

2014–15 Optometry Victoria Annual Report

President and CEO report

The 2014-15 year has been one of consolidation for the association, as we position ourselves to respond to the challenges facing the profession and continue to strongly illustrate our value proposition to members.

Throughout the year Directors Andrew Harris and Melissa Downing (both former Presidents), as well as Yota Yoshimitsu and Julia Kabov, and staff members Terri Smith, Kirsty Machon and Laura Grattidge bid us farewell. It is not understating the impact of these seven people to describe their respective contributions as immense, and their legacies as secure. Their groundwork and diligence has allowed the association to continue delivering a full suite of services to members without any lag. They are all missed and were farewelled in the appropriate manner throughout 2014-15.

The 2014 AGM ushered in a new Constitution for Optometry Victoria (OV), one which is simplified, modern in language, and includes all changes required as part of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic). In addition the 2014 AGM ratified a Special Resolution to change our name to Optometry Victoria. This decision was taken unanimously by members endorsing decisions made by all state boards and the National Board to adopt a name reflecting the motivation behind all our work: to advocate for and on behalf of the profession, for the benefit of all members.

Strong alignment with Optometry Australia's work continues. Nowhere is this better illustrated than through the new OV Strategic Plan. Leading, engaging and promoting optometry, optometrists and community eye care as well as creating an enduring organisation are the pillars that support the plan. These are identical to those emphasised in the national plan. This critical document, which was completed throughout the 2014-15 financial year, is now embedded into all OV day to day operations from June 2015, and will be the cornerstone of our work across the next three years. The Board and the CEO, who worked in close collaboration on this project, believe the plan provides a new vision for the association delivering leadership, engagement with members and promotion of the industry and community eye health.

The delivery of SRC continues to provide a considerable focus for the association's work in Victoria. In March the Board took the decision to move the event to a more appropriate venue. We're all very excited about the opportunity to relaunch SRC from 2016 at the Pullman and Mercure in Albert Park. The operations team, under the guidance of the Board, has commenced the work that

will ensure SRC remains the largest and most successful optometric conference in Australia.

Meanwhile we continue to use our excellent facilities at 28 Drummond Street to help members with a range of activities across the year.

The Board continues to provide strong leadership for OV, supported by a small, dynamic professional secretariat team committed to representing around 90 percent of practicing optometrists in Victoria.

Throughout 2014-15 our members have continued to receive comprehensive services including:

- professional and clinical advice that's immediate, exclusive, confidential and tailored;
- information about industry news and issues;
- evidence-based, value-for-money professional development and networking opportunities, developed for optometrists by optometrists including SRC;
- advocacy at the highest levels of government to look after optometrists' interests and enhance the status of the profession, and
- a Professional Indemnity Insurance policy for members' whole career, regardless of where they choose to work, backed by the medico-legal expertise to support it.

With a new, clear strategic plan and a renewed commitment to ensuring members receive the maximum benefit from the services provided by both OV and the national body, we are ideally placed to support the profession and our members through a time of significant industrial change, challenge and opportunity.

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



Kylie Haris

Kylie Haris
President



Pete Haydon

Pete Haydon
Chief Executive Officer

Optometry Victoria 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

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 (currently Timothy Lo). Associates can participate in Board meetings and discussions and view Board papers, however the Associate is not a 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 nine of nine meetings.
- **Murray Smith** (Vice President from 11 August 2014), who attended eight meetings.
- **Steve Dinh** (appointed 10 November 2014, Treasurer from 10 November 2014), who attended five meetings.
- **Rogan Fraser** (Treasurer to 10 November 2014), who attended seven meetings.
- **Allison McKendrick**, who is OV's representative on the National Board, attended seven meetings.
- **Genevieve Napper**, who attended nine meetings.
- **Jayson Ward**, who attended eight meetings.
- **Rowan Prendergast**, who attended seven meetings.
- **Timothy Lo** (appointed as Associate 15 June 2015), who attended the August 2015 meeting.
- **Andrew Harris** (resigned 27 October 2014), who attended three meetings.
- **Melissa Downing** (resigned 10 November 2014), who attended three meetings.
- **Yota Yoshimitsu** (resigned 27 October 2014), who attended three meetings.
- **Julia Kabov** (Vice President to 11 August 2014, resigned 11 August 2014).

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

- the Governance Committee: Rowan Prendergast (Chair), Kylie Harris, Genevieve Napper, Rogan Fraser, and
- the Audit Committee: Kylie Harris, Genevieve Napper, Rogan Fraser.

The Board wishes to reiterate previous comments regarding the departure of Andrew Harris (Director since October 1996, President 2001-03), Melissa Downing (Director since September 2008, President 2009-13), Yota Yoshimitsu (Director since August 2008) and Julia Kabov (Director since March 2012). Congratulations to these Directors on their years of service to the association. The Board expresses its deep gratitude for the guidance of its departing Directors, who have steered the organisation through times of great change and laid the foundations for the association's work in 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. This group makes sure the SRC program is designed by optometrists to meet member's clinical needs. As well as Genevieve thanks to Andrew Anderson, Bao Nguyen, Geoff Sampson and May Ho.

In addition, the Board thanks:

- The Education Reference Group, which is Luke Arundel, Tim Chung, Amy Higginbotham, Sarah Wassnig and Carla Abbott;
- The Primary Care Reference Group which is Rod Baker, Rogan Fraser, Malcolm Gin, Julia Kabov, Sophie Koh and Genevieve Napper, and
- The Therapeutics Reference Group, which is Jessica Chi, Jeff Chibert, Graham Lakkis, Nicole Leong, Ken Long, Allison McKendrick, Genevieve Napper, Ken Thomas, Ros Voullaire and Yota Yoshimitsu.



From l-r: Kylie Harris, Murray Smith, Steve Dinh, Rogan Fraser, Allison McKendrick, Genevieve Napper, Jayson Ward, Rowan Prendergast, Timothy Lo.

Member engagement

Representing approximately 90 per cent of optometrists in Victoria, Optometry Victoria remains the only independent voice for optometry. Our members and their profession are the centre of all of our work.

In 2014-15, OV membership was diverse and varied. OV provided a wide range of services and support to members, so that no matter what part of the optometry workforce they are in, we are relevant to them.

Industry News

We kept members informed about industry news and issues by producing six editions of Scope magazine. Articles included a wide range of member profiles, updates on changes to Medicare billing items, the lifting of the fee threshold and the freeze on indexation, information on initiating glaucoma treatment, profiles on SRC keynote speakers Blair Lonsberry and Christopher Lievens and an update on therapeutic endorsement rates in Victoria.

Tailored Advice

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.

Student and Recent Graduate Engagement

Students are the future of the profession. In 2014-15 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 2015 was a tremendous success. The room was full to capacity with students from both Deakin University and the University of Melbourne. Presentations provided insight into potential career pathways, and practical tips and advice from recent graduates. A dozen exhibitors who are planning to employ new graduates were able to meet and engage the future optometrists.

The Immediate Graduates dinner was hosted by OV in April 2015. It provided participants with the opportunity to share their recent work experiences with OV and each other, to highlight issues of concern for OV to consider, and to enjoy some social networking.

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 2014-15. Through our community role we provided support to the development and delivery of public and professional education activities. This included the production of multilingual resources in 2015.



Government relations and advocacy

Medicare and the *eye care for all* campaign

OV was actively involved in a number of advocacy campaigns throughout 2014-15 which have directly impacted on members and the optometry profession.

Changes to Medicare which came into effect on 1 January 2015 saw the removal of the fee cap for optometry. This has allowed optometrists to charge a fee for service above the amount specified in the Medicare schedule. This was a significant victory for optometry as a profession.

However a five per cent reduction in the Medicare rebate was initiated and the freeze on indexation continued. The *eye care for all* campaign is calling on the federal government to reverse the five per cent cut, or at the very least exempt disadvantaged patients. The campaign is also calling for fair and annual indexation of Medicare optometry items.

OV members have participated in the *eye care for all* campaign by promoting a petition to their patients to sign, writing letters to local members and the Federal Minister for Health, and participating in an online survey to track the impact of the Medicare changes at the practice level. Members have also shared stories of the impact of the Medicare changes on patients and on practice viability.

State government engagement

OV actively worked with the state government through 2014-15 to advocate and promote optometry and its role in primary eye care in the Victorian community. OV participated in a number of state government committees, providing strategic advice and support across a range of areas.

In the lead up to the 2014 state election, OV advocated the benefits of integrated eye care. *The integrated eye care services and optometry* paper highlighted that optometrists are highly skilled and contributing significantly to managing and reducing the risk and burden of eye disease in the community. It advocated the benefits of an integrated approach to eye care, with a strong focus on prevention of eye disease.

The paper was presented to then Minister for Health the Hon David Davis, and provided to the then Shadow Minister for Health Gavin Jennings and Greens Health spokesperson Colleen Hartland. It was also shared with a wide range of organisations including GP groups.

A change of government in Victoria in late 2014 saw OV maintain sound working relationships with departmental representatives, including with the Chief Allied Health Officer. OV also built new connections with relevant Ministers and their staff.

OV membership enables us to lead, protect and promote optometry and members' standing as eye health experts. It is members' personal stake in the future of the profession. Only by working together can we advance the standing of optometry and improve eye-health in the community.

OV contacted the new Victorian Minister for Health, Hon Jill Hennessy, and expressed a desire to work more closely with her. In particular we highlighted the implications of the new Victorian Government's Budget for the optometry profession, and the benefits of OV providing input earlier in the process in future. We suggested that the benefit of working with the peak body representing around 90 per cent of optometrists is that it assists with ensuring that proposals and initiatives are appropriate, robust and evidence-based.

OV also highlighted concerns regarding proposals outlined in a review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, most notably the proposal to amalgamate nine of the existing national health care profession boards into a single health professions' board. OV wanted to ensure that our views were well known to the Minister in advance of her consideration of the proposals at the Council of Australian Governments Health Council meeting in August 2015.

Clinical advocacy: glaucoma management

OV was a strong supporter of the change to Optometry Board of Australia guidelines that allow optometrists to assess patients, make an initial diagnosis and start treatment, when it is in the patients' best interests. OV voiced our support for the changes, kept members up to date on legal action initiated by the ophthalmology profession, and reported on the outcomes of the out-of-court settlement.

Throughout 2014-15 OV worked collaboratively and effectively with Optometry Australia and the other state divisions on advocacy, CPD and governance arrangements, in the best interests of our members.



SRC 2015

Well over 800 delegates enjoyed a smooth, modern and successful SRC in 2015. Popular international key note speakers were augmented by a dynamic local group of presenters – delegate feedback on the program was very strong. Blair Lonsberry was delighted to be back and made many friends on this his second visit. Chris Lievens said that it was the best trip of his life, ever! It's clear that SRC's reputation as a well run, rigorous education conference has gained traction amongst the speakers on the US circuit.

Meanwhile the Careers Expo was a strong success with 96 students attending.

Exhibitors were very pleased with the delegate turnout in a crowded CPD market, and fed back that they enjoyed the reduction to a two day Trade Expo, which saved some costs for them.

In the end we met all the challenges with creative, flexible solutions and pulled off another successful event.

The OV Board had been considering the future location of SRC for some time and in early 2015 took the decision to move the event to the Pullman and Mercure hotel in Albert Park from 2016. In selecting the new home for SRC we took care to ensure that the needs and feedback of delegates, exhibitors and sponsors alike were taken into consideration.

The exclusivity delegates will enjoy at the Pullman, combined with the improved access exhibitors will notice at the trade show will ensure a vibrant and fresh event. In addition the move will generate some cost savings for OV, which will be welcome bearing in mind the challenges all providers face around increased competition in the CPD and conference space.

For us, the strength of the educational program will always remain the primary consideration. SRC aims to maintain the best educational program in Australia – it's what our delegates demand of us and it's why they continue to attend year after year. In addition, our event is run to benefit members, not to generate profit. All surpluses generated are ploughed back into member-facing programs and services.

We're delighted with the success of SRC 2015, and look forward to SRC in our new venue from 2016.



Treasurer's Report

The Association reports a loss before tax of \$22,970 for the 2014-15 year (compared with a loss of \$2,433 in 2013-14). In addition we have set aside \$9,113 as a provision for capital gains tax resulting from the appreciation of our investments during the year. This brings our after tax loss to \$32,083 for the year.

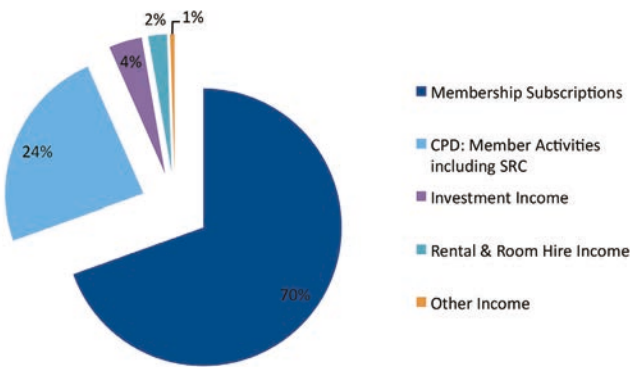
OV's overall income has decreased 4.5 per cent from \$2,426,456 in 2013-14 to \$2,316,259 in 2014-15. However expenditure has also decreased by 3.7 per cent from \$2,428,889 to \$2,339,229.

The decrease in income relates largely to the reduction in SRC income for the year (down by \$238,302), although membership subscription income increased by \$77,530 and investment income increased by \$56,783. The drop in SRC income has been offset in part by a reduction in SRC expenditure of \$97,480. Total expenditure reduced by \$89,660 compared with 2013-14.

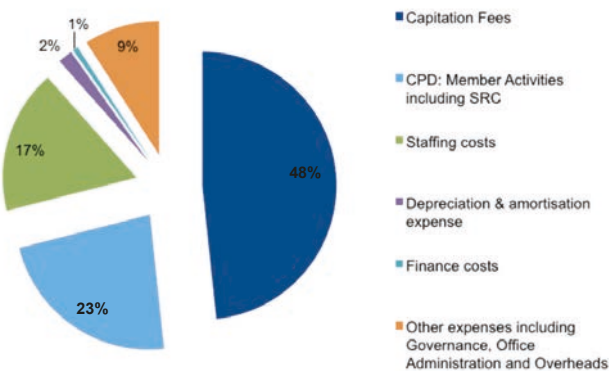
Other changes in expenditure worthy of note were legal costs and staff expenditure. Legal costs of \$12,500 were associated with the writing of our new Constitution. The additional expenditure associated with staff turnover related to long service leave pay-outs for three long-term staff members who resigned during the year. These were mainly financed from our provisions for long service leave which were accounted for in previous years, so didn't affect this year's bottom line significantly.

Full financial statements for 2014-15 are presented as a separate document.

Total revenue



Total expenditure





Strategic Goals for 2014-15

- Support optometrists to provide best practice eye care;
- Increase the participation of optometrists in integrated models of patient care;
- Engage with general practitioners to promote the full scope of optometry to improve patient outcomes;
- Work to ensure a high quality and sustainable workforce, and
- A unified national optometry association.

Staff

Terri Smith	Chief Executive Officer (to August 2014)
Pete Haydon	Chief Executive Officer (from August 2014)
Laura Grattidge	Operations Manager (to December 2014)
Tina Gigliotti	Finance and Operations Manager (December 2014-March 2015)
Gillian Holley	Finance and Operations Manager (March 2015-current)
Kirsty Machon	Policy and Member Services Manager
Johanna Hersey	Member Liaison Officer
Jenny Hall	Member Database and Accounts Officer
Helen Papadimitriou	SRC Coordinator
Anthea Cochrane	Education Consultant
Danielle Keogh	Education Consultant

Optometry Victoria

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