

2015–16

Optometry Victoria Annual Report



President and CEO Report

The 2015 -16 year has been one in which, in line with our strategic plan, Optometry Victoria (OV) has placed additional emphasis on the expansion of services to our members. Most members agree that the profession is in the middle of a period of considerable change. The challenge for the association is to ensure that we increase direct, meaningful engagement with our members. We feel that the answer to the question 'what value does my membership provide?' is best displayed through a better developed relationship with individual members, all the while supporting the national office to continue with its important work.

Throughout the year Director Rogan Fraser and staff members Helen Papadimitriou and Johanna Hersey bid us farewell. All made significant contribution to the organisation and will be missed. Rogan's Directorship spanned in excess of five years and during that time he had a stint as Treasurer and was also a key member of both the Governance and Audit Committees. His keen strategic mind and considerable knowledge of governance issues will be sorely missed, and we wish him well in his new medical career. Helen oversaw an extremely prosperous period as Southern Regional Congress (SRC) Coordinator, and will be remembered by all who worked with her as a diligent and solid professional. Johanna will be fondly remembered by members for her five years' service as Member Liaison Officer (and later as Personal Assistant to the CEO).

During the year, two new management committees were formed, allowing members to better direct the Board and the Secretariat in meeting their needs.

The Optometric Sector Advisory Group (OSAG) provides advice and input to the OV CEO and Secretariat staff on:

- emerging issues in the optometry field;
- clinical and technical optometric advice and feedback;
- guidance on policy issues, and
- input into the development or updating of member resources and information.

This represents a strong opportunity for members to have more direct input into the work of the association. OSAG is an amalgamation of the Primary Care Reference Group and the Therapeutics Reference Group. Many thanks to Rod Baker, Rogan Fraser, Malcolm Gin, Julia Kabov, Sophie Koh, Jessica Chi, Jeff Chibert, Graham Lakkis, Nicole Leong, Ken Long, Allison McKendrick, Genevieve Napper, Ros Voullaire and Ken Thomas for their work with these groups over recent years.

Meanwhile, the Secretariat and Board are mindful that young optometrists are the future leaders of the optometry profession. In Victoria they face unique challenges in establishing their careers. As the only state in Australia with two optometry schools, there will be a dramatic increase in graduate numbers over the coming years. Young optometrists have specific learning and development requirements that may not necessarily be met through existing CPD offerings. In addition there is a risk of professional isolation due to the dispersed nature of the workforce.

That is why we are delighted to have established Young Optometrists Victoria. The purpose of the committee is to enable young optometrists – with the assistance of OV resources – to grow professionally, through the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) and networking opportunities specifically targeted to the needs of early career professionals.

This committee has begun with a high work rate and is already developing a strong following with early career optometrists and students.

The group helps the association by:

- providing advice to OV on the current needs of young optometrists;
- planning and delivery of events for young optometrists;
- contributing to the development and implementation of a strategy to engage students 'early' in their course;
- providing advice to the OV CEO on potential candidates for leadership courses;
- contributing to the development and delivery of the Careers Expo at SRC;
- development and delivery of a strategy to retain young optometrists as members of OV; and
- advocating to young optometrists the advantages and benefits of OV membership.



We look forward to working with these groups in the coming years to help build and continue stable, satisfying careers for optometrists.

The delivery of SRC continues to provide a considerable focus for the association's work in Victoria. By some measures, our first foray into a new venue was a success – a solid increase in delegate numbers, a highly-rated clinical program, strong engagement with our commercial suppliers, and a successful Careers Expo. However, operational issues with the new venue caused significant concern. In our view some of these issues were certainly in excess of the normal 'teething problems' one might expect in shifting an event of this size. In some cases these issues impacted the amenity and experience of some delegates, and some sponsors and exhibitors too. We have been transparent with our stakeholders about what happened; what we intend to do to mitigate against repeats of operational problems with the venue, and how planned improvements will impact SRC in the future. We're very confident in our CPD products and look forward to the chance to showcase SRC at its best again in 2017.

The Board continues to provide strong leadership for OV, supported by a small, and significantly renewed Secretariat team committed to representing our members. More information and highlights of the year are contained on pages six, seven and eight.

Meanwhile the association continues to be in a strong financial position despite some of the headwinds the profession faces. More information on the state of OV's finances is contained in the Treasurer's Report on page ten.

We hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report, which provides a summary of our activities throughout the financial year.

Kylie Haris
President

Pete Haydon
Chief Executive Officer

The Board

Optometry Victoria (OV) is managed by a Board of Directors elected from the membership. The key function of the Board is to ensure the good governance of the organisation. While undertaking this important work the Board considers the broad trends affecting the membership and the profession.

The Board must contain a minimum of three and a maximum of ten Directors. Up to two external Directors can be appointed who will bring specific skills and experience to the Board that it feels it lacks, while the Board can also appoint a member to be an Associate. Associates can participate in Board meetings and discussions and view Board papers, however the Associate is not a full Director and carries no liability or responsibility for any Board decisions, and can't be counted in quorum or vote.

OV appreciates the time and consideration given to the association by all our Directors and Associates. The names of those who held office during the year were:

- Kylie Harris (President), who attended eight of eight meetings, which includes the AGM.
- Murray Smith (Vice President from 11 August 2014), who attended eight meetings.
- Steve Dinh (Treasurer from 10 November 2014), who attended seven meetings.
- Allison McKendrick, who is OV's representative on the National Board, attended eight meetings.
- Rogan Fraser, who attended seven meetings, retiring at 30 June 2016.
- Genevieve Napper, who attended seven meetings.
- Rowan Prendergast, who attended eight meetings.
- Jayson Ward, who attended six meetings.
- Timothy Lo (appointed as Associate 15 June 2015), who attended eight meetings as an Associate, and was elevated to full Director at the June 2016 meeting.



The Board is assisted in executing its duties through support from two subcommittees:

- the Governance Committee: Rowan Prendergast (Chair), Kylie Harris, Murray Smith, Genevieve Napper, Rogan Fraser, and
- the Audit Committee: Steve Dinh (Chair), Murray Smith, Genevieve Napper, Timothy Lo.

The Board wishes to reiterate previous comments regarding the departure of Rogan Fraser. Congratulations to Rogan on his years of significant service to the association. The Board is grateful for his guidance, diligence and passion. He has helped to steward the association through the beginning of a period of great challenge and opportunity, and in doing so has helped to lay the cornerstones of a strong Victorian Division well into the future.

The Board also wishes to thank the Organisation Committees and Reference Groups who assist greatly in making sure OV's services are led by optometrists, for optometrists.

In particular, thanks to the SRC Program Committee Chaired by Genevieve Napper and supported by Anthea Cochrane as Education Consultant. This group makes sure the SRC program is designed by optometrists to meet member's clinical learning needs. This Committee's passion for continuing the long tradition of excellence in clinical education is highly commendable. As well as Genevieve, thanks to Andrew Anderson, Bao Nguyen, May Ho and Timothy Lo.

In addition, the Board thanks:

- The Optometric Sector Advisory Group, which is Graham Lakkis, Malcolm Gin, Alice McLennan, Jessica Chi, James Armitage, Genevieve Napper, Mitchell Anjou, Ken Thomas, Kerryn Hart, Kon Zagoritis, Mark De Paola, Phillip Fent and Rod Baker;
- The Young Optometrists Victoria Committee, which is Rebecca Li, Jason Tan, Tina Huynh, Felix Tam (to December 2016), Laura Carson, Patrick Mac, and Katrina Yap (from June 2016), and
- The Education Reference Group, which is Luke Arundel, Tim Chung, Amy Higginbotham, Sarah Wassnig and Carla Abbott.



Member engagement and services

Optometry Victoria (OV) provides services to a vital and vibrant community of optometrists at every stage of their career. Representing over 90 per cent of optometrists in Victoria, OV remains the only independent voice for optometry. Our members and their profession are the centre of all of our work.

Member events

In 2015 -16 we were delighted to deliver a wide range of free member events across the state. We held regional CPD seminars in Warrnambool (Oct), Traralgon (Nov), Shepparton (Nov) and the Ballarat area (May). The seminars had a practical focus on the (at the time) new Medicare item numbers for foreign body removal and telehealth, as well as updates on key policy developments and advocacy.

In April 2016 we hosted a Glaucoma CPD seminar in Melbourne with very special guest Dr Jim Thimons (USA), who was ably supported by OV member Dr Graham Lakkis. In June 2016 we hosted Optometry Australia's Medicare webcast, offering this as a face-to-face seminar for OV members in addition to the online option.

All events were very well attended and feedback from participants was extremely positive.

Young Optometrists Victoria

Young Optometrists Victoria (YOV) held their inaugural meeting in October 2015, and have continued to meet regularly since that date. Committee members represent the diversity of OV's early career membership, working in metropolitan and rural practices, across corporate and independent optometry as well as in academia. During the year a place on the YOY committee became available and OV was delighted to receive a number of very high quality applications from early career members.

In November 2015 the committee delivered a comprehensive full-day careers workshop for early career members, with a diverse range of speakers covering topics such as children's vision and therapeutic optometry as well as practical topics such as owning your own practice. In April 2016 a highly successful finance seminar provided participants with practical advice on managing finances effectively.

YOY committee members have also participated in numerous presentations to optometry students across a range of year levels at Deakin University and the University of Melbourne. Committee members have also attended OV's Immediate Graduate dinners and presented at OV's Careers Expo at SRC, to ensure new members know about YOY and opportunities to get involved.

Student and Recent Graduate Engagement

Students are the future of the profession. In 2015 -16 OV staff and Board members delivered sessions to final year optometry students at both Deakin University and the University of Melbourne. The sessions provided students with practical information on how to register with AHPRA, obtaining a Medicare provider number and requirements associated with using Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. They also included an overview of OV and the benefits of membership.

The Careers Expo held during SRC in March 2016 was a tremendous success, with over 100 students from both Deakin University and the University of Melbourne attending. Presentations provided insight into potential career pathways, and practical tips and advice from recent graduates. Sixteen exhibitors who were planning to employ new graduates were able to meet and engage with future optometrists.

The Immediate Graduate dinners were held for Deakin University and University of Melbourne graduates. These highly successful dinners provided participants with the opportunity to share their work experiences, to highlight issues of concern for OV to consider, and to network with their peers.



Optometric Sector Advisory Group

In December 2015 the OV Board reviewed the role and purpose of OV's Therapeutic Reference Group and Primary Care Committee. It was determined that they had been underutilised in the preceding few years, and that the relatively narrow scope of each committee limited their practical use.

Aiming to more broadly utilise the considerable resource and skillset of the OV member base, and to ensure members' time was meaningfully utilised, it was proposed that the two groups be dissolved and replaced with the Optometric Sector Advisory Group (OSAG). OV members were invited to nominate, and thirteen high quality nominations were received (see page five). The first OSAG meeting was held in June 2016.

Vision Initiative

The Vision Initiative (VI) aims to prevent avoidable blindness and vision loss by delivering integrated health promotion programs and support. As a member of the VI steering committee we provided strategic advice to the program throughout 2015 -16. Through our community role we provided support to the development and delivery of public and professional education activities in the four new target areas, which are Brimbank, Greater Dandenong, Campaspe and Swan Hill. This included actively contributing to the updating of the VI resources during 2016.

Tailored Advice and Industry News

OV provided professional and clinical advice that was immediate, confidential and tailored. Advice to members included information on CPD requirements, registration renewal including effectively managing AHPRA audits, visual standards for driving requirements, managing patient health records, requirements when working as a locum, and industrial relations and employment issues.

We also kept members informed about industry news and issues by producing six editions of *Scope* under a new and redesigned format; establishing the Optometry Victoria Facebook page, and regularly updating the content of the Optometry Victoria website.

Locum Guide for Victorian Optometrists

The Locum Guide for Victorian Optometrists was made available to members through the OV website in August 2015. The Guide provides general advice across a range of topics and issues including trading structures, managing GST, Medicare provider numbers, superannuation, PAYG tax and insurance. The Guide has been very well received by members and has been downloaded and requested regularly.



Government relations and advocacy

Optometry Victoria (OV) membership enables us to lead, protect and promote optometry and members' standing as eye health experts. There is strength and influence in numbers. OV supports the fight to reduce the erosion of Medicare benefits; expand optometrists' capacity to charge what they are worth, and expand scope of practice.

Federal government engagement

'Eye care for all' and 'stop the freeze' Medicare campaigns

Roll out of the 'Eye care for all' national campaign continued throughout 2015 -16. Through the campaign we called on the Federal Government to reverse the five per cent reduction in the Medicare rebate, or at the very least exempt disadvantaged patients. The campaign also called for fair and annual indexation of Medicare optometry items.

OV members were actively involved in the campaign, with many encouraging patients and supporters to sign the campaign petition. The Essendon practice of Graham Wood and Associates collected over 1,000 signatures, an outstanding achievement.

The petition was tabled in federal parliament in October 2015 by the Hon. Anna Burke, MP. OV President Kylie Harris and OV Director Jayson Ward were part of a 15 strong delegation of optometrists who witnessed the tabling, and met with 26 politicians from all major parties.

The federal budget submission in April 2016 made a number of key recommendations including calling for reinstatement of annual indexation of the Optometry Medicare Benefits Scheme consistent with CPI. Many members supported this submission by writing letters to their local MPs.

The 'stop the freeze' campaign was initiated in the lead up to the federal election held in July 2016. The campaign was in response to the 2016 -17 Federal Budget announcement of an extension of the freeze on patient's Medicare rebates to 30 June 2020. Victorian members once again supported the campaign through encouraging people to sign the online petition, through displaying campaign materials in their practice and writing to the Federal Minister for Health, the Hon. Susan Ley, MP.

State government engagement

OV enthusiastically worked with the Victorian State Government through 2015 -16 to advocate and promote optometry and its role in primary eye care in the Victorian community.

Allied Health CCC Framework

Throughout late 2015 we actively participated in meetings and consultation sessions on the Allied Health credentialing, competency and capability framework convened by the Victorian Chief Allied Health Officer Kathleen Phillip. While the framework is not currently suited to the optometry profession, we continue to monitor this work and seek to identify potential benefits for the profession.

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations

In early 2016 OV developed a submission providing feedback on the Victorian Government's proposed changes to the 'Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances' Regulations. Members of OV's Therapeutics Reference Group (which was disbanded in April 2016) provided feedback on the submission before it was sent to government.

Health Complaints Bill

OV also provided feedback on a draft version of the *Health Complaints Bill* 2016. We particularly supported the requirement in the Bill that the new Health Complaints Commissioner refer relevant complaints to the Optometry Board of Australia.

Prep Bag Program

OV raised concerns with the Department of Education and Training regarding the inclusion in the 2016 Prep Bag of a non-independent resource highlighting the importance of good eye health in children. The Prep Bag is provided to the parents of children starting Prep at a state government school, and it includes a range of health and wellbeing information and resources.

OV contacted the Department of Education and Training highlighting our concerns and requesting that OV be provided with an opportunity to submit a resource that would be representative of the entire profession. OV continued to liaise with the Department about the program at June 2016, with an outcome expected in November 2016.

'Glasses for Kids' Program

OV wrote to the Victorian Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, the Hon Jill Hennessy, MP expressing our concern that the 'Glasses for Kids' program had been announced in the 2015 -16 State Budget, without any prior consultation with OV. At the recommendation of the Minister, OV liaised with State Schools Relief (SSR) who had been awarded the contract to deliver the program, in order to better understand and provide input into the delivery of the program. OV continued to liaise with SSR about the program at June 2016.

SRC 2016

The overall result for SRC in 2016 could generally be described as mixed. While we maintain our pre-eminence amongst optometric conferences in the southern hemisphere, operational issues associated with a change of venue certainly impacted on the delegate experience this year – something we'll be working hard to correct in 2017.

The decision to move the event to the Pullman and Mercure hotel in Albert Park from 2016 was based on the needs and feedback of delegates, exhibitors and sponsors alike. We felt that the exclusivity delegates enjoyed at the Pullman, and better access to delegates for sponsors and exhibitors would ensure a strong event.

In some ways the decision was vindicated. We enjoyed:

- In excess of 870 delegates, up from around 810 in 2015;
- A well-received educational program;
- A strong financial result;
- A successful Careers Expo;
- A successful and refreshed Saturday dinner;
- Well-attended sponsored sessions;
- Rebranding, and the establishment of a discreet website that will have utility for several years;
- Extensions to the program through a sponsored breakfast and six sponsored seminars;
- Strong utilisation of hotel facilities, and
- Generally happy sponsors and exhibitors, who were busy throughout the weekend.

These successes notwithstanding, Optometry Victoria (OV) faced considerable operational difficulties on the ground. The venue's approval of a floor plan that was not to scale led to the overcrowding and catering issues that impacted on delegate comfort. Further, technical problems with climate and parking systems across the weekend were less than delegates expected of us. Meanwhile, on the commercial side, curfews for exhibitors gaining access to the venue were poorly managed by the venue.

The Board and CEO accept that these systemic issues have led to some reputational damage for SRC, and OV more broadly.

We have held some strong and productive meetings with the venue following the event. Based on considerable analysis we have determined to proceed with another year at the Pullman, albeit in May rather than March to accommodate the arrival of SILMO in Sydney in March which is being run in conjunction with OA NSW/ACT's own CPD event, Super Sunday.

For SRC, the strength of the educational program is and remains the primary consideration. SRC maintains the best educational program in Australia – it is what our delegates demand of us and is why they continue to attend each year. SRC is run to benefit members, not to generate profit. All surpluses generated are used to fund member-facing programs and services.

While we face a tough challenge in delivering SRC in our new venue this year, we're motivated and focussed on presenting the best SRC ever in 2017.



Treasurer's Report

For the 2015 -16 year the association reports a surplus of \$110,322 after providing for income tax (compared with a loss of \$22,970 for the 2014 -15 year).

OV's overall income has increased by 3.2 per cent from \$2,316,259 in 2014 -15 to \$2,392,611 in 2015 -16. This, combined with a decrease in expenditure of 2.4 per cent from \$2,339,229 to \$2,282,289 contributed to the surplus.

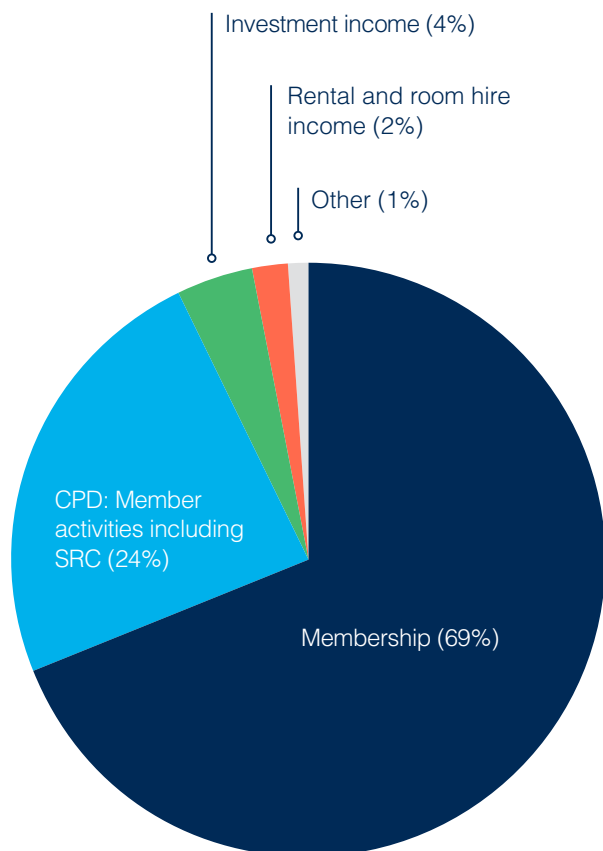
The increase in income relates largely to an improvement in delegate numbers at SRC, combined with an increase in sponsor and exhibitor contributions. Membership revenue was also higher than in 2014 -15 (up by 2.8 per cent).

The improvement in SRC revenue was accompanied by further cost reductions associated with the event (costs down by 10.2 per cent). Other items of note on the expenses side were savings associated with staff and wages, and savings associated with administration and bank charges. Meanwhile, member services were expanded with an additional \$16k expended in this area.

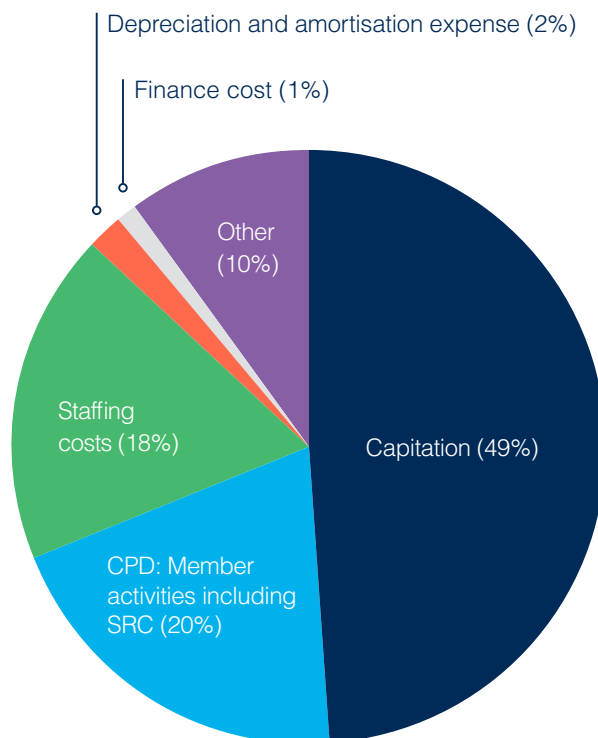
Full financial statements for 2015 -16 are presented as a separate document.



Revenue



Expenditure



Strategic Goals for 2015 -16

- Facilitate greater access to optometry services.
- Uphold and promote professional standards.
- Inspire collegiality in membership.
- Promote OV to optometry and potential optometry students.
- Provide outstanding member resources and information.
- Ensure long-term financial sustainability and organisational capability.

Board

Kylie Harris	President
Murray Smith	Vice President
Steve Dinh	Treasurer
Allison McKendrick	National Director
Rogan Fraser	
Genevieve Napper	
Rowan Prendergast	
Jayson Ward	
Timothy Lo	Associate from 15 June 2015, full Director from June 2016

Staff

Pete Haydon	Chief Executive Officer
Michelle Marven	Member Services and Policy Advisor
Jenny Hall	Member Database and Accounts Officer
Anthea Cochrane	Education Consultant
Helen Papadimitriou	SRC Coordinator (to March 2016)
Johanna Hersey	Member Liaison Officer (to May 2016)

Optometry Victoria

Address	28 Drummond Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053
Phone	(03) 9652 9100
Email	office.vic@optometry.org.au
Web	www.optometry.org.au/vic
Design	Adcore Creative (03) 9662 3248 www.adcore.com.au

