

ORIA TIMELINE

THE OPHTHALMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

1953

ORIA is established to advance eye research in Australia by providing funding for research into eye disease.

First signatories of the board included:

Joseph Ringland Anderson, Sir Norman McAlister Gregg, James Aloysius Flynn, John Bruce Hamilton, Arthur Herbert Joyce, Alfred Ladyman Fostevin, Darcy Ambrose Williams

1956

A Sydney based ophthalmologist who had dedicated his life to eye health as a clinician and researcher announced his intention to donate a significant portion of his estate to the ORIA.

The donor stipulated name and identity remain anonymous (hereinafter referred to as "DW").

ORIA opened a separate account named the DW Fund.

The ORIA Board appoints an investment advisory committee.

1959

The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) was set up to be led by the Research Director

1976

The ORIA Board decides that the Director of Research position calls for a tripartite agreement signed by ORIA, the Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital and the University of Melbourne. The agreement was symbolic of a collaboration, allowing evidence from emerging research to be integrated into practice while enabling ophthalmologists, those at the coalface, to identify research priorities based on best practice, expert consensus and patient-centred care.

1994

The Gift of Sight Society is set up to raise funds and build on the capital base for research grants. Its main focus is to attract donations from ophthalmologists and their patients.



1999

Gift of Sight Society rolls out a macular degeneration awareness afternoon.

Gift of Sight Society rolls out a series of awareness programmes for retinal diseases.

1954

The first ORIA Board members include:

- Walter Lockhart Gibson, Dame Ida Mann, Archie Anderson, Arthur Herbert Joyce, Alfred Ladyman Fostevin, Hugh Ryan, Kevin Ledgett, Ron Lowe, John Bruce Hamilton, W. Deane-Butler, Sir Norman McAlister Gregg

Ida Mann becomes the first female member of the ORIA Board.

- Ida Mann leverages her trachoma research, highlighting the prevalence of trachoma, causing disproportionately high rates of blindness among Aboriginal population of the Kimberley and Western Desert.

1958

- ORIA establishes the DW Fund trust deed in the ACT.

1960

- Professor Ida Mann, the Hon Secretary, is the principal author of the paper *Experimental Trachoma Produced by a West Australian Virus which is published in the British Journal of Ophthalmology.*

1980

- Ida Mann is honoured for her many contributions to ophthalmology and made a Dame (DBE).

1996

- ORIA receives a signed letter from the beneficiaries of the copyright from Sydney Long's artistic works, re-assigning these benefits to ORIA.

- The beneficiaries of the copyright from Sydney Long's artistic works requested that the copyright "benefit a group researching vision disabilities in children."

- ORIA receives many requests from major and regional galleries, museums, academic institutions and book publishers to sign a licence to reproduce Sydney Long's works.

- ORIA has developed strategies to leverage these requests to create awareness and demand for Sydney Long's works and to promote the ORIA brand.

2001

2002

Gift of Sight Society ceases to exist.

RANZCO Eye Foundation (REF) is incorporated as the fundraiser for the ORIA.

ATO grants REF tax exemption and Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.



- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed between ORIA and the New Zealand Save Sight Society – an agreement in which ORIA would assess New Zealand applications for research funds submitted by the research committee of the Save Sight Society.

- New Zealand Save Sight Society becomes the sole source of funds for New Zealand ophthalmologists distributed via the ORIA.

- Funding for the research is to be distributed from New Zealand.

- At this stage, New Zealand Fellows are not eligible for election to the ORIA Board but could attend the Board meeting.

- ORIA resolved to divest itself of the Gift of Sight Society.

- ORIA Board agrees to incorporate the work of Gift of Sight Society into a separate entity under the auspices of RANZCO.

2004

- REF official launch a fundraising function promoting its mission of supporting research, aiding projects and building community awareness.

2005

REF funds projects to:

- further research in glaucoma and AMD;
- support sustainable aid for purchase of equipment in the Australasian region as well as projects in East Timor and Myanmar;
- increase eye health community awareness – funding the creation of a website for patient information regarding hereditary eye disease; and
- coordinate a project with Diabetes Australia (NSW).

2008

REF partners with the Royal Australian College of Surgeons (RACS) and the Fred Hollows Foundation to fund the Central Australia Eye Health Program.

2011

Implementation of changes to the ACGR eligibility threshold by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research results in ORIA being removed from Category 1 funding.



2016

Professor Stephanie Watson becomes the first female Chair of the ORIA Board.

ORIA contracts an independent legal institution to develop a constitution.

In its constitution, ORIA highlights its role in prevention and early intervention in eye disease:

- "...promote the prevention and control of affections and diseases of and relating to the human eye and as affecting human vision by providing funding for the research, study and investigation of and into the nature, structure and functions of and relating to the human eye as a means of seeking to discover the nature, origins and causes of such affections and diseases".
- "...provide funding to seek and discover the origins and causes of blindness in humans by the application of any or all of those branches of science which are relevant to this purpose and to actively encourage the use of knowledge so gained for the improvement of means for the prevention of blindness in humans".
- The ORIA constitution also highlights the role of ORIA in research translation/public education:
- "...raise community awareness of eye diseases and encourage the dissemination of information, knowledge or advice relating to ophthalmological research by such means as the Institute may deem advisable including printed publication or otherwise.

2018

The ORIA Board announces target of 35% female participation in grant application process. Benchmark data indicates target is being met for both the proportion of females participating and the proportion of females receiving ORIA funding.

It is known anecdotally that ORIA grants have provided funding for all major eye diseases and, are often seed funding, with the basis for significant additional funding from federal and other external organisations. For the first time in 2018, trend data was analysed by the ORIA. Results highlight the proportion of funding allocated to ophthalmic research over the last four years as a proportion of the total of all National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding allocated to medical research across disciplines. Data indicates the funds allocated to eye research remained stable from 2014 to 2016, with a significant increase between 2016 and 2017.

2007

REF funds:

- the launch of the Fight Retinal Diseases project involving 10,000 patients/yr to establish a national system to track treatment outcomes for macular and retinal diseases;
 - the Australia and NZ Registry of Advanced Glaucoma Project (ANZRAG);
 - Rare Eye Disease Surveillance Unit;
 - The *Minum Berreng* ('tracking eyes') Indigenous Project;
 - Australian and international sustainable aid projects in Timor Leste and Myanmar.
- ORIA registers on the Australian Competitive Grants Register (ACGR).

2010

REF funds:

- the Australian and NZ Ophthalmic Surveillance Unit (ANZOSU);
 - Novartis Medical Retina Scholarships;
 - Central Australian Barkley Integrated Eye Health Program in collaboration with Fred Hollows Foundation;
 - Kimberley Diabetic Eye Care Program;
 - East Timor (Timor Leste) Eye Program (ETEP); and
 - Myanmar Eye Care Program.
- The Federal Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research proposes increasing the threshold for ACGR registration from \$200,000 (institutions with budgets over \$200,000 were eligible) to \$2 million.

2013

A major retrospective of the Australian Art *Australia* is held at the Royal Academy of Art in London. *The Spirit of the Plains* by Sydney Long forms part of the exhibition and reproduction rights are granted.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ORIA and REF is established.

REF garners the respected name of ORIA to leverage its fundraising efforts.

2017

ORIA functions are officially integrated within RANZCO, ratified by the signing of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between ORIA and RANZCO.

SLA states administrative services for ORIA will be provided by RANZCO, with the ORIA Board continuing to oversee the running of the organisation.

SLA clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of RANZCO staff in providing each discrete service to ORIA

The RANZCO Eye Foundation (REF) is dissolved.

