

Special One Decade edition

One decade and the launch of MD Awareness Week 2011

At the launch of Macular Degeneration Awareness Week 2011, the Foundation celebrated one decade of service to the Macular Degeneration community with a gala fundraising dinner at the Sydney Hilton Hotel on Friday 20 May. It was a wonderful evening acknowledging so many supporters and expressing our heartfelt thanks for the enormous contribution of Dr Paul Beaumont, our founding director.

Ambassador for the MD Foundation, actor and comedian, Jean Kittson, was superb as our MC, making for an enjoyable and memorable evening. Our wonderful patron, Ita Buttrose, launched our awareness week and presented the winners of the mEYE World Photographic Competition with their prizes.

NSW Minister for Health and Research the Hon. Jillian Skinner MP kindly launched the Macular Degeneration Foundation Research Grants Program fundraising appeal to raise \$10 million over the next 10 years to help find a cure for MD.

This Grants Program is a major initiative and reflects the Foundation's long term commitment to research on MD. We are kick starting the research to help find reasons and answers for this disease by providing an initial allocation over the next three years of \$1.5 million from our reserves.

I hope you enjoy and treasure this edition of the newsletter, which outlines our grants program, how you can help and announces our brand new free publication, the 4th in our series of guides, *Low Vision Aids & Technology – A Guide*.

Julie Heraghty

Chief Executive Officer



Patron, Ita Buttrose announcing the mEYE World Photographic Competition Grand Finalist, Delma Wheatley



Dr Paul Beaumont and Peter Brown, Foundation Board Director



Hon Jillian Skinner launching Macular Degeneration Foundation Research Grants Program



CEO, Julie Heraghty and MD Foundation Ambassador, Jean Kittson

Thank You!

Thank you again for your ongoing support. As we draw quickly to the end of this financial year please be assured that all of your generous donations made before 30 June will be processed immediately to ensure receipt in the 2010/11 financial year for taxation purposes.

About the Macular Degeneration Foundation Research Grants Program

The Macular Degeneration Foundation aims to raise \$10 million over the next 10 years for research into MD. We have begun the journey to find a cure by providing an initial research allocation over the next three years of \$1.5 million from our reserves.

Applications for the Foundation's initial research allocation opened on Monday 23 May. Successful grant applicants will be announced by the Foundation on World Sight Day, 13 October 2011. We will inform you of our first research grantees in your Summer edition of the newsletter.

The number of people with this disease (in some form) will double in the next twenty years if we do not find a cure. With our ageing population, very soon everyone will know someone who is at risk of blindness from Macular Degeneration.

We know many people want to support research into MD to help find the answers to this disease and the MD Foundation's Research Grants Program will now provide this opportunity.



Dr Paul Beaumont with Paul Rogan, Foundation Board Director and Chair of the Research Committee

"I didn't think it was possible in my life time to ever say to a patient that I could save their vision. It only has been through research that we have been able to do this and now further research may help us realise the dream – to find a cure," said Dr Beaumont.

Macular Degeneration Foundation Research Grants Program How can you help?

- If you would like your donation this quarter to go to the Research Grants Program then tick the "research" box on your donation form
- If this is left un-ticked then your donation will go, as usual, to the ongoing work of the MD Foundation
- With the formal establishment of the Macular Degeneration Foundation Research Grants Program, you may like to consider a bequest which supports this program. Please contact the General Manager, Lucy Walker or the CEO, Julie Heraghty on 1800 111 709
- You may also like to consider a substantial donation which could support a research fellowship with naming rights
- You may like to ask your, or your friends', local club or social group to fundraise on your behalf for the Foundation

Jean Morton

Jean Morton is a very special ten year friend of the Foundation and we are so grateful that Jean agreed to share her very personal story. Jean's story provides the real reason why research is the key and support for the program is so important.

Jean's story

Over 18 years ago I had a bleed at the back of the eye while driving. There was this black spot in my vision and I couldn't see properly. I just didn't fully understand what was happening at the time and it took a number of weeks for me to get it checked out. No one at that time picked up that I had wet Macular Degeneration.

The Macular Degeneration Foundation did not exist back then and there was nowhere to get help. I eventually heard of Dr Paul Beaumont who then gave me my diagnosis and told me all about Macular Degeneration.

My sight around that time deteriorated quickly. My whole world had changed – what do I do, where do I go? I felt that I just had to keep doing things, to keep going. I loved patchwork quilting and sewing and I belonged to Inner Wheel. I love cooking and being involved with the community. No matter how bad the situation, I felt I had to find a way to keep going and live life!

I believe in being positive and taking an interest in everything around me.

I have always wanted to fit into society and I have always found ways of continuing to do that since losing my sight. In the past 18 years there have been great steps forward in diagnosis, treatment and the availability of information on Macular Degeneration and I am so grateful to the Foundation for their wonderful work.

"It saddens me that current treatments and information were not available for me. I hope my story will highlight the importance of everyone joining with me to help support the work of the Foundation and help fund research, so that my children and grandchildren and all Australians will be able to see a great future without Macular Degeneration".



***Jean Morton,
dear Friend
of the
Foundation***



"I feel very confident about the next ten years. A massive investment in research could really make a huge impact on saving the sight of all Australians who are at risk of this disease," Ita Buttrose.

With your help, in the next decade, we will continue to grow and build upon our good work while we strive to find both reasons and answers for this disease. We need to find a cure while continuing to improve the lives of those living with the disease.

Raising \$10 million in the next 10 years will be a challenge, but we must give it our best. Nothing is impossible as we have come so far in ten short years; just think what we could achieve in the next ten years! We are all hopeful we can help find a cure, a way to prevent this disease, so that all Australians can see a future.

Thank you to all...

Thank you to everyone who has been involved with the MD Foundation from one day to one decade. Our newsletter recipients are the heart of our organisation. We value your support and commitment and we look forward to our next 10 years together.

At one decade we paused to thank some special people who have given a great deal to the Foundation for ten years.

Dr Paul Beaumont

Thank you Dr Paul Beaumont for your courage in establishing the Macular Degeneration Foundation, for your commitment to the Foundation, patients, their families and carers. Thank you for your vision for a patient driven organisation to reduce the incidence and impact of Macular Degeneration in Australia.



Chairman, Elizabeth Carr congratulates Dr Paul Beaumont on 10 years of service

Dr Paul Beaumont is the founding Director of the Macular Degeneration Foundation and served the first Chairman's term from 2001 to 2004. He had a vision to develop a patient focused organisation to improve the lives of Macular Degeneration patients, their families and carers. Over the last ten years Dr Beaumont's roles have included Chairman of the Board, Medical Committee Chairman, NSW State Chairman and member of the Research Committee. He has committed unlimited time, expertise and energy to teach, train and support the MD Foundation staff and educate patients and professionals.

Professor Paul Mitchell

The Foundation thanks Professor Paul Mitchell for ten years of commitment to the Macular Degeneration Foundation as its National Research Advisor and for sharing his world recognised expertise and knowledge for the benefit of all.



Professor Paul Mitchell, MD Foundation National Research Advisor

Our Sponsors

A special thank you to our original sponsors who have been with us for 10 years – Blackmores, Novartis, Profield Foundation, Quantum, Ernst & Young and Mallesons Stephen Jaques.



***Chris Pangilinan
Ophthalmics
Franchise Head
Novartis***

The Blackmores Dr Paul Beaumont Research Fellowship

In recognition of the extraordinary work performed by Dr Beaumont, the Foundation has announced the Blackmores Dr Paul Beaumont Research Fellowship of \$40K per year for the next 5 years. This \$200K commitment, kindly donated by Blackmores, is to facilitate and expedite research into nutritional and/or lifestyle aspects of Macular Degeneration. The Foundation thanks Marcus Blackmore Foundation and Blackmores Foundation for this very generous contribution to research in this country and their ongoing support of the work of the Foundation.



Christine Holgate, CEO Blackmores, announces the Blackmores Dr Paul Beaumont Research Fellowship

Our Volunteers

Janet Waters - longest serving volunteer

Janet Waters is our longest serving volunteer. She has given service to the Foundation every week for the last 10 years. She was invited to cut the one decade cake at the gala fundraising dinner to represent all of our wonderful volunteers who work tirelessly on our behalf. Thank you Janet, and thank you to all our vollies!

Janet's story

I was diagnosed in November 1995 with Macular Degeneration. At that time there was no cure, no treatment and little was known about the disease. It was devastating to be told I could lose my sight. I became involved with the Foundation back in 2001 and I am very grateful to the staff who have always been so helpful to me in all aspects of my vision loss.

I am thankful for the information the Foundation provides by way of the website, newsletters, research updates and advice from the staff for any problems I may have. I am pleased to have been able to volunteer and be of practical assistance to the Foundation.

I hope my volunteering has helped the Foundation to assist others who find themselves faced with a future of vision loss and in need of support and advice. My heartfelt congratulations to the Foundation on the last 10 years and I wish the Foundation all the very best for the future.



Janet Waters, the Foundation's longest serving Volunteer

MD Awareness Week 2011 - Patron, Ita Buttrose launched MD Awareness Week 2011

The Foundation conducted its first ever mEYE World Photographic Competition, inviting people to capture their unique story through the lens of a camera and help raise awareness of Macular Degeneration. Entrants were required to submit their photograph with 50 words or less to explain how their entry depicted the theme, "eyes on the future".

There were over 450 entries from all across Australia. The winners are listed below with the grand prize winner being Delma Wheatley (WA).



***Grand finalist, Delma Wheatley's,
winning photo***

Delma wrote "Having Macular Degeneration I often see life through the lens of my camera; capturing this tree in its glory, basking in the sun saturating her in rich gold dust like magic, creating a home for all creatures that lay solitude to this land. This tree gives testimony to life surviving this harsh environment as research gives future hope for curing MD".

Winners of the mEYE World Photographic Competition left to right in the photo:

- **Tsung-Heng Kuo – Open category (Vic)**
- **Charlotte Farquharson – Junior (Under 18) category (Qld)**
- **Ita Buttrose – Patron MD Foundation**
- **Delma Wheatley – Macular Degeneration Community category (WA) and grand finalist**
- **Ian Robertson (optometrist) – Healthcare Professional category (WA)**

You can visit www.meyephotocomp.com.au to view a range of photos entered and the final winners.



Patron, Ita Buttrose, and mEYE World Photographic Competition Winners

Low Vision Aids & Technology – A Guide

We are proud to provide you with the long awaited fourth guide in our series. We are very excited to be able to offer this publication which complements our other three guides produced by the Foundation:

Low Vision - A Guide: a practical introduction to living with low vision

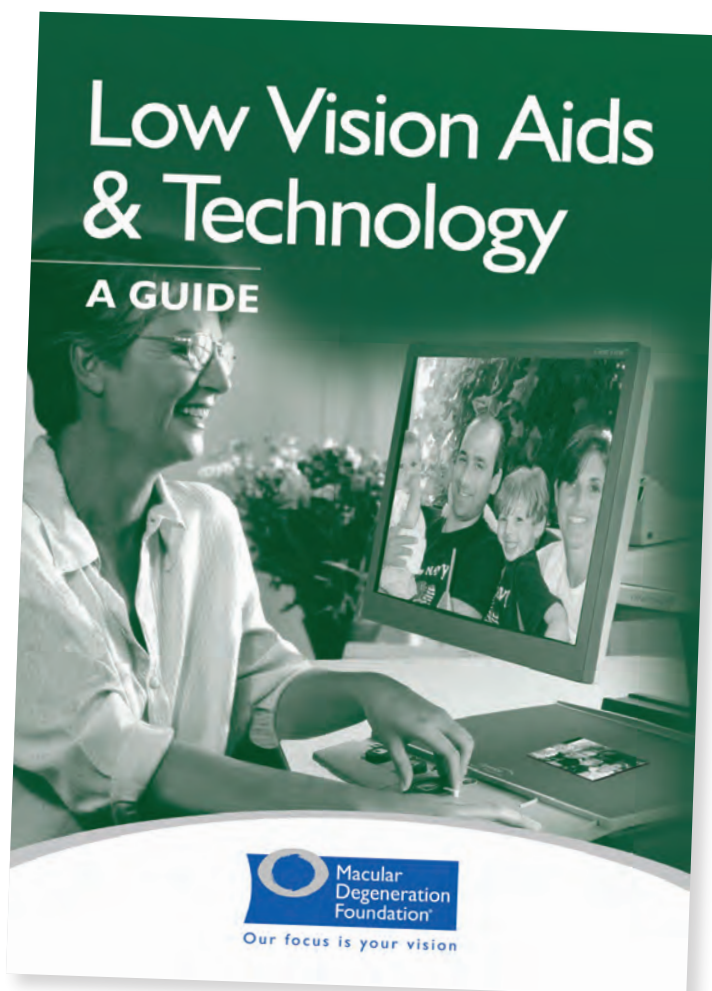
Family, Friend & Carer - A Guide: for people providing care to a person with low vision

Slips, Trips & Falls - A Guide: provides practical advice on avoiding falls

Low Vision Aids & Technology - A Guide is a resource for those on the low vision journey to help navigate the aids and technology pathway.

It provides information on the different types of aids, equipment and technology which can assist those with low vision in many different settings from home to work. It answers key questions often asked by people with low vision, their family and carers. It also provides examples of how aids and technologies have helped many people with a vision impairment to achieve the goal of maintaining quality of life and independence.

The guide covers a range of resources including simple hand-held optical magnifiers to more technology based options such as electronic magnifiers, reading machines and computer software.



Critical to getting the best outcome from using aids and technology is recognising that each person is different, has specific individual needs and that solutions exist to meet those needs.

Being informed, accessing appropriate services, having a positive approach and remaining open to learning new ways of doing things are key elements to great outcomes in the use of aids and technologies.

Thank you to the Federal Government and the Department of Health and Ageing for the funding which enabled us to produce the guide. We hope you find the guide useful and helpful.



Please phone the MD Foundation now on 1800 111 709 for your free copy, even if you have formerly registered to receive this guide.

A special honour! Introducing Beau!



Last newsletter we reported that Royal Society for the Blind (SA) had generously allowed our newsletter readers to name one of the RSB pups. We were overwhelmed with suggestions and they were all so creative and thoughtful. One name was suggested by eight people - Beau. The winning entrant, Christine Hardy from Qld, was drawn from the eight out of a hat.



Christine wrote "thinking about the wonderful achievements of the MD Foundation over the last ten years, the care and commitment of many people come to mind, especially Dr Paul Beaumont. Perhaps a small way to acknowledge and honour Dr Beaumont is by naming the puppy after him."

Beau is a male puppy and has only recently been placed with his RSB puppy educator. He now commences his early training which over the next twelve months will see him learn to socialise, travel on trains and buses, learn commands and visit shops and public places. He has a busy and challenging time ahead and we will keep you informed of his journey.

Beau has big footsteps to follow if he excels in his profession as his namesake Dr Paul Beaumont

Diary Note: Education Sessions

Location	Date & Time
Perth – Riverton	Monday 20 June, 2.00pm – 4.00pm
Perth – Mosman Park	Thursday 23 June, 10.00am – 12.00pm

Bookings are essential – call the Foundation on 1800 111 709

Donations – thank you

Thank you for supporting the Macular Degeneration Foundation. As a charitable organisation, we rely on your generosity to service the MD community across Australia. If you are able to help us at this time, a donation slip and reply paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience. You can also make a secure online donation using your credit card at: www.mdfoundation.com.au

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible

Thank you to all our wonderful supporters for your ongoing generosity.

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It is intended as a newsletter and its contents do not constitute medical advice and should not be relied on as such. June 2011