

eyecure.

WELCOME.

Regular readers may recall last year's fundraising appeal to purchase a new microplate reader, a piece of equipment essential for efficient screening in research and drug discovery. I'm pleased to report the appeal raised nearly \$15,000.

In more good news, the Foundation also received a special purpose grant from the Queensland Government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund, which supports not-for-profit organisations enhance services for communities across Queensland. Together the donations and grant funding allowed the Queensland Eye Institute to purchase the microplate reader without impacting its research budget.

The South Brisbane Day Hospital continues to support the Queensland Eye Institute Foundation in achieving its goal of sustainable funding for research. All profits generated by the hospital are donated to the Foundation and in 2025 donations from the hospital to the Foundation reached just over \$2 million.

This broad support from the community, government and corporate sectors gives our scientists job security and allows QEI to expand its research horizons. The new project looking to improve stem cell preservation for use in therapies treating eye disease, detailed on page five, is an example of that new direction.

Please enjoy this edition of Eyecure.

Professor Mark Radford
CEO and Executive Director
Queensland Eye Institute




QEI supports professional development across all its operations.

(L-R) CEO and Executive Director Professor Mark Radford, Clinic Manager Trudi Ferdinando, Clinical Operations Coordinator Tina Huynh and Clinic Manager Sandie McMurray at the RANZCO scientific meeting and practice managers conference in Melbourne late last year.



NEW DOCTORS.

The QEI clinic is expanding again, welcoming two new doctors to the team.

Dr Alexandra Manta, a highly respected teacher and researcher at QEI since 2023, is now offering her expertise in oculoplastic, orbital and lacrimal surgery to QEI clinic patients.

Dr Alexander Newman joins QEI as a consultant ophthalmologist specialising in cataract, macular disease, retinal disease and ophthalmic laser. In addition to extensive clinical training, Dr Newman has completed a clinical research fellowship in medical retina and uveitis.



Dr Alexandra Manta



Dr Alexander Newman



Scan me!

COMMENT ON YOUR CARE.

The Queensland Eye Institute is committed to providing quality care and support to every patient and visitor at each of its clinics.

A new online form allows patients and their companions to offer suggestions, compliments and complaints related to their experience at QEI clinics. Comments

can be anonymous or, if you would like to discuss something further, leave your contact details.

Visit our website to leave a comment or ask someone from our reception team for a paper form.

Visit our website





QUT optometry student Henry Lam examines a patient, supervised by Associate Professor Anthony Kwan.

OPTOMETRISTS LEARNING AT QEI.

Optometrists are on the frontline fighting avoidable vision loss. Their role spans early detection, management, public health advocacy and increasing access to care.

QEI doctors recognise the pivotal role played by their colleagues, offering regular professional development seminars and workshops to practising optometrists and training placements to optometry students.

Clinical Operations Coordinator Tina Huynh manages QEI's optometry education program and says student placements are in high demand. "Students get to see many different eye diseases when they're here – diseases they might have only seen once during their studies," Tina says. "Our ophthalmologists are very committed to including students as much as possible."

QUT student Henry Lam learnt much when on placement with QEI's Associate Professor Anthony Kwan recently, particularly how to interact with patients.

"You learn things from textbook, and it's very formalized, but eventually you're going to have to explain what you learned to a patient," Henry says. "Hearing someone like Dr Kwan explain things to them, you get to hear the terminology that makes it understandable."

The placements give students exposure to specialist procedures they won't see in an optometry setting, which ultimately helps their patients. "Seeing the ophthalmologists do procedures like injections and laser mean you actually understand what's happening from the patient's point of view," Henry says. "So, when you have to tell a patient they might need to have one of those treatments, you can better explain what that will be like."

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING.

Dr Alexandra Manta received an award for excellence in teaching from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists at its annual congress late last year.

Doctors are nominated for these awards by ophthalmology trainees for exemplifying excellence in planning, communication, assessment and evidence-based professional practice. The award is high praise for Dr Manta from her junior colleagues in Australia and New Zealand. Dr Manta also shared an award for best ophthalmic surgery film.

Since joining QEI Dr Manta has developed an oculoplastic and orbital dissection course and a seminar teaching safe practices in facial rejuvenation. She's also convened oculoplastic teaching and research focus group meetings for ophthalmology trainees.

She continues to supervise visiting post-graduate students in the QEI laboratory and plays a pivotal role supporting the Global Eye Health Network. Dr Manta is a worthy recipient of this award and QEI values her significant contributions to its research and education programs.



Dr Alexandra Manta receiving an award for excellence in teaching from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmology.



NEW RESEARCH ON STEM CELL PRESERVATION FOR FUTURE THERAPIES.

A new research partnership between the Queensland Eye Institute (QEI) and the University of Queensland (UQ) aims to improve stem cell preservation for use in therapies treating eye disease.

Stem cells found in human body fat (adipose tissue) show potential for treating corneal diseases and injuries, retinal degenerative diseases, glaucoma and optic nerve injury.

Adipose-derived stem cells (ADSCs) are a promising tool for tissue-engineering due to their abundance, accessibility, and ability to transform into other cell types.

For scientists exploring new ways to engineer tissue for ophthalmic therapies, a reliable supply of stable, structurally sound stem cells is crucial.

This new collaboration between QEI and UQ aims to develop and refine methods for preserving adipose tissue and ADSCs to ensure their long-term viability.

QEI's Dr Alexandra Manta and Dr Shuko Suzuki developed the research proposal and secured a partnership with the UQ Advanced Cell Therapy Manufacturing Initiative at the University of Queensland to pursue it.



Cryopreservation - Biological material secured in a vial and submerged into liquid nitrogen, typically reaching temperatures around -196°C for long-term storage.



PROFESSOR LAWRENCE HIRST VISION MUSEUM.

A new vision museum located in the QEI clinic waiting area #1 houses ophthalmology instruments and vision aids collected by Professor Lawrence Hirst and donated to the Queensland Eye Institute to mark its 20th anniversary in 2025. Professor Lawrence Hirst was the Queensland Eye Institute's inaugural Chief Executive Officer.

 Schiötz tonometer.



 Lawrence Hirst Vision Museum.

THEN & NOW.

The museum's contents remind us how far we've come in treating eye diseases.

The vintage tonometer on display was invented by Dr. Hjalmar Schiøtz in 1905 and was a standard screening tool in ophthalmology for decades. A tonometer measures intraocular pressure to diagnose and monitor eye conditions like glaucoma. This old version used a weighted plunger placed on the cornea to measure pressure based on the depth of indentation via a curved footplate, a scale and various interchangeable weights.

Today's clinicians have access to non-invasive instruments like the Icare IC100 which uses rebound technology. A light probe makes momentary contact with the cornea to measure pressure without the need for anaesthetic drops or air puffs.



OUTSTANDING SERVICE.

Professor Mark Radford has been honoured with an award for **Outstanding Service in Prevention of Blindness** from the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology. The Academy delivered the award at its recent congress in Hong Kong, marking another career highlight for QEIF's Executive Director and CEO. The Award recognises Professor Radford's ongoing commitment to collaborative research and his drive to strengthen clinical capacity in the region, particularly in low-resourced communities through RANZCO's Global Eye Health programs.

In another nod to Queensland's strength in the sector, Professor Timothy Sullivan, who is active in clinical research and an honorary clinical scientist at QEI, received a Senior Achievement Award from the Academy.



 Professor Mark Radford (left) with Professor Tim Sullivan.

CLINICAL TRIAL FOR NEW MACULAR DEGENERATION TREATMENT.

QEI is the only clinical trial site in Queensland for a global study of a treatment for neovascular age-related macular degeneration. The trial is assessing the efficacy, safety, and pharmacokinetics of a drug delivered through an ocular implant.

The Port Delivery System (PDS) is a small, refillable device designed for permanent implantation in the eye. It allows for continuous diffusion of drugs into the vitreous cavity as an alternative to regular intravitreal injections.

When introduced more than a decade ago, intravitreal injections dramatically changed the treatment of neovascular diseases such as neovascular (wet) age-related macular degeneration (nAMD) and proliferative diabetic retinopathy, two of the leading causes of blindness in adults over age 40.

However, the need for many regular visits can be costly and emotionally draining for patients and can increase the risk for a complication. This alternative drug delivery system, if supported by the trial findings and approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, could be a welcome development for patients with neovascular diseases.

For more information about this trial and QEI's clinical trials program visit the website here:

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INTRODUCTION TO OPHTHALMOLOGY FOR MEDICAL RECEPTIONISTS.

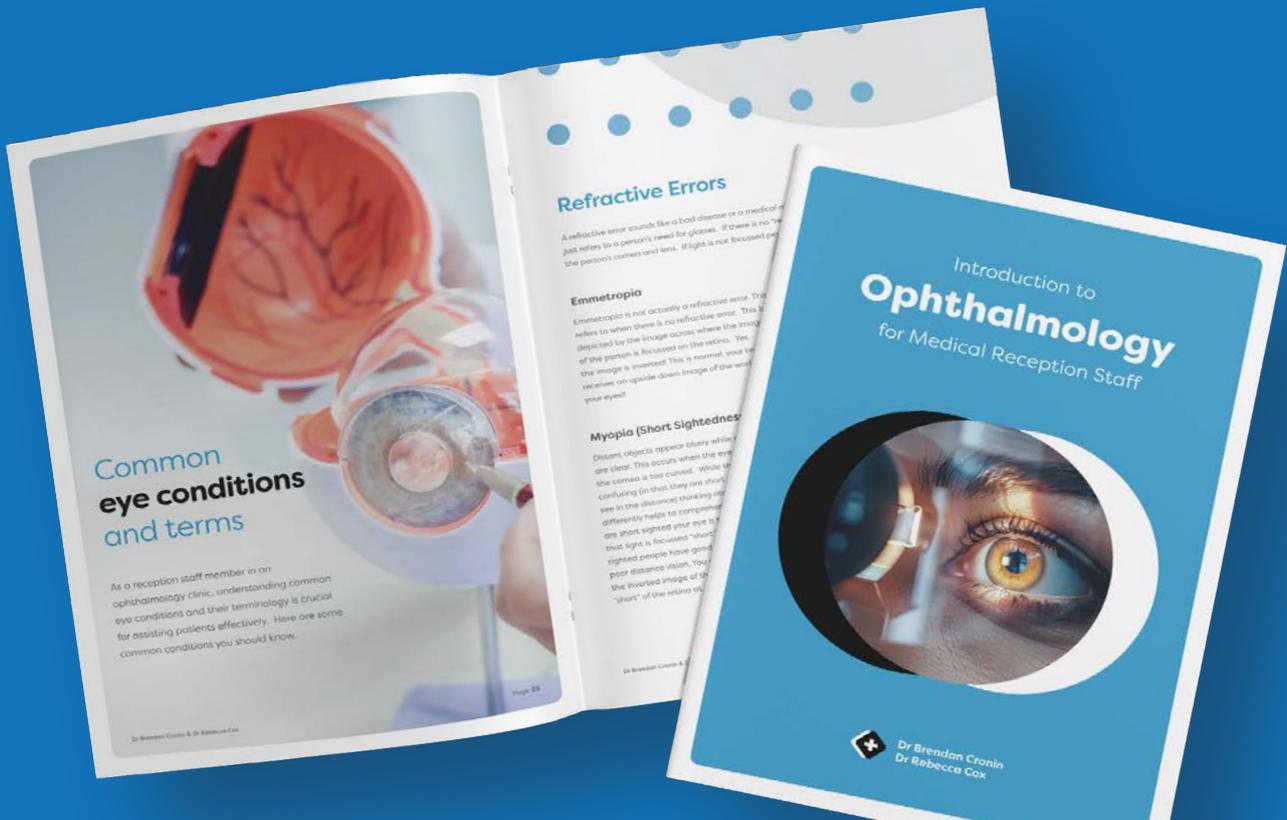
A new publication by QEI's Dr Brendan Cronin and Dr Rebecca Cox aims to improve care from the moment patients first engage with an ophthalmology clinic. The publication offers practical tips for medical receptionists, definitions of important ophthalmic terms and a thorough overview of eye conditions and treatments.

Dr Cronin says medical receptionists are critical to a patient's eye care journey and he was surprised he couldn't find any educational resources dedicated to them when he searched.

"Ophthalmology clinics offer unique challenges to reception staff," Dr Cronin says.

"There's a huge number of potential diseases in the eye, so working in an ophthalmology clinic is like working for multiple different types of surgeons," he says.

"It just makes sense to me that training receptionists to understand what we do and what patients experience will not only make their job more enjoyable it will also make them better at it."





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