

MACULAR DISEASE FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Macular
Disease
Foundation
AUSTRALIA

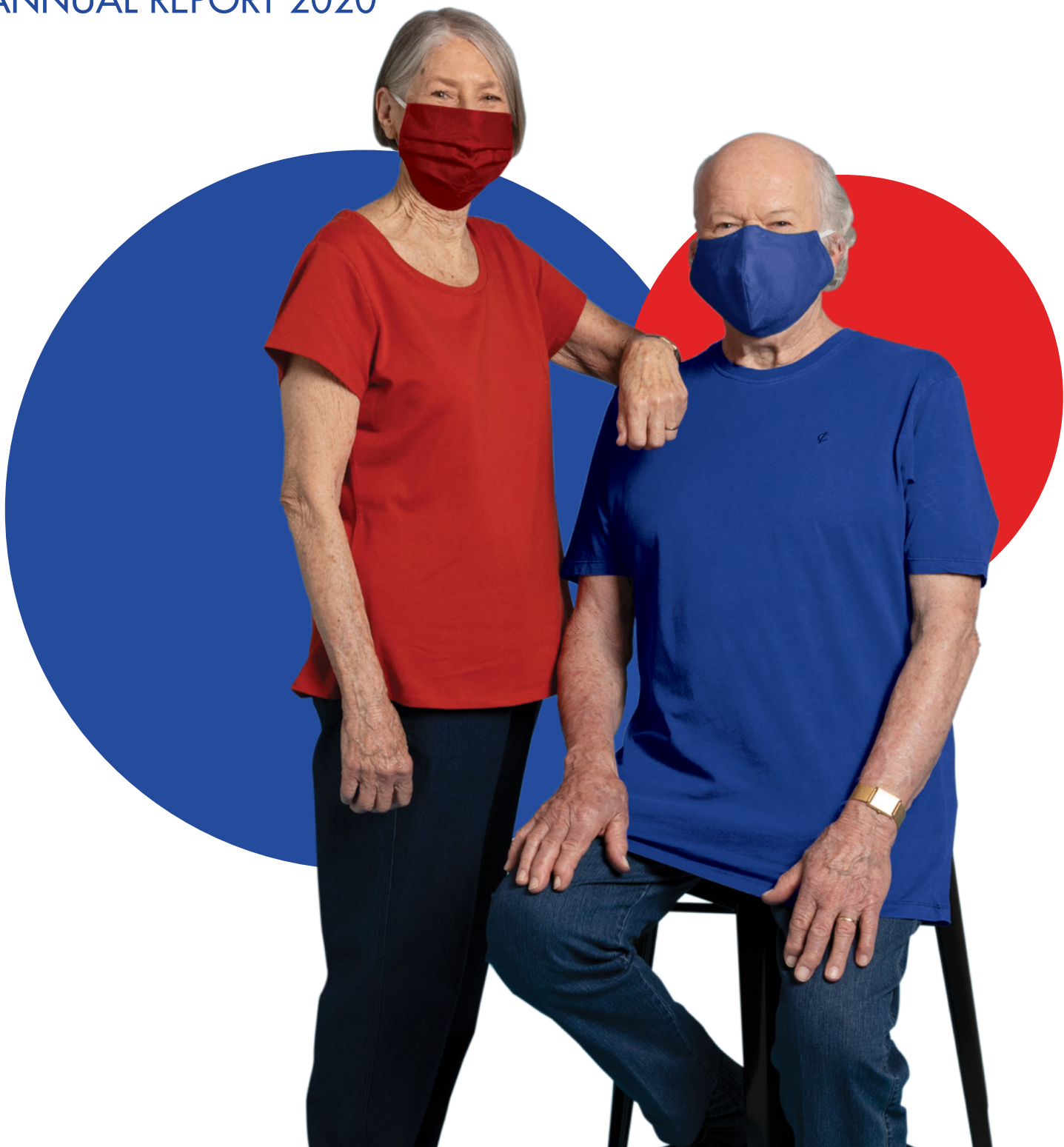


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MDFA acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to the Elders both past and present.

Cover image: Michelle Hauschild

HIGHLIGHTS

2019 — 2020



3.46m potential audience reach of MDFA's campaigns on essential eye health during COVID-19



Launch of landmark Macular Disease Social Impact Study with over 2,100 responses



Commenced major project with PwC on economic modelling relating to increased access to eye injection treatments



4,702 newly registered members of the MDFA community



Launch of new webinar education series with 10 webinars held from March–June 2020



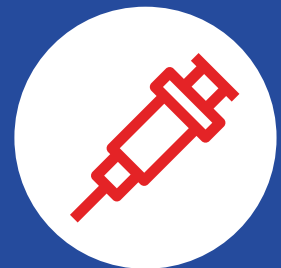
6,114 attendees at education sessions, face-to-face or online



165 MDFA government and non-government submissions and representations on behalf of the community, including 13 policy submissions in collaboration with partners



100% of people surveyed rated MDFA's advocacy as having a high value, while 97% would recommend MDFA services to others



653 people responded to MDFA's survey about the impact of MBS cuts related to intravitreal injections

PURPOSE

What brings us together

Our purpose is to reduce the incidence and impact of macular disease.

VALUES

The qualities we embody

Passion: we care about making a positive impact for our community.

Trust: our work is rigorous and evidence-based.

Courage: we face our challenges and the unknown with courage and embrace innovation.

Collaboration: we value collaboration for collective impact.

Empowerment: our strengths-based approach empowers our community to live optimally with macular disease.

PILLARS OF WORK



**Prevention
& Early
Detection**



**Supports &
Services**



**Voice of
the MD
Community**



**Research
& Data**

IMPACT GOALS

More people at risk of or living with macular disease self-identify and take action

Self-agency and optimal quality of life for people with or at risk of macular disease

Universal entitlement & treatment, rehabilitation and low vision support

Translation of research to support knowledge base for better patient outcomes

UPDATE FROM CHAIR AND CEO

When we set our priorities for 2019–2020, we could never have anticipated the year that unfolded. The devastation of the bushfires, floods and COVID-19 has had a significant impact and presented us all with unprecedented challenges.

Within days of COVID-19, we mobilised our staff to work remotely with minimal disruption to our work or services. This created many challenges but also provided us with opportunities to support our community in new ways:

- We launched a telephone outreach campaign to check in on the health and wellbeing of our community across Australia.
- Due to restricted community education forums, we launched a series of informative and interactive webinars on a range of practical topics.
- In response to reported declines in eye appointments in several states, we launched early public health campaigns to encourage Australians to continue urgent and essential eye treatment while complying with public health guidelines.
- We undertook extensive individual and systemic advocacy work in representing our community's concerns with government, aged care providers and eye health professionals.

Proposed cuts to Medicare rebates for intravitreal injections in the draft report of the Medicare Review Taskforce in Ophthalmology raised real concerns for many members of our community. We rightly invested significant time and funds to develop an economic impact report and an extensive advocacy campaign engaging with Commonwealth and State and Territory governments. Federal Health Minister, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, welcomed the report, and we continue to work with him and other health ministers across the country with a view to strengthen access to sight-saving treatment.

This year we commenced the inaugural longitudinal Macular Disease Impact Study in partnership with the Centre for Social Impact at the University of New South Wales. The findings will provide a stronger evidence base to better support the macular disease community in collaboration with the broader eye health sector.

We take this opportunity to thank members of MDFA's Medical and Research Committees, Audit and Risk Committee, Board, staff, and volunteers who work tirelessly to fulfil our mission to reduce the incidence and impact of macular disease.



Robert Kaye SC
Chairman



Dee Hopkins
CEO



Ita's passionate plea to older Australians

In early 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic hit Australia, it quickly became apparent that urgent public health messaging was required, in a bid to avoid thousands of people unnecessarily going blind as a result of the pandemic.

Fear and confusion around public health protocols led thousands of older, more vulnerable Australians to cancel urgent, sight-saving injections for diseases like wet (neovascular) age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic macular edema. MDFA launched a nationwide media campaign, spearheaded by a community service announcement featuring Ita Buttrose AC OBE.

Ita's calm, reassuring call for action provided clarity and reassurance in a time of uncertainty.

MDFA received positive feedback from the macular disease community and, importantly, ophthalmologists reported marked improvements in patients returning to scheduled sight-saving treatment.



Ita Buttrose addresses the nation in a community service announcement on behalf of MDFA.

PREVENTION & EARLY DETECTION

Impact Goal: More people at risk of or living with macular disease self-identify and take action.



85% of Australians have heard of macular degeneration



168,715 Resources to eye health professionals

Enhancing health literacy

Macular Disease Foundation Australia's annual public awareness program has traditionally focused on Macula Month, held in May. In 2020, however, the planned campaign was postponed due to COVID-19.

In addition to the community service announcement by Ita Buttrose AC OBE, MDFA developed a set of clear COVID-specific messages about sight-saving treatment in consultation with MDFA's Medical Committee and aligned to the Australian Government's public health messages.

This message formed the basis of MDFA's own digital advertising and information campaign. We also provided eye and general health practitioners with digital 'toolkits', allowing them to easily amplify key communications during COVID-19.

In early April, with media outlets restricting the filming of outside broadcasts, MDFA created our own video news releases.

We interviewed leading retinal specialist, Medical Committee Chair Associate Professor Alex Hunyor and two patients. The story highlighted the importance of attending urgent sight-saving treatment. It was aired in the general news and other mainstream media, including national TV and radio outlets, and was shared widely online.

Engaging with health professionals

MDFa has begun work on a multi-year project to develop a new educational program, targeting health professionals using a \$1.5m grant in response to the National Strategic Action Plan for Macular Disease. The objective of this program is to enhance communication with, and the understanding of macular conditions by health professionals such as GPs and pharmacists, so that they can engage with Australians at risk of macular disease. Our aim is to work with health professionals so together, we can increase the number of at-risk Australians undertaking comprehensive eye exams for early detection of macular disease and prevention of vision loss.

MDFa has formed a consortium to co-develop and deliver this important initiative, which includes the Royal Australian New Zealand College of Ophthalmology, Optometry Australia, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

This year MDFa worked closely with the Medical Committee as MDFa ambassadors to engage with other eye health professionals and continued its program of participating in professional seminars, virtual conferences, and tertiary education programs.

MDFa has expanded its associations with independent optometry groups and industry influencers such as MyHealth1st and Oculo. This year we also launched a new email newsletter, Macula Matters, to improve communication and share patient-focused initiatives with health professionals.

SUPPORTS & SERVICES



New webinar series – virtual learning from anywhere

With the pandemic forcing the cancellation of our traditional face-to-face community education forums, we developed a new online webinar education series. The webinars are interactive forums where participants can directly engage with guest speakers. Leading experts such as ophthalmologists, nutritionists, mental health specialists and low vision specialists have shared their expertise to support participants to live optimally with eye disease.

Ten webinars were held this year with attendees from across Australia.

The positive community response to the webinar series means the program will continue, even when restrictions lift. All webinars are recorded and accessible to watch any time on our website www.mdffoundation.com.au.

“Thank you for allowing webinars to happen. It is heartening to know the information being provided. My husband has AMD and I am his wife and carer.”

SUPPORTS & SERVICES

Impact Goal: Self-agency and optimal quality of life for people with or at risk of macular disease.



6,261 National Helpline calls



6,114 Attendees at education events



93% of participants rated our webinars as being excellent or good

As a learning organisation, MDFA has been listening and working closely with our community to ensure our work is focused on what matters most. Our community has been clear.

They have come to rely on MDFA to be the trusted experts on macular disease, but they also want us to be journey experts – support from diagnosis and for life (Hall and Partners Report, 2017).

As a result, we continue to make changes in the way we provide support and services so that we address the changing needs of our community. These changes enable us to focus our priorities in a way that yields the best impact for our community and empowers people living with macular disease to live an optimal quality of life.

National Helpline

With the commencement of COVID-19 restrictions and self-isolation, MDFA initiated a proactive tele-outreach campaign to check in on the health and wellbeing of our community.

Our calls aligned with our public awareness campaigns, promoting the adherence of public health guidelines and the need to attend urgent and essential eye treatment. For that reason, our first tranche of calls targeted those with wet AMD and diabetic macular edema who are receiving intravitreal injections or laser treatment.

MDFA's education team has also been ensuring people have the resources they need to maintain eye health at home, with Amsler grids and nutritional information being particularly popular.

"I miss the information sessions you used to have regularly at various venues. But these webinars are a good alternative. I liked this session about mental wellbeing as the presenter seemed to really understand what people with AMD experience."





Peer support – walk in my shoes

There is considerable research to suggest that peer support is an important component of health care. Whether we live in a busy city, regional or rural Australia, we all benefit from feeling understood by someone who has “walked in my shoes”. We can learn from each other and live healthier lives. Last year we trialled a new Peer to Peer telephone program with our long serving volunteers who all have lived experience of macular disease. Based on the positive feedback, the program expanded this year and continues to be valued by many people in the community.

COVID-19 has halted our plans to trial a new peer support group based in Melbourne. We anticipate this will commence in 2021 led by two new volunteer facilitators. We will evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative and if successful we will consider how we might expand this in other states.

“It really helps to talk to someone outside of the family. It does you a lot of good. I enjoyed talking to Val and afterwards, I felt uplifted.”

Maureen, 89, on the Peer to Peer program

Expanding our footprint

This year we appointed an experienced optometrist based in Melbourne to represent MDFA in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. As well as delivering education forums and webinars, she is collaborating with health care professionals to develop joint initiatives in early detection and prevention of macular disease. Although our plans were delayed by COVID, we have now recruited a part-time community educator and optometrist in Brisbane, with plans for a similar recruitment in Western Australia.

Information and resources

MDFA offers more than 60 free resources including publications, brochures, home monitoring tools and practical fact sheets. Key publications have been produced in eight languages.

Our Medical Committee, comprising Australia's leading eye specialists, oversees all clinical content to ensure our community has access to the latest medical expert information about macular conditions, treatment options and evidence-based advice on minimising progressive vision loss.

This year, we have undertaken a major review and redevelopment of 14 of our publications in consultation with members of our community. The new publications are succinct, easier to read and reflect MDFA's bright and bold new colour palette, designed to showcase that people can live vibrant lives with macular disease.

We thank our community friends and their families who feature prominently in the new publications.

Vision Voice is MDFA's newsletter and is available from our website, mailing service and in CD format. Produced three times per year, this newsletter is distributed to more than 40,000 subscribers and contains the latest information on research, MDFA advocacy and representational activities, and much more.





VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

COVID representations

An unintended consequence of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions was that some patients with macular disease stopped attending appointments for their intravitreal injections. Without these treatments, patients were at risk of severe vision loss or blindness.

Given the need to ensure clear COVID-specific messaging about the importance of continuing urgent and essential sight-saving treatment aligned to the Australian Government's public health guidelines, MDFA engaged more extensively this year with both its Medical Committee and the health sector more broadly. In response to calls from concerned family members and people living in aged care

facilities, we made representations to more than 50 aged care providers seeking to allow residents to access sight-saving treatment without a 14-day quarantine on their return.

MDFA made representations to the federal Health Minister the Hon Greg Hunt MP, all eight state and territory Health Ministers, and more than 20 MPs. We sought their support to communicate the important message in their constituencies that urgent and essential medical treatment was critical during the pandemic.

We continue to monitor the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and how we can best support our community.

Impact Goal: Universal entitlement for treatment, rehabilitation and low vision support.



100% of community survey respondents believed MDFA's advocacy to governments is valuable



165 MDFA submissions & representations, including 13 policy submissions in collaboration with partners



60+ voices of community members added to policy submissions in relation to impact of potential MBS rebate cuts

MDFA campaigns against cuts to Medicare rebate

In August 2019, the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce released its draft ophthalmology report, which proposed changes to MBS rebates for ophthalmology procedures, including a cut to the rebate for intravitreal injections (IVI).

MDFA consulted widely with the macular disease community, including our Consumer Reference Group, and key stakeholders to inform our submission in response to the Taskforce. We received an overwhelming response from our community highlighting the impact that the proposed changes would have on patients as any cuts are likely to be passed on to patients.

"If the 70% cut comes into reality, I will not be able to afford to have the treatments. If I don't have the appropriate treatments for my macular degeneration, I will go blind. It is just that simple."

"I have no central sight in the left eye, there was no effective treatment when I was first diagnosed, and about 70% in the right eye.

"I am desperately trying to protect that, as the thought of being legally blind, and totally dependent on other people is terrifying."

MDFA, jointly with RANZCO, commissioned a PwC report outlining the costed unintended consequences in the event the MBS cut were to proceed.

We made strong representations to the federal Health Minister the Hon Greg Hunt MP, and the Shadow Minister for Health the Hon Chris Bowen MP. We asked that any cuts to the MBS be quarantined until alternative models can be developed so that Australians can be assured of accessing affordable sight-saving treatment. We also met or briefed State and Territory Health Ministers regarding the potential impact on their health systems and communities and discussed the need to collaborate on improving access to public sight-saving treatment, particularly to more vulnerable patients.

Minister Hunt welcomed the report and arranged for MDFA to present it to the Taskforce. We developed a summary document on the potential impact of a proposed cut to share with other peak bodies such as Diabetes Australia and the Consumers Health Forum to inform any submissions they were making. The Taskforce's final report and recommendations are expected to be delivered in late 2020. We continue to monitor this matter and engage with all levels of government.

In June 2020, MDFA commenced a new project with PwC and key stakeholders to develop improved, costed models of affordable and accessible IVI treatment for macular disease. This detailed report will be developed for both federal and State governments.



RESEARCH & DATA

2019 Research Grants Awards

Three leading researchers began MDFA-funded projects in 2020, after being awarded a total of \$600,000 in a prestigious event held at Admiralty House on World Sight Day in October 2019.

The successful recipients of MDFA's Research Grants Program, which aims to reduce the incidence and impact of macular disease, were announced by His Excellency the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Professor Alex Brown from the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute is focusing on diabetic retinopathy and diabetic macular edema in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Dr Audra Shadforth, from Griffith University and Queensland Eye Institute, is investigating the potential for scar-less wound healing in age-related macular degeneration (AMD) patients. The third project, by Dr Zhichao Wu from the Centre for Eye Research Australia, is looking at new methods for improving detection and monitoring of AMD using optical coherence tomography.

Impact Goal: Translation of research to support the knowledge base for better patient outcomes.



\$4.1m in Research Grants since 2011



18 Australian researchers funded across 21 projects from 2011 to 2020



\$1m in Research Grants to be allocated in 2021



2,169 participants in landmark Macular Disease Social Impact Study

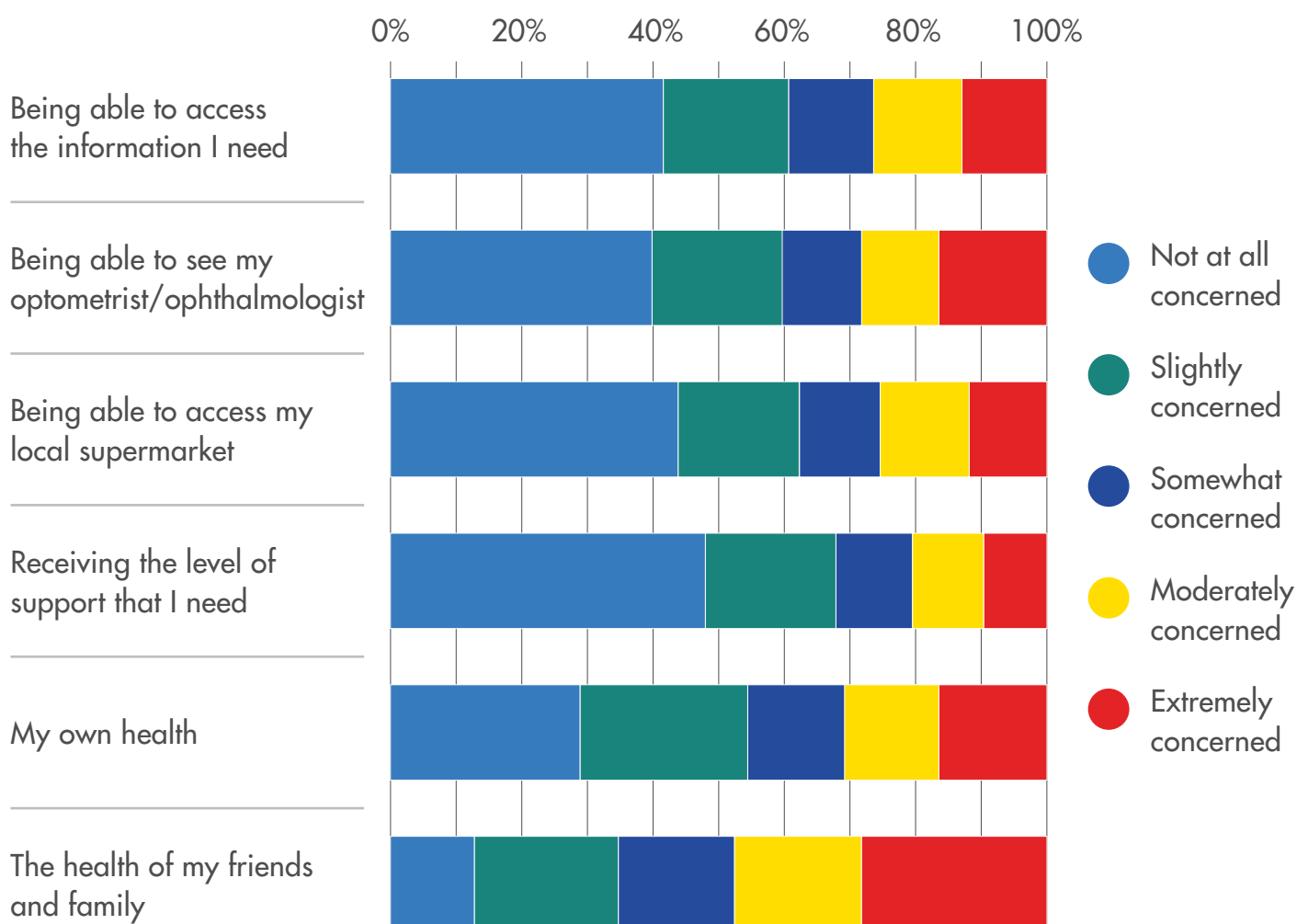
Macular Disease Social Impact Survey

M DFA engaged the Centre for Social Impact at UNSW to conduct the inaugural longitudinal Macular Disease Social Impact Survey, co-designed with input from leading researchers and ophthalmologists. We wanted to gather better evidence of the impact of macular disease, and to uncover how people are coping with their condition, highlighting avenues for intervention and future research.

M DFA invited 16,439 people living with macular disease to participate in the study, with 2,169 responding to the survey. We asked 70 questions about the impact of macular disease on people's lives. Participants were also asked about their concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential impact this may have on their condition and access to care.

Key findings from the baseline survey will be released in early 2021.

How concerned are you about the following aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic?



This survey will be repeated periodically to follow participants through their disease journey. In partnership with researchers and practitioners, MDFA will leverage the Social Impact Longitudinal Survey to facilitate research and to improve practice and inform health policy and is designed to improve outcomes for people with macular disease.

This first survey has been made possible with the generous support of the Fitzpatrick Sykes Family Foundation.

“For a simple survey that was reasonably straightforward to fill out, it has the potential to be an incredibly useful tool for multiple stakeholders. It struck me that it was going to be incredibly useful both immediately and to develop trend analysis and patterns.

“The survey will be a useful policy tool to direct resources to the right areas, with immediate, medium-term and long-term applications.”

- Will Fitzpatrick,
Fitzpatrick Sykes Family Foundation

Research Grants Program

MDFA is currently funding five ongoing studies. In addition to the three projects announced in 2019, which started this year, Research Grants Program funding is facilitating the work of Professor Alice Pebay (University of Melbourne) and Professor Bamini Gopinath (University of Sydney). Three projects have recently been completed.



Professor Erica Fletcher, University of Melbourne

Grant awarded: \$180,000 in 2017

Project title: Targeting monocyte phagocytosis to reduce progression of age-related macular degeneration.

Professor Fletcher’s project investigated the role of immune cells in the development of early AMD. She was specifically looking at the formation of waste deposits in the back of the eye, and whether these occur because of defects in cellular waste removal.

Outcomes: Professor Fletcher found reduced immune cell function in AMD patients. Further, the project showed that small peptides that target receptors can enhance immune cell function *in vitro*. These important findings suggest that immune cells are functionally abnormal early in the disease and that it’s possible to generate therapies that enhance their function.

The results suggest that AMD isn’t just a disease of the eye, but a result of systemic changes. More work is needed to investigate whether targeting monocyte phagocytosis can reduce the development or progression of AMD.

“I appreciate the financial support by MDFA for this important project... we are continuing to explore the application of the information we uncovered.”

- Professor Erica Fletcher



Associate Professor Wilson Heriot, University of Melbourne

Grant awarded: \$30,000 in 2016

Project title: Plaquenil and chloroquine phototoxicity

Project: The anti-malarial drugs chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine are used widely for the treatment of a range of systemic conditions. However, long-term use of these agents is known to lead to macular degeneration.

M DFA's research grant allowed Associate Professor Heriot to develop a model to study the effect on the retina of mice treated with these medications.

Outcomes: The study showed that even after a very short period of drug use (four weeks) hydroxychloroquine treatment made the retina more sensitive to light, however this effect was not observed for chloroquine.

While some mild changes in the retina were observed, overall, no significant damage was noted with either drug in the short term in this animal study.

"Quinine derived drugs such as chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine release toxic compounds when exposed to sunlight and could cause macular degeneration. The mouse model pilot study has shown that, even at low doses and very short light exposure, retinal metabolism is significantly altered.

"This model will allow us to explore longer exposure to mimic patient exposure. If phototoxic damage is confirmed, macular damage may be eliminated with glasses filtering specific colours."

- Associate Professor Wilson Heriot



Dr Fred Chen, University of Western Australia

Grant awarded: \$120,000 in 2017

Project title: Stargardt macular degeneration: finding new genetic mutations

Project: Stargardt disease (also called Stargardt dystrophy or fundus flavimaculatus) is a genetic eye disease, and the most common childhood macular condition. The vast spectrum of disease, which affects about one in 10,000 people, is due to the large number and varied severities of mutations (faults) in a single gene, the ABCA4 gene.

M DFA funding provided Dr Chen with the opportunity to examine the clinical spectrum of Stargardt disease in more than 100 genetically confirmed patients at Lions Eye Institute, Perth.

Outcomes: Dr Chen and his collaborators at the Australian Inherited Retinal Diseases Registry and Murdoch University have identified several novel mutations in their Stargardt patients. They were able to verify the computer-predicted molecular impact of these DNA sequence alterations by examining Stargardt gene processing in the patient's own skin cells.

This has helped establish a streamlined clinical pathway for assessing and diagnosing patients, providing them with opportunities to be considered for future clinical trials.

Dr Chen and his team have now secured NHMRC funding to continue this ground-breaking work.



OUR COMMUNITY

Grant Family Fund: A lasting legacy to 'best mates'

When her beloved father Ron started losing his sight to age-related macular degeneration (AMD), Faye Grant became his primary carer, enriching his last years.

That generosity of spirit continued after her death, with a bequest to MDFA that has the potential to enrich the lives of **all** Australians living with macular disease.

Faye included MDFA in her Will. Her bequest is now being used to fund vital, innovative research into macular disease through the Grant Family Fund, as a legacy to Faye and Ronald Grant.

The Grant Family Fund is a new research funding stream, which will be allocated to early-career Australian researchers working on creative 'blue-sky' projects. Applications are open now and \$100,000 will be allocated in 2021.

The Grant Family Fund will give preference to projects that have the potential to shift current paradigms and have a major impact on macular disease research.

Faye's generous gift leaves a lasting and meaningful legacy. It is our hope that the research sponsored by the Grant Family Grant will lead to medical breakthroughs that will literally change lives.

Our Community: transparency, accountability, for purpose

While the COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for our community supporters to undertake their usual fundraising activities, up until COVID restrictions, people like Joan were still actively supporting us and spreading the word about macular disease

When Joan was diagnosed with wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD) 13 years ago, she refused to let it slow her down. Determined to stay active, Joan makes hand-made cards to keep busy and sells them at the markets to contribute to curing AMD in a positive way.

The money Joan raises goes towards research into macular disease in the hopes of creating a better future for her children, especially as they have a 50 per cent risk of developing AMD because of their family history.

Honouring our bequestors

Leaving a gift in a Will is a generous act of compassion, so it's important that we honour and celebrate this life-changing contribution.

For this reason, Macular Disease Foundation Australia has introduced a new bequest honorary group called Visionary Partners. As a Visionary Partner, members will receive a certificate of appreciation and regular updates on the work of MDFA. They will have an opportunity to attend exclusive events to meet MDFA staff, Board members, researchers, and other like-minded supporters of MDFA.

If our Visionary Partners consent to public acknowledgement, they will join our Visionary Partners Honour Roll in our annual reports. The Grant Family Fund is an example of what can be achieved through the generosity of bequests. For more information on the Visionary Partner program, please contact MDFA.

How we invest your donations

With 8.5 million Australians at risk of or living with macular disease, our donors and Visionary Partners play a vital role in supporting MDFA to reduce the incidence and impact of macular disease for future generations.

Thanks to donations and gifts from generous donors we have been able to invest in the following initiatives this year:

- Build our research grants fund so that we can award \$1m in new research grants for 2021
- Co-commission PwC to develop an economic impact report to use in representing our community to the Australian Government in response to proposed cuts to Medicare Rebates for sight-saving treatment
- Invest in a partnership with the Centre for Social Impact to undertake Australia's inaugural longitudinal study on the Impact of Macular Disease to support our work in representing and supporting the macular disease community more effectively
- Enhance our technology capabilities so that we could mobilise a national tele-check-in campaign during COVID and enable our staff to work remotely without disruption to our services
- Provide training and resources to our volunteers to deliver Peer to Peer tele-support to our community

Supporter survey

It's important for MDFA to check in regularly with our community, to ensure we are providing the best support we possibly can. This year we sent supporter surveys to more than 5,500 patients and carers who joined our community in the past two years. The survey results were compelling and show support for the main pillars of work conducted by MDFA. We thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey.



100% of survey respondents believe MDFA's advocacy to governments is valuable



95% believe it is important to fund Australian research into macular disease



91% of our community place a high value on MDFA's information and support services



95% of our community value our public awareness campaigns.

GOVERNANCE

Board Directors

Chairman: Mr Robert Kaye
SC LLM LLB MAICD

Mr Neil Wykes
OAM BCom FCA AGIA ACIS

Brigadier John Fenwick
BA MBA GAICD AFAIM

Mr Richard Grills

Ms Lisa Lusthaus
BSc App. Psych (Hons)

Ms Imelda Lynch
RN BN MHSN GAICD

Professor Nitin Verma
AM FRANZCO MD MMed Dip NBE

National Research Advisor



Professor Paul Mitchell
AO MBBS MD PhD FRANZCO FRACS
FRCOphth FAFPHM

Thank you and farewell

Professor Nitin Verma

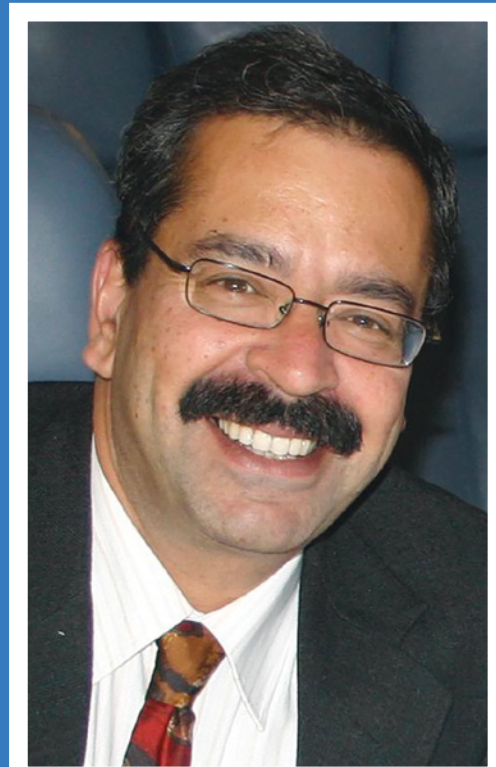
In 2020, we were delighted to learn that Macular Disease Foundation Australia Board member, Professor Nitin Verma, had been appointed President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO).

Nitin has served on the MDFA Board for more than 17 years, and also served as Chair of the Research Committee and as a member of the Medical Committee.

While Nitin has now stepped down from the MDFA Board, he will continue to be a strong advocate for the macular disease community and will continue to work closely with MDFA on a number of projects in his new position as RANZCO President.

Thank you, Nitin, from the Board and staff of MDFA, and our wider community, for giving us your time and expertise over so many years.

We wish you all the best in your new role.



Associate Professor Dimitri Yellachich

We also thank Associate Professor Dimitri Yellachich, who has resigned from the MDFA Medical Committee. We thank Dimitri for his years of service and contribution. We know Dimitri will continue to bring positive change in our wider community.

COMMITTEES

Medical Committee

A/Prof Alex Hunyor (Chair)
Dr Amanda Greaves
Dr Alex Harper
A/Prof Wilson Heriot
Dr David Hilford
A/Prof Anthony Kwan
Dr Tharmalingam Mahendrarajah
Prof Paul Mitchell AO
Dr Grant Raymond
Prof Nitin Verma AM
A/Prof Peter van Wijngaarden
A/Prof Dimitri Yellachich

Research Committee

Prof Nitin Verma (Chair)
A/Prof Anthony Kwan
Ms Imelda Lynch
A/Prof Peter van Wijngaarden

Audit and Risk Committee

Mr Neil Wykes OAM (Chair)
Mr Ashley Chapman
Brigadier John Fenwick
Mr Robert Kaye SC
Mr Paul Rogan

State Chairs

Dr Amanda Greaves (QLD)
A/Prof Wilson Heriot (VIC)
Prof Nitin Verma AM (TAS)
Ms Imelda Lynch (SA)
A/Prof Alex Hunyor (NSW)

Consumer Reference Group

Mr Ashley Chapman
Mr Des Morton
Ms Jenny Solomon
Mr Peter Wilkinson OAM
Mr Richard Grills
Mr Robert Prikulis
Mrs Gillian Prikulis
Mrs Val Nicholson
Mr Jim Pringle

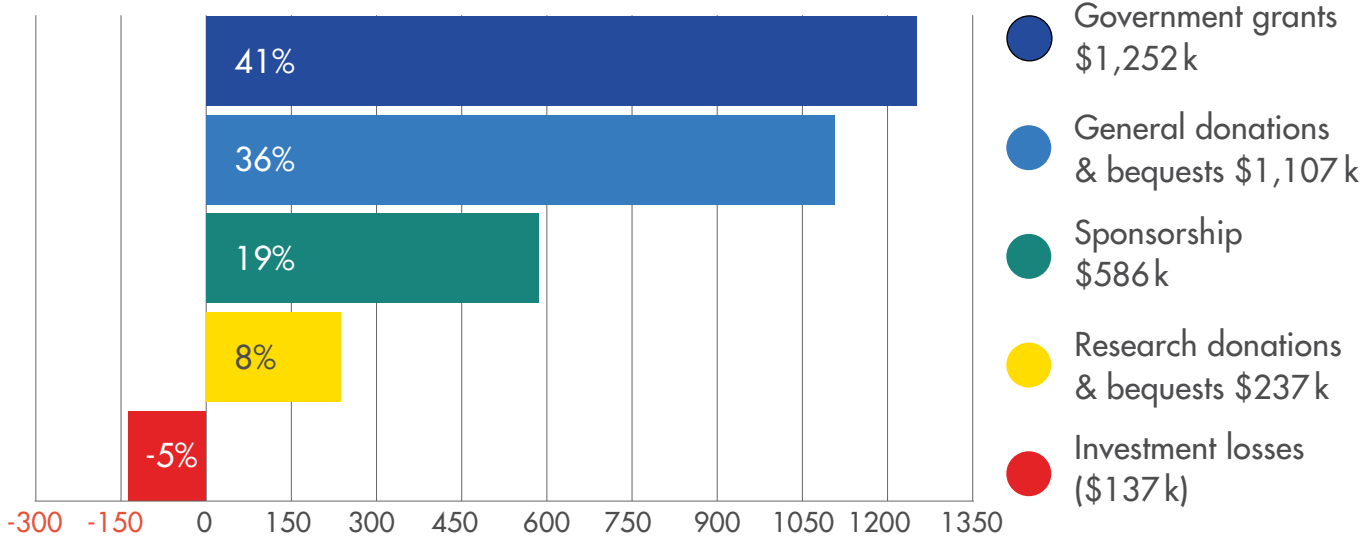


Champions of the macular disease community

We would like to thank Ita Buttrose AC OBE and Jean Kittson for their continuing efforts to raise public awareness of macular disease, and the need for regular eye examinations.

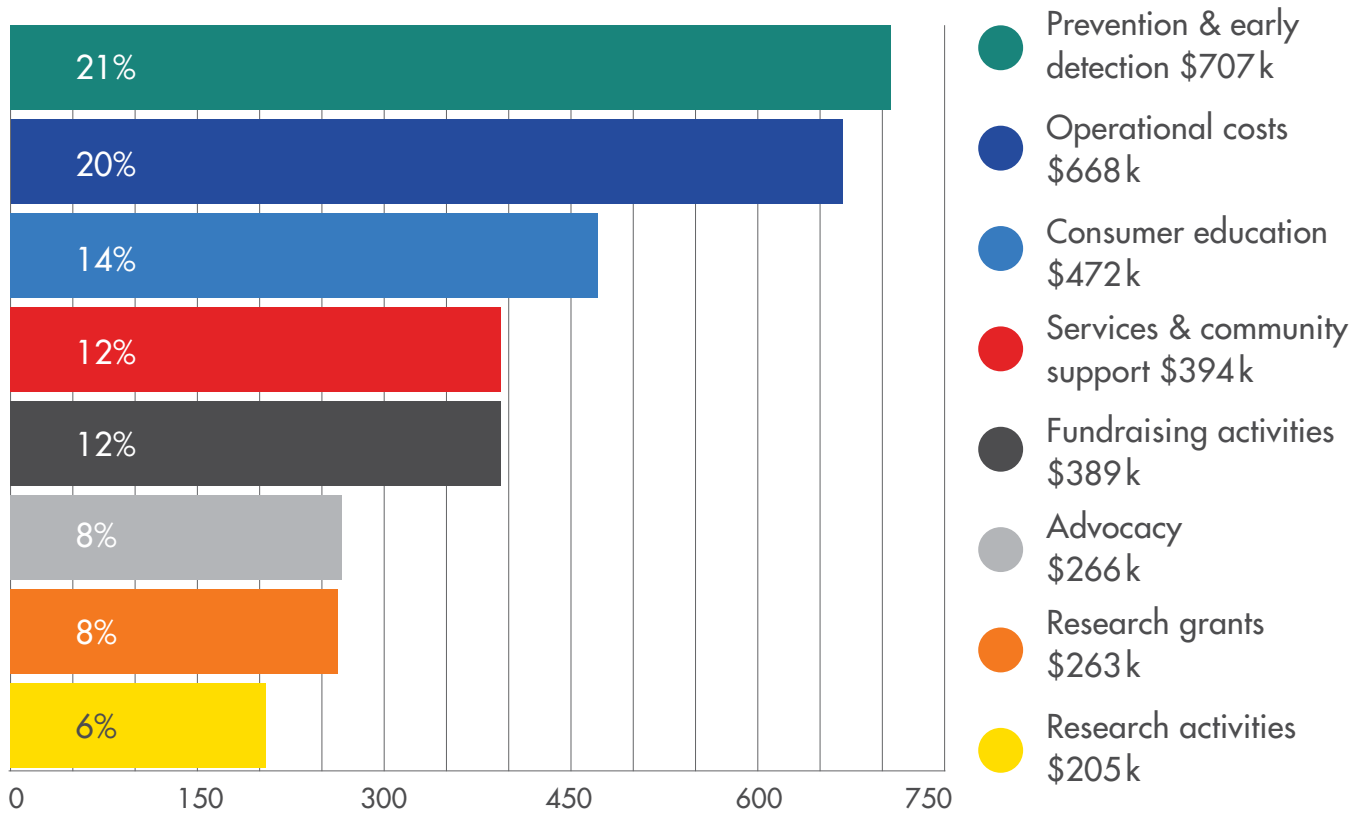
FINANCIALS

Revenues \$000s



Note: Revenues include net investment loss of -\$137k of which unrealised losses on investments were -\$280k.

Expenses \$000s





SUPPORTERS

Supporters

Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club Ltd
Club Forster
West Pennant Hills Sports Club Ltd
Hornsby RSL Club
Magpies Waitara
Lithgow Workies
Dubbo RSL Club
Goulburn Soldiers Club
Goulburn Workers Club
Moree & District Services Club

Trusts & Foundations

Fitzpatrick Sykes Family Foundation
The McBriarty Family
Mills Family Foundation

Visionary Partners

Brian Schafer
DJ Hobden & GM Ricardo
Pamela Taylor
Lloyd Davis
Paddy Beatrix Carter
Nancy Scott
Neville Gallard
Lorraine Young
Elaine Sinclair
Mike & Carol Morphet
Judith Wright
Jennifer Wakeling
Rina Slack
Marjorie Vorsa
John and Margaret Martin

Estates

The Hughes Family Trust Fund
The Estate of the Late Beryl Elaine Slade
The Estate of the Late Nancy Honorah McAulay
The Estate of the Late Faye Grant

Individuals

Owen & Judy Roberts
Richard Williams
Brian R Beaulock
Lyn Franks
Alex Cleave
John and Beverley Harvey

SUPPORTERS

Government Support

Thank you to the Australian and NSW governments for their continued financial support.



Australian Government

Proudly funded by



The Commonwealth's Peak and Advisory Bodies Program and NSW Health support the development and communication of relevant evidence-based information for the macular disease community, health providers, government and other related stakeholders.

The Commonwealth's National Action Plan funding supports projects to deliver on its goals to manage, prevent and treat macular disease.

Funding from the NSW Government contributes to the delivery of comprehensive education and awareness programs, as well as support services to thousands of people in NSW, including those in regional and remote areas.

Supporters

The generous support provided by the following organisations (in alphabetical order) enables the delivery of key initiatives and activities.



A key supporter since 2011, Bayer funding assists with key initiatives in the areas of client services, awareness, education and research.



A valued supporter over the past 15 years, Blackmores funds awareness, research and health promotion programs run by MDFA.

JBWere

JBWere manages MDFA's investments and supports with strategic advice for social return.



Novartis has been a major contributor to our awareness and support services programs since MDFA's establishment.



Perpetual has supported MDFA with in-kind support as well as administering generous Trust & Foundation funds.

Profield FOUNDATION

Profield Foundation has been a long-term supporter of MDFA, helping to fund frontline client services, including the National Helpline, MDFA publications, and awareness and education activities.



We welcomed Specsavers as a new financial supporter in 2018. Specsavers funding will enable the development of new macular disease initiatives.



The story behind our cover shot:

2020 is certainly the year of the mask, and we thank our volunteers Jim and Clare for taking part in our photo shoot for this year's cover.

Clare started volunteering for MDFA in 2006. Jim will tell you he's been at MDFA "since the ark pushed off". In reality, he started about six months after Clare and literally days after being diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

"In those days, you just would go blind. I wanted to go to the source for information. I enjoyed volunteering, I made some changes to my lifestyle and my diet and all these years later, I'm still mobile, can still see the TV and can still drive a car," Jim says.

While our "vollies" help out in many ways, one of their primary tasks until the pandemic was to pack and send publications to members of our community. There's always laughter and chat around the large table reserved for this purpose.

Jim, Clare and others are also part of our successful Peer to Peer program, providing members of our community with the opportunity to speak to someone with experience of macular disease.

Over the past 14 years, Jim and Clare have formed a strong friendship, bonding over interests in art and music... and their cheeky senses of humour. A few years ago, Clare invited Jim and his wife Mary on a group tour of Japan. The trip was such a success, Clare and Mary returned the following year (leaving Jim in Australia).

While our volunteers have been unable to come into the office during COVID-19, we've been checking in on them regularly... and they've all been checking in on each other.

"It's been very difficult for older people during the pandemic," Clare says. "We haven't seen each other for months. I miss that contact, but we've all kept in touch."



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