

sight & sound



One eye doesn't stop Beverley from painting

Looking at Beverley Frame, you wouldn't know she only has one eye.

Beverley is 75 years old and is an artist and loves travelling. Having only one eye hasn't slowed her down.

Growing up in Queensland, Beverley loved the sun. She enjoyed swimming and being outdoors. But it was this constant exposure to the sun which led to Beverley having to have her eye removed.

In 2001 Beverley noticed she could see a blob on the inside of her eyelid. Concerned, she came to the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital's Emergency Department.

The "blob" was diagnosed as melanoma of the eye and Beverley underwent a three hour operation to have it removed.

Everything was going well until 2003 when she found another lump in the same eye. This one was removed through surgery but her specialist at the Eye and Ear, Dr John McKenzie, said something else would need to be done to stop the cancer from coming back.

He suggested one option was to remove the whole eye, but Beverley

wasn't ready to make that decision.

In November 2008 it came back again and this is when Beverley knew she would have to make a decision.

Dr John McKenzie said Beverley faced the risk the disease could spread to other parts of her body.

"When melanoma becomes recurrent then unfortunately we need to carry out extensive surgery."

At the beginning of 2008 Beverley had her eye removed as she didn't want to face the risk of the cancer spreading.

But Beverley said she hasn't felt sorry for herself at all.

"Not long after I had my eye taken out, I went on a pilgrimage to Assisi in Italy for three weeks and in April this year I will spend 5 days in Tasmania at a watercolour painting workshop."

"I have a prosthetic eye that fits to my glasses now which looks so real. They have put makeup on my prosthetic eye so I had to buy some mascara and eye liner especially so that both of my eyes match."

Dr McKenzie said the eye is the part of the body most exposed to the sun and while melanoma is rare, there are significant risks for the development of tumours around the eye and on the eyelids.

"This is in addition to the risks to the eye itself from excessive UV exposure. It is very important to wear a hat and sunglasses outdoors."



Top Although Beverley Frame has had an eye removed, this hasn't stopped her from doing what she loves most, painting.

Bottom Dr John McKenzie is the head of the Oncology Clinic at the Eye and Ear.

Below Audiologist Brooke Paisley, senior surgeon Professor Stephen O'Leary and scrub nurse Sally Wallis travelled to Alice Springs to provide ENT care to Indigenous children.



Below Hospital CEO Ann Clark (right) presented volunteer Jean Hamley with an award for her volunteer years of service.



Below Mum, Naomi is so happy her boys have been given the gift of hearing.



New deal will provide better ear care in Alice Springs

A specialist team from the Eye and Ear will travel to Alice Springs each month in order to improve ear, nose and throat (ENT) health care services for the people of Alice Springs.

Under a new agreement, a team consisting of a senior ENT surgeon and a theatre scrub nurse, will work with staff members at Alice Springs Hospital to help manage the high demand for ENT disease care in central Australia.

Senior ENT surgeon at the Eye and Ear, Professor Stephen O'Leary has been involved in setting up this agreement and said through the partnership, the hospital is showing leadership and commitment to improving rural health outcomes.

"In a visit to Alice Springs leading up to the signing of this agreement, in one week, our team assessed 30 patients and undertook 16 operations, the majority to repair holes in the ear drum."

Scrub nurse Sally Wallis who accompanied Professor O'Leary said most of the children they saw had more than one health condition.

"It was nice to think that fixing their ears may make a difference in their lives."

Volunteers dedicated to giving recognised

Two volunteers at the Eye and Ear were recognised at the end of last year for their dedication to helping the hospital.

Jean Hamley was awarded a Volunteer 'Years of Service' Award at the Volunteer Recognition Lunch for her 40 years of service to the Eye and Ear.

Jean, who farewelled the hospital at the end of last year, had been volunteering in the speech pathology department with her close friend, speech pathologist, Anne Yorston. Jean was one of the first volunteers to ever work in a medical department of a hospital.

The commitment of Frankston Friends member, Natalina Paganoni was recognised with a state fundraising award.

Natalina was named the Cadbury Fundraiser Volunteer of the Year at the Fundraising Institute of Australia's Victoria Fundraising Excellence Awards.

Over the past 30 years Natalina has run regular raffles, baked a plethora of cakes and run countless hospital stalls raising over \$17,000 for essential extras.

It was after Natalina's family grew up and left home that she joined the Frankston Friends – a group dedicated to raising money for the Eye and Ear Hospital, in order to give back to the community.

Two ears are better than one

When twins Ben and Lochie were born, they were quiet babies. They slept really well and mum, Naomi, thought she was just lucky and put it down to them being twins.

Naomi didn't realise the boys were both profoundly deaf until they were sent for a routine screening at six weeks.

Ben and Lochie are now 16 months old and the days of quiet in Naomi's household are gone – and she wouldn't have it any other way.

Ben has a cochlear implant for both ears and Lochie has an implant for one ear and a hearing aid for the other.

Naomi said the cochlear implants have changed the boys and their family's lives.

"Without the implants, the chances of them speaking, especially Ben, weren't good but now both boys have a vocabulary of 14 words which is above average for their age group."

Ben and Lochie just enjoyed their first Christmas with the gift of hearing.

Naomi said she never thought she would hear baby babble.

"Now they laugh, sing to themselves and chatter away and when they hear a new and exciting sound they pull their cochlear coils off and hand them to us so that we can listen too."



Far Left Marketing and Community Relations Manager Lyn Moorfoot with Cadbury Fundraiser Volunteer of the Year Award winner, Natalina Paganoni.



Left Dr Christine Wittig (second from left) was presented her award by CEO Ann Clark, Chair of the Research Committee Professor Tony Klein and Chair of the Board of Directors, Jan Boxall.

Using your donation wisely

In times of economic hardship, the need from the community for cost efficient, world class health care increases and the Eye and Ear needs to be able to continue to meet these demands.

The hospital recently held its Christmas appeal which raised funds towards research, equipment and treatments.

Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital Chief Executive Officer Ann Clark said a big thank you goes to everyone who contributed to the latest appeal.

"As a tertiary specialist hospital, we see hundreds of thousands of patients each year – with every type of eye disease. Donations from the community enable us to use our expert knowledge to quickly translate new research into treatments available to our patients."

Marketing and Community Relations Manager Lyn Moorfoot said the hospital is offering a new program for people who wish to make monthly deductions to spread their donations over the year.

"Our regular supporters program is quick and efficient. You can register online and arrange to have donations directly debited from a savings account or credit card. Regular donations help us to save on administration costs and to plan ahead. Funds can then be specifically allocated to research and new treatments."

For more information or to become a regular supporter visit www.eyehandear.org.au/support or phone (03) 9929 8497.

Researcher recognised with Churches award

A researcher looking into a new treatment for the degenerative eye condition Keratoconus has been awarded the Ronald Churches Bequest Award.

Dr Christine Wittig, a research fellow from Germany, was selected for the award for her research project titled "A prospective randomised clinical trial of corneal collagen cross-linking in keratoconus."

Dr Wittig was invited to Melbourne from Germany in 2006 to co-ordinate the trial with one of the hospital's principal eye specialists, Associate Professor Grant Snibson.

Keratoconus is an eye condition characterised by a thinning of the cornea resulting in a cone-like shape and vision impairment.

The new technique, developed in Germany, involves applying riboflavin (Vitamin B2) to the eye before exposing it to a measured dose of UVA light. This generates a chemical reaction which results in strengthening of the cornea preventing it from bulging further.

The award is given to a project based on its "originality, potential significance of the research and the potential public interest in the project."

Dr Wittig was presented with the award at a ceremony in October last year which has been established from a recent bequest to encourage and promote research into eye conditions.

Dr Wittig said it is encouraging to see people understand the importance of the research and feel it is worth supporting.

The wonders of eye treatments – morning tea for donors and supporters

Learn about what goes on behind the scenes of research at the Eye and Ear into groundbreaking new treatments to combat eye disease.

Our next donor morning tea will include presentations from Keratoconus treatment researchers Associate Professor Grant Snibson and Dr Christine Wittig on progress made into treating this degenerating eye condition.

10am Thursday, 26 February 2009

**Lucy Jones Hall, Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
426 Albert Street East Melbourne**

To RSVP phone (03) 9929 8532 or email rsvp@eyehandear.org.au

Below Emergency Department Director Dr Carmel Crock sees too many young men in emergency because of serious eye injuries.



Rural eye patients younger than their city counterparts

Eye patients from rural areas of Victoria are on average five years younger than their city counterparts.

Findings from the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital's recently released Community Mapping Report show while the median age of patients from metropolitan areas is 62 years, the median age of patients from rural areas is 57.

Report co-author Kellie Michel said the report presents an interesting snapshot of who uses vision and hearing services in Victoria.

"The Eye and Ear is the major provider of eye and ear, nose and throat (ENT) health care services in the state. This report aimed to find which groups of people are currently using the hospital's services and in doing so, identify the under-represented groups."

The report also found young men are more likely to come to hospital for a serious eye injury than any other age group.

Relative to the overall amount of patients to the hospital, people aged between 20 and 39 years make up 31 per cent of emergency cases while only representing 14 per cent of all other cases.

The report found the greatest proportion of most urgent cases in eye emergencies were chemical eye injuries.

Emergency Department Director Dr Carmel Crock said chemical eye injuries can happen on the worksite or at home.

"Cement and plaster dust can be particularly dangerous if they end up in someone's eyes. It is vital the patient's eyes are irrigated onsite straight away and then the patient is taken to hospital for further treatment. Alkaline substances can blind if not treated immediately which is why we can't over emphasise the importance of wearing eye protection on worksites and when doing home handyman jobs."

Include the Eye and Ear in your New Year's resolutions

As Australia's only specialist hospital for eye, ear, nose and throat health, we are at the forefront of the fight to prevent vision and hearing conditions. We appreciate the support of the community through donations and bequests.

You can make a donation online at www.eyear.org.au or by phoning 1800 808 137.



Learn more about the Eye and Ear

Last year the Eye and Ear made the lives of over 220,000 people richer.

Our latest Annual Report and Quality of Care Report highlight just some of our achievements in patient care and clinical research from the year.

For your free copy of the Quality of Care Report or the Annual Report download it at www.eyear.org.au or phone (03) 9929 8689.



The Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital
caring in every sense

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