

# Sight + Sound

THE EYE AND EAR NEWS AUTUMN 2024



## The heart of the Eye and Ear

We talk with our very own Dr Rod O'Day

## Supporters in the spotlight

Retired Eye and Ear nurse becomes major donor

## The difference you make

Securing world-leading technology for our doctors and nurses

The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital is committed to achieving equality in health status between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Aboriginal Australians. We acknowledge that the land we meet and work upon is the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. We value the diversity and strength of our people and communities.



2

Hospital news



4

The difference you make



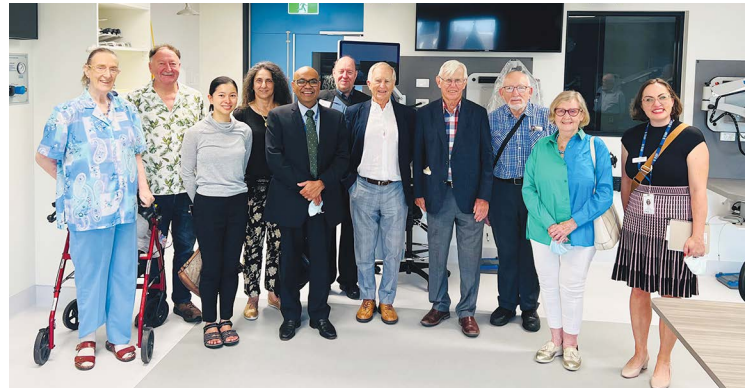
6

Our people



7

Patient chronicles



↑ Donors attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and tour of hospital.



↑ Sandra Knight – Chair of the Consumer Advisory Committee Consumer Working group. Recipient of Australia Day Honours list for service to people who are blind or have low vision.



# Welcome to our new Sight + Sound

I'm pleased to be sharing with you our new Sight + Sound newsletter. The new look features the best stories and updates from around our hospital. We want to share the impact of your support. Whether through donations, volunteering, or your positive words, you truly make a difference.

In this first issue for 2024, we hear from Dr Rod O'Day, who shared some of the incredible research he and his team are doing into ocular cancer in our Christmas appeal. I want to personally pass on my gratitude for your generosity over Christmas. Thanks to you, we were able to raise \$43,906 which will help us continue innovative care and research that can change lives.

We also share the moving story of Daniel, a young man who took part in our clinical trial into sudden sensorineural hearing loss. I know his story will move you as it did me.

In other hospital news, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place on 12 December 2023 in the Martin Family Auditorium. It was great to see some of our donors on the day and give them a tour of the re-developed hospital.\*

I also pass on my congratulations to Sandra Knight, who was recognised in the 26 January Australia Day Honours list for service to people who are blind or have low vision. Sandra has

**“Whether through donations, volunteering, or your positive words, you truly make a difference.”**

shared her lived experience with the hospital for many years as a consumer representative and more recently as the Chair of the Consumer Advisory Committee Consumer Working Group. Congratulations Sandra.

I look forward to sharing more stories from our staff, volunteers and patients as we journey through 2024. Thank you for your generosity and support.

Yours sincerely,

**Brendon Gardner**  
Chief Executive Officer

\* If you'd like to receive an invitation to attend future AGMs either in-person or online, please let us know via phone call to 1800 808 137 or email to [fundraising@eyeandear.org.au](mailto:fundraising@eyeandear.org.au).

# Hospital news

What's been happening around our hospital



## Spaces and places named after donors, and a new donor acknowledgment board

We announced some newly named spaces in our redeveloped hospital at the AGM in December 2023.

The Education Precinct (levels 4 and 5) has been named after the Council of Auxiliaries, a network of volunteers who have generously supported the hospital since 1922. The foyer outside the Martin Family Auditorium (level 4) has been named after the late Aline Darke OAM. Aline was the President of the hospital's Executive Council of Auxiliaries from 1980 to 1992 and 1995 to 2001. Under her leadership, the Auxiliaries raised several million dollars for the hospital. We're proud to recognise Aline and the Council of Auxiliaries' extraordinary support of the hospital.

A new donor acknowledgment board has also been installed on the ground floor of the hospital, near the Emergency Department entrance on Morrison Place. The donor board recognises and honours the auxiliaries, benefactors, bequestors, corporate partners, families, foundations, individuals and trusts who have given generously and substantially to the hospital over the years.

↑ Above photo: The new donor acknowledgement board.

## World Association of Eye Hospitals Meeting 2023

In October 2023, we hosted the 17th Annual Meeting of the World Association of Eye Hospitals. Over 100 delegates from 37 eye hospitals across 18 different countries attended, coming together to share knowledge and innovations that improve eye care.

In true Melbourne fashion, delegates experienced all four seasons over three days! But the weather did nothing to dampen their enthusiasm to experience Melbourne and contribute to a range of inspiring presentations and round-table discussions on patient eye care.

We were grateful to receive sponsorship for this event from pharmaceutical companies Bausch & Lomb and Bayer.



↑ WAEH delegates pictured in the Martin Family Auditorium.

## Bakers Delight (Kew branch) treating our staff

A big thank you to Bakers Delight for generously donating Hot Cross Buns to the staff at the Eye and Ear in the lead up to Easter.



→ Staff from the Philanthropy and Fundraising team are pictured here enjoying the treats.

## Royal visit to Eye and Ear

We were delighted to welcome Her Royal Highness, Princess Astrid of Belgium, for a visit on 31 October 2023.

Her Royal Highness (HRH) visited our hospital as part of the Belgian Economic Mission to Australia. The visit followed the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between GIGA, the University of Liège's interdisciplinary research institute in the biomedical sciences in Belgium and The University of Melbourne's Department of Otolaryngology, located within the Eye and Ear.

This agreement will see two world-leading institutions, dedicated to the treatment of hearing loss, work together towards enhancing medical outcomes.

Princess Astrid toured the Eye and Ear's research and training facilities and spoke with patients, researchers, and ear, nose and throat specialists including the pioneer of the Bionic Ear, Professor Graeme Clark.



↑ HRH Princess Astrid of Belgium with Professor Graeme Clark, inventor of the Cochlear Implant.

## People living with glaucoma benefit from Glaucoma Community Collaborative Care Program education event

On 15 November 2023, the Glaucoma Community Collaborative Care Program (G3CP) held a training and information session for optometrists. Since 2019, the G3CP has provided community-based eye care for eligible patients with mild to moderate glaucoma.

This program is made possible via a shared-care arrangement between the Eye and Ear's Glaucoma Unit and participating community optometrists.

Optometrists working with the Eye and Ear as part of this program gain valuable experience in co-managing patients with glaucoma and receive access to accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training from our glaucoma team.

We are grateful to The Penelope Foster Foundation for funding this program and making educational events like this possible.



↑ Glaucoma Community Collaborative Care Program (GC3P) training and information session for optometrists.

# The difference you make

Here's a snapshot of what donated funds have been used for lately, and how your support is making a real difference. We are so grateful!



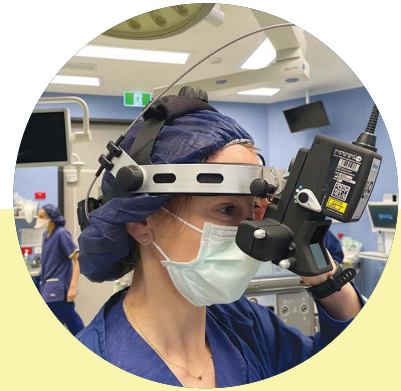
## 2 x portable slit lamps

A slit lamp is a microscope with a bright light used during an eye exam. It gives ophthalmologists a closer look at the different structures at the front and inside the eye. It's a key tool in determining the health of our patients' eyes and detecting eye disease.



## 4 x ear speculum holders

Ear speculum holders are a useful tool in various ear procedures. The holder is designed to be attached to the operating table, holding in place the speculum (a funnel-shaped device that is inserted into the ear and used to visually examine the eardrum and the passage of the outer ear). Having the speculum held in a speculum holder frees the surgeon's hands and reduces operating time.



## 1 x Indirect Laser Ophthalmoscope (ILO)

The ILO delivers indirect laser treatments for peripheral retinal conditions, such as peripheral retinal tear, retinal detachment, peripheral retinal haemorrhage diabetic retinopathy, diabetic macula oedema, retinal vascular obstruction, retinal neovascularisation and Retinal Ischaemic Disease.

# Thank



“The team at the Eye and Ear is extremely grateful to you, our generous donors, for enabling ongoing advances in specialist care through training, innovation and research, thereby improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for our patients.”

**Dr Sherene Devanesen, Board Chair**



### **Glaucoma research**

Research into a comprehensive home monitoring system for patients with glaucoma. This is especially important for patients living in regional and rural Victoria, and even across the country. Generously funded by the auDA Foundation.



### **CANVAS research**

CANVAS (Cerebellar Ataxia, Neuropathy And Vestibular Areflexia Syndrome) is a syndrome that affects balance and coordination by interfering with the brain, inner ear balance mechanisms and nerve function. Donated funds are enabling research into its causes and treatments. Generously funded by The Mary Curry Memorial Fund for CANVAS Research.



### **An eye drops patient information package**

This included information sheets and a video, developed to help patients to administer their eye drops more effectively. This resource kit has been shared with eye hospitals nationally and internationally and has been well received by patients and colleagues working in these organisations.

# You

# Our people

The heart of the Eye and Ear



↑ Dr Rod O'Day.

At the end of 2023, we shared with our supporters some exciting developments in research by our very own Dr Rod O'Day.

Dr O'Day is an ophthalmologist who specialises in eye cancers here at the Eye and Ear. He leads a team that has developed a tablet that can reduce the size of large eye cancers to the point that the eye can be saved, and the cancer treated without causing vision loss.

Thanks to the generous support of our donor community, \$43,906 was raised for this appeal. Your donations will help continue cutting edge research like this to save the vision of people in Australia and around the world.

## Q+A

We sat down with Rod for a Q+A, to help you learn more about the great people who are at the heart of the Eye and Ear.

**Q: What is the most exciting part of your job?**

A: Challenging scenarios: be it a difficult clinical diagnosis or management question, or a complex therapeutic relationship, such as helping a patient through a diagnosis of cancer.

**Q: What motivates you at work?**

A: To provide compassionate, tailored and world class care.

**Q: What was your first job?**

A: Glassy at the London Tavern in Richmond. Great university job.

**Q: What are you currently reading?**

A: Question 7 by Richard Flanagan.

**Q: What is your favourite book of all time?**

A: Bonfire of the Vanities by Tom Wolfe.

**Q: If you could only eat one type of cuisine for the rest of your life, which would you choose?**

A: Italian, hands down.

**Q: Describe your perfect day.**

A: Swim across the Point Lonsdale Bay (then coffee) followed by day at home with my wife and two young daughters.



# Patient chronicles

37-year-old Daniel was your average Melburnian - working in the city, living with his girlfriend and loving the footy.

This all changed in February 2023. After a day at the races, Daniel went to bed completely fine. When he woke up, he was feeling unstable on his feet.

“I said to my girlfriend, ‘I can’t hear from my left ear.’ At first, we thought it must be a little bit of wax or something,” Daniel remembers.

He tried over the counter solutions to break up what he thought was a build-up of wax. “Nothing much happened, but I didn’t think much of it at the time.”

It was Daniel’s girlfriend who pushed him to go to the Emergency Department at the Eye and Ear.

It was there that doctors confirmed Daniel’s hearing loss was profound in his left ear. He was diagnosed with sudden sensorineural hearing loss, a condition that impacts roughly 10-20 people out of every 100,000 Australians per year. It can occur at any age and most often comes on with no warning signs or pre-existing conditions. At his follow up appointment, doctors prescribed medication, and provided Daniel with information about a clinical trial into the condition.

“There were three big questions that I wish I could answer. What happened to cause this, what is going on in my own body right now, and will I get my hearing back?”

“It’s the mystery of this whole thing that really bothers me,” Daniel says.



↑ Daniel Haseler and partner.

Professor Rob Briggs, Medical Director of the Cochlear Implant Clinic at the Eye and Ear, was available to answer Daniel’s questions and explain the details of the trial.

“Administratively the Eye and Ear is well organised, from the audiologists to the Emergency Department. There’s a great sense of care and investment in trying to achieve the best outcomes for me and my hearing. It’s been really great with Professor Briggs; it has felt like a partnership and an investment in the best outcome for me going forward.”

While Daniel’s hearing hasn’t returned to his left ear, he feels like he has given himself the best chance by going to the Eye and Ear early on.

“Particularly us fit men, we tend to sit back, it’ll be right, it’ll come back, whatever the case may be. The lesson I’ve learnt from this is... start the process as soon as you can. Give yourself every chance of turning around the situation.”

Daniel has a simple message for others in the same boat as him.

“Simply, don’t give up. The statistics are something like 60-70% of sufferers will get at least something back. I’m just in the 30% that hasn’t. So, play the numbers. It’s certainly not over until it’s over.”

# Supporters in the spotlight

The people and partners contributing to our hospital



## Retired Eye and Ear nurse becomes major donor

For Christina So, the Eye and Ear was more than just a workplace. She says the hospital felt like a home to her over her 27 years working as an Associate Nurse Unit Manager, from 1989 to 2016.

“When I first arrived in Australia from Hong Kong, I didn’t know anyone in Melbourne. It was through the hospital that I settled into Australia, met colleagues who became friends, and eventually felt at home,” she said.

This was why Christina made a generous donation to the Eye and Ear in 2022. She knew firsthand how important donations are to staff, patient care and wellbeing.

Christina’s donation was used to purchase a portable slit lamp and 12 infusion pumps.

“Making things easier for the team and patients at the Eye and Ear was something I’d always dreamed of doing. If we all do our bit, we can make a difference for the medical teams and the patients,” she said.

↑ Above photo: Christina (centre) is pictured here with the nursing staff from the inpatient ward during her tour of the redeveloped hospital in December 2023.

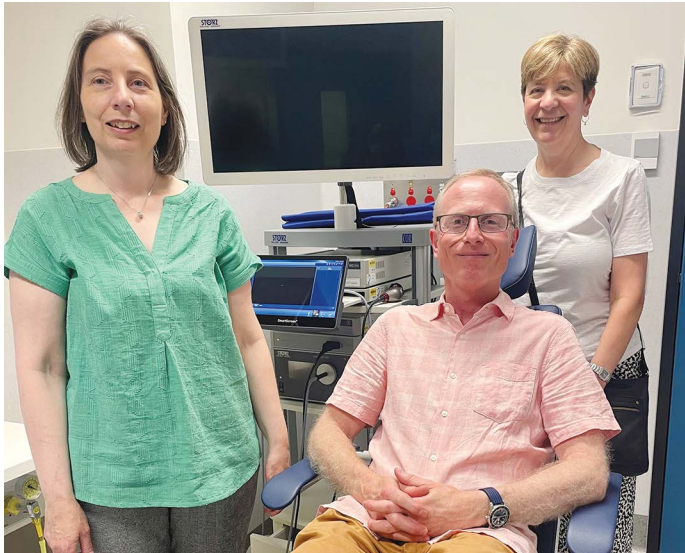
## John T Reid Charitable Trusts contribute to new Skills Lab

Trustees of John T Reid Charitable Trusts visited the Eye and Ear to view the newly opened Skills Lab in October 2023, after having contributed towards its establishment.

The Skills Lab provides trainee eye and ear medical staff with a state-of-the-art facility in which to master their surgical skills. The Lab will be a centre of excellence, dedicated to training and educating the next generation of specialist eye and ear nurses and doctors. “It was a privilege to visit the Skills Lab and to have Associate Professor Jean-Marc Gerard share with us the impact this amazing innovative lab will have on the next generation of eye and ear specialists,” said Nicole Butera, Trustee of John T Reid Charitable Trusts.



↑ Nicole Butera (left) and Rob Anderson (right), Trustees of John T Reid Charitable Trusts, with A/P Jean-Marc Gerard, Head of Otology at the Eye and Ear.



### **Gifts in Will enables purchase of critical hospital equipment**

Gifts in Wills enable the Eye and Ear to meet our most pressing needs, like purchasing medical equipment, upgrading hospital infrastructure, improving patient care, and funding groundbreaking research to prevent vision and hearing loss.

In 2022, the late Ronald Charles Forsyth left a generous bequest to the Eye and Ear.

With Ronald's bequest, the hospital was able to purchase an ENT Stack. This large camera system allows us to look into people's noses and throats to assess their nasal passage, adenoids, tonsils and vocal cords. It has increased the hospital's capacity to assess and diagnose patients quickly.

We hosted Ron's family for a tour of the redeveloped hospital and a chance to see the ENT Stack in action in November 2023.

"Ron was a humble man and would have been embarrassed by the attention and recognition, but his gift will make a great difference to the staff and patients at the Eye and Ear for many years to come so it is nice to celebrate that," said Jenny Cook, Ron's niece.

We are grateful to all those who have remembered the Eye and Ear in their Will. For more information about how to include the hospital in your Will, please reach out to us on 1800 808 137 or [fundraising@eyeandear.org.au](mailto:fundraising@eyeandear.org.au).

# In your words

Here's what some of our donors told us recently about why they support the hospital:

**"I make a small donation each month to the Eye and Ear hospital because it provides an excellent, specialised service to Victorians. The recent redevelopments, including a state-of-the-art education precinct, are also excellent. Having been a patient over the years, I am pleased to be a small part of the hospital's development."**

Tim

**"A very grateful patient receiving great care."**

Carole

**"I am very grateful for the surgery received following an eyelid injury in June 2001. I had a cornea transplant great care at the hospital."**

Anne

**"Your excellent service to me over the years."**

John

↑ Pictured left to right, Jenny, Peter and Lina Cook with the ENT Stack that was purchased thanks to their uncle Ron's Gift in Will.

# YES, I would like to give the gift of Sight + Sound by donating today.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my **once-off donation** of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**, I wish to make a **monthly gift** of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

via: (please tick)  MasterCard  Money order

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

VISA  Cheque  
(payable to The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Card no: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us what motivated you to give or email us at [fundraising@eyeandear.org.au](mailto:fundraising@eyeandear.org.au)

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Cardholder's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please email my receipt

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send me information about including a gift to the Eye and Ear in my Will

I have already included a gift to the Eye and Ear in my Will



Please tear off and return in the reply paid envelope.



To donate online, please visit: <https://donate.eyeandear.org.au/>



Call us on 1800 808 137 to make a payment over the phone.

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

I do not wish to receive further communication from The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital.



Give  
the gift  
of Sight +  
Sound



### **The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital**

Phone: 1800 808 137

Email: [fundraising@eyeandear.org.au](mailto:fundraising@eyeandear.org.au)

32 Gisborne Street, East Melbourne  
Victoria 3002

[www.eyeandear.org.au](http://www.eyeandear.org.au)

The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital respects your privacy and all information is treated in confidence. If you do not wish to receive further mailings, please phone 1800 808 137.

Sight + Sound is published bi-annually. ©The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. April 2024.

ABN 81 863 814 677