

**40**

# *Pivotal Moments*



# Introduction

2023 is a milestone birthday for the Lions Eye Institute, turning 40 years of age. Since our humble beginnings conducting glaucoma screening programs from a caravan, we have grown into a world leading eye research institute.

Occasionally, it's important to reflect on where we've come from and to remind ourselves of the journey so far. This is one of those moments and I hope you enjoy reading about the 40 pivotal moments we have chosen to celebrate our 40-year history in Western Australia.



I am so very grateful to our generous supporters, our inspiring researchers, clinicians and staff, and our patients who entrust us with their care.

May there be many more years into the future for the Lions Eye Institute to continue delivering on our vision of **better vision for all.**

Best wishes

**Professor Bill Morgan**

Managing Director, Lions Eye Institute

1

## 1925



**Helen Keller** addresses the Lions International Convention in Ohio, USA and says “try to imagine how you would feel if you were suddenly stricken blind today.”

**Helen Keller (centre) is presented with flowers** (image credit: Copyright ©American Foundation for the Blind, Helen Keller Archives)

2

1963

**Dr Robert Linton AM** 'the father of modern ophthalmology' in Western Australia, becomes the national president of the Ophthalmological Society of Australia (now the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmology – RANZCO). He establishes the Western Australian division of the Australian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness (AFPB) the following year.



**Dr Robert Linton AM**

3

1964

The City of Perth Lions Club and the AFPB begin operating a mobile glaucoma screening caravan, dubbed the **Glaucoma Detection Clinic**, to offer free public testing.

**Glaucoma screening outside Perth Council House**



4

1970



**Original Glaucoma Detection Clinic caravan from the mid 1960s** (image credit: Arthur Nutt, City of Perth Lions Club)

Lions Clubs in Western Australia form the **Lions Save-Sight Foundation (WA) Inc** to expand the work being done by the AFPB and lead the development of world-class ophthalmic care in Western Australia.

5

1973



Lions screening programs are expanded to include **amblyopia** (lazy eye) in children and in new regions of Western Australia.

**Lions amblyopia screening**

6

1975

The **Lions Chair in Ophthalmology at The University of Western Australia (UWA)** is established by Lions Save-Sight Foundation, with **Professor Ian Constable AO** at the helm.



**Professor Ian Constable AO**  
(photo taken ~2021)

7

1976

Professor Ian Constable AO joins Dr Fred Hollows AC in the Kimberley region to conduct **eye screening programs** and then continues to make regular field trips to the Kimberley and Ngaanyatjarra Lands in the Blackstone Ranges.



8

1978

With the support of Lions, a **major diabetic retinopathy screening program** starts for people with diabetes in the regions.

**Diabetic retinopathy screening**

9

1983

Professor Ian Constable AO founds the **Lions Eye Institute**. He and his team move from Royal Perth Hospital to A block, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. **Dr Brian King AM MBE** is appointed inaugural Chair of the Lions Eye Institute Board.

**The original clinic in A block at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Dr Brian King AM MBE**



10

1985

The Lions Eye Institute develops **one of the world's first intra-ocular lenses** for cataract surgery. The lens is implanted for the first time by Professor Ian Constable AO and Professor Graham Barrett AM at Royal Perth Hospital.

## 11 1986

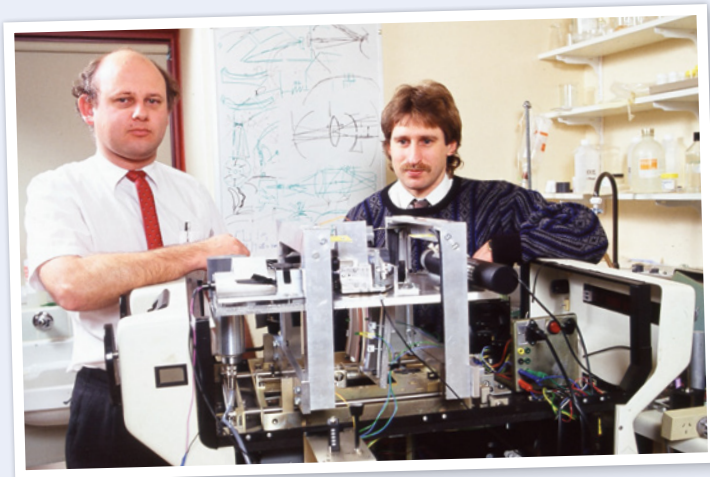
Coinciding with the first year of organ donor registration, the Lions Eye Bank begins **supplying donated corneas for transplant.**

## 12 1987

Professor Ian Constable AO is named **WA Citizen of the Year** (Professions category).

The Lions Eye Institute is successful in obtaining a major Commonwealth research grant to develop **new ocular biomaterials**, particularly for intra-ocular lenses.

## 13 1990/1991



Dr Robert Eikelboom (left) with Dr Paul van Saarloos (right)

Physicist Paul van Saarloos designs and builds the **excimer laser surgical system** – PRK (photorefractive keratectomy) – that provides the first refractive treatment in Australia for myopia.



Sir Francis Burt and Justice Geoffrey Kennedy at the Lions Eye Institute's building appeal launch

## 14 1992

The Governor of Western Australia, Sir Francis Burt, launches the Lions Eye Institute's **first public appeal** to help finance the construction of new purpose-built research laboratories. The Commonwealth Government also commits \$3 million towards a dedicated research building.

## 15 1993

Professor Graham Barrett AM invents the **Barrett Universal II Formula**, considered to be one of the most accurate intra-ocular lens power calculation formulas. It is globally recognised and used to improve the refractive accuracy outcomes of cataract surgery.



Professor Graham Barrett AM

## 16 1994

The Lions Eye Institute signs an agreement with UWA to form the **Centre for Ophthalmology and Visual Science (COVS)**, strengthening the Lions Eye Institute's research capabilities.

17

1996

The Lions Eye Institute **research and clinical facilities open in Nedlands**, enabling the Institute to pursue a broad range of eye research projects and encompass clinical laboratory and preventative medicine.

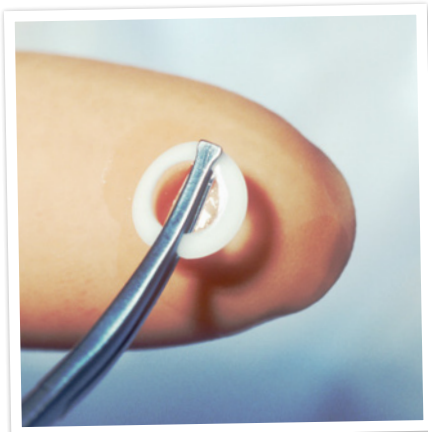


**Lions Eye Institute's research and clinical facilities located in Nedlands**

18

1997

The **first LASIK** (laser eye surgery) procedure is performed in Western Australia by Lions Eye Institute surgeons.



19

1998

The **world's first artificial cornea, the AlphaCor**, is developed at the Lions Eye Institute and successfully implanted in patients in the USA, Australia and India.

**AlphaCor – the world's first artificial cornea**

20

1999

Professor Ian McAllister and others develop the **central retinal vein occlusion bypass laser surgery procedure**, improving vision for sufferers of non-ischemic central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO).

21

2000

The inaugural **Ian Constable Lecture** is presented in UWA's Octagon Theatre by Professor Joseph Vacanti, the John Homans Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital. The lecture is titled 'Tissue engineering: 21st Century tissue repair.'



Teleophthalmology consultation

22

2003

A **teleophthalmology trial** begins in Western Australia's Gascoyne region, transferring eye disease images from remote locations to health professionals in the city. The Gascoyne trial on 118 patients shows the technology saves money and improves eye health.

23

2005

Professor Elizabeth Rakoczy and her team's **gene therapy research** for wet age-related macular degeneration is recognised by the National Health and Medical Research Council, and named in the **top 10 research projects** in the nation.

The Lions Eye Institute **opens in Murdoch**, in Perth's southern suburbs. This clinic provides local access to ophthalmologists specialising in glaucoma, oculoplastics, cataract and retinal conditions.

24

2006

A **world-first microfistula glaucoma stent** is developed by Professor Dao-Yi Yu AM, Professor Bill Morgan, Associate Professor Er-Ning Su and Professor Steve Cringle, together with sophisticated robotics and instruments designed to insert it into the eye. This leads to world-first clinical trials at the Lions Eye Institute and the introduction of the XEN® Gel Stent worldwide.



Researchers in the Lions Eye Institute's laboratory

25

2007

The Lions Eye Institute joins forces with the Government of Western Australia, UWA and the WA Institute of Medical Research to build a **new state-of-the-art medical research facility** at the QEII Medical Centre and consolidate medical research in Western Australia.

26

2008

**Professor David Mackey AO** is appointed as the Managing Director of the Lions Eye Institute, and he delivers the Ian Constable Lecture on the topic of personalised genetics in the same year.



**Professor David Mackey AO**  
(photo taken ~2016)

27

2011

A \$3 million gift by the Estate of The Joyce Henderson Trust Fund sees the **establishment of a paediatric fellowship** at the Lions Eye Institute, to operate in perpetuity for research into children's eye injuries.

28

2013

**Lions Outback Vision** is officially launched to provide high quality eye health services to Western Australia's remote, regional and Indigenous communities.

29

2016



**Lions Outback Vision Van**

The **Lions Outback Vision Van** – a custom-built mobile eye health clinic with specialist equipment and consulting rooms – commences services to regional and remote communities in Western Australia.

30

2017



Professor Elizabeth Rakoczy wins the **Florey Medal** for her pioneering research in discovering a new gene therapy for wet age-related macular degeneration.

**Former Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, presenting the Florey Medal to Professor Elizabeth Rakoczy** (image credit: AAMRI Brad Cummings Photography)

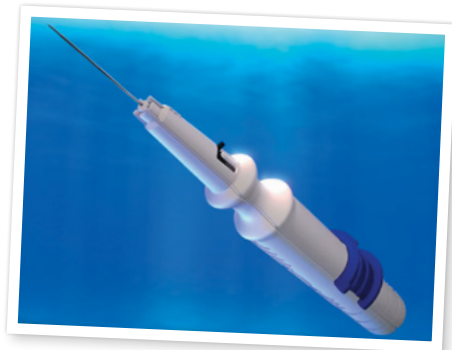
31

2018

The **XEN® Gel Stent** – a breakthrough surgical treatment for draining fluid from the eye – is approved for use in Australia.

Invented at the Lions Eye Institute, the technology represents more than 20 years of research by Professor Dao-Yi Yu AM, Professor Bill Morgan and their teams.

Professor David Mackey AO is awarded the largest ever **NHMRC grant** for research into the genetics of eye disease.



**XEN® Gel Stent**

32

2019



The Virna Glaucoma Drainage Device

The **Virna Glaucoma Drainage Device**, co-invented by Professor Bill Morgan and Dr Virna Oktariana, is launched in Jakarta to tackle high rates of glaucoma in Indonesia.

The Lions Eye Institute signs **Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)** with two universities in Indonesia in Jakarta and Bali. The MOUs strengthen ties with Indonesia and foster greater collaboration, innovation and training opportunities. This follows the MOU with Universitas Airlangga in Surabaya, signed in 2003.

33

2019

Professor Mariapia Degli-Esposti wins the **Eureka Prize for Scientific Research** for her work in developing world-first pre-clinical models to test the use of immunotherapy to control cytomegalovirus.



Professor Mariapia Degli-Esposti at the 2019 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes Award Dinner with Dr Chris Andoniou (left), Peter Fleming (centre) and Dr Jose Paulo Martins (right)



Associate Professor Angus Turner is named **Western Australian of the Year** (Professions category) for his work in outback vision.

Associate Professor Angus Turner

34

2020

The Lions Eye Institute partners with UWA to develop the **state's first Optometry School**. The new degree is a Doctor of Optometry.



The inaugural cohort of **UWA optometry students in 2021** (image credit: Ian & Erick Regnard)

35

2020



The Lions Eye Institute develops a **prototype for non-invasive intra cranial pressure measurement**, which will benefit a wide range of patients in neurology, neurosurgery, emergency departments and astronauts in space.

**Lions Eye Institute Research Engineer, Aleksandar Vukmirovic (left)**, with **Hon John Quigley MLA** holding a prototype of the device at **Parliament House (in November 2021)**

36

2021

The Lions Eye Institute establishes the state's first paediatric diabetic eye health initiative in collaboration with Perth Children's Hospital – the **Perron Paediatric Retinopathy Initiative**. The initiative will establish screening, early diagnosis methods, research and treatments for diabetic retinopathy.

37

2021



Vision Pharma wins the overall 2021 Western Australia Innovator of the Year Award (Associate Professor Fred Chen is pictured far right)

Vision Pharma (a joint venture between the Lions Eye Institute and PYC Therapeutics) wins the overall **2021 Western Australia Innovator of the Year Awards** for its 'VP-001 to treat retinitis pigmentosa 11'. The Institute's Associate Professor Fred Chen is a co-inventor of VP-001.

38

2022

The Lions Eye Institute's **Midland clinic** (first established in 2015) relocates to a newly fitted out premises, expanding the offering of eye health services to residents in Perth's eastern suburbs and surrounding regions.



Lions Eye Institute's Midland clinic



39

2022

The **Lions Outback Vision Kimberley Eye Hub** opens in Broome to provide Pilbara and Kimberley residents with critically needed access to local eye health care. It rapidly becomes recognised nationally as the exemplar model in providing accessible eye care.

**A young patient at the new Lions Outback Vision Kimberley Eye Hub**

40

2022

Through collaborations with UWA and Curtin University, the Lions Eye Institute deepens its research capabilities with the appointment of Professor Allison McKendrick as the inaugural **Lions Eye Institute UWA Chair in Optometry Research** and Professor Andrew Turpin as the inaugural **Lions Curtin Chair in Ophthalmic Big Data**.



**Professor Allison McKendrick**



**Professor Andrew Turpin**