

# Eye Institute celebrates 15 years

Looking back over 15 years to when Eye Institute first opened is a source of great pride for its three founding ophthalmologists, Drs Bruce Hadden, Tony Morris, and Peter Ring. At the time, the project was a risk as well as a huge financial investment, and it attracted its share of criticism. Who could have believed that 15 years on there would be seven directors, visiting consultants, 40 staff, and that the facility has nearly outgrown its original site.

Its genesis was the 1992 American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery Congress in San Diego. Drs Tony Morris and Peter Ring had been doing radial keratotomy for some time and on returning from San Diego they agreed that laser treatment was the way of the future for refractive surgery and decided to invest in an excimer laser, costing around \$800,000.

They invited Dr Hadden to join them – his reply was ‘give me 48 hours to decide’. After only one sleepless night, Dr Hadden’s decision was made and he hastily arranged to attend a course in refractive surgery in Chicago. The first laser refractive operations (PRK) were done on July 18 1992, but not without controversy. A headline on the front page of the *New Zealand Herald* ‘Long view plea in eye surgery’, went on to question the long term safety of laser refractive procedures. Such concerns have, of course, long since been refuted.

Having worked together for

nearly two years in the joint ownership of the excimer laser, they decided to combine their practices as one entity and establish Australasia’s largest private eye hospital with day-stay facilities that were second to none. In late 1993 Dr Morris noticed a villa for sale at 125 Remuera Road.

“We had all got along very well together; we took the plunge, bought the property, and planned the building. That included a trip to the United States to visit some ambulatory surgical facilities, which at that time were a new concept in surgical care. Our proudest day was February 24 1995 when the then named Remuera Eye Clinic, Day Surgery and Laser Centre, was officially opened by the Governor-General Dame Cath Tizard,” said Dr Hadden.

Controversy continued in 1995, during Eye Institute’s first year. At that time a Government funding body, North Health, wished to contract out cataract operations to the private sector to reduce the waiting list in public hospitals.

“Eye Institute submitted to do 140 procedures which meant North Health paid us to do them instead of paying Auckland Hospital. What a furore! Debate took place in the media with us being criticised for doing public work and the then manager of Auckland Hospital stated that “such a move would threaten the best teaching hospital in New Zealand”. Ultimately we did the 140 cataract operations and the Milford Eye Clinic did 100 and all the

patients benefited. Politics precluded further contracts for some years, but now of course contracts for public hospital elective surgery are widely accepted as a means of patients on the waiting lists enjoying the benefits of more timely surgery and at the same time, being cost-effective,” said Dr Hadden.

The practice continued to go from strength to strength. From the outset, the vision of the partners was to expand the partnership. Dr Trevor Gray joined the directorship in 1997 and since then the team has been joined by Drs Helen Danesh-Meyer, Nick Mantell, Peter Hadden, and Adam Watson, all of whom have added to the sub-specialty expertise. In 2001 Professor Charles McGhee joined as a visiting consultant and more recently, in 2009, Dr Simon Dean joined as an Associate – making a total of ten sub-specialists working in Eye Institute. In line with this expansion, the ancillary staff has also increased to forty, double what it was in 1995.

Changes to the fit-out have been undertaken from time to time to accommodate more staff and growing patient numbers, as well as more surgical and diagnostic equipment, including the iFS IntraLase, vitreoretinal equipment, and new diagnostic equipment including the Cirrus Optical Coherence Tomography, Zeiss IOL Master, and the many other items needed to provide state-of-the-art ophthalmic care.

In 1999 the name was changed from ‘Remuera Eye



Back row: Prof Charles McGhee, Drs Simon Dean, Trevor Gray, Prof Helen Danesh-Meyer, Nick Mantell, Adam Watson and Peter Hadden. Front row: Founding ophthalmologists Drs Tony Morris, Peter Ring and Bruce Hadden

Clinic’ to ‘Eye Institute’, to reflect leadership in ophthalmic surgery, clinical research, and a growing national sphere of influence.

In 2005 Eye Institute expanded to the North Shore with a fully equipped consultation clinic and surgical facilities at the Northern Clinic, and in 2008 a fully equipped consultation suite at New Lynn was opened. Equipment at both locations includes automated visual fields, optical coherence tomography, and at North Shore, corneal topography as well. Presently Eye Institute is developing a facility to service the growing South Auckland population.

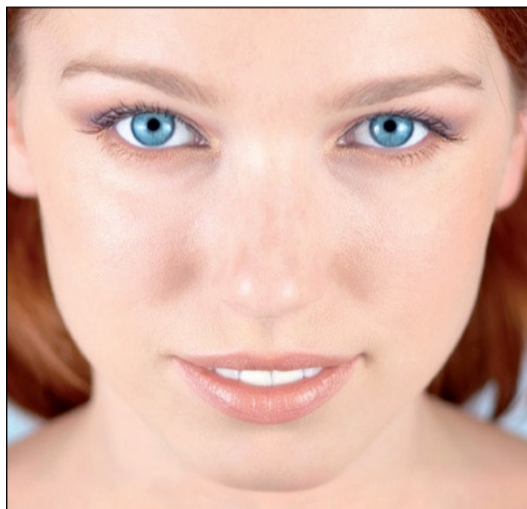
Over the 2009-2010 Christmas/New Year period Eye Institute had an extensive interior redecoration including wall coverings, carpeting and tiling to bring the decor into the new decade while retaining the harmonious ambience.



At the opening in 1995 are from left: Drs Bruce Hadden, Peter Ring, Tony Morris and the Governor General Cath Tizard

Whereas the original theme was turquoise and rust, the new décor is charcoal and grey. With the modernised colour scheme the exterior of the building remains as timeless as when built, which is a tribute to the architect, Kerry Avery. Eye Institute’s Directors are

much indebted to manager Barbara Cable, and to their loyal and committed staff. They are confident that the Institute’s facilities and expertise are well placed to continue leading in ophthalmic surgery throughout the next decade. **O**



## Eye Institute Education Series 2010



Eye Institute’s Education Series continues to offer an opportunity for the Optometry Profession to gain exposure to the latest advances in therapeutics, shared-care management and surgical advances in New Zealand. You are invited to join us on one or more of the following Seminars and Conferences for the 2010 year.

**Theme:** Diagnostics & Therapeutics in everyday Practice  
**First Seminar:** Novotel Conference Rooms, 72 –112 Greenlane Rd East  
**Time:** Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2010  
 6.30pm - 8.30pm

**Second Seminar:** Novotel Conference Rooms, 72 –112 Greenlane Rd East, Ellerslie  
**Time:** Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010  
 6.30pm - 8.30pm

**Conference:** Venue to be confirmed  
**Time:** Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2010  
 8.00am - 5.00pm

**Contact:** conference@eyeinstitute.co.nz  
 09 522 5775 / Barbara Cable  
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