



OPTOMETRY VICTORIA ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

FROM THE PRESIDENT + CEO



LEFT TERRI SMITH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
RIGHT KYLIE HARRIS, PRESIDENT

In this age of online communications we are in regular contact with members during the year with updates, news and information from both the Victorian office and the national organisation. Recognising this, our 2014 report provides a summary of our activities throughout the financial year 2013-14. We have grouped our reports according to the five key strategies outlined in our 2013-16 Strategic Plan.

A key activity this year has been related to the change of name from Optometrists Association Australia-Victoria to simply Optometry Victoria. This format was adopted by agreement of the state-based optometry divisions across the country and reflects something much bigger than a name change. It flags our intention to focus more of our efforts on advocacy for and promotion of the important role of optometry in providing primary eye care services.

We remain committed to meeting the needs of all members, from optometry students through to our well-established members. We have provided a wide range of information and support for members across the state.

We have made further progress this year in embracing new technologies to communicate with members — and to increase engagement in education activities. Our member webinars are popular and the SRC app and facebook page have attracted significant interest.

We continue to produce guidelines, policy and information resources for our members. Over the year we have worked cooperatively with other health professions. We have actively promoted optometry and eyecare to government and strategic partners throughout Victoria. We also continue to work cooperatively with industry partners.

We have maintained our Association magazine *Scope* in hard copy format — mailed to members every two months. We hope that members share our interest in having a good read at the table over lunch, or perhaps at home in comfort.

We have made good use of our premises to invite members to a range of information and CPD and CPR activities over the year. The premises have also been used by members, industry and other organisations for a range of activities.

SRC continues to provide an annual focus for CPD in Victoria. We love to see so many members together to learn, catch up with colleagues, and see what's new in diagnostic technology and industry trends.

The Board continues to provide strong governance for the organisation. Our small but effective staff team continues to provide enthusiastic support for the important work of the Association.

With a strong sense of strategic direction and a commitment to working effectively with Optometry Australia we are confident that we are well placed to support the profession in these dynamic times.

THE BOARD



TOP ROW KYLIE HARRIS, JULIA KABOV, ROGAN FRASER
 SECOND ROW MELISSA DOWNING, ANDREW HARRIS, STEPHEN JONES
 THIRD ROW ALLISON MCKENDRICK, GENEVIEVE NAPPER, MURRAY SMITH
 BOTTOM ROW YOTA YOSHIMITSU, JAYSON WARD

Optometry Victoria is managed by a Board of Directors elected from our membership. The Board can have up to eight Directors, or nine if the National President is a Director. The Board also has the capacity to include up to two Associate Directors.

The key function of the Board is to ensure the good governance of the organisation. While the Board undertake this important work they enjoy broad ranging discussion about issues affecting our members and the profession.

As President, Kylie Harris was supported by Julia Kabov (Vice-President) Rogan Fraser (Treasurer), and the remainder of the Board — see summary at right.

The Association held ten Board meetings during the year, in each month of the financial year except January and May.

Nine Directors' terms covered the entire financial year. Of these, Kylie Harris and Genevieve Napper attended all ten board meetings. The following Directors attended nine meetings: Melissa Downing, Rogan Fraser, Andrew Harris, Julia Kabov

and Allison McKendrick. Murray Smith attended eight meetings and Yota Yoshimitsu attended seven meetings. Jayson Ward joined the Board as an Associate Director in June 2014.

Stephen Jones attended the July meeting then retired from the Board after seven and a half years service including four years as Treasurer. We take this opportunity to acknowledge his considerable contribution over the years.

We appreciate the time and consideration given to the Association by all our Directors.

- Kylie Harris, President
- Julia Kabov, Vice-President
- Rogan Fraser, Treasurer
- Melissa Downing
- Andrew Harris
- Stephen Jones (until July 2013)
- Dr Allison McKendrick (appointed National Board Director)
- Dr Genevieve Napper
- Murray Smith
- Yota Yoshimitsu
- Jayson Ward (Associate Director since June 2014)

FINANCES

The Association reports a loss before tax of \$2,433 for the 2013-14 year (2012-13: \$130,516 loss). During the year, the Association undertook a revaluation of its land and building resulting in an increase in value of \$618,843 to \$3 million. In the event the property is sold, capital gains tax would be payable. Any tax payable can be offset by tax losses of the Association. This has allowed the Association to recognise an income tax benefit of \$155,873 in relation to its tax losses experienced in the past, which were previously unrecognised, resulting in a profit after tax of \$153,440.

Overall income for the Association has decreased 1.9% from \$2,473,270 in 2012-13 to \$2,426,456 in 2013-14. Expenditure has decreased 6.7% from \$2,603,786 to \$2,428,889.

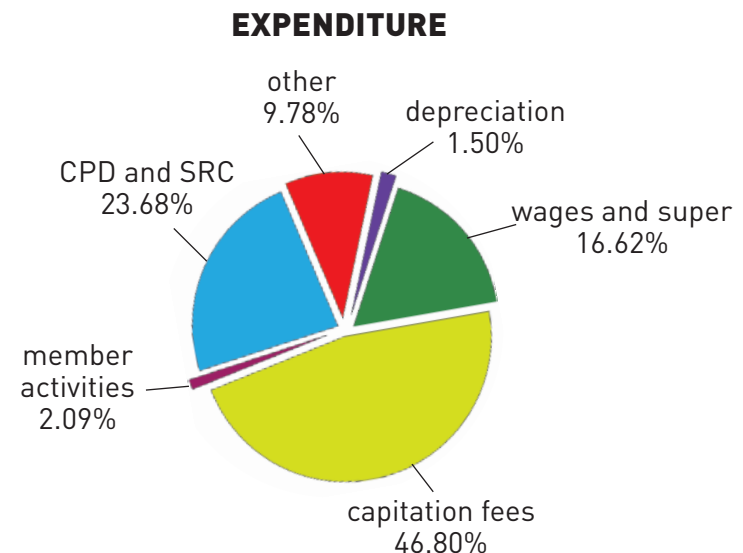
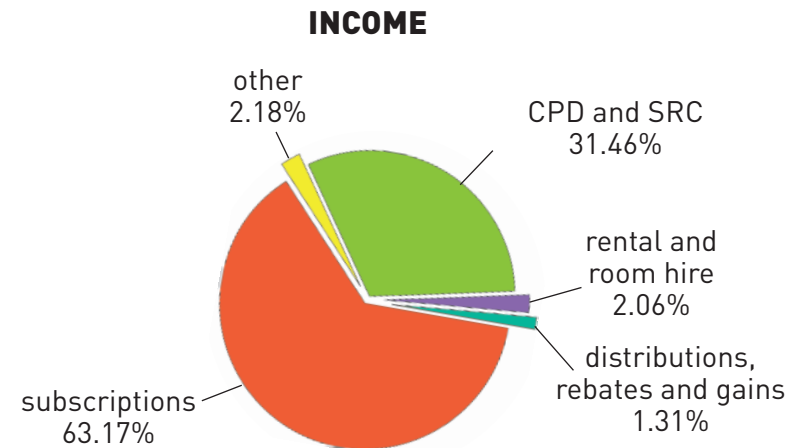
The decrease in income relates largely to the cessation of the Yellow Pages collation activity for members and a reduction in SRC income for the year. The decrease in expenditure also relates in significant part to the cessation of the Yellow Pages activity, although expenses on SRC and the Association's wages costs were also somewhat lower than in 2012-13.

It should be noted that in FY12 and FY13, the Association made a strategic decision to increase expenditure on member activities, particularly with respect to improving the profession's engagement with GPs. This increased activity was funded by very healthy profits from the 2010 and 2011 SRCs. The relative reduction in member activities in FY14 reflects a return to more historically normal expenditure on this area.



ROGAN FRASER, TREASURER

Full financial statements for 2013-14 are presented as a separate document.



SRC2014



SUPPORT OPTOMETRISTS TO PROVIDE BEST PRACTICE EYE CARE

Best practice in optometry: putting it all together

We've launched a great new tool to help you practice at your best. An important part of our work is to ensure optometrists have the right clinical, practical and professional support and information they need to practice optometry to a high standard, and obtain satisfaction from a career as a health professional.

This online tool is to make it easier for members to have ongoing familiarity with the many policies and legislative instruments with which optometrists have to be familiar, understand, or comply with, as well as other guidelines and information to support optometrists in providing great eye care.

Best Practice in Optometry is available in convenient FlipBook format and brings together information for optometrists about:

- optometry competencies;
- optometry registration standards, including additional underpinning guidelines and policies;
- legislative frameworks covering optometry;
- clinical standards and guidelines;
- guidelines for or information about practice policies and procedures
- communicating effectively with your patients, and
- prescribing

through a series of direct links to up-to-date online information and resources.

Communicating what we do . . . to you

We recognise how important it is for our members to know what is going on. It's your organisation, and your profession. To strengthen communication with members and help you keep on top of things we:

- produced six issues of *Scope* — covering topics including RVEEH referral guidelines, advertising standards, promoting your practice to GPs, Board and member activities, what do in the event of a complaint . . . and more;
- kept members informed through our regular bite-sized updates in the national optometry e-news bulletin — we make sure there's news in there every week just for Victoria, and
- introduced some great new ways to communicate before, during and after SRC.



We introduced a Facebook page, and developed our highly popular smartphone app for SRC to make the conference even easier, and to find out what's happening quick and convenient.

SRC

You came, you laughed, you learned and you enjoyed the daylight. Our first ever SRC in summer was a delight from start to finish. Drs Bloomenstein and Gerson were a new breed of presenter, showing us that professional education can be effectively delivered in a fun, relaxed manner. They were ably supported by a who's who of our local educators, our old friend the Trade Expo and a myriad of social events.

All credit to the 924 SRC attendees for the relaxed, happy vibe this year — that's all of you optoms out there! Your enthusiasm for and appreciation of the intelligent, independent education that SRC provides is wonderful to behold each year.

The move to new dates earlier in the year came with its own set of challenges, predominantly that we only had nine months between SRC 2013 and 2014. Thanks to everyone, office staff, Education Committee and Education Consultants who dealt with those challenges in creative, flexible ways and pulled off another great event.

Your questions asked and answered

Each working day, we talk to optometrists, assisting with a wide range of your questions, queries and concerns. No question is too small, too big, or too leftfield. We helped well over 200 members individually during 2013-14. We have helped people who wanted to:

- employ a new graduate;
- value their business;
- undertake a presentation about eye care in their local area;
- set up a Facebook page for their practice;
- set up for locum work;

- establish a local peer learning group for CPD;
- resolve a dispute about the refund of glasses in an amicable way, and
- source material to help them promote their practice and optometry to local GPs.

We have answered a wide range of specific questions.

- Does the TAC require a doctor's referral?
- Can I use this particular Medicare item under these particular circumstances?
- What can I do about a local shop selling novelty lenses?
- Are there referral guidelines for patients with this particular condition?
- What are my reporting obligations for patients who do not meet the visual standards for driving and how should I communicate this to the patient?
- How long must I keep patient records?
- What are my reporting requirements if I am concerned a patient might make a complaint?

We've also spoken to and advised people in complex situations, including members affected by or concerned about marketing 'scams'; or members who have been in tricky situations with their patients or staff.

Education: Ocular allergy webinar

'Twas the season! Spring time is allergy time for Melbourne. We helped 85 optometrists across Victoria to make allergy season 2013 better for patients, with a webinar on managing ocular allergy with expert optometrist, and member, Dr Graham Lakkis.



INCREASE PARTICIPATION OF OPTOMETRISTS IN INTEGRATED MODELS OF PATIENT CARE

ENGAGE WITH GENERAL PRACTITIONERS TO PROMOTE THE FULL SCOPE OF OPTOMETRY TO IMPROVE PATIENT OUTCOMES

Operation GP: Helping you help GPs

The relationship you have with local GPs can help ensure great care. GPs are an important source of support for you; and you for them — providing skilled eye care for patients, and monitoring and caring for those with chronic conditions.

Through Operation GP, we:

- produced, updated and distributed a wide range of resources, including template referral materials, introductory letters, and Fact Sheets about optometry: scope of practice, training, Medicare and equipment;
- provided information in *Scope* highlighting the range of strategies members use to work with GPs and promote optometry services in local communities;
- developed a presentation for members to use in education sessions to introduce local GPs to the work of optometry;
- worked with Medicare Locals to provide information about optometry and optometry services, and
- made sure that GPs and organisations representing GPs and primary care were well-represented at our Eye on the Future Dinner.

Eye on the Future: A dinner for primary eye care

The Victorian Minister for Health, David Davis, was among the guests our April Eye on the Future dinner that brought health professionals together to share ideas about the delivery of eye care services in Victoria. The Minister joined 66 guests, including representatives from Networking Health Victoria, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists, the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, and a number of Medicare Locals. Many individual optometrists and optometry organisations were at the dinner, which was also attended by the Chief Allied Health Advisor for Victoria, Kathleen Philip, and representatives from the Australian Physiotherapy Association and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

Optometry Victoria President Kylie Harris addressed the dinner, noting that “each and every one of our members is working with many different health professionals, receiving referrals and referring on, consulting and co-ordinating care, finding the best service, the best pathway, to

make sure that patients get the best possible health outcomes”. She encouraged all to talk together, and “think about ways that we can all encourage and foster a future that strongly and consistently supports integrated care”, a sentiment endorsed by the Minister in his keynote address.

Election 2014: Optometry matters

Optometry Victoria put together a submission for the major parties contesting the 2014 Victorian state election. This document was presented to the Victorian Minister for Health, David Davis, at a meeting in June. In our submission, Optometry Victoria called for:

- optometrists to have the chance to utilise the full extent of their training and skills to provide excellent vision care — national and state laws and policies should encourage and enable this;
- enhanced government funding to ensure that the VES remains viable and sustainable;
- nationally consistent laws to ensure novelty or non-powered lenses can only be provided with a prescription from an optometrist or medical practitioner, and
- ongoing support for the great work of the

Vision Initiative, a major partner in eye health education in Victoria.

We pledged to work with the Victorian government to ensure that the upcoming intergovernmental review of the performance of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency strengthens the system to protect patients and encourage best practice care.



Vision Initiative: Optometrists part of the push to increase testing rates

It's been a busy year for the Vision Initiative, and we have been a part of that, helping to roll out an innovative pilot program in four local government areas to strengthen referral pathways for patients in need of eye and vision care, raise awareness of the leading causes of blindness, and increase knowledge and eye testing rates among at risk communities.

Optometrists in the greater Shepparton area, La Trobe Valley, Geelong, and Darebin local government areas have all enthusiastically signed up to help this effort.

Member Roman Serebrianik developed and delivered some great educational presentations for pharmacists and GPs, letting them they know all the ways optometry can help, and why eye testing is important.

Integrated eye care: why it works, and why we're for it

To promote the work optometrists do, and how important is it to help Victorians maintain access to effective care within their communities, we have put together a paper, *Integrated Eye Care: Evidence and Advantages*. We presented this to the Minister for Health, David Davis, in June.

The paper looks at:

- the optometry workforce in Victoria;
- eye health and disease in Victoria;
- general benefits of integrated models of health care;
- eye disease in the hospital setting, and why it makes sense to prevent eye disease and to manage those patients who can be managed appropriately in the community setting in that setting, freeing specialist ophthalmologists to provide much-needed hospital care;
- optometry and the burden of diabetes and diabetic eye disease, and
- novel projects in Victoria that have demonstrated how optometrists can help

triage and appropriately refer patients, so that only those Victorians who really do need the high-quality specialist eye care provided by our tertiary institutions and outpatient clinics are the ones who end up there.

Other health professions: putting it out there

Throughout the year, Optometry Victoria has provided or organised talks and information to a range of health professionals we felt it was important should understand the eye care message. This has included conference presentations and CPD sessions for:

- aged care nurses;
- aged care workers (presented with Vision Australia), and
- pharmacists.

Health Professions Group and Chief Allied Health Advisor

We meet regularly with other health professional associations to share ideas and resources. This is a great opportunity to promote interdisciplinary care and referral. This ongoing relationship has had many benefits including nomination of participants in the Health Leadership Course, now in its four year.

We have developed a very positive relationship with the Chief Allied Health Advisor, Kath Philip ensuring that the key issues for the profession are understood by the state health department. Kylie Harris (President) represents Optometry Victoria on the Victorian Department of Health, Allied Health Education Reference Group. Work to ensure a high quality and sustainable workforce.

WORK TO ENSURE A HIGH QUALITY + SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

Our students . . . the profession's future

We've been working with both Deakin and Melbourne unis in Victoria, to make sure that students coming into the profession get the most from their chosen career, and understand and value the work and role of a professional organisation that's there to support them throughout their life as an optometrist.

We:

- held our annual Getting Registered Session, with a record attendance, introducing students to the ins and outs of registration, Medicare, the PBS and more;
- delivered a two hour workshop for third year students in the Doctor of Optometry degree at Melbourne University, highlighting the diversity of career options and opportunities for these highly-skilled students about to enter the profession. Optometry Victoria delivered this workshop with speakers including national President and Optometry Victoria Board member Andrew Harris, and optometrist Lauren Ayton, whose diverse career spans a range of clinical and research experience;
- attended Deakin University as part of an orientation day for new optometry students, presenting on the role of the Association; and
- held our annual 'catch-up' dinner for recent graduates newly-started in optometry practice to meet our new members, answer questions and find out how they are enjoying their first months in the profession.

Careers at SRC

The SRC Careers Expo featured two 'firsts': it was held as part of SRC, and included students from both Deakin and Melbourne universities. Speakers from Optometry Australia and Optometry Victoria were followed by the Expo, an opportunity for students to meet a range of practitioners and members hoping to find out more about future graduates, their skills and their interests.

The road ahead: A Workforce Position and Strategy

Optometry Victoria had developed a Workforce Strategy which is centred on activities aimed at (1) developing the optometry workforce; and (2) increasing the demand for optometry services

We want to:

- make sure optometry can provide effective, high quality eye care to meet community expectations and future demands; and
- utilise the skills of optometrists, to ensure that optometrists are enabled to practice at the full extent of their training, and in a range of environments including clinical optometry, education, research, in hospitals and tertiary care, and in the optical industry.

The strategy, which can be found on our website, outlines activities to support these aims.

Working with the regulators

The Optometry Board of Australia and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency are there to set the highest standards for registered optometrists, which should help get the best out of all practitioners.

We make sure that we always make Victorian views heard as part of the ongoing national process of reviewing the effectiveness of regulatory systems and policies, communicating information to members, and where possible, making things better where they need to be. Throughout the year we have:

- supported national office and our members through the first audit of optometrists against registration standards;
- developed the *Best Practice in Optometry Self-Audit* tool and guideline linking all AHPRA and OBA codes and standards from the one handy online FlipBook;
- had input to Optometry Australia submissions to AHPRA and the OBA on a range of registration policies and guidelines including social media guidelines, advertising guidelines and professional indemnity registration standards;
- provided information and assistance for members who may have been the subject of an AHPRA notification;
- communicated developments and changes to all our members through our publications;
- responded on optometry's behalf to the findings and recommendations of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the performance of AHPRA.

EYE ON THE FUTURE DINNER



A UNIFIED NATIONAL OPTOMETRY ASSOCIATION

WE WILL BE PLAYING A MUCH MORE HIGH PROFILE AND VISIBLE ROLE THAN WE PREVIOUSLY HAVE IN AREAS SUCH AS GOVERNMENT LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY, HIGHLIGHTING EYE-HEALTH ISSUES AND PROMOTING OPTOMETRY TO CONSUMERS AND THE HEALTH CARE SECTOR.

Optometry Victoria has contributed actively to national activities throughout the year. We believe that extensive national cooperation will provide the best possible outcomes for the profession and for individual members.

In fact the Victorian Board is committed to moving towards the federated entities of Optometry Australia becoming a single organisation. We understand that this will take some time to achieve. We have developed a position paper — *Moving Forward: In Support of a Single National Organisation for Optometry* — to highlight the key reasons for becoming a single organisation.

Optometry Victoria

While our legal name is still Optometrists Association Australia (Victorian Division) we are now trading as Optometry Victoria under the banner of Optometry Australia. Whilst the new name is simpler and more contemporary it represents much more than a name change. After consultation, which included both quantitative and qualitative research with members from each of the states, the separate state bodies committed to the new name and a refocussing of resources.

In short:

- We are changing so that we can begin to concentrate our resources on strengthening and protecting the optometry profession.
- We will be playing a much more high profile and

visible role than we previously have in areas such as government lobbying and advocacy, highlighting eye health issues and promoting optometry to consumers and the health care sector.

- Our goal is to put eye health front and centre of Australian health care and to significantly raise the standing of optometrists as eye health experts.
- Our members remain core and we are committed to providing maximum membership value. This is evidenced by the fact that we have listened to, and we are responding to, our members.

Working together

National Policy and Resource Development Victoria continues to contribute actively to all requests from Optometry Australia to contribute to policy and resource development. Kirsty Machon, our Policy and Member Services Manager works closely with the Professional Services and Policy staff at Optometry Australia to ensure the valuable information we learn from our members is fed through to national policy and resources.

This year we have provided input to a policies and practice notes ranging from Privacy, Bulk Billing, Remuneration through to Diabetes Clinical guidelines, Professional Indemnity Insurance and Risk Management and Releasing Prescriptions. We have contributed to responses to AHPRA consultations on Entry Level Competencies (a number of members were involved in this), and social media, as well as the OBA registration



standards for Criminal History and English Language. We have also contributed ideas to the development of national resources and campaigns to support members to promote optometry.

Our staff and Board have contributed directly to the national Strategic Planning process.

National Working Groups

We have contributed to a range of national working group this year, all with a focus on achieving better outcomes for our members.

- Fees Working Group
- Branding Working Group
- Brand Implementation Working Group
- Communications Working Group
- Cost Savings Working Group

CPD Working Group

Terri Smith has chaired a new national Working Group to promote cooperation amongst the states in the delivery of excellent CPD to Australian optometrists. We were pleased to take leadership of this group given the longstanding role of the Victorian Division in providing the largest national CPD program in SRC. The initial focus of this group has been developing and promoting the Optometry Australia

conferences. We are really proud of our independent national conference programs and want to make sure we can continue to provide the best possible conference programs for our members. We are very aware of the challenges to face to face conferences both in terms of attracting delegates and sponsorship.

Getting practical

At an administrative level, we have been introducing a new national member database and financial system. This has been a huge project and has required considerable cooperation across the states. The introduction of the new system has highlighted substantial differences in the way each state operates. These are not insurmountable differences but they have added to the complexities of developing a national approach. While we have been processing Victorian Membership and SRC payments online for seven years now some of the other states are not, there are considerable differences in state fees and even in membership transfer rules. We are all working together to try to rationalise some of these processes to provide better services to members and reduce overall administrative costs.

FOR THE INDIVIDUAL + FOR THE PROFESSION

The Association has a role to protect and further the interests of both individual optometrists and the profession.

For individual members, we are here to:

- support members to practice in a way that allows them to use their skills and training, so that their professional life is personally rewarding
- make sure our members have the clinical, practical and professional support and information they need to practice optometry effectively and to a high standard.

For the profession, we are here to:

- ensure optometry and eye care are on the agenda of those setting and directing health policies and providing services in Victoria
- make sure GPs, specialists and other health professionals are aware of what optometrists do and why it makes clinical and economic sense to provide integrated care
- raise awareness within the Victorian community about the role optometrists play in eye care, and the services they can provide
- ensure measures are in place to keep optometry a viable and attractive profession into the future.

STAFF

Terri Smith	Chief Executive Officer
Laura Grattidge	Operations Manager
Kirsty Machon	Policy and Member Services Manager
Johanna Hersey	Member Liaison Officer
Jenny Hall	Member Database & Accounts Officer
Helen Papadimitriou	SRC Coordinator
Kathy Roberts	Eye Health Awareness Project Officer (to Dec. 2013)
Anthea Cochrane, Bao Nguyen	Education Consultants



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