

Sight + Sound

News | Spring 2023



CEO welcome

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of Sight + Sound. This year has been an extremely busy and exciting time for The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (Eye and Ear). With several redevelopment milestones met, our focus remains on providing an outstanding experience for our patients.

In 2023, we celebrate 160 years since our founder, Dr. Andrew Sexton Gray, established the Eye and Ear Infirmary. A true humanitarian, Dr. Sexton Gray saw the overwhelming need for specialist care in an impoverished community and so provided care for little or no charge.

This rich history, along with the hospital's cutting-edge innovations, is proudly displayed on our History Wall (pictured top right), located on the ground floor of the Gisborne Street site for all to experience. This striking installation visually represents who we are as a hospital. I encourage you to take a look next time you visit.

There has been much activity this year as we continue to transform our hospital. I am proud to share with you an update on our progress:

Inpatient Ward

Our new Inpatient Ward is now located on Level 4 of the Blue Wing. The state-of-the-art inpatient facility offers a fresh and bright environment that provides a comfortable and healing atmosphere.

Emergency Department Short Stay Unit

Our new Emergency Department Short Stay Unit is now operational. With four 24-hour beds, we offer designated care for patients who require short-term treatment and monitoring whilst offering increased comfort, improved monitoring and care.

Acute Ophthalmology Service (AOS) and Reception

Our AOS clinic and Reception have moved to the hospital's Ground Floor. For AOS, this new location is near the Emergency



The new History Wall.

Department (ED), which ensures the continued collaboration and coordination of patient management and care between the two departments.

Apart from further redevelopment and bequest updates, in this edition, we also hear from:

- Katie, a patient and passionate advocate for the Cochlear Implant Clinic.
- Peter, an Eye and Ear volunteer and consumer advisor, about his fulfilling role in the hospital.
- Emma, one of seven winners of our Patient Experience Awards, about what the honour means to her.

Our donors have always played an important part in the success of the hospital, including the redevelopment. I'd like to thank every one of you for your ongoing support in ensuring we continue to provide the best care possible for all our patients.



Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Brendon Gardner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brendon Gardner
Chief Executive
Officer



Katie and her family pictured with Eye and Ear speech pathologist, Denise.
Photo: The Horsham Weekly Advertiser.

Katie's mission to raise funds for the Cochlear Impact Clinic continues

You may recall young cochlear implant patient Katie, who was profiled last year in our End of Financial Year fundraising appeal, which many of you contributed towards. 8-year-old Katie is an aspiring philanthropist whose gratitude for her life-changing cochlear implant led her to fundraise in her local Horsham community for the Cochlear Implant Clinic.

12 months on, Katie hasn't shown any signs of slowing down on her mission and has once again raised funds so children like herself have the opportunity to hear.

After her hearing tests as a baby indicated issues, Katie received her cochlear implant at the Eye and Ear when she was 10 months old. Under the care of her otolaryngologist Professor Robert Briggs, speech pathologist Denise Courtenay and the broader audiology team, Katie's cochlear success has meant her speech and development are at least on par, if not above, her peers.

“Without the Eye and Ear hospital, Katie would not be able to hear,” Katie's mum, Rebecca, told the local Horsham newspaper The Weekly Advertiser.

In a special ceremony at Katie's Primary School, Katie presented the raised funds to

her long-term speech pathologist Denise - who has been integral in Katie's treatment since she first came to the hospital.

“For this particular type of hearing loss, I work with patients all the way through the assessment process and then in the early months and years after the cochlear implant, to make sure the implant is functioning,” Denise explained to The Weekly Advertiser.

The special bond between the pair was more than enough for Denise to travel to Horsham from Melbourne for the occasion and Denise took the opportunity to educate Katie's class about hearing and sound.

The funds were raised through the collective effort of Katie and her grandfather, using timber offcuts to create Christmas trees, angels and doves to sell to her local community.

Her donation of \$2322 to the Cochlear Implant Clinic will give Victorians with severe or profound hearing loss access to innovative technology to improve their quality of life and overcome the barriers, isolation and frustration they face as they navigate everyday life with a severe hearing impairment.

Martin Family Auditorium officially open

The Martin Family Auditorium, the centrepiece of The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital's new state-of-the-art Education Precinct, was officially opened on 17 August by Dr Catherine Brown OAM, CEO of Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (LMCF).

The auditorium will be a space in which current and future leaders in eye and ENT health will educate, learn and collaborate.

The development of the auditorium was supported by a generous legacy gift made through The M, L and ADP Martin Fund, a bequest fund of LMCF.

Dr Catherine Brown OAM, Chief Executive Officer of LMCF, spoke at the official opening of the auditorium and did the honours of cutting the ribbon.

"I know how hard these projects are – it's such a massive thing to redevelop a hospital. Congratulations and I look forward to hearing how this auditorium adds to your capability and leadership within eye and ear health."

Dr. Brown was Deputy Chair of the Eye and Ear's Board of Directors from 2000 to 2009 and is a profound advocate for the hospital's redevelopment.

"I'm quite passionate about the specialist eye and ear services and research that the hospital does. The hospital is internationally recognised and it's where all the eye and ear specialists receive their education and training. Lyndal Martin was studying optometry at the time of her premature death. The naming of the Martin Family Auditorium is such a beautiful legacy for the Martin family," she said.

The auditorium is the centrepiece of the new Education Precinct, which also contains a surgical skills training lab, collaboration space, a boardroom and a library.

Philanthropy has paved the way for many great medical advancements at the hospital, including the development of the Bionic Ear. Thanks to LMCF and the Martin Family, we now have this stunning new facility to continue to train and educate future generations.

In the months ahead, additional sections of the newly developed Education Precinct will open. We look forward to sharing those updates with you in future editions of Sight and Sound.

Dr Catherine Brown OAM opening the new Martin Family Auditorium, with Brendon Gardner (CEO) and Danny Mennuni (CFO) holding the ribbon.



Volunteers and Consumer Representatives make their mark

Most of you would be familiar with our kind, red-vested volunteers who donate their time to assisting patients around the hospital in many ways.

COVID-19 changed a lot of things at the hospital, including the ability for our volunteers to come on-site due to restrictions across the health sector. Throughout that time, the volunteers kept in regular touch via virtual meetings, and fortunately, at the end of last year, the restrictions eased and we began to welcome volunteers on-site again.

In addition, our Consumer Representatives also came back on-site. Consumer Representatives contribute their time and experience as members of the community and previous patients. They work across several different committees and projects.

Peter Rushen (pictured right) is one of our volunteers who began his volunteering journey as a Consumer Representative. We spoke to Peter about his experience in both opportunities.

When did you begin as a Consumer Representative at the Eye and Ear?

I joined the Eye and Ear in November 2017. I decided to retire from hospital administration in rural Victoria earlier in 2017 and move back to Melbourne and I was looking for a meaningful voluntary role.

What do you love most about being a Consumer Representative?

I love interacting with staff at all levels and considering important safety issues that sometimes impact patients.

What made you get involved as a volunteer?

I was aware that the system for reviewing patient safety was something that all hospitals in Victoria do and I wanted to contribute to ensuring patient interests and quality of care were considered when examining potential safety issues.



Volunteer Peter in his signature red vest.

What would you say to someone considering becoming a volunteer or a Consumer Representative at the Eye and Ear?

If you are looking to do something meaningful in retirement, providing support and comfort to patients and visitors attending the hospital and building camaraderie with other volunteers is very satisfying.

In addition, being a Consumer Representative enables you to get involved in service delivery in the hospital and engage with the staff to ensure the interests of the patient are being considered when safety issues are reviewed.

Interested in finding out more about volunteering or joining our consumer register? Please contact Betty Tellis on 03 9929 8658 or email betty.tellis@eyeandear.org.au.

Collier Charitable Fund provides funding for a new laser to treat glaucoma

The Collier Charitable Fund, a charitable trust established in 1954 by three Melbourne sisters, has provided a grant to our hospital to enable the purchase of a laser used in the treatment of glaucoma.

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that slowly damage the nerve for vision at the back of the eye ('optic nerve') and is the leading cause of irreversible blindness.

The Eye and Ear conducts on average 1000 laser treatments per year. The hospital previously only had one glaucoma laser, but thanks to the Collier Charitable Fund grant, now has two.

Sarah Gladman, Acting Nursing Unit Manager of Specialists Clinics, said the laser has had a positive impact both for patients and medical staff.

“Having the second laser, funded by Collier Charitable Fund, has made a significant difference to the amount of laser procedures we can perform. It allows us to have two doctors performing laser procedures on any given day, instead of one, which ultimately doubles the number of patients we can help and decreases the wait time for patients – leading to improved vision outcomes,” she said.

The laser is used for procedures to reduce pressure in the eye and thereby reduce the risk of further vision loss due to glaucoma and to remove a cloudy capsule that forms in the lens of the eye following cataract surgery, resulting in improved vision.

Olivia Myeza, Director of Philanthropy and Fundraising at the Eye and Ear, said the grant will result in life-improving outcomes for many patients.

“We know that Alice, Annette and Edith Collier had a passion for improving the lives of Victorians. We hope they’d be proud to know that, thanks to the Collier Charitable Fund, roughly 1000 people in 2023 will receive laser treatment that prevents further vision loss or improves their vision. On behalf of each of these people, we extend our deepest thanks.”

Glaucoma Specialist Clinic staff ecstatic with the new laser.



Patient Experience Awards 2023: recognising exceptional patient care

A handful of the Eye and Ear's exceptional doctors and nurses were recently recognised in the Patient Experience Awards for 2023. The awards are particularly special to staff and the hospital, as the recipients are nominated by patients for going above and beyond in providing patient care.

We asked awardee Emma Loughnan, Social Worker and Disability Health Liaison Officer, what this award means to her:

“Winning the Patient Experience Award is my personal reassurance that patients who are having trouble engaging in their treatment have better health outcomes by implementing a holistic, patient-centred care approach. It’s encouraging to know that the patients are not only given the time and space to discuss their barriers, but that we have the resources within our hospital to address these barriers and to turn them into positive outcomes for so many of our patients.”

Thank you to all those patients who took the time to nominate medical staff for the Patient Experience Awards this year.

Smiles all round! Emma accepting her Patient Experience Award.



Include a Charity Week – the difference legacy giving makes

The 4th to 10th of September was Include A Charity Week, where Australian charities celebrate the community impact of gifts in wills.

The Eye and Ear has benefitted significantly from bequests over our 160-year history, with generous legacy gifts enabling the purchase of critical medical equipment, the redevelopment of the hospital, investment into ground-breaking research to prevent vision and hearing loss and quality care and treatment for our patients.

We give thanks for every person who has thought of the hospital in their will and made an impact through their legacy giving. Whether big or small, each bequest makes an incredible difference.

If you've included a gift to the Eye and Ear in your will, or if you'd like information on how to do that, our Philanthropy and Fundraising team would love to connect with you. Reach out at 1800 808 137 or via email to fundraising@eyeandear.org.au.

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Cover photo: A beautiful moment between Katie and Denise.
Photo Credit: The Horsham Weekly Advertiser

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