



Media Statement

October 18, 2018

“Founding father” appointed to champion the Lions Eye Institute and the cause of saving sight

The Lions Eye Institute (LEI) has appointed internationally renowned ophthalmologist Professor Ian Constable to serve as its Patron.

Professor Constable founded the LEI 35 years ago and this year, celebrates 50 years in ophthalmology.

Board Chairman Peter Forbes made the announcement at a Clinicians Appreciation Dinner in Perth on October 15.

“Ian joins an outstanding list of previous LEI Patrons: Sir James McCusker, Mr Bill Wyllie and Sir James Cruthers,” he said.

“Through this role, Ian will continue to promote the achievements and ongoing need for support of the Institute among our stakeholders in the community, government, business, university and medical research sectors.

“As one of our true founding fathers, there can be no-one better suited to the role of Patron than Ian.”

Under Professor Constable’s leadership as Managing Director from 1983 to 2009, the LEI contributed significantly to international understanding and treatment of eye disorders. He still works as one of the LEI’s leading ophthalmologists and continues

active involvement in research, including a ground-breaking gene therapy for wet age-related macular degeneration.

A hallmark of Professor Constable's time as Managing Director was his commitment to tackling blindness through a wide range of initiatives, including the training of new generations of ophthalmologists both in Australia and overseas and outreach work in Indigenous communities.

Significant research breakthroughs during his stewardship include polymer tubes for glaucoma and the artificial cornea, laser shunts for vein blockage, new insights into oxygen consumption in the retina and the immune basis for complex inflammatory diseases of the eye.

Professor Constable said he was honoured to assume the role of Patron.

"I will seek to promote the achievements and ongoing need for support of the Institute in collaboration with the Managing Director and the Board," he said.

Western Australians can find out more about the sight-saving work of the LEI during our annual [Open Day](#) this Saturday, October 20, from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

This year's Open Day features interactive displays from researchers and for the first time, visitors can experience being inside the eye using virtual reality technology.

Institute research groups will showcase the latest cutting-edge eye science with a focus on eye genetics, DNA testing, stem cell technology, gene therapy and clinical trials. The Open Day is at the LEI, 2 Verdun St, Nedlands. The event is free and all are welcome.

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Image: Professor Ian Constable