

# sight & sound

## Better care for trauma patients



Ensuring eye trauma patients get the very best in care is the main driver behind the Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital's new Penetrating Eye Injury Clinic.

Established in August, the Hospital Clinic runs fortnightly and manages the recovery of eye trauma patients.

Clinic Head, Dr Michael Loughnan, said the clinic was established to help in the treatment and recovery of eye trauma patients, many of whom had serious and complex injuries that resulted in a loss of sight. Providing the best possible care can increase the chances of a good outcome.

"We examine the patient, check that they are recovering well, and then give feedback to the Hospital ophthalmologist treating the patient," Dr Loughnan said. The new service also provides education to ophthalmologists about the latest techniques in the management of major eye trauma – ensuring that the skills of the hospital's doctors are maintained.

Dr Loughnan said 80 per cent of patients with penetrating eye injuries were men, and often the injuries were as a result of work around the house or property.

This was certainly the case for Wollert farmer Pat Micelotta, who recently shared his story for the hospital's Christmas Appeal. Pat underwent emergency surgery at the hospital by Staff Ophthalmologist Dr Ehud Zamir after a fencing accident resulted in a 4mm cut to his eye. Pat's injury required him to have 9 stitches.

Dr Zamir was initially concerned that Pat would lose vision as a result of his injury but is now more optimistic. "Pat is doing extremely well and we're hopeful that his eye will fully recover," Dr Zamir said

Dr Loughnan, who assessed Pat's recovery in November, said on the day he saw Pat, there were two other patients with fencing-related eye injuries.

"We find that a lot of the trauma patients have sustained their injury doing high impact work, such as fencing and drilling and sadly, some of these patients do lose sight as a result," Dr Loughnan said.

Pat said he felt relieved. "My accident was a quick second mistake that could have affected the rest of my life but because of the specialist care I received I'm going to be OK. The hospital staff did a great job and I am very thankful."



**Top** Wollert farmer Pat Micelotta is recovering well since undergoing emergency treatment at the Eye & Ear. **Bottom** Dr Michael Loughnan is head of the Hospital's new Penetrating Eye Injury Clinic.



**Below** The hospital looks forward to the positive outcomes Bryony Coleman's research will have for hearing impaired patients.



## Support for emerging researchers

Bryony Coleman is passionate about making a difference to the lives of hearing impaired patients through her research. Yet as a young researcher, one of the greatest challenges for Bryony is not the actual research itself, but finding enough funding to enable her work.

"One of the hardest things about working in research is that you have to fund yourself," Bryony said. "As a young researcher, it can be difficult to source funding because you are just starting out and your work may not be high profile enough in the research community."

That is why Bryony is thrilled to have been appointed to one of the hospital's new research positions, where she will receive funding over two years in support of her hearing research. Known as the junior Wagstaff Fellow position, it has been enabled by a generous bequest from Mr Ernest Edward Wagstaff.

Up until this year, there were two senior Wagstaff Fellow positions, one for eye research and one for ear, nose and throat (ENT) research. For the first time the hospital has been able to offer two positions for emerging researchers such as Bryony. By supporting budding researchers the hospital aims to

assure Australia's future in eye and ENT research through building research capacity and providing incentive for researchers to remain in the country.

Bryony's research is an Australian-first and aims to improve the outcomes for cochlear implant patients. It involves the application of stem cells to the inner ear to replace neurons which are crucial for the cochlear implant to function.

"This funding means that I can concentrate 100% on laboratory work," Bryony said.

Mr Wagstaff was a pioneer of the oil and Australian motor industry and a past member of the hospital's Board of Management Committee. He passed away at the age of 95, leaving \$6 million to research at the hospital in his will. After his estate was finalised in 1996, the Eye & Ear established a perpetual fund, which with prudent financial management has seen this investment grow. The Wagstaff bequest has been used to fund a significant number of research projects in eye and ENT health as well as the research fellowship program.

If you are interested in finding out how you can support research through leaving a bequest to the hospital please call (03) 9929 8058.

**Below** The 2006 Annual Report.



## Reports released

The Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital's 2006 Annual Report and its 2006 Quality of Care Report are now available.

Both reports can be accessed online at [www.eyear.org.au/aboutus/publications.asp](http://www.eyear.org.au/aboutus/publications.asp) or we can send you a copy. Simply phone (03) 9929 8689 or email [info@eyear.org.au](mailto:info@eyear.org.au)

## Ethical fundraising

As a public hospital, the Eye & Ear relies upon the support of the community to maintain a high standard of patient care and to carry out training and research in the areas of eye and ear, nose and throat health.

It is important that the community has confidence in our processes and fundraising practices. In recognition of this, the hospital's Board has affirmed its commitment to ethical fundraising practices and to uphold the Fundraising Institute of Australia's (FIA) Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.

The FIA is a professional body which encourages self-regulation of industry practice through fundraising codes of practice. In recent times, the FIA has embarked upon an advocacy program to government and the corporate sector to promote the importance of community confidence in fundraising.



**Far left** Mrs Jian Huang Li, Dr Stephen Huang and Mrs Cecelia Tse present Hospital CEO Graeme Houghton with the cheque.

**Left** Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital Patron Mrs de Kretser accepts a gift from hospital patient Kate Doyle during her visit.

## Community support

The hospital has gratefully received a donation of \$7,090 from Melbourne's Chinese community.

In a formal cheque presentation to the hospital, Dr Stephen Huang said the Chinese community was pleased to be able to support the important work of the hospital.

This is the second time in the past year that the Chinese community has presented a donation to the hospital. Earlier in 2006, the Ethnic Happy Age Association of Victoria raised \$7,000 for the Eye & Ear as part of their new year's celebrations.

Hospital Chief Executive Officer Graeme Houghton said the hospital was very appreciative of the community's ongoing support. "Donations such as these enable the Eye & Ear to fund initiatives, such as new treatments or research, which might not otherwise be carried out due to a lack of funds," Mr Houghton said.

The generous donation was raised by the community during an annual singing competition sponsored by Knox Chinese Elderly Citizens Club, Foochow Association of Victoria, Multi Art and Culture Association of Victoria Inc, The Hunan Association of Victoria, Kong Chew Chinese Opera, and the Ethnic Happy Age Association of Victoria.

## Hospital hosts Patron's visit

The Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital is pleased to announce the appointment of its new Patron, Mrs Jan de Kretser.

Mrs de Kretser recently accepted an invitation from the hospital to be Patron during her husband's term of office as Governor of Victoria.

Professor Graeme Ryan AC, Chair of the hospital's Board of Directors, welcomed Mrs de Kretser's appointment, which he said enhanced the profile of the Eye & Ear and its work in the Victorian community.

As part of her role, Mrs Kretser and the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser AC, visited the Eye & Ear and toured several hospital departments. Over morning tea they met with patients, supporters, community representatives, hospital Community Advisory Committee members and staff.

Mrs de Kretser, who practiced and taught Occupational Therapy for many years, said she was impressed by the work of the hospital and amazed at the advances in the delivery of healthcare that enabled patients to regain their sight and hearing so quickly.

## Stop press...

The State Government has pledged \$2 million to progress the hospital's redevelopment planning on its current site.

Labor's pre-election commitment to the hospital, part of its overall health policy, was announced on 2 November.

Hospital Chief Executive Officer Graeme Houghton said the announcement was welcome recognition from the government regarding the importance of the hospital's redevelopment project.

Since 2004, the hospital has been carrying out redevelopment planning in conjunction with the Victorian Department of Human Services. A hospital redevelopment will ensure the Eye & Ear is able to meet the needs of sensory-impaired Victorians in the years to come.

The \$2 million will be used to carry out various aspects of the planning process, such as feasibility testing, consideration of how we could improve our services and development of building design layouts that include the housing of the hospital's research.

*Below and left* Protect your eyes from damage this summer by slipping on a hat and sliding on a pair of sunglasses.



## Slip, slop, slap and slide this summer

The Eye & Ear is encouraging all Victorians to protect their eyes from sun damage this summer by wearing sunglasses and a hat.

Dr Andrew Traill, of the hospital, said while many people may be aware of the skin cancer risks associated with ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure, there was little awareness of eye health dangers.

“UV exposure has been linked to eye diseases such as cataracts, pterygium and cancer of the eye,” Dr Traill said.

“If you spend even a moderate amount of time in the sun without sunglasses you are at increased risk of developing vision complications later in life.”

“Parents, in particular, need to be aware that eye damage is progressive and can start in childhood. So in addition to “slop, slop and slap”, parents should “slide” a pair on sunnies on their children.”

*The following information has been compiled by the hospital and is published courtesy of The Cancer Council Victoria, SunSmart Program, Vision 2020 and the Optometrists Association Australia.*

### Long-term eye damage caused by UV exposure includes:

- Cataracts** – a cloudiness of the lens
- Pterygium** – an overgrowth of the membrane covering the white part of the eye onto the cornea
- Solar keratopathy** – cloudiness of the cornea
- Cancer** – of the conjunctiva (membrane covering the white part of the eye)
- Skin cancer** – of the eyelids and around the eye

### Tips to help prevent eye damage:

- 1. Avoid the sun** – In summer, three quarters of UV exposure occurs between 10 am and 4 pm. Staying out of the sun as much as possible between those times will reduce your UV exposure.
- 2. Slip on a hat** – If you do venture outdoors, a broad-brimmed hat will reduce by half the amount of UV reaching your eyes.
- 3. Slide on sunglasses** – Sunglasses that meet Australian standards, and photochromic lenses, which go dark in the sun then become clear again, will reduce the amount of UV reaching your eyes. When buying sunglasses look for those marked AS/NZS 1067:2003 and EPF 10 as these meet Australian standards.

## Season's Greetings

The Board and staff of the Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital wish all our patients, donors and community supporters a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Buone Feste

Kales Giortes

Chuc Mung Tan Nien

圣诞快乐 新年如意



**The Royal Victorian  
Eye & Ear Hospital**  
caring in every sense

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