



# QUEENSLAND EYE INSTITUTE FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT  
DECEMBER 2014



QUEENSLAND  
**eye**  
INSTITUTE  
CLARITY FOR LIFE

ABN 37 009 737 384



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# Our purpose

*Our mission is to provide excellence in research, education and clinical care to reduce eye disease, improve eye health, and ultimately eliminate preventable blindness in the community.*





# Our vision

*is that our Institute will be internationally recognised for its efforts in research, education and clinical care to reduce eye disease and promote eye health in the community.*



# Board of Directors



**Mr. Mark Sheridan**  
Chairman

Mark Sheridan is Managing Partner with leading Chartered Accountants Hanrick Curran in Brisbane. He has a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) and is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia. He is also a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Australian Institute of Management. Mark was appointed a Director of the Foundation in 2003, and Chairman of the Foundation in April 2011.



**Professor Mark Radford**  
Executive Director & CEO

Mark Radford was appointed as Chief Executive Officer for the Foundation and the Queensland Eye Institute in March 2010, and Executive Director in July 2010. He has a Doctor of Medicine from Nagasaki University in Japan, and a Ph.D. from the Flinders University of South Australia. Mark is a Fellow of both the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Australian Institute of Management.



**Ms. Kylie Blucher**  
Director

Kylie Blucher, Managing Director of Nine, Queensland joined the Foundation Board in July 2013. Kylie brings an extensive knowledge of both the corporate and media industries, after more than 25 years working with the Austereo Radio Network and the Nine Network.



**Mr. Brett Greensill**  
Director

Brett Greensill is one of real estate's most successful and award winning agents, and Principal of his own business, LJ Hooker New Farm. He has over 10 years experience in the property industry and public sector experience prior to that. Brett joined the Foundation Board in August 2008.



**Judge Anthony Rafter**  
Director

Anthony Rafter is currently a District Court Judge in Queensland. He was admitted as a Barrister of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1985, and then Senior Counsel in 2003. Prior to joining the Foundation Board in June 2012, Anthony was the Chairperson for the Nursing Tribunal and a Board Member of Legal Aid Queensland.



**Ms Catherine O'Sullivan**  
Director

Catherine O'Sullivan is Pro Vice-Chancellor, Pathways and Partnerships at Bond University where she is responsible for driving expansion of the University's engagement with business, community and industry groups across Australia and internationally. She has had an exceptional career in senior management in education and government, including as the QLD State Manager, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).



**Ms. Samantha Wilkinson**  
Director & Company Secretary

Samantha Wilkinson is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has post graduate qualifications in business and marketing from Queensland University of Technology. She was director of Allied Timber Products. Samantha joined the Foundation Board in 2009, and became Company Secretary in 2011.

Catherine has also held roles as Assistant Director General, Department of Primary Industries; Executive Director of Schools, Toowoomba and the first female Principal at Goondiwindi State High School. She was QLD Telstra Business Woman of the Year 2002, QLD Telstra Business Woman of the Year – Community and Government 2002, and won a Churchill Fellowship. Catherine joined the Board in August 2014.



# Chairman & CEO Report

## Welcome to our Annual Report for 2014.

It is humbling to look back on the now 50 year history of the Queensland Eye Institute Foundation and what we have achieved in that time.

At the beginning of 2014, the Queensland Eye Institute Foundation started the year from our new premise at 140 Melbourne Street. This has defined the Institute as a major milestone in our history and brought with it exciting change and opportunity. Yet it also reminded us of just what remains the same – our relentless pursuit of ways to prevent blindness and preserve sight.

The first six months of 2014 was focused on ensuring the fit-out at 140 Melbourne Street was seamlessly completed without impacting patient care or critical research programmes. It would be misleading to suggest we did not have our share of interruptions, setbacks and delays. However, we are proud of the way our relocation was managed by staff, reflecting our agility and flexibility in the face of constant change and challenge. Approximately 80 employees now occupy the new Institute and associated day hospital.

Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Ms Penelope Wensley AC, officially opened our new 4,000 square metre purposely designed facility on 3rd June.

The institute now houses our new state-of-the-art eye clinic and purpose built research laboratory, a comprehensive vision diagnostic unit and clinical trials centre, a day hospital including three operating theatres, a 100-seat teaching facility and 60 space car park for patients and guests.





These facilities are the result of the efforts and tireless work of so many people, in particular the trustees of the Sylvia and Charles Viertel Foundation, who had a vision for Queensland. We would like to take the opportunity to thank its Chairman, Mr George Curphey, and his fellow trustees for their continued support. Without their commitment and belief in our cause, we would not be where we are today.

Our Board made an investment in excellence when it agreed to fund the development of the South Bank Day Hospital. On 4th September, the South Bank Day Hospital completed its first official operating list and, since then, all three theatres have been in use. Our surgeons, nurses, technicians and admission staff have done a wonderful job in getting the new hospital operating and are dedicated to providing a truly patient centred hospital facility. By the end of the year, 542 patients had been treated through the hospital.

The South Bank Day Hospital now presents us with an exciting opportunity to transform the way we provide care to our patients and their families. The hospital is a separate legal entity wholly owned and operated by the Foundation; all profits generated will be invested back into the work of the Foundation. It will provide us with a sustainable future, enabling us to remain focused on our ultimate goals.

Our research faculty, led by our chief scientist, Professor Traian Chirila, and our senior scientists, Associate Professor Damien Harkin and Dr. Nigel Barnett, continue to make progress in a number of different areas (outlined in the table) many in collaboration with world renowned institutes both here and overseas. Our new research laboratory, purposely designed for separate biomaterial and biological studies, is helping our research become even more advanced and progressed.

Our unique operational structure allows our doctors and scientists to work side-by-side to discover the causes of eye disease and find new or improved treatments and earlier diagnoses. Bringing research and patient care together helps us turn possibilities into the realities of better treatment and prevention strategies.

During the year, we again were represented at local, national and international research meetings, and our publication output continues to strengthen with 30 publications in 2014.



## Our Research Themes

Research Theme	Research Aim
<b>Tissue Engineering &amp; Regenerative Ophthalmology</b>	The most extensive research project at QEI aims at creating tissue-engineered constructs for the restoration of damaged/diseased ocular surface, and for the treatment of the age-related macular degeneration (AMD).
<b>Ophthalmic Biomaterials</b>	<p>Development of functional substitutes able to compensate for loss of ocular tissue or to restore failed functions. The focus is on the repair, replication or regeneration of cells and tissue.</p> <p>Biomaterials can be generally defined as materials (artificial or natural) that are brought in contact with our body tissues, with the aim of treating or replacing damaged or diseased tissues, organs and functions.</p> <p>Our research program on biomaterials for the eye includes developmental work on templates for growing a variety of cells of the eye, and on artificial substitutes for certain segments of the eye. A substantial amount of experiments are dedicated to investigating the compatibility of the eye tissues with our materials. We also are currently developing ocular surgical adhesives and carriers for the controlled delivery of drugs and other agents to the eye.</p>
<b>Visual Neuroscience</b>	In the Visual Neuroscience theme, we investigate the processes that lead to diseases of nerve cells at the back of the eye, particularly the light-sensitive retina and the optic nerve. These diseases include the common blinding conditions of glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration (AMD): diseases for which there are currently no cures. Using advanced experimental techniques, including specialist imaging and electrophysiology, we aim to unravel the complex steps that lead to the death of these critical nerve cells in order to develop and target effective protective therapies. We are currently investigating a number of promising "neuroprotective" strategies including enhanced antioxidant compounds and unique silk extracts. Ultimately, we aim to slow down or even stop the degeneration of vital nerve cells and reduce the loss of vision currently associated with retinal disease.





Under the guidance of Dr. Brendan Cronin, our Director of Education, QEI continued its teaching programme to medical students from The University of Queensland, optometry students from the Queensland University of Technology, and registrars. Our Grand Rounds programme continues to be well attended by students and consultants alike.

In 2014, we continued to host science research students from France, and recommenced a Fellowship in conjunction with Heart Reach Australia for a young Vietnamese Ophthalmologist.

On Friday, 7th November, we held our fourth National Sunnies Day. The aim of National Sunnies Day is to raise awareness, especially in primary school children, of the dangers of excessive exposure to harmful UV rays and promote the use of sunglasses as a protective measure for your eyes. We will now look to redesign our children's education programme so that we can raise much needed awareness of the benefits of wearing sunglasses and the work of the institute for future years.

Continued improvements and innovation that we have had over 2014 would not have been possible without the leadership of an extremely focused board. The Board of Directors has provided significant support for the Foundation. We thank them all for the contribution of their time and commitment and also their imagination and passion for our work.

In August, we welcomed Ms Catherine O'Sullivan to our Board of Directors. Ms O'Sullivan is Pro-Vice Chancellor, Pathways and Partnerships at Bond University, where she is responsible for driving expansion of the University's engagement with business, community and industry

groups across Australia and internationally. She has had an exceptional career in senior management in education and government, including as the Queensland State Manager, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), and in 2002 was Queensland Telstra Business Woman of the Year.

The coming year promises to be just as exciting as the last and we'd like to thank our staff, who continue to go that extra mile. They have made this year's achievements possible. Today we are proud to say that our team includes some of this country's brightest minds and hardest workers, all striving to improve the eye health of Queenslanders, Australians and the rest of the world. Ms Kelly Langdon and Ms Carmel Johnston need to be personally thanked for their dedication, commitment and uncompromising hard work in what was a year of significant challenge.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge our most valuable people, the support of all our donors, sponsors, ambassadors and volunteers. We receive donations from people all around Queensland and other parts of Australia, who generously support us and make our work possible. As a not-for-profit charity, without them, the Queensland Eye Institute simply would not exist.

Your commitment has kept us focused in a year of change, and has inspired us to think big for our future and the future of all people affected by eye disease.

**Mark Sheridan**  
Chairman

**Mark Radford**  
Executive Director & CEO



## Our Ambassadors



**Ms. Di Cant**

Brisbane fashion stylist, public speaker and fashion marketing consultant Di Cant, brings a touch of flare to the Prevent Blindness Foundation



**Mr. Bruce Paige**

Prominent Brisbane media identity Bruce Paige is passionate about giving back to the community through his work with Nine News.



**Mr. Wayne Sticher**

Fireman Wayne Sticher and his wife Del, have been avid supporters of the Prevent Blindness Foundation since July 2002 when he first met Professor Lawrence Hirst as a patient. Wayne was diagnosed with Paecilomyces Keratitis, an extremely rare and aggressive fungus, which almost claimed his eye.



**Ms. Phoebe Young**

Mother and lawyer, Phoebe Young is a strong supporter of the Institute's research into ocular diseases. At the age of 18, Phoebe suffered Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, which resulted in the amputation of both legs below the knee, along with her left hand and the fingertips on her right hand. Phoebe also suffered impairment to her eyesight, which she states has been her greatest challenge.



# Our Team

## Board of Directors

Mark Sheridan  
*Chairman*

Professor Mark Radford  
*Executive Director*

Samantha Wilkinson  
*Company Secretary / Director*

Kylie Blucher  
*Director (appointed July 2013)*

Brett Greensill  
*Director*

Anthony Rafter  
*Director*

Catherine O'Sullivan  
*Director (appointed August 2014)*

## Clinical Faculty Staff

Dr. Anthony Pane  
*Neuro-Ophthalmology*

Associate Professor Tony Kwan  
*Retinal Diseases*

Dr. Brendan Cronin  
*Cornea*

Professor Ravi Thomas  
*Glaucoma and Clinical Epidemiology*

Dr. Tai Smith  
*Oculoplastic, Lacimal & Orbit Surgery,  
Eye Physician & Surgeon.*

Dr. Mark Chiang  
*Glaucoma, Cataract & Diseases of the Retina*

Dr. Sunil Warrier  
*Medical Retina, Ocular Oncology, Cataract & Pterygium.*

## Honorary Clinical Faculty Staff

Professor Ivan Schwab  
*University of California at Davis, Sacramento Medical Center*

## Research Faculty Staff

Professor Traian Chirila *BEng, PhD, FRACI, CChem*  
*Senior Scientist*

Professor Lawrence Hirst  
*Research Scientist*

Dr Allison Sutherland *BSc (Hons) PhD, MBiomed Eng*  
*Manager of Clinical Research Services*

Dr. Nigel Barnett *BSc (Hons), MSc, DPhil*  
*Senior Scientist*

Associate Prof. Damien Harkin *BSc, PhD*  
*Visiting Senior Scientist*

Dr. Shuko Suzuki *BAppSc, MAppSc, PhD*  
*Research Scientist*

Dr. Neil Richardson *BAppSc, PhD*  
*Visiting Scientist*

Dr. Laura Bray *BSc (USC), BAppSc Hons (QUT), PhD (QUT)*  
*Post-Doctoral Research Scientist*

Dr. Jinchun (Fiona) Li *MMedSci*  
*Research Assistant*

Dr. Jennifer Young *BSc, MSc, PhD*  
*Research Assistant*

Eden Liu  
*Laboratory Coordinator*

Dr. Karina George *BAppSc, PhD*  
*Honorary QEI Senior Scientist*

Peter Gillies *BAppSc, MAppSc, Research Student (PhD)*

Audra Shadforth *BSc, Research Student (PhD)*

Natalie McKirdy  
*Graduate Student*





## Honorary Research Faculty Staff

Professor Emeritus Graeme George

*AM, PhD, FRACI, Queensland University of Technology*

Professor Andrew Whittaker

*PhD, FRACI, University of Queensland*

Professor Murray Baker

*University of Western Australia*

Dr. Louise Ainscough

*BA, BAppSc, PhD, University of Queensland*

Dr. Beatrix Feigl

*MD PhD, Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI)*

## Management Team

Kelly Langdon

*General Manager*

Anna Blake

*Clinical Services Manager*

Carmel Johnston

*EA to Executive Director*

Jane Dodds

*Community Relations Officer*

Kate Lowe

*Communications Manager*

Renee Ferenc

*Marketing Manager (Commenced  
September 2014)*

Gerrard Gosens

*Special Projects Manager (Commenced  
September 2014)*



# Education

## 2014 was an exciting year for the Queensland Eye Institute for education.

With the move to our new facility and the larger auditorium, our teaching opportunities have been substantially increased and a large number of people have come through for numerous education events.

Dr Tai Smith and Dr Brendan Cronin held two educational evenings for general practitioners which were very well received by those who attended. Those who attended were obviously very impressed as many other practitioners requested that Dr Cronin give talks in their actual practices and to show them how to use their ophthalmic examination equipment.

The registrars continue to use the QEI facilities for their weekly training sessions and these remain very popular with the registrars. There were some issues with the supply of pig's eyes for the wet lab in 2014 and it was only in the later half of the year that the wet lab started to be used by the registrars again. We now have a new supply of pigs eyes and this supplier now offers some fabulous opportunities for the registrars who have been able to get a hold of animal orbits which means they are able to practice all sorts of oculoplastic and orbital surgery that they have previously been unable to attempt in the wet lab.

Our optometry education events have been extremely popular this year. We have moved to a more formal structure with three optometry events, all of which were very popular with optometrists. We plan to expand these in 2015 to fully utilise the size of the new auditorium.

The Queensland RANZCO ophthalmology grand rounds have also been very popular at the new facility. The new dial in feature allows people to dial in from home and this is particularly advantageous for ophthalmologists in rural and regional areas. There has been an excellent uptake of this service and the ophthalmologists who are now routinely dialing in are very happy.

This year QEI also hosted the RANZCO RACE exam. This is the final exit examination for ophthalmology trainees from around the country. The clinic was closed for the 2.5 days of the examinations and it was a fabulous opportunity to showcase the QEI facility.



# Clinical Care

With patient care at the heart of all that we do at QEI, 2014 has proven a year of many excellent developments.

The year has seen an increase in the volume of patients being reviewed in the QEI Clinic as well as an expansion of procedures and services able to be completed because of the new procedure room. These include lid reductions and cross-linking clinics.

Parking facilities were introduced for all patients, allowing greater comfort and convenience for patients and their families, many of who travel significant distances to attend the clinic, in addition to coping with debilitating eye conditions.

Queensland Eye Institute is pleased to now offer a 'one-stop-shop' – all-encompassing service for eye care.

## New Doctors for QEI

In 2014 we welcomed Dr Mark Chiang and Dr Tai Smith to the Institute.

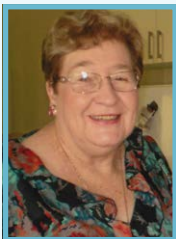
**Dr Mark Chiang** completed his Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery degree in Queensland in 2000, followed by a Master of Philosophy in 2007. Prior to his Ophthalmology training, he spent 2 years as a Glaucoma Research Fellow at the Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre in the UK and also served as a medical officer in rural Queensland. He then undertook his Ophthalmology training in Queensland and completed a Vitreo-Retinal Fellowship at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in 2012 where he became proficient at both the surgical and medical management of retinal and macular diseases. Dr. Chen was awarded the RANZCO/Abbott Medical Optics Scholarship and completed a Fellowship in Glaucoma and Education at the prestigious Moorfields Eye Hospital in London. He trained under the eminent Professor Sir Peng Khaw for the management of complex glaucoma in both children and adults and was involved in the development of state-of-the-art glaucoma drainage devices at the Institute of Ophthalmology in University College London. Dr Chiang's specialties include paediatric and adult glaucoma, complex cataract surgery techniques including those requiring vitreo-retinal approaches, as well as the management of retinal and macular diseases such as age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. He is both a member of the Childhood Glaucoma Research Network to promote advances in the care of childhood glaucoma globally and the international Lindberg Society, where he is actively involved in the research of pseudoexfoliation syndrome and glaucoma.

**Dr Tai Smith** is a Queensland educated and fellowship-trained Ophthalmologist specialising in the management of complex eyelid, orbit and lacrimal diseases. He completed a Clinical Fellowship in Orbit and Oculoplastic Surgery at the renowned University of British Columbia Eye Care Centre in Vancouver, Canada. Dr Smith has training in the latest innovations in endonasal tear-duct surgery without external scarring; laser-assisted upper and lower eyelid blepharoplasty and Asian lid crease surgery. He also has an interest in revisional oculoplastic surgery and the assessment, management and surgical rehabilitation of the thyroid eye disease patient. He is a member of the International Thyroid Eye Disease Society (ITEDS).



# Changing lives — Our patients

## Yvonne's Story



Fiercely independent, 78 year old Yvonne knows only too well what keeping her eyesight has meant for her everyday life.

Without the specialist treatment she received at QEI, her experience of Christmas would have been very different - **she would have been blind in 6 months...**

Diagnosed with insulin dependent diabetes at only 32 years of age, Yvonne visited her GP for what she believed was a simple referral for glasses. Not so, this routine visit resulted in a diagnosis of glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

Diabetic retinopathy can potentially cause haemorrhages in the back of the eyes. If the macula is affected, this will also reduce a person's vision. So for many years, in addition to managing her other medical conditions, Yvonne was regularly seen by an ophthalmologist.

Her diabetes was made more difficult by multiple systemic micro vascular complications including issues with her blood vessels and chronic pain in her toes and feet. However, despite the impact on her mobility, Yvonne travelled widely and continued to live a full and active life.

She survived bowel cancer, multiple surgeries, lost two husbands to illness and inconceivable also lost her youngest daughter in a motor vehicle accident.

In 2009 Yvonne underwent laser treatment on both eyes, which improved her eyesight markedly. She also commenced a series of drops to help with the treatment of her condition.

Unfortunately a fall in 2011 damaged her shoulder and while in hospital her sugar levels rose drastically, resulting in a marked increase in her insulin. Yvonne began to suffer increased pressure in both eyes, but particularly in her left eye. Her eyes became redder and redder, very sore and began to weep. She suffered severe Blepharitis (dry eyes) in both eyes and

subsequently developed inflammation to the ocular surface due to the drops she had required to treat her condition.

*"I look back now and realise I never believed I would die from cancer however I had an incredible fear of losing my sight," Says Yvonne.*

Yvonne faced diminishing vision - something that would further impact on her existing mobility issues.

She was seen by QEI's Dr Brendan Cronin who performed a stent in February this year to relieve the pressure in her eyes. The operation was a success - the vision in Yvonne's right eye greatly improved and she is now awaiting a new laser treatment to further improve her left eye, along with treatment with preservative free drops.

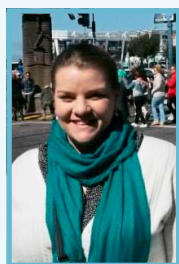
*"Meeting QEI's Dr Cronin changed my life - I didn't realise how much my sight meant to me until I faced the possibility of losing it. For twelve months I lived with the fear I would end up in a nursing home, condemned to a particular way of life. Instead I got to keep my independence."*

With an active social life, a dedication to her family and her Probus involvement, more than ever Yvonne needs to protect and preserve her eyesight. Determined to live her life the way she chooses, she has set herself a goal and says this year is going to be the year for improving her vision.

Queensland Eye Institute is committed to helping thousands of patients from all over Australia who suffer the debilitating effects of vision loss. Our research is ground breaking and every donation we receive brings us one step closer to developing solutions and ultimately discovering cures that will change the lives of so many people.

**Our aim is to constantly improve the quality of clinical care provided to patients and their families - with specialists continuing to treat patients for some of the most complex and serious eye conditions, many of which result in vision saving or even life saving treatment outcomes.**

# Rebecca's Story



Losing your sight is simply too terrifying and difficult to comprehend. At only 24 years of age however, young country patient Rebecca was just 24 hours away from becoming permanently blind...

The startling reality is there are dozens of case studies where the expertise and knowledge of Queensland Eye Institute clinicians has not only saved people's sight but ultimately, their lives. In partnership with universities and hospitals, Queensland Eye Institute plays a critical role in Queensland and Australia in understanding, preventing and treating low vision and blindness.

## Vision loss can happen to anyone at any age, as Roma Town Planner, Rebecca knows...

Rebecca, age 24, felt like her head was about to explode. A lot of us say this when we get bad headaches, but Rebecca's case was different. Her head really was about to explode.

Two weeks earlier Rebecca with an awful headache, the worst of her life, and it continued to worsen. For a week she cried with pain. Her GP told her it was a migraine and gave her some tablets, which didn't help. Then she noticed she was losing her vision as well.

First the left eye, then the right eye started blacking out when she bent over or coughed. The sight faded in the left eye, to the point where it had very little sight. Then the right eye's vision started going as well.

Rebecca was admitted to hospital in the Queensland country town where she lived. The doctor obtained a CT brain scan, which was normal, and told her it was a severe migraine. She was in hospital for a week on painkillers. She was going blind.

Rebecca traveled to Brisbane with her mum and was seen by Dr Staples, who looked in her eyes and was shocked by what he saw. Her optic nerves - the nerves of sight which carry vision information from the eyes to the brain were massively swollen and bleeding.

That night, Rebecca was transferred by ambulance to the Mater Hospital in Brisbane. Neurologist Dr Chris Staples and Queensland Eye Institute neuro-ophthalmologist Dr Anthony Pane worked urgently to save her sight.

An MRI brain scan showed signs of high pressure in Rebecca's head. This was confirmed by a lumbar puncture which showed that Rebecca's brain fluid pressure was more than six times the normal level. She was diagnosed with a rare disease: Fulminant Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension (Fulminant IIH).

**Rebecca says,** "I first thought that my vision would return once the headaches stopped, however the thought of losing my sight permanently became absolutely terrifying."

The human brain is surrounded by a special fluid, which helps keep it healthy and cushions it from impacts on the skull. In most cases the fluid pressure stays in a narrow normal range. Rarely, the fluid pressure increases above the normal range and the patient develops headaches and optic nerve swelling - IIH - but this is usually a very gradual process, over many months. Very rarely, the fluid pressure increases massively and suddenly: Fulminant IIH. If the pressure on the optic nerves isn't urgently relieved, the patient goes blind within days.

Dr Pane recalls: "I was shocked by how severe Rebecca's optic nerve swelling was, and how poor her vision was. When we first met that weekend she was blind in her left eye and down to about 50% of normal vision in her right eye. If I felt that we had maybe 24 hours to stop her going completely blind."

It was thought that repeated lumbar punctures might be enough to drain off the brain and buy Rebecca some time. However even a few hours after each lumbar puncture, her pressure was massively high again. She was losing the battle.

Dr Pane and Dr Staples urgently discussed Rebecca's case with neurosurgeon Dr Robert Campbell. He took Rebecca to theatre and inserted a drainage shunt tube between her spinal cord and her abdomen, to act as a "safety valve" to release the high-pressure brain fluid. Thankfully, it worked.

Immediately Rebecca's headaches completely disappeared - she was pain free for the first time in three weeks. And slowly, her sight returned as well.

Dr Pane was delighted with Rebecca's improvement. "I thought we had completely lost Rebecca's left eye, and that it would be blind forever. However within a couple of weeks she could read fine print. The right eye also recovered well. Rebecca has permanently lost some side vision which is a shame, but it's a lot better than being completely blind."

Despite an incredible outcome medically, Rebecca's condition continues to impact on her everyday life.

"It's the everyday things that are affected. I have tunnel vision and I often don't realise someone is beside me until they move in front of me. I can no longer drive but am grateful to at least have much of my vision back. Any headaches or neck pain still make me very anxious. I am told that whatever vision I have in 18 months will be what I have for the rest of my life. Today, I never take my sight for granted. At only 24, my condition just happened - it wasn't hereditary."

## Cheryl's Story



At 59 years of age, Cheryl has faced a number of major crises in her life, but none quite as terrifying as the prospect of losing her sight.

Originally from Tamworth, a machinery accident rendered

Cheryl severely disabled and epileptic at only 43 and resulted in her being permanently bed-bound in a semi-reclining position 99% of the time. Her accident left her with limited use of her left arm, poor mobility and a reliance on others to take her out in a wheelchair - her independence was taken away.

Cheryl had to come to terms with the fact that her life would never again be as it was before her accident. She had to cope with the breakdown of her marriage and suffered excruciating nerve pain from her injuries as well as constant seizures. Despite all of this, with the help of a full time carer, she somehow managed to move forward with her life.

Without any formal design training, she began to draw, the most intricately beautiful ink and pencil drawings, inspired by images that came to her during her seizures. Confined to a bed all the time and able to do little more than listen to audio books, Cheryl says her drawing became more than just a way of "staying sane", it also helped keep her mind off her terrible nerve pain.

**Worryingly, in June 2013 she began noticing blurred vision in her right eye. She lost her depth perception - missing her coffee cup with her spoon, for instance.**

Her vision worsened, and Cheryl went completely blind in her right eye over a few weeks. An ophthalmologist told her that she had suffered a stroke in her right optic nerve - the cable joining the eyeball to the brain - and that nothing could be done. Then she started to lose sight in her left eye as well. She was referred to Queensland Eye Institute's neuro-ophthalmologist, Dr Anthony Pane.

**Cheryl was terrified. Despite all she had endured as a results of her accident, never before had she faced the prospect of losing her sight - the one thing that allowed her to still experience beauty and enjoyment in her life.**

Dr Pane didn't believe this was a stroke, and ordered neuro-imaging, blood tests and a lumbar puncture. Cheryl was diagnosed with an extremely rare disease:

MOG-antibody-positive optic neuritis. Her own immune system had accidentally turned on her optic nerves, and was trying to kill them.

Cheryl's right optic nerve was too far gone to save, however Dr Pane was able to recover some vision in her left eye. She was treated with high-dose intravenous steroids and then a new immune system suppressant treatment called Rituximab. Cheryl's left eye sight stopped decreasing, and stabilised.

**Says Cheryl, "Despite all the conditions I have, the one thing I value most is my eye sight. I look back and feel I was playing Russian roulette. Until I faced losing my vision, I never really understood how much I had to lose".**

*"The fear of never being able to see again was very sobering but I now know there are so many miracles going on behind the scenes at QEI - both in research and at the clinic".*

Following months of treatment, Cheryl says she visited QEI in February this year wearing her lucky purple shirt and having told herself many positive affirmations. She waited in clinic with a knotted stomach and can still recall Dr Pane's "magic words", "Yes, your optic nerve is stable and it looks like you will be able to keep your eye sight in your left eye."

Cheryl will continue to be monitored but she's grateful everyday for the sight saving work of Dr Pane and the team at QEI. Thankfully she still has enough sight in her left eye to do her amazing drawings. Dr Pane is proud to have one of Cheryl's recent drawings hanging in his room.

Queensland Eye Institute is committed to helping thousands of patients just like Cheryl from all over Australia who suffer the debilitating effects of vision loss. We are exploring new ways to treat and prevent both common and rarer eye conditions every day. Our research is ground breaking and every donation we receive brings us one step closer to developing solutions and ultimately discovering cures that will change the lives of so many people.

**Our aim is to constantly improve the quality of clinical care provided to patients and their families - with specialists continuing to treat patients for some of the most complex and serious eye conditions, many of which result in vision saving or even life saving treatment outcomes.**





# Thank You to Our Supporters

The work of the Foundation is due to the support of many people, not just our Board and staff. As always we are grateful for the both the moral and financial support of the **Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation**, and especially its Board of Trustees and its Chairman, Mr. George Curphey. We are excited about the possibilities that the next chapter of our relationship will bring.

We want to extend our sincere thanks to all our donors – our success would not be possible without your support.

Thank you also to the many volunteers who generously give so much of their time and expertise assisting with events and tasks, which enables us to continue our sight saving work.

Finally, we would like to thank the many organisations that have provided support in many different ways to our activities throughout the year.

General	Hanrick Curran	Alderley Hire
	Chartered Accountants	Mr. Kevin Driscoll & Family
The Book Launch – Alyssa J Montgomery	Kathy Plunkett & Family	Tracy Mathers
	Volunteers from QEI	Sorbet Fashions
National Sunnies Day 2014	Nine Network	Queensland Government
	Nova 106.9	Department of Education & Training
	Bright Eyes Sunglasses	Queensland Health
	Reds	4BC
	IGA	97.3FM
	Valley Edge	IGA Hopper Group
Bunnings BBQs	Alderley Hire	QEI Staff Volunteers



# Financial Snapshot

The following information is extracted from the Audited Financial Statements for January 1 to December 31, 2014.

## Balance Sheet Comparatives

	2014 \$	2013 \$	2012 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash & cash equivalents	3,094,810	3,248,889	2,047,183
Trade & other receivables	687,074	423,618	106,247
Inventories	-	-	5,042
Other assets	94,859	64,434	113,676
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>3,876,743</b>	<b>3,736,941</b>	<b>2,272,148</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant & equipment	11,743,696	4,395,646	1,843,307
Intangible assets	320,985	64,618	74,654
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>12,064,681</b>	<b>4,460,264</b>	<b>1,917,961</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>15,941,424</b>	<b>8,197,205</b>	<b>4,190,109</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade & other payables	6,508,167	1,032,547	125,404
Employee benefits	364,503	311,915	230,642
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>6,872,670</b>	<b>1,344,462</b>	<b>356,046</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>9,068,754</b>	<b>6,852,743</b>	<b>3,834,063</b>



## Income Statement Comparatives

	2014 \$	2013 \$	2012 \$
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation	1,680,000	1,680,000	1,650,000
Viertel Funding — capital works in progress	7,411,488	2,622,435	-
Other donations & bequests	558,319	2,812,106	271,686
Interest & other income	2,183,718	779,216	757,149
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>11,833,525</b>	<b>7,893,757</b>	<b>2,678,835</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Research costs <sup>1</sup>	76,581	194,684	241,883
Occupancy costs <sup>2</sup>	2,606,190	479,713	468,350
Labour Costs <sup>3</sup>	3,935,050	2,707,062	2,395,156
Professional Fees	55,997	164,221	191,763
Depreciation & amortisation expense	1,256,162	892,273	398,763
Other general expenses	1,687,534	437,124	405,600
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>9,617,514</b>	<b>4,875,077</b>	<b>4,101,595</b>
<b>NET COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS)</b>	<b>2,216,011</b>	<b>3,018,680</b>	<b>(1,422,680)</b>

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Research consumables & equipment

<sup>2</sup> Includes lease for laboratory & clinics

<sup>3</sup> Research, teaching, clinical, administration & support





## Cash Flow Comparatives

	2014 \$	2013 \$	2012 \$
<b>CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from supporters & donors	12,483,753	8,180,128	2,583,110
Payments to suppliers & employees	(9,252,214)	(4,460,024)	(3,688,080)
Interest received	97,673	71,888	112,678
Finance Costs	(1,057)	-	-
<b>NET CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>3,328,155</b>	<b>3,791,992</b>	<b>(992,292)</b>
<b>CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Payment of property, plant & equipment	(8,563,734)	(2,581,764)	(125,548)
Acquisition of intangibles	(96,843)	(8,522)	(57,332)
Payment of Acquisition of Business	(200,000)	-	-
<b>NET CASH USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>(8,860,577)</b>	<b>(2,590,286)</b>	<b>(182,880)</b>
<b>NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH &amp; CASH EQUIVALENTS HELD</b>	<b>(154,079)</b>	<b>1,201,706</b>	<b>(1,175,172)</b>
Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	3,248,889	2,047,183	3,222,355
<b>CASH &amp; CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	<b>3,094,810</b>	<b>3,248,889</b>	<b>2,047,183</b>

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