



## **Media Statement**

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

### **The Lions Eye Institute welcomes Budget commitment to medical research fund and subsidy of important eye drug.**

The Lions Eye Institute (LEI) in Western Australia has welcomed the Federal Government's commitment to the Medical Research Future Fund, as outlined in last night's Budget.

LEI Managing Director Professor David Mackey said the Government's commitment to funding medical research would provide certainty to the sector and help Australia retain its best and brightest young scientists.

"Most importantly, it will provide the basis for essential research into some of the biggest health challenges we face, including preventable blindness and vision loss," he said.

Professor Mackey also welcomed confirmation in the Federal Budget that eye patients with retinal vein occlusion (RVO) and diabetic macular edema (DME) would have access to subsidised ranibizumab (Lucentis) under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme from July 1 this year.

According to figures from the Federal Health Department, the listing will assist approximately 12,000 patients with DME and 6000 patients with RVO. Without Government subsidy, this medicine can currently cost consumers more than \$10,000 per year.

"This is a very welcome decision for people suffering from RVO and DME because Lucentis is a drug that saves people's vision and in some cases restores it," Professor Mackey said.

"This decision will make the drug more accessible and affordable for many people."

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