

Project Vision

The MD Foundation has conducted a nationwide client-based research project titled Project Vision. The research was undertaken to ascertain the experiences, the needs and the extent of knowledge about the disease amongst the members of the MD Foundation.

In future newsletters we will provide more details of the results, but below are a few of the key findings:

- Almost all of those who have MD inform their families that they have developed the condition. They encourage their families to take precautions against MD, such as

having regular eye checks, dietary changes, stopping smoking and wearing sunglasses.

- 75% of members living with MD are aware of steps they can take to slow its progress.
- 83% of members with MD are aware of the Amsler grid, while 60% use one.

Thank you to all of those who participated in the survey. Many of you will have dealt with Laylla Amnsor, the Foundation's Research Officer, who has undertaken the project over the last year. The Foundation thanks Laylla for her commitment and dedication to Project Vision.

Office of Fair Trading Seniors Guide

The Office of Fair Trading in each state produces a Seniors Guide which contains consumer information for older Australians. The Guide contains information on buying and/or selling a house, renovating your home, buying and/or repairing a car, shopping wisely, travelling, managing your finances, seeking healthcare, wills and funerals as well as a list of useful contacts such as Council on the Ageing (COTA) in your State.

There is also information available on the services provided by the Office of Fair Trading; such as helping consumers and businesses understand their rights and responsibilities. Call the Office of Fair Trading in your State for more information on services for seniors.



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How Can I Make a Donation?

As a charity, the MD Foundation relies on donations, bequests and sponsorship to fund its operations. A donation slip and reply paid envelope is included with this newsletter for your convenience. The Foundation thanks contributors for their ongoing support.

You can now make a donation to the MD Foundation online using your credit card. This secure method of payment allows you to instantly make a donation at a convenient time for you, any time of the year. For tax purposes, a receipt will be e-mailed to you on payment.

And remember - all donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Want to contact us?

Phone 1800 111 709 or visit our website www.mdfoundation.com.au



Our focus is your vision

Newsletter

WINTER
2nd Edition 2008

Ready, Steady, Cook

The MD Foundation will feature on the popular Channel 10 cooking show, **Ready, Steady, Cook** on **Thursday 7 August, 2008 at 2:00pm Eastern Standard Time (EST)**. Be sure to check your TV Guide to confirm the scheduled time in your State.

In this special celebrity edition of the show, writer, comedienne and MD ambassador Jean Kittson cooks for the Tomato Team, while Blackmores nutritionist Pam Stone cooks for the Capsicum Team.

The program will showcase recipes which contain ingredients good for eye health, such as spinach, salmon, sardines and pumpkin.

It is important to eat foods which are good for your macula. The right diet and a healthy lifestyle can help to reduce your risk of developing MD and help slow down the progression of the disease.



Be sure to watch

Ready, Steady, Cook

on **Thursday 7 August 2008**

on **Channel 10** at **2:00pm (EST)**

to learn new eye-healthy recipes and cheer on your favourite team!

New Federal Funding for GP Education

The MD Foundation has been one of the successful applicants for Federal funding to improve the knowledge and skills of GPs with respect to MD.

The Foundation will be developing new training resources for GPs that will include the most up-to-date scientific evidence regarding the prevention, detection and management of MD.

The project will run for two years. In year one, GPs in key at-risk population areas in NSW will receive the pilot training package which will be evaluated and then rolled out to the rest of NSW, QLD and VIC in year two.

This initiative is significant as it provides crucial information on MD to 'front-line' health professionals and thereby increases the chances of early detection - something that has the real potential to save sight.

Education

Awareness

Research

Support Services

Representation

DISCLAIMER: This Newsletter is produced by the Macular Degeneration Foundation Australia. It is intended as a Newsletter and its contents do not constitute medical advice and should not be relied on as such.



Mr Ross Field

Sadly we wish to inform our MD community of the passing of dedicated Foundation supporter, Mr Ross Field. Mr Field passed away on Sunday 8 June 2008.

Mr Field was a generous philanthropist and a great believer in the MD Foundation's work. His support enabled the Foundation to implement the Navigator Library Access Project and funded the position of a Client Services Officer. Mr Field was a very private and humble man who quietly changed the world for others with MD while living with the disease himself. He will be greatly missed as a friend of the Foundation.



Mrs Margaret Bresinski

It is with great sadness that we wish to inform our MD community of the passing of the wonderful Margaret Bresinski. Margaret died suddenly but peacefully at Royal North Shore Hospital, Sydney on Saturday 31 May 2008. Margaret was one of the MD Foundation's original volunteers and has been a part of life at the Foundation for four-and-a-half years. Her hard work and dedication to the Foundation will be greatly missed by her fellow volunteers and Foundation staff.



Racing to Get the Message Out There

Congratulations to David McCowage, who won the Snap-On Nitro Champs competition in his dragster racing car on 3 May, 2008.

David showed his support for the work of the MD Foundation by adorning his car with the Foundation logo and "How's Your Macula?" image.

The event, held at Western Sydney International Dragway, was attended by 40,000 people. On the day, the Foundation received some great exposure including: public announcements regarding Macular Degeneration, leaflets were handed out to the crowd as they wandered through the pits, and David was interviewed for television and photos of his car with the MD Foundation logo have been published in Drag-Racing magazines.

The Foundation would like to thank David for his commitment to raising the awareness of Macular Degeneration.

Large-Print Crosswords

There are large-print crossword magazines available for people with low vision. Often people find that reading the tiny print in newspaper crosswords becomes difficult when experiencing vision loss.

Large-print crosswords have large letters for the clues, large boxes to fill in the answers, and are well spaced. These crossword magazines are often available from your local newsagent or some bookstores.

MD Foundation Supports Improved Access to Audio Description in Electronic Media

The MD Foundation has added its voice to the call for improved access to Audio Descriptive (AD) in the electronic media.

It has made a submission to the Federal Government's Enquiry on Access to Electronic Media for the Hearing and Vision Impaired. The enquiry is considering the issue of access to television (both free-to-air and subscription), cinema and downloadable media. In particular it is looking at captioning for the deaf and hearing impaired and audio description for the blind and vision impaired.

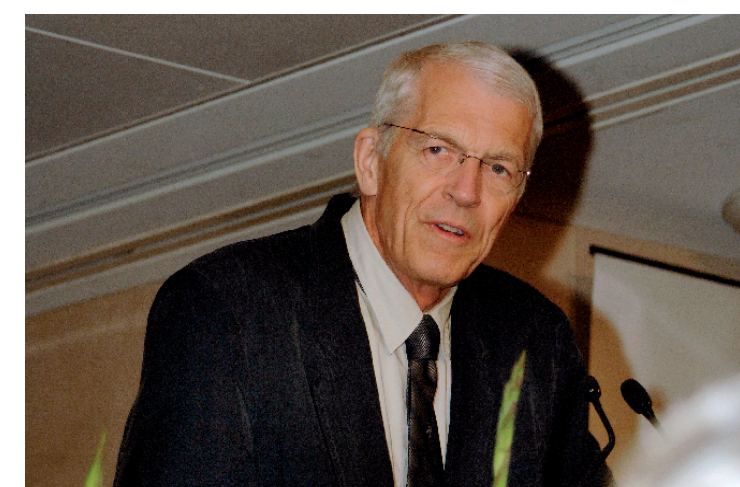
Audio description is the descriptive narration of all the visual elements of a TV program, movie, DVD, performance or other media, giving access to people who are blind or vision-impaired, without interfering with the original soundtrack.

AD may be pre-recorded and delivered as an option for television programs or DVDs, or it may be performed live, for example, for a theatrical performance.

For more information, the Department's discussion paper is available on their website www.dbcde.gov.au or go to the website of Media Access Australia at www.audiodescription.com.au

MD Awareness Week 2008

The 2008 MD Awareness Week, held from Sunday 25 May to Saturday 31 May, was a great success in promoting awareness of MD in Australia. The media campaign potentially reached over 15 million people through newspapers, radio and television. Additional thanks go to the sponsors of Awareness Week - Optometrists Association Australia, Novartis, Blackmores and Bluedesk. The MD Foundation looks forward to an exciting MD Awareness Week in 2009.



Annual Fundraising Dinner

The MD Foundation's Annual Fundraising Dinner was held on Friday 30 May 2008 at the Hilton Hotel, Sydney. Guests enjoyed a night of raffles, entertainment, great food and speeches.

Special guests on the evening included the Foundation's Patron, Ita Buttrose; Senator The Hon Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health & Ageing; and internationally-renowned architect Jan Utzon.

Jan Utzon is the son of the famous architect Jørn Utzon, who designed the Sydney Opera House in 1967. Jørn has since developed Macular Degeneration, but is still working alongside his son in the refurbishment of the iconic Australian monument. The Weekend Australian reported that:

"In order to complete work on [the Sydney Opera House], Jan [Utzon] has taken on the role of visual amanuensis, translating his father's visual solutions into nuanced plans. Often, father and son will communicate on design questions with wooden shapes, while other times Jørn will inspect Jan's visual rendering of his ideas with a magnifying glass."

Jan Utzon spoke at the dinner about his father's deteriorating eyesight and about the man who inspired him to believe that anything is possible. The Foundation is grateful for the ongoing support of the Utzon family.