

# infocus

## FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE GIFT OF SIGHT



## Meet our Outpatient Nursing Unit Manager, Lesley

**If you've been to the Outpatient Unit, you've probably met Lesley McDowell, our Nurse Unit Manager.**

Lesley manages 18 nurses while running the busiest department in the hospital, offering over 70,000 appointments annually.

It's an extremely challenging job, but Lesley says she's inspired by the people she works with.

*"Between providing patient care and completing our quality improvement projects, in a very busy and stressful environment, we still manage to be a close knit family – sharing laughter, tears and celebrating each other's achievements."*

Lesley's priority is to make sure her team feels supported, happy and safe at work.

*"I've noticed when the team is happy, our patients are happier too."*



## Join us in thanking a founding member



**After a distinguished career, Professor Frank Billson AO retired from the Foundation Board at the annual general meeting this year.**

A founding member of the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation in 1981, Professor Billson was the first Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Sydney, starting in 1976 at Sydney Eye Hospital.

He was a surgeon with an intense interest in the science of ophthalmology and was eager that our Foundation should support basic and clinical research. He also recognised the need for

the purchase of specialist equipment which would enhance both teaching and state-of-art care at Sydney Eye Hospital.

Professor Billson encouraged ophthalmology graduates to take research and surgical positions overseas at the conclusion of their Sydney Eye Hospital training to continue their learning and development. He supported Fellows funded by the Foundation, to contribute to research while at Sydney Eye Hospital. His passion and advocacy enhanced the worldwide reputation Sydney / Sydney Eye Hospital has, as a

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centre of excellence in patient care.

Dr Justin Playfair AM, Chair of the Foundation Board recalls, "Frank was eager that our young ophthalmologists and researchers be encouraged to

engage politicians and the community of the benefits of research, the significance of our achievements and the consequences if inadequate funding was not available for research.

"His drive and loyalty to the Foundation and Sydney Eye Hospital has given us a world class hospital and we thank Professor Billson sincerely for this achievement, among many others."

## Grant drives breakthrough in corneal research

**Thanks to your generosity, this 40th anniversary year has been given another important reason for celebration. Your gifts have directly led to a \$1 million grant from the Federal Government for research in the battle against corneal disease and blindness.**

Your support enabled us to give \$480,000 towards this work and made clear how vital the ground-breaking research by Professor Gerard Sutton (pictured second from right) and his team gathered from universities in Sydney, Wollongong, Melbourne and Queensland is.

The team was awarded an additional \$1 million for their Australian Corneal Bioengineering: Novel Therapies to Fight Blindness project under the Federal Government's Medical Research Future Fund Frontier Grants Programme.

### **Bold and innovative ideas**

It will create opportunities for researcher collaborations to explore bold and innovative ideas and make discoveries of great potential and global impact. This will allow the team to continue towards the ultimate goal of producing a bioengineered



cornea, thus reducing reliance on donated corneas.

Corneal disease is the third most common cause of blindness among all age groups and the leading cause of unilateral blindness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Professor Sutton is an Ophthalmologist and Medical Director of the NSW Tissue Bank, and lead researcher. He is excited by the funding injection and potential new treatments for patients needing corneal transplants.

*"We have been fortunate to have had the support and encouragement from the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation."*

*"Without the Foundation our research would not be where it is today," he said.*

### **Thanks to donors**

Congratulating Professor Sutton and his team, Foundation CEO Linda Fagan, said: *"This prestigious funding has the potential to help millions of corneal patients and it is also recognition of how valuable the work of the Foundation is."*

# Thank you for opening the door to the world

**They're here – and it's all thanks to you! In July we welcomed our three new international fellows.**

Dana enjoys hiking, Tun Hang likes spending time with his wife and two children and Taras is an avid runner, swimmer and tennis player.

Hobbies, however, will take second place now as all three are eagerly looking forward to working at Sydney Eye Hospital with our world class professionals.



### **Dr Dana Ahnood**

#### **Medical Retinal Fellow**

Dana studied medicine at the University of London and was drawn to Ophthalmology early in her training. After completing her Ophthalmology training in the UK, she completed a medical retina and uveitis Fellowship at the world renowned Moorfields Eye Hospital, UK. She also undertook Observerships at the Christian medical centre in Tanzania and the Rigshospitalet in Denmark.

### **Dr Tun Hang Yeo**

#### **Eddie Donaldson Vitreoretinal Fellow**

Tun Hang studied at the University of Western Australia and completed his Ophthalmology training in Singapore. He is currently a Fellow with both the Academy of Medicine (Singapore) and the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (United Kingdom). He is also a clinical lecturer at the National University of Singapore.



### **Dr Taras Gout**

#### **Oculoplastics Fellow**

Taras trained in the UK where he taught medical students, engaged in bench-to-bedside translational research, and developed a special interest in oculoplastics, a highly specialised field of plastic and reconstructive surgery. He will take the knowledge and skills he gets here back to the UK and work as an oculoplastics consultant.



# Celebrating 40 years

## Happy 40th Birthday everyone!

**In 1981, a group of compassionate, generous people came together with a mission to help people with blindness, vision loss and eye disease.**

Today, you are part of a group of people with exactly the same mission

This year we launched our 40th year celebrations, and it's a celebration of everything

you've achieved as a supporter. You have provided advanced technology, contributed millions to training the best specialists from around the world and funded innovative research projects. Most of all, you've helped transform the sight – and the lives – of tens of thousands of Australians.

So cheers to you, and Happy 40th Birthday Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation!

## Put a little pep in your step

Next time you visit Sydney Eye Hospital, you can add a little pep with a coffee from the Little Jardin coffee cart in the courtyard.

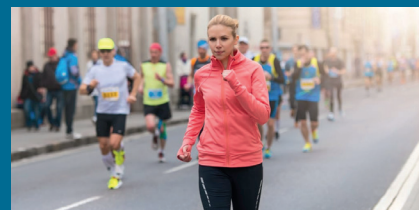


Registered nurses Olivia Huang, Bianca Strong and Shannon Dalton enjoying fresh coffee with Dr Hannah Wood.

## Check out our Community Fundraising page

Put the fun into fundraising to help raise much-needed funds for frontline staff, research and vital equipment at Sydney Eye Hospital.

Scan the QR code below to find out how to join in the fun!



### Blackmores Running Festival

Run across the Sydney Harbour Bridge and finish at the Sydney Opera House! Choose the 3km, 10km, half or full marathon.

**BLACKMORES  
RUNNING FESTIVAL  
19 September 2021**



### Sun-Herald City2Surf

Join our team of Visionaries to fundraise while running the City2Surf.

**CITY2SURF  
17 October 2021**