

Iain Dunlop, President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists, 2007 – 2009

Canberra based eye surgeon, Dr Iain Stirling Dunlop was elected as President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists in 2007 and was the second President to give two years as President. He practices both in Canberra and Sydney. As a Senior Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) at the Sydney Eye Hospital since 1989 he teaches anterior segment surgery and helped to set up the wet lab, Foundation theatre and research laboratories. In 1997, he helped to establish the Canberra Eye Hospital which is the region's largest and most comprehensive eye facility. He is also a VMO at the John James Memorial Hospital at Deakin, ACT, and at the Goulburn Base Hospital, NSW.

Iain was born on 30 June 1956 at Newcastle, NSW and was educated at Knox Grammar School where he was Dux of the School for the HSC in 1974. He won many scholarships and prizes during his medical training and graduated with honours in Medicine from the University of Sydney in 1980. He did his Internship and Residency at the Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney from 1980 to 1981, was Medical Registrar at the Repatriation General Hospital at Concord from 1982 to 1984 where he trained as a physician concurrent and subsequent to passing his ophthalmology part I examination. After completing his FRACP part I examination, he became an Ophthalmology Registrar at Sydney Eye Hospital from 1984 to 1987, the final year as the Professorial registrar under Frank Billson. Iain became a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) and the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists (RACO) in 1987; a Member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology in 1994, and the American Society of Cataract and Refractive surgery in 1995. Iain gained experience at Queen Square, the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, the Western Ophthalmic Hospital and the St Mary's Hospital in London from 1991 to 1992.

Dr Dunlop has been active in College affairs for many years. He was the last Federal Honorary Secretary of the College, a position that lapsed with the change of governance of the College in 2002. He then served on the College Board as Honorary Treasurer and Chair of the Audit Committee.

At the Sydney Eye Hospital, Iain was secretary of the Medical Staff Council (MSC) for a decade before he became Chair of the Council. He also chaired the Sydney Hospital MSC for 5 years from 2006. At State level he served on the NSW Branch, including as secretary and then as Chairman in 2006/7. He was elected President of the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists (ASO) in 2004 and was actively involved in representing ophthalmology to government and at the Australian Medical Association (AMA). In 2005 Iain was elected to the Board of Vision 2020 Australia from 2005 to 2008, a position that directly linked the College to the wider vision care sector in Australia.

Under his RANZCO Presidency during his first year in office:

- The College recognised the growing need for proactive workforce planning, including more ophthalmic services against the likely future shortfall of ophthalmologists. Therefore additional training positions including private practice involvement were sought;
- Two new training posts in private practice were accredited under the Commonwealth Government's Expanded Specialist Training Program;
- Provided financial support for a new academic chair in the Australian School of Advanced Medicine at Macquarie University in NSW;
- Obtained Medical Council of New Zealand accreditation for the vocational training program and continuing professional development in New Zealand for six years;
- Lodged a submission with the New Zealand Clinical Training Agency for an increase in funding to allow more ophthalmic training positions to be established;
- The New Zealand National eye Centre was opened at the University of Auckland, following a formal agreement between the departments of Ophthalmology, Optometry and Visual Science to further the quest for the development of an integrated eye care team;
- The College had promulgated an integrated eye care team approach to ensure that the patient is served by a unified management approach, including patient consent, adequate indemnity protection, open and timely communication between practitioners, and safe prescribing: and the NSW/ACT collaborative care model for glaucoma was instituted in 2008;
- Tunnel Vision, the most recent study of four Access Economics studies commissioned by Professor Taylor to provide accurate econometric data was released to inform the approach to glaucoma management in which task delegation rather than role substitution would be required for workforce implementation;

- An International Ophthalmology Committee to integrate information on services between overseas aid and educational development and to formally liaise with Federal Government agencies on the application of the \$42 million grant for eye care in the Asia Pacific Region;
- The RANZCO Eye foundation set up the inaugural JUeye campaign to be run annually to raise awareness of eye health issues and to promote philanthropy towards eye care;
- A new contract with increased royalties and improved editorial assistance was re-negotiated with Wiley-Blackwell for the continued publishing of the College's scientific journal, *Clinical & Experimental Ophthalmology*, which was recognised as a major international publication;
- The College contributed both directly and through Vision 2020 Australia to the *National Framework for Action to Promote Eye Health and Prevent Blindness and Vision Loss*;
- Changes were proposed to Continuing Professional Development by moving to an annual rather than a triennial cycle, an annual audit, and simplification of the web-based data entry system;
- Two comprehensive submissions for the evaluation of digital imaging for glaucoma and for the macular were lodged with the Medical Services Advisory Committee;
- In conjunction with the RANZCO Eye Foundation brought children's vision care to the attention of the public as the theme for World Sight Day 2007.

Iain's first Presidential address was titled "For successful People, failure is a much more instructive and useful consideration than success". He welcomed the graduates as Fellows of the College and acknowledged their efforts; the support of their families and loved ones; and the generosity of the many Fellows and teachers who had trained them, first in medicine and particularly in ophthalmology.

Iain then focused on failure as the major theme of his address in that failure and success are relative: how their own failings and those of others were dealt with would define the type of person they would become. He used the aphorism that "success builds character, failure reveals it" and posed the question of how they would know if they were successful in the broadest sense. After posing several different ways that one could 'measure' success he contended that the paradox was that the standard measures of success would not be useful to their real success or worth: it would be in their treatment of failure that they would really find that measure. He advised the audience that failure must be approached humbly, honestly, openly and courageously as they are the events from which they would grow. He counselled that they would have the capacity to know why a misadventure occurred and it would be for them to take responsibility for the recognition and the remediation of the situation. Iain informed them that the end result may be good or bad but the process is equally as important as the result, and when they reflected on how they dealt with it, they would get a measure of the character of the practitioner that they were. Although such occurrences were rare, he considered that open disclosure was the public concept of the mechanism for dealing with unforeseen medical irregularities and that timely disclosure of the problem to the patient, active communication of the options for redressing it, involvement of colleagues, and sincerity in expressing regret were important factors in dealing with them. In dealing with the failure of others, Iain recommended empathy, consideration, and maintenance of perspective, in their treatment of the perceived failings. He concluded his address by reminding the graduates that in years to come it would be most likely that they would forget everything that had been said that night but they would not forget their feelings of achievement after all their hard work.

During Iain's second year as President:

- The Commonwealth Government introduced ill-informed reductions in the Medicare rebates to ophthalmic patients and Fellows were forced to examine the value of their services;
- The College developed a more intense interface with the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists in their advocacy role in offering sound principles and factual data;
- Dr Mark Renehan took over as Censor-in-Chief from Dr David Kaufman who had filled the role for six years, and Dr John Grigg took over from Professor Charles McGhee as Chair of the Scientific Program Committee;
- Consideration was given to planning annual or triennial support between the various major ophthalmic industry companies and the College;
- Vision 2020 New Zealand was launched in May 2009 with initial goals of data collection on disease prevalence, service delivery and unmet need;
- The College Library revised its web presence with clearer search facilities for ophthalmic and medical literature as well as real-time chat during business hours;
- After 10 years in the position Bob Guest stood down as CEO, leaving the College transformed and open to external examination of processes firmly in place, evolving without loss of independence or purpose. In the

final months of his Presidency, Iain led the recruitment of Ms Susi Tegen as incoming CEO with a brief to proactively involve the College in government, international and Australian vision sector decision making;

- Vision care was again brought to the attention of the public by promoting World Sight Day on the theme of “Vision and Ageing”;
- Provided four teachers to the Cambodian vocational training program at the University of Phnom Penh;
- Introduced an annual cycle for Continuing Professional Development;
- Adopted an environmental policy for both the College facilities and the profession at large;
- Received endorsement from the Australian Tax Office as a Charitable Institution for Tax Concessions;
- Further upgraded the College’s computer network including servers, databases and security systems;
- Reviewed and set the College’s eight strategic goals for 2009 to 2014.

Iain delivered his second Presidential address titled “The ability to intelligently do nothing is a mark of clinical maturity”. After congratulating the new Fellows for the achievement of Fellowship and acknowledging their families and the Fellows who trained them, Iain acknowledged the superb level of skills the graduates had achieved and that they would now have the privilege of enjoying the magical success of restorative ophthalmic surgery. However he opined that deeper success and gratification lie in the medicine of ophthalmology, practiced over many years with the same patients in the control of the progression of glaucoma, or managed sight threatening uveitis, or contained diabetic retinopathy. He spoke about the contrast of the bright lights of procedural acclaim compared with the active, considered, scientific, evidence-based, intelligent decisions to do nothing. He said that choosing not to treat is just as valuable as choosing to treat, but communicating such a decision requires competencies of scholar, health advocate and collaborator, beyond the standard medical expert and clinical decision maker. Communicating the decision to do nothing with the understanding and consent of the patient requires more information, more empathy and more time. He advised that the consultant’s twin decisions of what to do and when to do it embody the ophthalmologist’s professionalism and expertise and are more important than the technical performance of surgery and cannot be substituted. He observed that the clinical decisions are complex and must always be interactive and empathetic but they seem to be opaque to the pusillanimous ‘reductivists’ and blinkered ‘econocrats’ who would reduce them to non-individual ‘commodified’, quick fixes. The practice of medicine is not a flow chart and this simplistic view is enticing but wrong. Iain concluded his speech by advising the audience to take time when they are doing nothing and, for work-life balance, to take time to do nothing, but remember to let nothing stand in the way of their well-deserved sense of achievement and pride.

Iain comes from a family of ophthalmologists. His father Donald, now retired, was an ophthalmologist in Newcastle, and his mother Patricia was an orthoptist. His sister Catherine and his brother Anthony are both ophthalmologists. All six syblings trained in medicine at Sydbey University giving a continuing Dunlop presence in the faculty from 1972 to 1989, a feat equalled only by the Flynn family in the 1930s.

Since leaving the College Presidency, Iain has continued to contribute to RANZCO. He has led the Ophthalmic workforce review committee; was involved in the whole of Medicare item review; was the RANZCO International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) representative; is on the RANZCO constitution advisory committee; and provides regular input to ophthalmic policy.

At a broader level, Iain is currently the Chairman of the Federal Government's Ophthalmic Prosthesis Clinical Advisory Group (OPCAG), and sits on the Professional Services Review Advisory Committee (PSRAC) and the Health Technology Assessment Consultative Committee (HTACC). In 2013, he was appointed to the Council of the Australian Medical Council (AMC) and reappointed as a councillor to the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS).

In medical politics, he was a longstanding ophthalmology representative on AMA Federal Council. In 2011/12 he was President of ACT AMA and in 2013, he was elected Chairman of AMA Federal Council.