

## New Executive Manager for Glaucoma New Zealand

**H**elen Mawn has been appointed Executive Manager of Glaucoma New Zealand (GNZ). Helen replaces Heather Hyland who left the organisation in November last year.

Helen has many years of experience and proven results in the non-for-profit sector. For the past nine years she held the role of Executive Director of The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation - growing the Foundation from a 'one-man-band' with a second hand computer to one of the most successful, high profile and respected charities in New Zealand.

Helen is looking forward to using her strategic expertise to help GNZ move forward in terms of its charitable objectives and the funding initiatives required to achieve this.

"My focus for 2009 will be building a solid platform for the future to ensure that the activities of GNZ continue to grow and it has sufficient resources in place to deliver," she said.

Working with current sponsors and supporters, as well as encouraging new interest is also extremely important to Helen.

"I also look forward to establishing a permanent



Helen Mawn

annual Glaucoma Awareness Appeal on the calendar," says Helen.

## GNZ to focus on collaboration with eye care professionals, government and consumer education

**O**ne of Glaucoma NZ's biggest challenges is to reach as many of those 34,000 undiagnosed New Zealanders as possible each year to help prevent them going blind.

The three pillars of preventing blindness from glaucoma are; early diagnosis, commitment of patients to their treatment, and providing treatments that minimally interfere with a patient's life-style. The new Chair of Glaucoma NZ (GNZ), Professor Helen Danesh-Meyer said to achieve these requires a multi-disciplinary approach.

"Our mission is to eliminate blindness from glaucoma in New Zealand by providing education, public awareness and research into glaucoma. GNZ is in a strong position to achieve this.

"This year GNZ will be focussing on increasing collaboration with all professionals involved in eye care; optometrists, general practitioners, pharmacists and nurses. We plan to work closely with optometry on projects that will encourage the early diagnosis of glaucoma.

"We need to work with government so that early diagnosis through screening is an accessible and affordable option for all New Zealanders.

"Education is the key to the successful management of any chronic disease - including glaucoma. GNZ is committed to strengthening its educational programmes for patients and eye-care professionals," she said.

Since its inception in 2002, GNZ has gone from strength to strength through the generous support of its patient base, sponsors, and eye care professional colleagues. GNZ has perhaps the most well-developed educational programmes of any charity of its kind. Its general Community Education provides free information via public seminars, information booklets, newsletters, and a website. Seventy-nine free public seminars have been held to date, from Whangarei to Invercargill, and every patient with glaucoma receives a free information pack and regular newsletters to keep them up to date with the latest on glaucoma.

"We consider it important that membership to GNZ is free, to encourage people to join and stay as informed as possible. Current membership is over 7,200 up on the 2007



Professor Helen Danesh-Meyer

figures of approximately 5,250.

"We are also very proud of our web-based Professional Education Programme for optometrists, and based on its success, a programme for general practitioners was launched last year," said Prof. Danesh-Meyer.

GNZ recognises the importance of sustaining the momentum achieved to date and moving forward. Prof. Danesh-Meyer said that despite a lot being achieved in a relatively short space of time, GNZ is determined to achieve even more in the future in its fight against glaucoma.

"In this regard ongoing funding will be crucial, as it is the life-blood of any charity. So we will need to further develop our sponsorship and support base, and hope the public and professionals alike will all rally behind GNZ.

"We are absolutely passionate about the work we do and making a difference, but we can't do it alone," she said.

Professor Danesh-Meyer was appointed Chair of Glaucoma New Zealand at the end of last year, replacing Dr Ken Tarr who stood down after seven years in that position.

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## Glaucoma NZ 2009 Professional Education Programme

**E**nrolments are now open for Glaucoma NZ's 2009 Professional Education Programme. The course is delivered entirely online through a password protected section of the Glaucoma NZ (GNZ) website.

The professional education programme is approved by the Optometry Board CPD Committee for 7 TPA credits on completion of the course and examination.

The 2009 online course will again be largely case-based, comprising a series of seminars based on clinical case studies, and Glaucoma Updates reviewing recent glaucoma literature. The seminars will cover a planned programme of topics which will link academic knowledge with practice. As well as questions and answers to accompany each case, each seminar will include an academic discussion of the important features of the case described.

In addition, this year 5 of the 10 cases will be in areas of therapeutics involving the use of medications other than glaucoma drops. These cases will be in areas that affect the glaucoma patient and require a broader approach to management such as, the use of steroid eye drops, allergic eye disease, and dry eye.

For full explanatory letter and enrolment options please visit [www.glaucoma.org.nz](http://www.glaucoma.org.nz)