



**SAVE SIGHT**  
**I N S T I T U T E**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

# Annual Report 2008

## Save Sight Institute

Foresight Australia  
Lions NSW Eye Bank

Sight for Life



The  
University  
of Sydney

## 1. The Save Sight Institute Vision and Mission



*The Save Sight Institute is located on the historic site of Sydney's first hospital and shares its home with the Sydney Eye Hospital*

Established as a Foundation of the University of Sydney on 6 May 1985, The Save Sight Institute is a not-for-profit organisation working with government and community to save sight. Its work and its vision provide a unique fusion of scientific endeavour, clinical excellence and community spirit!



### **Sight for Living, Sight for Life!**

#### **Our Vision:**

**Sight for Life**  
for the whole community.

#### **The Mission:**

**New Knowledge Creation**  
to save sight.

#### **Research Focus:**

**Eye Disease & Vision Science**  
ensuring that the unsolved blindness of today becomes curable and preventable tomorrow.

**Communication Technologies**

exploiting digital media to train the next generation of eye doctors, increasing community awareness and extending eye health services to remote and rural communities.

**Community Service & Eye Care**

developing eye health services, diagnostic tools and screening programs for the prevention of eye disease.

## 2. Table of Contents



*Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of NSW, Patron, The Save Sight Institute & Chancellor, The University of Sydney*

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### 3. President's Report



*Mr Ken Coles AM*

Last year I reported not only on the highlights and achievements of 2007 but also on the events leading up to the retirement of Professor Frank Billson AO on 31st August 2008, after thirty one years as the Foundation Professor of Ophthalmology and Eye Health in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Sydney, and as Director of the Save Sight Institute since 1986. Having received Senate's approval of the Constitution and with seed funding by Lions International, the Institute was established as a Foundation of the University of Sydney.

There were two very successful events in 2008. The first was a scientific conference held over three days in the Claffy Lecture Theatre at Sydney Hospital. This was held prior to the second event, a formal dinner for some 360 people in the Great Hall of the University. The proceedings were masterfully guided by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Professor Bruce Robinson, in the presence of the Chancellor and Governor of NSW, Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO; Sir Nicholas Shehadie; and the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Michael Spence and his wife the Reverend Beth Spence.

There were two musical items. Professor Billson's first patient Dr Patrick O'Brien and his wife, Dr Kate Walker, played a duet on piano and viola. We were then surprised and delighted by Professor Billson playing a Schumann piano solo.

It was a significant tribute to Professor Billson that so many people participated in the conference and came to the dinner, some from interstate and overseas. The quality of the papers presented at the conference was of a very high standard and some interesting and valuable discussion took place. It was an up to the minute snapshot of the achievements and present status of ophthalmology research and practice.

During the first half of 2008 the search for Professor Billson's successor began, culminating with the Selection Committee meeting under the Chairmanship of Professor Andrew Coats towards the end of July and offering the position to Professor Peter McCluskey, then working at the Liverpool Hospital campus of the University of NSW.

In 2008 Dr John Grigg completed his first year as Head of the Discipline of Ophthalmology in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Sydney. In this role, he oversees all aspects of the teaching of Ophthalmology to both undergraduate and post-graduate students, including assisting in the organization of the annual Registrars Conference held at Sydney Hospital in January each year.

Mid-year we were very pleased to hear that our application to the University of Sydney's New Appointments Scheme was successful. This scheme is designed to attract outstanding new staff to the University and has enabled us to recruit Professor Paul Martin to the Save Sight Institute. Paul will move his group, including Associate Professor Ulrike Grünert, from the National Vision Research Institute at the University of Melbourne in late 2009. Their work has shed light on the basis of subtle colour vision changes in the early stages of diseases such as glaucoma and can assist in development of diagnostic tests such as blue/yellow multifocal VEP that is currently being developed by the clinical visual neurosciences group at the Save Sight Institute. Their collective expertise will add a further dimension to colour vision research at the Save Sight Institute.

We wish Emeritus Professor Frank Billson the best of health and happiness as he builds a new life and we look forward to working with Professor Peter McCluskey as our new Professor and Director.

## 4. Director's Report



*Professor Peter McCluskey*

This is the first opportunity I have had since taking up my position as the Director of the Save Sight Institute to contribute to an Annual Report.

2008 has certainly been a year of great change at the Save Sight Institute. Professor Billson has retired after 31 years at the helm. Over this period, he has grown the Institute from its small beginnings into the internationally recognised research facility that it is today. The Save Sight Institute has made impressive contributions to research into important causes of blindness in our community and to the clinical care of adults and children, not only in Sydney and New South Wales, but throughout Australia and the Asia/Pacific Region. All this has occurred as a result of Frank Billson's skill, knowledge, hard work and his collaborative spirit; these are large shoes to fill and it is with some trepidation that I take over as the Director.

A critically important major project will begin in 2009. Construction of a new research laboratory will begin during the second half of 2009 and will be commissioned in early 2010. Additionally the first floor of the Save Sight Institute building requires significant refurbishment to support our growing group of researchers who need increased accommodation space and more infrastructure support staff. As well we need to refurbish the clinical area on the ground floor to cope with increased patient numbers and new technology that is now standard care in clinical ophthalmology.

There have been enormous changes in the environment in which the Save Sight Institute finds itself over 2008. The global financial crisis has already impacted on income streams for Universities and not-for-profit organisations such as our Institute. Understandably, there is considerable local concern regarding the impact of the depressed world and local economy on the income streams and donations that support institutes such as the Save Sight Institute. At this time, it is difficult to determine just what the effect will be, but it is clear that we will have to budget very carefully to ensure that the Institute can continue its existing research programs and expand its research facilities.

Despite the economic uncertainties of this time, I remain optimistic and absolutely committed to continuing to grow the research programs, clinical services and teaching capabilities of the Save Sight Institute. Adversity is a fact of life that can't be controlled. What we can control is how we react to it. We are fortunate at the Save Sight Institute to have an outstanding Board and an extremely talented, committed and hardworking group of researchers. In fact these uncertain times present us with great opportunities to sharpen our research focus, tighten our administrative structure and energise our staff.

With our team, I have no doubt that we will beat the challenges that lie ahead and continue on our path towards becoming the leading eye research institute in the country.

A Time  
for  
Change

## 5. Professor Billson's Report



*Professor Frank Billson AO*

2008 has been a further year of sustained development within the Save Sight Institute, increasing its capacity to contribute to its international standing as a major centre for eye research, post-graduate education and community service in Australia and overseas.

From its establishment in 1984 with two and a half staff, including the only Professor of Ophthalmology in the University of Sydney, this year we can reflect on the Save Sight Institute's present complement of five professors and its first class research laboratories and staff within the South Block of Sydney Hospital. The Save Sight Institute receives competitive research grants of between one and two million dollars each year and increases its capacity to function through the generous donations of those who give support to this charitable institution. The future is bright with the appointment of my successor, Peter McCluskey, as Director and Professor.

Peter McCluskey will bring the added dimension of research in inflammatory eye disease together with his reputation as a teacher and a fine clinician. Before his appointment, the Save Sight Institute was able to access additional research laboratory space outside the South Block in Sydney Hospital, but on the same floor, in what is known as the Centre Block of the Hospital. It has been designed for collaborative research, including stem cell research, which will have particular relevance for the Lions NSW Eye Bank. It will also provide additional accommodation for staff. It has been designed and partially funded, but its commissioning and new equipment will need further funding, hopefully contributed in part by our generous donors. As it is in construction, but not complete, it will be capable of any modification that might be decided upon.

I was fortunate to be part of the organisation with our President Ken Coles, of a dinner in August, celebrating 125 years since the establishment of the Sydney Eye Hospital and its ever-closer ties with its research arm, the Save Sight Institute, and its interface with the University of Sydney. The dinner was a wonderful occasion of unity between town and gown, as I had hoped. It was also the right moment for me to vacate the Chair in favour of Peter McCluskey. Remembering the journey since my appointment, but looking ahead to the future, the next generation belongs to people such as Peter McCluskey, John Grigg, John McAvoy, Mark Gillies, Michele Madigan, Stuart Graham, Roger Truscott, Sasha Klistorner, Meidong Zhu, Robyn Jamieson, Max Conway, Diana van Driel and Li Wen. I thank everyone who has made this Institute's reputation possible and I particularly thank our President, Ken Coles, and the Board of Directors of the Institute, all our donors, academic staff, the Institute's Executive Assistant, Gisela Payne, and the generous clinical staff, orthoptists, administrators and students. We have indeed been fortunate.

Finally, I express my thanks to:

- the University: to the successive Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors and Deans under whom I have served and the Senate;
- to the South East Sydney/Illawarra Area Health Service and its leaders, Debora Picone and most recently Terry Clout;
- to all those wonderful donors including people like Mrs Marno Parsons.

I wish the Institute the very best for a robust future.

*1. Professor Billson at the podium; 2. Mrs Marno Parsons; 3. Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of NSW, and Professor Bruce Robinson, Dean, Faculty of Medicine; 4. Her Excellency Marie Bashir AC CVO, Professor Billson, Mrs Gail Billson, Professor Robinson; 5. A pensive Professor Billson; 6. Professor Robinson presents Professor Billson with pictures; 7. Ms Meredith Dodds, Dr Yves Kerdraon, Professor Billson, Dr Mei Tan, Dr Weng Sehu; 8. Dinner in the Great Hall*

## 5. Professor Billson's Report (continued)



## 6. Introduction to Professor Peter McCluskey



*Professor Peter McCluskey*

**W**e are proud to welcome Professor Peter J McCluskey, MD, FRANZCO, FRACS, as Professor of Ophthalmology and Eye Health and as Director of the Save Sight Institute, and introduce him to you.

Peter needed to spend some time completing things he had in train when he was offered the position, during which time we had the opportunity to meet and get to know him and to brief him on the details of the Save Sight Institute and the research being undertaken. He was very generous with his time until he was able to take up his position full-time early in 2009 when a small welcome function was held in the Institute so that those who had not yet met him had a chance to do so.

Peter McCluskey is an inflammatory eye disease specialist with more than 15 years' experience in the field. Currently his primary clinical focus is refractory vision-threatening chronic inflammatory eye disease and he is currently involved in clinical trials with new therapies for these patients. His laboratory research focuses on mediators of inflammatory eye disease. He has a longstanding interest in dry eye and Sjogren's syndrome and has been involved in clinical trials and basic research in this area for the last ten years.

Professor McCluskey graduated with first class Honours from the University of New South Wales. He completed his ophthalmology training at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Sydney Eye Hospital. During his MD studies in ocular immunology at the University of New South Wales, he completed a fellowship in uveitis at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London.

Peter McCluskey, previous to his appointment, was Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of New South Wales, based at Liverpool Hospital in Sydney. Currently he is a consultant at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney; he is a Visiting Professor in the School of Medical Sciences at the University of New South Wales. He and his co-workers have obtained more than \$1,900,000 in competitive research grants and he has authored 108 peer reviewed papers, 14 book chapters and two books.

Ken Coles AM  
President



## 7. Head of Discipline's Report



*Dr John Grigg*

2008 has been a year of change and innovation. We celebrated the career of Professor Frank Billson in an exceptional scientific conference in August 2008, followed by an enjoyable celebratory dinner in the Great Hall at Sydney University. The Discipline and the Save Sight Institute have inherited a great legacy from Frank Billson. We are excited about the prospects of building on these foundations to advance the cause of ophthalmic clinical work and visual science studies.

We in the Discipline of Ophthalmology have been fully engaged with the Faculty of Medicine throughout 2008 in a number of areas. Teaching remains a strong focus of the Discipline and we have had the opportunity to participate in an extensive review of the Medical Student curriculum. The focus has been to bring the curriculum back to a more Discipline-specific approach. This has enabled smaller specialties such as Ophthalmology to be able to contribute to the teaching program. One highlight of the new curriculum is an increased emphasis on the basic sciences. Ophthalmology now is able to contribute to this and provide students with information on the eye and visual processing which underpins any understanding of the disease process.

The increased emphasis placed on the contribution of the Discipline to the curriculum has also meant that students now obtain a more uniform experience across the Faculty. The Discipline of Ophthalmology has developed a standardised curriculum, which is now being implemented across the Faculty. This provides certainty for the students in what they need to know and also, importantly, certainty in what teachers need to instruct their students.

In 2008, all the medical students visited the Sydney Eye Hospital Campus for the first time in ten years, since the advent of the new Graduate Medical Program. There is very positive feedback regarding their experience and they were appreciative of the contribution of the academic and hospital staff during their visit.

To reinforce the importance of Ophthalmology in the Medical Program and the effectiveness of the new teaching program, one of the Discipline's PhD students, Tony Succar, is undertaking an evaluation of the current teaching program, to see how effective it is. In addition, we are implementing the virtual ophthalmology clinic, which has been in development for a number of years. It offers an exciting interactive way of marshalling the skills of ophthalmic history taking in a non-threatening way that allows the student to gain confidence before embarking on real-life consultations.

The Save Sight Institute Clinic provides a public face for the ophthalmic skills of the academic department. The academic department brings together a number of clinicians who are respected for their tertiary opinions and who have contributed to the benefits of their subspecialty. The Save Sight Institute, together with Sydney Eye Hospital, provides expertise in the use of novel ophthalmic diagnostic instruments for the benefits of patients and the community. Electrophysiology is one such area. The electrophysiology testing service has been selected as one of the sites for an international clinical trial, the first clinical trial in electrophysiology. This provides recognition for the high standard of work and evaluation performed at the site. Through a number of international co-operations, particularly with the United Kingdom, we have advanced the service provided to patients. For the first time we now offer investigations which give a guide to visual prognoses for patients with retinitis pigmentosa. This has been well received by patients suffering from this condition.

2008 welcomed the selection of Professor Peter McCluskey as the new Director of the Save Sight Institute. This appointment provides the Institute with an exciting opportunity to build on the foundations and advance visual science/research in the NSW community.

## 8. Save Sight Institute Staff

### Patron

**Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir** AC, CVO  
Governor of New South Wales

### Members of Council

**Mr Ken Coles** AM, BE, DUniv, FIEAust  
President

**Professor Frank Billson** AO  
FRANZCO, FRACS

Director (selected Aug. 2008)

**Professor Peter McCluskey** MD,  
FRANZCO, FRACS

Director (appointed Aug. 2008)

**Professor Ramzi Fayed**

**Mr George Harris**

**Mr Max Holmes\***

**Mr Peter Ketley**

**Mr Jean-Claude Legrand\***

**Professor John McAvoy**

**Mr Ben Meek**

**Mr Kerry Williams\***

\*Lions Members

### Finance Committee

**Mr Ken Coles** AM  
Chairman

**Professor Frank Billson** AO

**Professor Ramzi Fayed**

**Professor John McAvoy**

**Mr Ben Meek**

### Ex Officio Members

**Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir** AC, CVO  
Chancellor

**Mr Alan Cameron** AM, BA, LLM(Syd)  
Deputy Chancellor

**Dr Michael Spence** BA(Hons),  
LLB(Hons)

Vice-Chancellor

**Professor Bruce Robinson** MD, MSc,  
FRACP

Dean of the Faculty of Medicine

### Academic Staff

**Professor Frank Billson** AO FRANZCO,  
FRACS (until Aug 2008)

**Professor Peter McCluskey** MD,  
FRANZCO, FRACS

**Dr John Grigg** FRANZCO, FRACS

**Professor John McAvoy** BSc, PhD

**Professor Mark Gillies** PhD,  
FRANZCO, FRACS

**Associate Professor Alexander Klistorner** BMed, PhD

**Professor Jonathan Stone** DSc, FAA

**Professor Roger Truscott** BSc, PhD

**Associate Professor Frank Lovicu**  
BSc, PhD

**Dr Max Conway** PhD, FRANZCO,  
FRACS (NHMRC Neil Hamilton  
Fairley Fellow)

**Dr Samantha Fraser-Bell** MBBS,  
BSc(Med), MHA, MPH, FRANZCO

Senior Lecturer

**Dr I-Van Ho** PhD

Senior Lecturer

**Dr Robyn Jamieson** PhD, MBBS,  
FRACP

Hon Senior Lecturer (based at CMRI)

**Dr Yves Kerdraon** MBBS, BSc(Med)  
(Hons), MBIomedE, FRANZCO

Senior Lecturer

**Dr Georgina Kourt** FRANZCO, FRACS

Clinical Senior Lecturer

**Dr Michele Madigan** BOptom, PhD

Senior Research Fellow

**Dr Con Petsoglou** MMed(ClinEpid),  
FRANZCO, FRACS

Clinical Lecturer

### Clinical Academic Staff

**Clinical Associate Professor Philip Clifton-Bligh**

**Dr Andrew Chang**

**Dr Iain Dunlop**

**Dr Raf Ghabrial**

**Dr Michael Giblin**

**Associate Professor Ivan Goldberg**

**Dr Stuart Graham**

**Dr Paul Healey**

**Dr Alex P Hunyor**

**Dr Yves Kerdraon**

**Dr Gagan Khannah**

**Dr Yong Li**

**Dr John Males**

**Dr Anthony Maloof**

**Associate Professor Kathy McClellan**

**Dr Weng Sehu**

**Dr Gerard Sutton**

**Dr Simon Taylor**

**Dr Sureka Thiagalingam**

**Dr Nitin Verma**

**Dr Richard Wingate**

**Dr James Wong**

### Administrative & Clinical Staff

**Mr Alaa Al-Edwan** MA

Administration Assistant

**Ms Haipha Ali** BAppVisSc(Orthoptics),  
MOAA, AOBCR

Orthoptist

**Mr Giovanni Crasto**

Finance Control Officer

**Mrs Esta Gorgees**

BAppVisSc(Orthoptics), AOBR

Orthoptist

**Mr Alistair Gillies**

Computer Systems Officer

**Mrs Aminah Hamdoun**

BAppVisSc(Orthoptics), AOBR

Orthoptist

**Ms Elizabeth Hawker** RN

Clinical Secretary

**Mrs Widad Kammoun**

Orthoptist

**Ms Asya Klistorner** BMedSci

Electrophysiologist

**Dr Maria Korsakova** MBBS

Electrophysiologist

**Ms Barbara MacDougall** Cert III IT

Clinic Manager



*Barbara MacDougall & Natalie Vrtkovski (front); Haipha Ali, Asya Klistorner, Aminah Hamdoun, Esta Gorgees*

## 8. Save Sight Institute Staff (continued)



**Ms Gisela Payne** Cert III Mkting  
Executive Assistant to the Director

**Ms Anna Sclavos**  
Optometrist

**Mrs Ann Studerus**  
Clinical Secretary

**Mrs Eleanor Viney** BA  
Postgraduate Administrator

**Mrs Natalie Vrtkovski**  
Administrative Assistant

### Lions NSW Eye Bank Staff

**Professor Frank Billson** AO  
FRANZCO, FRACS  
Director (until Aug. 2008)

**Dr Pauline Rumma**  
Acting Director (from Aug. 2008)

**Ms Jenny Yehuda**  
Acting Manager

**Dr Con Petsoglou** MMed(ClinEpid),  
FRANZCO, FRACS  
Deputy Director & Production  
Manager

**Associate Professor Kathy McClellan**  
PhD, FRANZCO, FRACS  
Medical Advisor

**Mr Raj Devasahayam** BAppSc  
Senior Scientist

**Dr Meidong Zhu** MMed, PhD  
Research Fellow

**Mr Benedict Cooper**  
Transplant Coordinator

**Mr Pierre Georges** MSc(Med)  
Transplant Coordinator

**Mr Robert MacDonald** BA(CogSci)  
Transplant Coordinator

**Mrs Helen McKeon** BSc  
Transplant Coordinator

**Ms Kellie-Anne Thomas** BMedSci  
Transplant Coordinator

### Foresight Australia

#### Board Members

**Professor Frank Billson** AO  
FRANZCO, FRACS  
Chairman

**Mr Kevin Gardner** MComm, BBus,  
FCPA, FCIS, JP  
Honorary Treasurer

**Dr Maureen Gleeson** BHA, MHA,  
PhD

**Mr George Harris** BA, LL.M

**Mrs Anne Leach** BA

**Associate Professor Kathy McClellan**  
PhD, FRANZCO, FRACS

**Dr Geoffrey Painter** FRANZCO,  
FRACS

**Mr Muhammad Sultan**

**Dr Nitin Verma** FRANZCO,  
MM(Ophth), MD(Ophth)

#### Administration

**Mr Giovanni Crasto**  
Honorary Accountant

**Mr Kevin Gardner**  
Honorary Treasurer

**Mr Paul Pryce**  
Honorary Auditor

### Medical Advisors

**Professor Frank Billson** AO  
FRANZCO, FRACS

**Dr John Kearney** FRANZCO, FRACS

**Dr Max Conway** PhD, FRANZCO,  
FRACS

**Dr Roger Dethlefs** FRANZCO

**Associate Professor Kathy McClellan**  
PhD, FRANZCO, FRACS

**Dr Neale Mulligan** FRANZCO

**Dr Geoffrey Painter** FRANZCO,  
FRACS

**Dr Gerard Sutton** MS(Oph),  
FRANZCO, FRACS

**Dr Nitin Verma** FRANZCO,  
MM(Ophth), MD(Ophth)

### Foresight Volunteers

**Ms Lea Armstrong**

**Mr Arthur Durham**

**Miss Doris Flood**

**Miss Mary Kane**

**Mrs Anne Leach**

**Mr Don McDonald**

**Mr Bob Morris**

**Mrs Elisabeth Thilo**

**Mr John Wilmott**

### Registrars

**Dr Matt Ball** (Senior until April '08)

**Dr Greg Moloney** (Senior)

**Dr Sophia Dauber**

**Dr Shweta Kaushik**

**Dr Chris Qureshi**

**Brighu Swamy**

### Visiting Fellows

**Dr Martina Bösch** (Switzerland)  
Visiting Fellow

**Dr Shiyng Li** (Republic of China)  
Visiting Fellow

**Dr Yuki Sugiyama** (Japan)  
Post Doctoral Fellow of the S.E.H.  
Foundation

**Dr Nishantha Wijesinghe** (Sri Lanka)  
Visiting Fellow

## 8. Save Sight Institute Staff (continued)



*Professor John McAvoy*

### Research

**Professor Frank Billson AO**

FRANZCO, FRACS, FACS

**Professor John McAvoy BSc, PhD**

Director of Laboratory Research

**Mr Vadim Alkhimov**

Analyst Programmer

**Mrs Mynon Ambadeniya**

Research Assistant

**Ms Christina Adler**

Research Assistant

**Ms Sook Chung**

Research Assistant

**Dr Max Conway PhD, FRANZCO**

FRACS (NHMRC Neil Hamilton

Fairley Fellow)

**Mr Michael Friedrich**

Research Assistant

**Dr Christine Gaston**

MBBS(Hons)

Clinical Research Coordinator

**Professor Mark Gillies PhD,**

FRANZCO, FRACS

**Ms Briony Glastonbury MHSM**

Project Manager

**Ms Ann Gould BSc**

Clinical Research Officer

**Dr John Grigg FRANZCO,**

FRACS

Head of Discipline of

Ophthalmology & Eye Health

**Dr Peter Hains**

Senior Research Assistant

**Mrs Grace Hunt**

Research Assistant

**Dr I-Van Ho PhD**

Senior Lecturer

**Dr Robyn Jamieson PhD, MBBS,**

FRACP

Hon Senior Lecturer

(based at CMRI)

**Assoc Professor Alexander**

**Klistorner BMed, PhD**

**Ms Liudmila Kolmogorova**

BMedSci

Admin/Research Assistant

**Dr Anastasia Korlimbinis PhD**

Research Assistant

**Dr Alice Len PhD**

**Associate Professor Frank**

**Lovicu BSc, PhD**

**Associate Professor Kathy**

**McClellan PhD, FRANZCO,**

FRACS

**Dr Michele Madigan BOptom,**

PhD

Senior Research Fellow

**Ms Jasminka Mizdrak**

Research Assistant

**Mr An Nguyen**

Research Assistant

**Ms Anke Nguyen**

Research Assistant

**Ms Jacqueline Jina Oh**

Research Assistant

**Dr Ken Ooi**

**Dr Hemamalini Srinivasan**

**Ms Jessica Ray**

Research Assistant

**Dr Weiyong Shen PhD**

Senior Research Fellow

**Professor Jonathan Stone**

DSc, FAA

**Ms Rebecca Storen**

Research Assistant

**Mr Robert Rapkins**

Research Assistant

**Dr Richard Stump PhD,**

MPH(Hons)

Laboratory Manager

**Professor Roger Truscott BSc,**

PhD

**Mrs Diana van Driel BSc(Hons)**

Senior Research Assistant

**Dr Natalie Walsh-Conway**

BAppSci, PhD

Research Assistant

**Ms Li Wen MMed**

Research Assistant

**Mrs Maria Williams RN, BN,**

BA, GDipAcuteCareNurs

Clinical Research Officer

**Ms Sung Hooi Yu**

Research Assistant

**Dr Meidong Zhu MMed, PhD**

Senior Research Fellow



*Dr Richard Stump*



*Professor Mark Gillies and his research team*

## 9. Community Activities in Australia



### Lions NSW Eye Bank

I have been fortunate to have been the Director of the NSW Lions Eye Bank from 1995 until 2008. The Lions NSW Eye Bank has been closely integrated with the Save Sight Institute staff, not only through my appointment as Director in 1995, but by virtue of the fact that it occupies space within the Save Sight Institute, which accommodates the coordinators' offices and the Eye Bank laboratory. This integration includes research which is being conducted by staff of the Eye Bank along with staff and post-graduate students of the Save Sight Institute. Research contributions through stem cell research and keratoconus have been of great value thanks to the co-operation of Dr Gerard Sutton, who represents the Transplant Surgeons on the Eye Bank Program Committee, and Professor John McAvoy, Director of Experimental Ophthalmology.

In 1995, the Eye Bank was the subject of an adverse report through a Hospital commission of New South Wales. Since that time, the Eye Bank has grown exponentially and I wish to thank the Eye Bank staff who have served with me and those who remain; particularly Pierre Georges, Helen McKeon and Kellie-Ann Thomas. Finally, most especially, we thank Lions for its partnership with the Department of Health and for its support of the Save Sight Institute. This has been so important in the success of this Eye Bank, now perhaps the leading Eye Bank in Australia.

**Frank Billson AO**  
Director

### Foresight Australia

Foresight Australia is an international non-government development organisation. It is independent of the Save Sight Institute, but integrates with it, the staff serving both institutions. The co-operation has led to the development of a post-graduate degree in international ophthalmic science.

During 2007-2008, Foresight has been part of a consortium of seven international non-government development organisations (INGDO's) recognised by the Federal Government to implement programs in the prevention of blindness in the Asia-Pacific Region. This is in addition to programs it is already involved in, which have been made possible through ongoing donations from the community.

This year, Dr Geoffrey Painter, a Foresight Board member, led the development of a proposal for enhancing eye health in the Solomon Islands. Geoffrey is a member of the International Ophthalmology Committee of the Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO). The proposal includes collaboration with the College of Surgeons, RANZCO and the International Centre for Eye Care Education. I also thank Dr Nitin Verma, also a member of the Board, for his contribution to East Timor since 2001, a program he has led and run, and in which I have shared. I thank both for their continuing valuable service on the Board of Foresight.

I thank the Board of Foresight Australia for its service and I especially want to thank the tremendous contribution of the volunteers in the Spectacles Program. They have made available thousands of glasses to countries in need, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Timor-Leste, the Solomon Islands and Myanmar. They are:

Ms Lea Armstrong  
Mr Arthur Durham  
Miss Doris Flood

Miss Mary Kane  
Mrs Anne Leach  
Mr Don McDonald

Mr Bob Morris  
Mrs Elisabeth Thilo  
Mr John Wilmott

**Frank Billson AO**  
Chairman



*Doris Flood and John Wilmott prepare glasses for despatch to countries in need*

## 10. Teaching Activities

### Postgraduate Students in 2008

#### Students enrolled for PhD

**Allende, Alexandra** - Regulation of choroidal blood vessel growth during development and ageing of macula

**Supervisors:** Prof J Provis, Prof P McCluskey

**Balachandran, Chandrashekar** - Multifocal perimetry in glaucoma

**Supervisors:** Prof FA Billson, Dr SL Graham, Dr A Klistorner

**Jay, Narelle I** - Proteomic analysis of diabetic retinopathy

**Supervisors:** Assoc Prof MC Gillies, Dr A Len

**Lawlor, Mitchell** - The sensory predominance of vision and associations with eyes: opportunities and limitations for eye banking and corneal donation in NSW

**Supervisor:** Prof FA Billson

**Martins, Alessandra A** - Investigation of spectral (blue-yellow) colour objective perimetry in normal states and the early detection of visual field defects in diseased states

**Supervisors:** Prof FA Billson, Dr S Klistorner

**Quin, Godfrey J** - The effect of laser treatment on retinal vascular leak in diabetic retinopathy

**Supervisor:** Assoc Prof MC Gillies

**Succar, Tony** - Outreach ophthalmic care services via telemedicine and the implementation of a virtual ophthalmology clinic

**Supervisor:** Dr John Grigg

**Co-Supervisors:** Dr I-Van Ho, Prof FA Billson

**Zhang, Xinyuan Zhang** - Effect of steroids on retinal dysfunction in macular oedema

**Supervisors:** Assoc Prof MC Gillies, Dr M Zhu, Dr B Bao

#### Students enrolled for Master of Science in Medicine (Research)

**Devashayam, Raj** - Long term corneal storage: implications for eye banking

**Supervisors:** Dr K McClellan, Dr C Petsoglou

#### Student enrolled for Master of Science in Medicine (Ophthalmic Science)

Hewitt, Alexander William

#### Student enrolled for Master of Medicine (Research)

**Chong, Colin CW** - Transforming growth factor-beta in the resolution of ocular wound healing

**Supervisors:** Prof JW McAvoy, Dr F Lovicu

#### Students enrolled for Master of Medicine (Ophthalmic Science)

Athanasiov, Paul	Goold, Lucy Alice	Sharma, Abhishek
Brettell, Dan	Gupta, Aanchal	Sharma, Anamika
Brown, Tani	Hogden, Michael	Skalicky, Simon
Chen, Katie	Hue, John	Tan, Teng Han
Chen, Jern Yee	Kearney, Frances	Tan, Yew Liang
Cheng, Sheng Hsiu	Leong, Belinda Chui	Tanner, Melissa Jane
Chong, Chee Foong	Nakka, Prathyusha	Thew, Michael RJ
Correia, MV	Nguyen, Ethan VH	Tran, Khoi Anh
Davies, Michael J	Pandya, Vivek	Wan, Sue Ling
Do, Helen Hyun-Jin	Raj, Robert	Warrie, Sunil K
Dubey, Rahul	Roufas, Athena	

#### Students enrolled for Master of Philosophy (Research)

Hoi, Michelle  
Lyons, Brian  
Munos-Erazo, Luis

#### Students enrolled for Graduate Diploma in Medicine (Ophthalmic Science)

Bahrani, Farid  
Cornish, Elisa Eleanor Guida  
Green, Matthew David  
Ng, Chinghui  
Ng, Wan Yi

#### Student enrolled for Graduate Diploma in International Ophthalmology

Correia, Marcelino Vincente

## 11. Publications

- Barthelmes D, Gillies MC, Sutter FKP. Quantitative OCT analysis of idiopathic perifoveal telangiectasia. *Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci.* 2008;49:2156-62.
- Barthelmes D, Sutter FKP, Gillies MC. Differential optical densities of intraretinal spaces. *Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci.* 2008;49:3529-34.
- Chen Y, Stump RJW, Lovicu FJ, Shimono A, McAvoy JW. Wnt signaling is required for organization of the lens fiber cell cytoskeleton and development of lens three-dimensional architecture. *Dev Biol.* 2008;324:161-176.
- Chong CC, Stump RJ, Lovicu FJ, McAvoy JW. TGF $\beta$  promotes Wnt expression during cataract development. *Exp Eye Res.* 2008 Aug 26. [Epub ahead of print].
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- Klistorner A, Arvind H, Nguyen T, Garrick R, Paine M, Graham S, O'Day J, Grigg J, Billson F, Yiannikas C. Axonal loss and myelin in early ON loss in postacute optic neuritis. *Ann Neurol.* 2008;64:325-31.
- Klistorner A, Fraser C, Garrick R, Graham S, Arvind H. Correlation between full-field and multifocal VEPs in optic neuritis. *Doc Ophthalmol.* 2008;116:19-27.
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- Shah HR, Conway RM, Van Quill KR, Madigan MC, Howard SA, Qi J, Weinberg V, O'Brien JM. Beta-lapachone inhibits proliferation and induces apoptosis in retinoblastoma cell lines. *Eye*. 2008;22:454-60.
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## 11. Publications (continued)

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### BOOK CHAPTERS

Eells J, DeSmet K, Kirk D, Wong-Riley M, Whelan H, Ver Hoeve J, Nork T, Stone J, Valter K (2008). Photobiomodulation for the Treatment of Retinal Injury and Retinal Degenerative Diseases. In: Waynant R, Tata D (eds) *Proceeding of Light- Assisted Tissue Regeneration and Therapy Conference*, vol I. Springer, New York, pp 39-51.

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Valter K, Kirk D, Stone J (2008). The potential of ambient light restriction to restore function to the degenerating P23H-3 rat retina. In: Anderson E, LaVail, MM, Hollyfield, JG (eds) *Advances in Experimental medicine and Biology*, Vol.613. Recent Advances in Retinal Degeneration. Springer, pp 193-199.

### PATENTS

Australian Provisional Patent Application No. 2008906405, filed 12 December 2008. 'Diagnostic and therapeutic methods'. Inventors: Sutton, McAvoy and Madigan. The University of Sydney.

## 12. Funded Research Projects 2008

### Australian Research Council

Researcher: Stone  
ARC Centre of Excellence in Vision Science (\$104,000)

Researcher: Truscott, McAvoy, Aquilina  
ARC Discovery Grant #0666847: Understanding lens aging: the molecular basis of presbyopia (\$100,000)

### National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Researcher: Gillies  
NHMRC Project Grant #352312: A multicentre randomised clinical trial of a laser treatment plus intravitreal triamcinolone for diabetic macular edema (\$82,000)

Researcher: Gillies  
NHMRC Project Grant #402573: An open-label extension of a randomised clinical trial of intravitreal triamcinolone for diabetic macular edema (\$51,243)

Researcher: McAvoy, Lovicu  
NHMRC Project Grant #457336: The role of FGF antagonists, Sef and Spry, in lens biology (\$102,250)

Researcher: McAvoy, Lovicu  
NHMRC Project Grant #512355: Roles for MAPK/ERK1/2,  $\beta$ -catenin/TCF and Smad3 mediated signalling pathways in TGF $\beta$ -induced cataract (\$113,750)

Researcher: Truscott  
NHMRC Fellowship (2007-11) #457085: (\$119,000)

Researcher: Truscott, Guilhaus  
NHMRC Project Grant #512334: Characterising protein and membrane changes in age-related cataract lenses (\$141,250)

### National Institutes of Health (NIH), USA

Researcher: McAvoy, Lovicu  
NIH, 2 R01 EY003177-27A1: Lens differentiation and cataract: a role for Wnt/PCP signaling (US\$144,039)

Researcher: Truscott, Schey  
NIH, R01 EY013570: Nuclear cataract: role of UV filters and the lens barrier (US\$115,000)

### Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia (ORIA)

Researcher: Di Giralomo, Madigan, Conway  
ORIA Project Grant: Molecular and cellular mechanisms in ocular surface squamous neoplasia (\$49,205)

Researcher: Jamieson, Grigg, Tam, Billson  
ORIA Project Grant: Ocular developmental disorders: molecular genetics and gene function (\$50,000)

Researcher: McAvoy, Lovicu  
ORIA Project Grant: Mechanisms of lithium's promotion of lens epithelial phenotype and inhibition of TGF-beta-induced cataract (\$35,000)

### Sydney Foundation for Medical Research

Researcher: Khistorner  
Sydney Foundation for Medical Research Grant: Early diagnosis of glaucoma & accurate monitoring of progress (\$90,000)

## 12. Funded Research Projects 2008 (continued)

### Sydney Foundation for Medical Research (continued)

Researcher: Madigan

Sydney Foundation for Medical Research Grant: Photoreceptor death and survival in normal ageing and age related macular degeneration (\$70,000)

Researcher: McAvoy

Sydney Foundation for Medical Research Grant: Growth factor regulation of lens epithelial growth and differentiation: implications for understanding normal development and cataract (\$264,000)

### Other Research Grants

Researcher: Gillies

Lowy Medical Research Institute: Treatment breakthrough of idiopathic juxtafoveal telangiectasia; Mactel Project (\$388,814)

Researcher: Gillies

Lowy Medical Research Institute: A natural history of macular telangiectasia (\$113,744)

Researcher: Gillies

Eye Foundation Grant: Fight retinal blindness (\$169,900)

Researcher: Klistorner

National Multiple Sclerosis Society USA Grant: Protective role of myelination (US\$121,500)

Researcher: Klistorner

National Multiple Sclerosis Society USA Grant: Binocular multifocal VEP in optic neuritis (US\$40,000)

Researcher: Klistorner

The Adolph Basser Trust Grant: Optic nerve function and blindness and the evaluation and recording of multifocal VEP's (\$80,000)

Researcher: McAvoy, Stump, Lovicu

Vision Cooperative Research Centre: Dynamic vision project (\$50,000)

Researcher: McAvoy, Sugiyama

S.E.H. Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship: Role of Wnt/planar cell polarity signalling in lens development (\$110,000)

Researcher: Shen

Faculty of Medicine Strategic Research Grant, University of Sydney: Regulation of bone marrow derived progenitor cells for treatment of diabetic retinopathy (\$49,836)

Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) Endeavour Fellowship to Yuki Sugiyama: Role of Wnt/planar cell polarity signalling in lens development (\$25,000)

Researcher: Sutton

Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation: Keratoconus research (\$25,000)

### Grants to SSI for equipment, capital works etc

Lions NSW-ACT Save Sight Foundation: Sorvall Discovery WX90 Ultracentrifuge (\$33,969)

Medical Foundation of University of Sydney: New laboratory construction (top floor Central Block, Sydney Hospital) (\$800,000)

NHMRC Equipment Grants: Zeiss Axio Imager (\$50,115)

Rebecca L. Cooper Medical Research Foundation: Fundus camera (\$20,000)

University of Sydney Major Equipment: Zeiss Axio Imager (\$57,450)

University of Sydney Major Equipment: New laboratory construction (top floor Central Block, Sydney Hospital) (\$200,000)

### Clinical Trials

Gillies: Allergan (\$138,215), Eli Lilly (\$4,766), Novartis (\$69,100), Novotech (\$3,913)

## 13. Financial Statements 2008

### Income Statement for the year ended 31 December 2008

	31 December 2008 \$	31 December 2007 \$
<b>Income</b>		
Grants	2,065,382	2,028,475
Scholarships, Donations and Bequests	414,101	699,819
Business and Investment Income	195,626	149,394
Internal and other Income (See note 2)	1,865,400	913,703
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>4,540,509</b>	<b>3,791,391</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salaries	2,619,810	2,132,048
Consumables	279,275	271,221
Equipment and Repairs/Maintenance	147,415	181,059
Services and Utilities	71,116	* 42,063
Travel, Conferences and Entertainment	187,693	120,565
Other Expenses	220,550	* 488,168
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,525,859</b>	<b>3,235,124</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	1,014,650	556,267
Accumulated Funds as at 1 January	2,919,684	2,363,417
<b>Total Accumulated Funds</b>	<b>3,934,334</b>	<b>2,919,684</b>

#### Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2008

**1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies**

- a) These accounts have been prepared on a cash basis and amounts are stated at historical cost.
- b) Income tax is not applicable to activities of the Foundation.
- c) All fixed assets are expensed in the year of purchase.
- d) Some comparative items have been reclassified to conform to the current year's presentation.\*

**2. Internal & Other Income**

Equipment Grant	600,000	-
Clinical Services	334,577	254,174
Student Fees from Medical Degree	119,912	224,387
USyd Bridging Grant	49,836	-
Consulting & Contract Income	524,426	294,042
Others	236,649	141,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,865,400</b>	<b>913,703</b>

## 13. Financial Statements 2008 (continued)

### Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2008

	31 December 2008 \$	31 December 2007 \$
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Petty Cash	1,000	1,000
Funds Participating in University Pool Interest	3,933,334	2,918,684
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>3,934,334</u>	<u>2,919,684</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u><u>3,934,334</u></u>	<u><u>2,919,684</u></u>
<b>Equity</b>		
Accumulated Funds	3,934,334	2,919,684
<b>Total Equity</b>	<u><u>3,934,334</u></u>	<u><u>2,919,684</u></u>

I certify that the Income Statement and Balance Sheet of the Foundation have been prepared in accordance with the University's accounting practices and procedures. These Foundation accounts form part of The University of Sydney's financial reports which have been audited by the Auditor-General, New South Wales.



Dominic Curtin CA  
Finance Director  
Faculties of Health  
May 6, 2009

## 14. Donations

The SSI would like to thank all of our supporters who have, over the last year, helped us to continue our research, teaching and community awareness programs.

Listed below are the major contributors for the year 2008.

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Mrs Meredith Tait  
Mr Donald M Taylor  
Mr Keith J Webb  
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Dr Hoong G Wong  
Ms Jocelyn Woodhouse  
Mr William J Youll, OAM

*We would like to acknowledge the ongoing generous support of The Claffy Foundation to the Discipline of Ophthalmology & Eye Health for the advancement and propagation of research into the problem of human eye health.*

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I GIVE to the Save Sight Institute, the University of Sydney, the sum of \$..... which I direct to be paid to the Save Sight Institute to be applied for the purposes of the Save Sight Institute in such manner as the Council of Governors may determine.

#### **Property**

I GIVE to the Save Sight Institute, the University of Sydney, my property (insert address) or (my shares, debentures, etc. and describe them, e.g. BHP shares) to be applied for the purposes of the Save Sight Institute in such manner as the Council of Governors may determine.

#### **General**

If you wish to leave the whole or part of your estate:

I GIVE to the Save Sight Institute, the University of Sydney, the whole (or specified percentage or the residue) of my estate or whatsoever nature or kind and wheresoever situated, to be applied for the purposes of the Save Sight Institute in such manner as the Council of Governors may determine.

**For further information, please contact the Save Sight Institute:**

Ms Gisela Payne  
Telephone: (02) 9382 7302  
Facsimile: (02) 9382 7372  
Email: [giselap@eye.usyd.edu.au](mailto:giselap@eye.usyd.edu.au)

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**9382 7302**

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