



## **HISTORY OF THE NSW/ACT SAVE SIGHT AND PUBLIC HEALTH CARE FOUNDATIONS**

**The first of the combined project/activities of Lions Clubs in NSW & ACT was the Lions NSW-ACT Save Sight Foundation.**

The idea of such a foundation, was put forward by Lions Neville Tucker OAM in 1973. His idea was "that the Lions of NSW and ACT Should join together in raising a large amount of money for investment then, to use the interest from this investment to help clubs fund the sight projects when their funding for such project falls short."

**The foundation was adopted** by the then NSW District Governors at the National Convention in Canberra in May 1974. Incorporation followed in November of that year.

*The objects for which the foundation is established are many and in the interpretation of these objects "anomalies and diseases of the eye" is construed in its widest sense*

The target was to raise \$1 million. By December 1975, \$226,000 had been raised and by the end of 1978, the target of \$1 million had been achieved.

**The first Grant was made in 1975** and since then some 237 grants have been made. These grants have provided equipment for hospitals; money for research & travel grants; payments for eye operations; eye screening programmes for detection of glaucoma, amblyopia and strabism in children; diabetes screening; funding towards a Lions ward in the new Sydney Eye Hospital; 5 low vision clinics and 2 mobile clinics.

**Each chartered Lions Club of the five** Lions Districts operating in NSW and the ACT are members of this foundation and the management of the Foundation and of its business, property and affairs is by the articles vested in the directors. The Board of Directors comprises 3 representatives of each Lions District (N1-N5) plus the District Governors of the day.

**"Seeding money" for an Eye Institute** in Sydney was provided by the Save Sight Foundation, for the purchase of essential equipment and for employment of administrative staff plus 6 years of support funding. Funds were also provided to establish a Lions Eye Bank with continuing support for the yearly salary of \$80,000 for the Eye Bank Director and a co-ordinator. Since Professor Frank Billson took over as Director of the Eye Bank he has declined to take his salary and directed that the money go directly to the Eye Bank for research and running costs.

**The amount provided is now \$100,000**, which is one third of the running cost associated with the Eye Bank.

On many occasions between 1975 and 1980 grants applications for funding for other health type projects were received. As these were outside the guidelines of the Save Sight Foundation they sadly had to be refused and returned to the Clubs. The Save Sight Directors then decided that another Foundation, broad in its scope should be set up to cover these other types of grant requests

**In January 1981 the Lions NSW/ACT Public Health Care Foundation** was set up with Memoranda and Articles much similar to those of the Save Sight Foundation but covering all health aspects. Originally the funds for this Foundation came from the Personality Quest, but now all funds raised are split between the two Foundations as the Personality Quest is now longer running.

The other sources of funding are direct from donations from Clubs; donations in the form of Life Governorship or Life Membership of either or both of the Foundations being bestowed on members or community members in recognition of achievements. Becoming a Participating Club is another way of supporting the Foundations. This is done by donating \$10 per member to either of the Foundations.

For this support, the Club will receive a Banner Patch. Currently most of the funding comes from the Car Raffle and from interest from the share portfolio

### **Save Sight Institute**

In 1985 the foundation carried out investigation on the possibility of establishing an Eye Institute in Sydney. In partnership with the University of Sydney, the Save Sight and Eye Health Institute was established on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1986. Professor Frank Billson, A.O. Head of the Department of Clinical Ophthalmology, Sydney University was appointed Director of the Institute. With this Institute we offered the community, government and the university, the opportunity to share in a joint mission- "to prevent blindness"

The Institute exists to support and extend the work of the University's Dept of Clinical Ophthalmology. In 1993, as recognition for the Save Sight Foundations support the University presented a Founding Governors Award to the Foundation Chairman and as further recognition they granted Honorary Governorship to 3 Lion members who continue to serve on the Council of the Institute.

**The Foundations belong to Lions Clubs in NSW and ACT** and rely on support from these clubs. Each year the Foundations send out tickets in a Car Raffle to all clubs in NSW and the ACT and ask that the clubs sell these tickets to provide income for the Foundations. Without this support the Foundations would be unable to assist clubs with grant applications, so Directors and District Governors are asked to ensure that clubs continue to support the Foundations.