

Season's Greetings to all...

This year we have been able to achieve some remarkable outcomes in striving to achieve our goal of reducing the incidence and impact of MD in Australia. I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone for the support that has been given in so many ways. My special thanks to the Foundation's Patron, Ita Buttrose, as well as the Foundation's Board, Committees, Staff, Volunteers and all those who have showed their support throughout the year.

On behalf of the MD Foundation I wish you an enjoyable and restful festive season and a happy New Year.

Julie Heraghty
Chief Executive Officer



Plans for 2008

The MD Foundation has many plans and projects for the upcoming year. These include:

- Produce the next edition of *Low Vision - A Guide*, which will include information on depression and mobility
- Continue to work on equity of access and affordability for the blind and vision impaired in regards to low vision aids and adaptive technology across all States and Territories
- For the first time, have our Fact Sheets and Information Brochures translated into five languages - Italian, Greek, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Vietnamese and Arabic
- Provide an improved education service in Western Australia with the appointment of WA Education Officer, Ms. Georgina Ryan



The MD Foundation Staff Team

2006 - 2007 Annual Report

The Foundation has recently published its 2006 - 2007 Annual Report. If you would like a copy, phone the Foundation on 1800 111 709 or view online at www.mdfoundation.com.au

ABC - Australian Story

Part of the Foundation's role is to make representations on issues that can improve the quality of life of those with MD. It is a priority to maintain the independence that is so important to all of us as we age.

Many readers will be familiar with the popular program on ABC Television called **Australian Story**. The conclusion of the program very often contains the outcome of the story and important information of relevance to the story line in print and is not accompanied by any audio. This can make the enjoyment of the program difficult for those with vision impairment.

In response to the concerns of our clients, the Foundation took this issue further and followed the ABC complaints process. This involved submissions to the ABC Audience and Consumers Affairs, the Independent Complaints Review Panel of the ABC, the Complaints Review Executive of the ABC and finally the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

The final finding was that the ABC did not breach their code. The ACMA supported the position that there may be occasions, due to resources and other considerations such as creativity, editorial integrity and immediacy, that the provision of audio, in addition to text, may not be possible or appropriate for ABC Television.

One of the MD Foundation's objectives is to represent the interests of the MD community. The Foundation advocates for the best interests of the MD community across Australia and encourages equality and accessibility for all.

What does your local library offer?

In 2007, the Foundation partnered with 22 libraries in NSW as part of the NLAP. The Foundation has discovered great services that all libraries Australia-wide offer for those who have a vision impairment or are legally blind. Services libraries may offer include:

- Large print books
- Use of talking books using a Navigator, CDs or Cassette Tapes
- Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV) which are electronic magnifiers used to assist with reading
- Talking computer programs such as Jaws and Zoomtext

Librarians are also a great source of support for those who have a vision impairment and can help you to get the best out of your library service. For more information contact your local library and ask what support services they offer for those with a vision impairment.

I have MD. How Can I Continue to do Crossword Puzzles?

Large-print crossword puzzles and playing cards are available for those who enjoy these activities as part of their daily routine. Otherwise a low vision assessment can determine whether the use of a magnifier can help fill in the blanks. You can also try enlarging your crossword using a photocopier.





Summer Salads

Salad is a great way to get your daily dose of lutein, especially into the warmer months of summer. Lettuce is an abundant source of lutein - cos, iceberg, green leaf, or romaine. Build your salad up with lettuce and throw in some baby spinach leaves to start off your delicious summer meal.

Thank You...

The Foundation has received hundreds of letters on your behalf from local Federal Members about Low Vision Aids Subsidies, as alerted in our Spring Newsletter. Thank you for your overwhelming support and participation in the campaign. We have made an impact and will continue the effort.

Update Your Information

At the beginning of 2007 the MD Foundation renewed and updated all of its key messages and information material. If you would like updated fact sheets, please phone the MD Foundation on 1800 111 709.

Launch of Navigator Library Access Project, Sydney

The Hon. Kristina Keneally, State Minister for Ageing and Minister for Disability Services officially launched the Navigator Library Access Project (NLAP) at the NSW State Library on 25 September 2007. The Minister congratulated the Foundation and local public libraries across NSW on making this audio technology so accessible.

Did You Know?

One of the major risk factors of Macular Degeneration is genetics. There is a 50% chance of developing MD if a family history is present.

That's why it is always important to let your family know if you have MD so that they can take the steps to reduce their risk of developing the disease.

Steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of developing MD are covered in this Eye Health Checklist:

- Have your eyes tested and make sure the macula is checked
- Don't smoke
- Keep a healthy lifestyle, control your weight and exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. Limit your intake of fats; eat fish two to three times a week, eat dark green leafy vegetables and fresh fruit daily as well as a handful of nuts a week
- In consultation with your doctor, consider taking a zinc and antioxidant supplement
- Provide adequate protection for your eyes from sunlight exposure, especially when young



From l-r: Dr. Paul Beaumont, Kathleen Bresnahan (Assistant State Librarian), and The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP

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Community Education in NSW & Western Australia

The MD Foundation now has a community Educator in Western Australia as well as NSW.

If you belong to a community group based in WA or NSW and would like to arrange a session to learn about MD, symptoms, risk factors, treatment options, management and the importance of nutrition and lifestyle, please phone the Foundation on 1800 111 709.

A Short Break...

The Foundation will be closed over Christmas from the 21st December and will reopen on the 2nd January, 2008. We hope you enjoy the festive season and look forward to your support in the New Year.

Donations

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 the newsletter for your convenience.

An easier and quicker option is available by calling the Foundation to make a credit card donation. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

The MD Foundation would like to say a big thank you to all who have donated to the MD Foundation. It is your help and support that allows the Foundation to

Lucentis vs Lutein - What is the Difference?

Lucentis (Loo-cent-is) is the treatment available for Wet MD. It has recently been listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Lutein (Loo-teen) is the antioxidant found in dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach and silverbeet. In consultation with your doctor, you may consider a Lutein supplement if you have a diet low in Lutein, however the supplement is **not** listed on the PBS.

Drop In and Say Hi!

With this Newsletter you will find instructions on how to find the MD Foundation's Sydney office. We have low vision aids and technology on display and a friendly staff team ready to help. You can call the Foundation at any time and make an appointment to see and use the equipment with the assistance of a member of the Foundation's staff. Please phone 1800 111 709 to make an appointment at your convenience.

continue to provide you with a great information service.

Volunteering

If you would like to become a volunteer and help in our Sydney office, please phone the Foundation on 1800 111 709.

The MD Foundation thanks all volunteers who give their time to help the Foundation service the needs of the MD community throughout Australia.