

One Decade Gala Fundraising Dinner

When: Friday 20 May 2011, 6.30pm

Where: Hilton Hotel, 488 George Street, Sydney

Price: \$160 per person
(tables of 10)

Bookings: Booking forms are available by calling the MD Foundation on 1800 111 709 or by visiting our website www.mdfoundation.com.au



Finding Reasons - Finding Answers

mEYE World Photographic Competition MD Awareness Week 2011

The Macular Degeneration Foundation invites you to submit your photograph online and include 50 words or less to explain how your entry depicts this year's theme, "eyes on the future". Your unique interpretation of the theme is what this competition is all about – celebrating the world through "your eyes".

Whether you have a passion for photography or you just love to take happy snaps you could be a winner. Capture your unique story through the lens of a camera and help raise awareness of Macular Degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in Australia.

An information flyer is included to give to your family or friends.

The judges include our wonderful patron, Ita Buttrose and the famous artist Ken Done. Winners will be invited to attend the Macular Degeneration One Decade Gala Fundraising Dinner.

We want happy snappers from the Macular Degeneration community!

There is a category for the Macular Degeneration community. If you have a vision impairment, do not let this deter you. Have someone help you and they can read the information flyer provided.

To submit your entry we want you to do it online through the competition website www.meyephotocomp.com.au.

If you cannot do this then find a friend, a smart grandchild, go to your local library and ask for help or call the MD Foundation to assist.



An initiative of the Macular Degeneration Foundation

Categories:

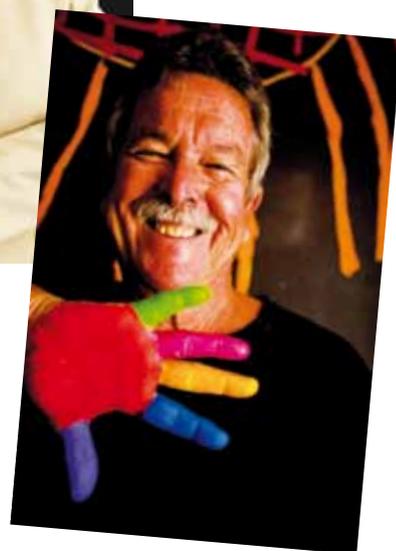
- **Open (general public)**
- **Macular Degeneration community (those with MD, family, friends and carers)**
- **Healthcare professionals (optometrists, ophthalmologists, GPs, orthoptists, pharmacists etc)**
- **Junior (Under 18)**

Entries close 27 April 2011

Visit www.meyephotocomp.com.au to enter



Judge - Ita Buttrose



Judge - Ken Done

Read Dr Bob's story on page six and be inspired to enter the competition!

Low Vision Aids & Technology Campaign ... keep on going!

Thank you again for the support you are giving to this campaign and especially for sending me your responses from a myriad of health insurers and local federal members. I really appreciate you taking the time to convey your own personal experiences with low vision. It is your letters that are prompting reviews by the health insurers and ensuring that we have Government's attention. **Julie Heraghty – CEO, MD Foundation**

What has happened?

1. Government

- ✓ Your representations to your local members have resulted in a response from Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary, stating "The Productivity Commission (*Disability, Care and Support*) Report will be considering a wide range of service delivery issues, including the provision of aids and equipment for people with vision impairments."
- ✓ You may recall that the Foundation made a submission to the Productivity Commission on *Disability, Care and Support* on a range of matters for our constituents including access to and affordability of low vision aids and technologies.



- ✓ The 800 page report was released on February 28, 2011. It primarily details the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- ✓ Our initial reading of the report is that low vision aids and technologies are covered in the report through the area referred to as "Aids and Appliances."
- ✓ The MD Foundation CEO will attend various public hearings and meetings on the draft report to ensure the MD community interests on all matters are included.

Where to now?

1. The MD Foundation will continue to encourage all major health insurers to provide fair and reasonable benefits for low vision aids.
2. Our MD community to keep us informed of any correspondence related to the matter.
3. The MD Foundation CEO will attend various public hearings and meetings on the draft report to ensure the MD community interests on all matters are included.
4. We will keep you informed via the quarterly newsletters and website.

2. Private Health Insurers

We have had an excellent outcome with HCF and hopefully others will now follow. Benefits are very inconsistent across the health insurers.

HCF (tel: 13 13 34)

HCF has now included a benefit for low vision aids (from 1 January 2011) and it will apply to any purchase made after 1 July 2009 for members who have continuously held one of the following products: Extra Benefits (closed), Multi Cover and Super Multicover; (subject to limits available under the Artificial Appliance Category of your extras cover).

| Item | Benefit | Limit | What you need in order to claim |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|--|
| Low vision magnifying device | Up to \$75 | 1 per person every 3 years | A letter from your ophthalmologist, optometrist or occupational therapist to confirm you have had a low vision assessment and an official receipt for the purchase of your low vision aid. |
| Desk top magnifying device | Up to \$500 | 1 per policy every 3 years | |

MBF (tel: 13 11 37) - MBF has informed us that a certain benefit is available under a specific policy and conditions, but this has very specific limits. If you are purchasing a low vision aid please phone MBF to clarify if you are eligible. In the interim MD Foundation has had a very positive meeting with representatives to discuss improvement and expansion in the provision of MBF's benefits.

nib (tel: 13 14 63) - Presently no benefit payable but will review for future product changes.

Medibank Private (tel: 13 23 31) - Currently reviewing the possibility of extending the benefits to cover the purchase of low vision aids and technology and presently consulting with industry specialists and stakeholders.

hif (tel: 1300 13 40 60) - Consultation ongoing with MD Foundation.

People Care (tel: 1800 808 690) - Being considered but in the interim the fund may consider benefits for low vision aids and technologies (on a case by case basis) by supplying a letter from your doctor or optometrist regarding items needed and the price.

Australian Unity (tel: 13 29 39) - Provides a benefit under the extras cover. Under optical entitlement they pay a benefit for low vision aids such as a magnifier after a six month waiting period. Referral letter and receipt required with reference to item number 0710.

MD Awareness Week - How can you be involved?

This is a big year for the MD Foundation and we want you to be part of our One Decade party! MD Awareness Week (MDAW) 2011 will run from 22 May to 28 May 2011. There are many ways for you to be involved within your local community and below are some ideas:

- Enter the mEYE World Photographic Competition and make sure all your family and friends are snapping away!
- Use the week to address your local council on how the local area could be improved for those with a visual impairment
- Write or speak to your local papers and encourage them to raise awareness during the awareness week
- Have your local community groups hold a morning tea to raise awareness with a gold coin donation to the MD Foundation

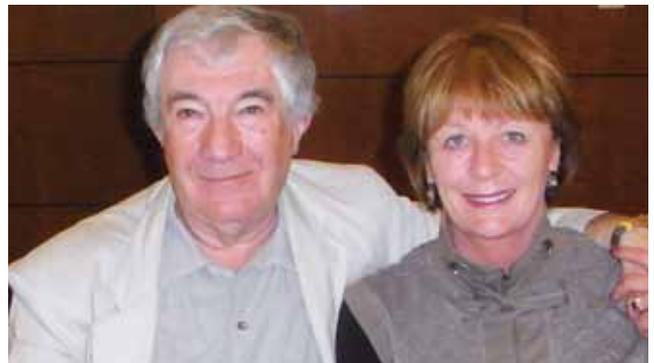


- Libraries receive MDAW posters from the Foundation – ask them to have an awareness display or a talk on MD
- Become an “Everyday Hero” through the Everyday Hero fundraising website - for our computer savvy clients – follow the links from our website www.mdfoundation.com.au

Be inspired by Dr Bob Thompson

I first met “Dr Bob” several years ago through my position as Secretary of the AMD Alliance International. He is a UK General Practitioner and Chair Emeritus of the Alliance. After deferring his medical degree due to family hardship, he finally fulfilled his passion and lifelong dream to become a doctor. At 48 he was diagnosed with wet MD and declared legally blind. He cannot practice his profession but makes it his lifelong goal to educate GPs about the disease. I was immediately inspired by the way he coped with what life had dealt, his attitude and courage; and most importantly his wonderful humour.

On one occasion he pulled out his camera and took a photo of the scene in front of us. He said “I use all my technology to see as much as I can and I love to capture in my mind and heart the places and the people I visit. I once entered one of my photos in a photo competition and won”.



His laughter was infectious as he stated “It was quite a shock for the organisers to learn that the winner had Macular Degeneration and was legally blind”.

I am inspired by Doctor Bob’s love of life and positive attitude to have a go and I hope his story will inspire you to be involved in our inaugural mEYE World Photographic Competition.

Julie Heraghty – CEO, MD Foundation

MD Foundation Visits RSB Adelaide

MD Foundation staff visited RSB (Royal Society for the Blind) in January for two days of professional training on living with low vision and low vision aids and technology. This training supports the MD Foundation staff in their knowledge of a range of areas including the latest in low vision aids and technology.



MD Foundation and RSB (SA) teams

The RSB is the primary provider of free services to more than 11,500 South Australians who are blind or vision impaired.

We wish to thank RSB Executive Director, Andrew Daly and his team for so warmly welcoming MD Foundation staff and also a special thank you to Margaret Brown, Manager Community Services.

MD Foundation staff had the opportunity to meet RSB Guide Dogs in training, as well as two new born pups, and fell in love! RSB have very generously allowed our newsletter readers to name one of the RSB pups in a litter due to be born very soon. See details on how to be involved.

MDF Puppy Naming Competition



As the puppy is still to be born we need to hedge our bets with names – so put your thinking cap on as we need both a boy's and a girl's name! Here's how to enter:

1. Select a boy's and a girl's name you think would be fitting for an RSB Guide Dog.

To help you:

- names to start with the letter "B"
- select short simple names eg. Bert is good Bertram is not.
- we don't know if our pup is black, brown or golden - so a colour reference name could be confusing
- don't forget the pup's owner will need to use this name in public!



2. You can enter by emailing your RSB puppy names to info@mdfoundation.com.au. Please include "MDF Puppy Naming Competition" in the subject line or alternatively call the MD Foundation on 1800 111 709 and we will record your entry.
3. Stay tuned as we'll announce the winner, and introduce our little pup, in the next newsletter!



MD Foundation Telesupport Program

The Telesupport Program is a support service that is provided over the telephone via teleconference once a month on relevant topics. You can join in the session via a free telephone call in the comfort of your own home. Book your place at one of the upcoming sessions by calling the MD Foundation on 1800 111 709.

| Date and Time | Topic and Guest Speaker |
|--|--|
| Wednesday 6 April 2011 10.30am (EST) | Topic: How can computers and new technology help me? Opening up doors and staying connected via the internet. Speakers: Dr. Scott Hollier and Sarah Pulis, Media Access Australia |
| Wednesday 11 May 2011 10.30am (EST) | Topic: Getting around safely. How orientation and mobility training can help. Speaker: Ben Schwarz, Guide Dogs |

Education Sessions

The MD Foundation is pleased to present a number of special guest presenter sessions with guest ophthalmologists. Bookings are essential - call the Foundation on 1800 111 709.

| Guest Presenter | Location | Date & Time | Address |
|-----------------------|-----------|---|--|
| Dr Jim Runciman | Adelaide | Saturday, 30 April 10.00am - 12.00pm | West Croydon & Kilkenny RSL Sub-branch |
| Dr Jolly Gilhotra | Adelaide | Saturday, 30 April 2.30pm - 4.30pm | Burnside area - venue to be confirmed |
| Dr Nitin Verma | Hobart | Saturday, 14 May 10.00am - 12.00pm | Stanley Burbury Theatre, University of Tas - Sandy Bay Campus |
| Dr David Hilford | Brisbane | Saturday, 28 May 10.00am - 12.00pm | Broncos Leagues Club |
| Dr Dimitri Yellachich | Perth | Sunday, 29 May 2.00pm - 4.00pm | Wesfarmers Lecture Theatre, Business School, University of WA |
| Dr Alex Harper | Melbourne | Saturday, 25 June 10.00am - 12.00pm | Venue to be confirmed |

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 is 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

Thank you to all our wonderful supporters for your ongoing generosity.

Contact us

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