

eyecure.

WELCOME.

This edition of Eye Cure reflects the Queensland Eye Institute's ongoing commitment to discovering new treatments through its research program, developing Australia's eye health professionals through education, and translating innovations by delivering better patient care.

More recently, QEI has expanded its focus to include global eye health initiatives. Programs supported by QEI and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmology (RANZCO) in Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific continue to develop, supported by significant in-kind contributions of equipment, consumables and professional support.

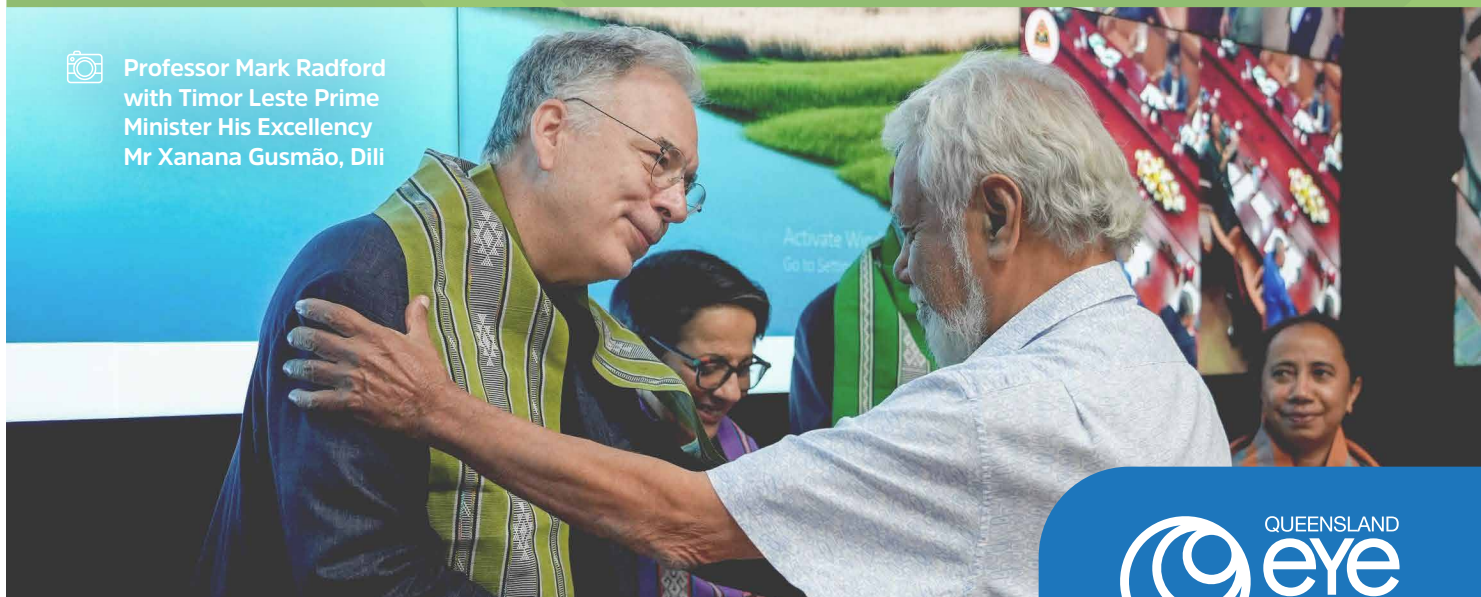
A sincere thank you to donors who supported the Queensland Eye Institute Foundation's mid-year fundraising appeal. Total community donations in May and June reached nearly \$74 thousand, with all gifts to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the South Brisbane Day Hospital. All funds raised by the Foundation support QEI's research program, paying our scientists and funding research equipment and supplies for the Woolloongabba laboratory.

Please enjoy the Spring 2026 edition of Eyecure.

Professor Mark Radford
CEO and Executive Director
Queensland Eye Institute



Professor Mark Radford
with Timor Leste Prime
Minister His Excellency
Mr Xanana Gusmão, Dili



AUSTRALIAN FIRST AT QEI.

A man in a dark blue suit, white shirt, and orange patterned tie is standing on a staircase with a brick wall in the background. He is smiling and holding onto the metal railing.

 Dr Geoffrey Ryan

Dr Geoffrey Ryan recently became the first surgeon in Australia to implant the eyePlate-S glaucoma tube drainage device in surgery performed at South Brisbane Day Hospital. The new device is the latest advanced surgical approach offering another option to glaucoma patients who don't respond to conservative treatments.

Dr Ryan is an expert in advanced anterior segment surgery and has subspecialty training in glaucoma and cornea. He seized the opportunity to introduce this new device in Australia.

"As a surgeon already familiar with glaucoma tube surgery, the most striking

feature of this new device was how technically straightforward the procedure felt compared to other tube shunt platforms," Dr Ryan says. "The learning curve appears genuinely low, which I believe will make this device accessible to a broader range of glaucoma surgeons."

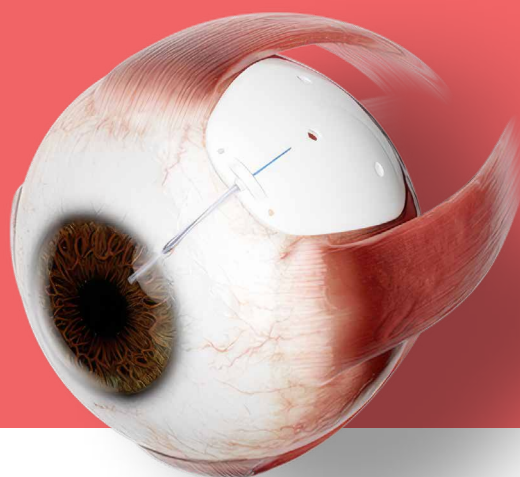
Glaucoma is a condition where the optic nerve is affected by increased fluid build-up in the front of the eye. It remains the leading cause of irreversible blindness in adults worldwide.

The main goal of glaucoma treatment is to lower intraocular pressure to prevent optic nerve damage and vision loss.

Treatment has progressed from iridectomy in the 1850s, where part of the iris was removed to improve fluid drainage, to today's medications, eye drops and sophisticated laser and surgical techniques.

Most recently, a new category of drainage devices implanted using MIGS (Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery) treat glaucoma with much smaller incisions and less disruption to the eye.

The **eyePlate-S glaucoma tube drainage device** is designed to treat advanced or aggressive glaucoma, particularly when eye pressure remains uncontrolled despite traditional treatment approaches, including surgery.



EYE SOLVED IT.

QEI ophthalmologists delivered another fun and interactive learning event for optometrists in August. Conceived by Clinical Operations Coordinator Tina Huynh, this 'Who dunnit' event focused on medical retina, corneal and orbital disease, glaucoma and post-cataract surgery complications. Participants studied cases and worked together in small groups to uncover the mystery behind each condition.



VISITING FRENCH STUDENTS.



The QEI research team welcomed two post-graduate students from Aix Marseille Université, Polytech Marseille this winter. Aya Kneni and Marwa Marchane worked on crosslinking tarsal collagen by exposing it to different coloured lights and photosensitisers, making valuable contributions to QEI's research on novel treatments for eyelid laxity disorders. Dr Shuko Suzuki supervised the students during their time at QEI, with Chief Scientist Professor Traian Chirila providing project coordination.



TEACHING SMALL INCISION CATARACT SURGERY AT QEI.

QEI hosted a wet lab teaching and lecture series on small manual incision cataract surgery this winter, in partnership with the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists (ASO). Clinicians from around Australia attended the full day workshop and seminar at QEI's Woolloongabba campus, run

in conjunction with the ASO Annual Conference.

Small manual incision cataract surgery skills are particularly important in low resource settings, including Australia's rural and remote regions and some of its Pacific neighbours.

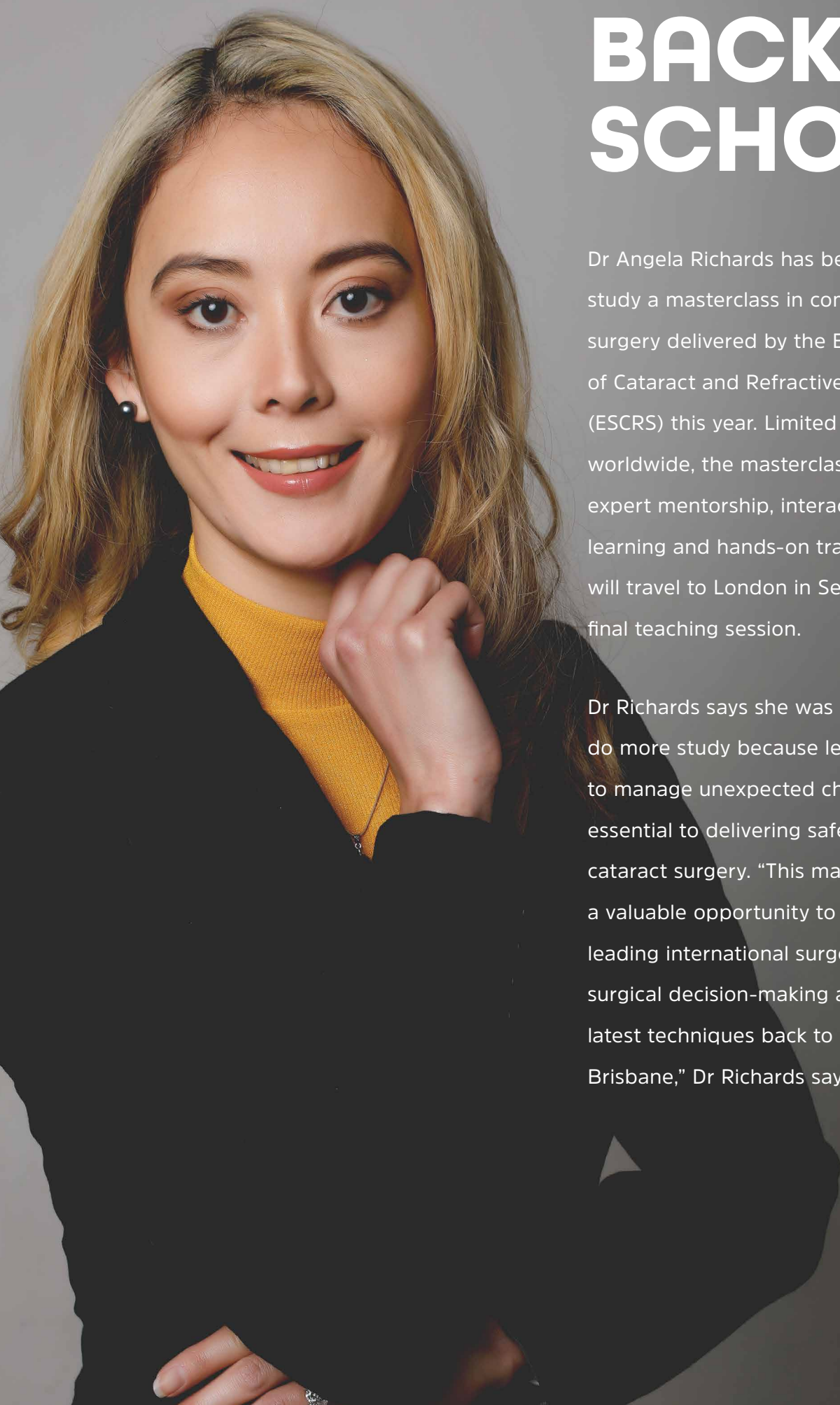


Training on small manual incision cataract surgery in the QEI wetlab

BACK TO SCHOOL.

Dr Angela Richards has been accepted to study a masterclass in complex cataract surgery delivered by the European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons (ESCRS) this year. Limited to 50 participants worldwide, the masterclass combines expert mentorship, interactive online learning and hands-on training. Dr Richards will travel to London in September for the final teaching session.

Dr Richards says she was motivated to do more study because learning how to manage unexpected challenges is essential to delivering safe, high-quality cataract surgery. "This masterclass is a valuable opportunity to learn from leading international surgeons, refine my surgical decision-making and bring the latest techniques back to my patients in Brisbane," Dr Richards says.



HEADS UP – NEW 3D TECH FOR EYE SURGERY.



 Dr David Gunn operates at South Brisbane Day Hospital using a new system which replaces the microscope eyepiece with a screen for "heads-up" surgery

In a first for the Australia-Pacific region, Dr Gunn performed LASIK surgery while looking at a high-definition 3D display, wearing polarized 3D glasses to perceive depth. While the system allows for a more comfortable operating position for the doctor, it's also designed to minimise light exposure to the patient's eye.

A bonus is the extra scope for teaching. Because everyone in the operating theatre sees the same large 3D image on

screen, not just the surgeon who looks through a traditional eyepiece, everyone in the room can follow the procedure in real time.

"The stereoscopic detail is remarkable, the ergonomics are far better, and everyone in theatre sees exactly what the surgeon sees," Dr Gunn said. "It was the first time our theatre staff had watched LASIK in stereoscopic 3D."

AWARD FOR QEI STUDENT RESEARCHER.

Recent medical graduate and visiting researcher at QEI, Nadja Pop, has capped her undergraduate studies with the coveted Romanian Student Erasmus of the Year award.

Born in Switzerland to Romanian parents who later relocated to Australia, Nadja's journey as a student, scientist and clinician reflects the international pathway many scientists follow.

After graduating from Brisbane Girls Grammar School in 2017, Nadja studied

medicine at George Emil Palade University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science, and Technology (UMFST) in Târgu Mureș, Romania. An interest in ophthalmology led her to the Queensland Eye Institute, where she worked on research projects exploring photochemical crosslinking of collagen, in parallel with her medical studies.

Nadja remains closely associated with QEI through her PhD, which is being supervised jointly by QEI's Chief Scientist, Professor Traian Chirila, and academics at UMFST.



Nadja Pop (right) receives Romanian Student Erasmus of the Year 2026



FIJI GLAUCOMA WORKSHOP.

In June Professor Mark Radford attended the 3rd “Towards 6/6” Surgical Workshop in Fiji, which this year focused on glaucoma surgery. Professor Radford presented the results of a 2025 study of the region, highlighting the scale of the challenge: among 2,587 glaucoma presentations, 48% were already at an advanced stage. Most patients were managed medically despite the known limitations—high ongoing costs, reliance on daily adherence, and often inadequate control in advanced disease.

This significant study suggests glaucoma in the Pacific should be managed as a surgical disease, an approach supported by Global Eye Health programs in the region aimed at increasing local surgical capacity.



Professor Mark Radford (front, third from left) with workshop participants in Fiji

COMMITTED TO CARE.



 Prof Mark Radford and Jayne Fields load surgical equipment bound for East Timor



The Queensland Eye Institute is focused on saving sight, including in communities who don't have access to advanced medicines and surgical facilities.

QEI recently worked with Rotary Australia's RARE program to transport surgical equipment and supplies donated by Alcon to Timor Leste's Hospital Nacional Guido Valadares (HNGV) eye clinic. The supplies shared a container with other donated goods, including desks and books from Brisbane schools, with shipping costs met by a generous corporate donor.

Professor Radford later joined Professor Nitin Verma, chair of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmology's Global Eye Health program, to discuss Australian support for Timor Leste's vitreo-retinal services with Prime Minister His Excellency Mr Xanana Gusmão.

 Timor Leste Prime Minister His Excellency Mr Xanana Gusmão (left) with Professor Mark Radford (QEI) and Professor Nitin Verma (RANZCO)

WELCOME TO RESEARCH THIEN.

Thien Nguyen, a post-graduate student completing a Masters of Diagnostic Genomics, is working on QEI's research exploring safer, lower-cost precision therapy for thyroid eye disease.

Thien is a qualified optometrist and has a particular interest in genomics. He's keen to explore research as a career but it's been a difficult transition. Fortunately, QEI's Dr Alexandra Manta could offer him advice, experience and academic connections.

"I had an extensive network in optometry," Thien says, "and I just abandoned it and moved into another industry. It's been hard."

"I contacted QEI because I wanted information about what kind of organisations are important, what kind of people I should talk to, and what it's like to be a scientist.

"But it just happened that Dr. Manta was looking for someone to help her at that time," Thien explains.

Dr Manta says Thien's background as an optometrist is a great advantage to his research work at QEI. "Thien understands the real impact thyroid eye disease has on people," Dr Manta says, noting women outnumber men five to one in suffering from this disfiguring and vision-impairing disease.

QEI's research project on thyroid eye disease is a collaboration between Professor Damien Harkin and Associate Professor Daniel Wallace from QUT and Doctors Alexandra Manta and Shuko Suzuki from QEI, bringing together expertise from histology, genomics, cell and molecular biology to explore new targeted treatment pathways.



Post graduate student
Thien Nguyen at QEI's
research laboratory in
Woolloongabba

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