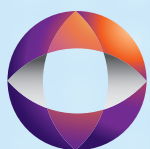


# Be a star that shines on

Help create a future free  
from vision loss



CENTRE FOR  
Eye Research  
Australia



# A new era starts with you

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When you remember CERA in your will, you leave  
a legacy of light in the darkness of vision loss

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Like you, we know that vision is precious.  
And, like you, we believe that no one should  
ever lose the gift of sight.

At the Centre for Eye Research Australia  
(CERA), our bold vision is to achieve a world  
free from eye disease and vision loss.

We are an international leader in eye  
research – ranking in the world’s top 5 for  
ophthalmology research. Using world-class  
knowledge and expertise, our researchers  
are striving to transform the diagnosis and  
treatment of eye disease, and are finding new  
ways to prevent people from going blind.

At CERA, every trial, every set of results, and  
every breakthrough, is moving us closer  
to a new era of vision. The path forward  
is illuminated by the kindness of our  
supporters, who have chosen to make their  
legacy the gift of sight for future generations.

## **Your legacy gift will enable our researchers to continue:**

- ▶ Understanding the causes of eye disease.
- ▶ Informing disease prevention.
- ▶ Improving the diagnosis and treatment  
of eye disease.

## **Today, you can be a visionary for the future of sight.**

**By remembering CERA in your will,  
you’ll be creating a legacy of hope  
for people affected by vision loss  
and protecting sight for generations  
to come.**



Sophie Thomas, pictured with her seeing eye dog Yarra, lives with Usher Syndrome and is hopeful research will find a treatment for the condition.

**Add your  
vision to the  
story of sight**

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# Globally, more than 1.3 billion people are experiencing vision loss and 36 million are blind

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Rapidly ageing populations across the developed world, unequal access to screening programs, and the growing burden of diabetes, mean that millions more are at risk of losing their vision.

In Australia, First Nations people experience blindness and vision loss at three times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians.

**There has never been a greater need to protect and restore sight, nor opportunity to do so successfully.**

At CERA, our research plays a vital role in helping improve the lives of people experiencing vision loss, reducing the global burden of blindness, and enabling healthy ageing.

**When you leave a gift in your will to CERA, you are helping light the way for more scientific breakthroughs that will protect future generations from the darkness of vision loss.**

## **Towards a brighter future**

Today, eye researchers at CERA are unlocking exciting possibilities for earlier detection of eye disease, better treatments, and the possibility of restoring sight.

With donor support, our research has expanded to encompass:



**Gene therapy:** Gene therapy research is bringing new hope to people living with untreatable eye diseases. Some gene therapies aim to treat eye disease by identifying a defective gene that causes vision loss, and replacing it with a correct copy that is reintroduced into the eye using a specially engineered safe virus. Others aim to introduce genes that protect or repair damaged cells.



**Stem cell technology:** This is part of a national collaboration to build a bio-engineered cornea (the clear window at the front of the eye). The project aims to overcome a worldwide shortage of donor corneas and reduces the risk of rejection for those who need corneal transplants.



**AI and imaging technology:** Advances in imaging technology are enabling us to see the intricate structures in the eye better than ever before. These exciting new technologies aim to help us identify the early warning signs, thereby preventing vision loss, and also help to identify those at risk of conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

**With supporters like you beside us the possibilities to protect sight – and one day, restore it – are limitless.**

# Hope for a world powered by vision

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A gift in your will to CERA will mean a brighter future for generations of people like Jim

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A retired father of three, Jim and his wife Carol's love of travel has taken them around the world. But travel nowadays comes with a growing set of challenges.

Jim has 'dry' age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a condition that affects millions of elderly people worldwide. In Australia, AMD is the leading cause of severe, irreversible vision loss in the over 50s age group, with around 1 in 7 people living with the condition.

Despite recent advancements, there is still no effective treatment for this stage of AMD, or any way to slow its progression.

For people like Jim, this means there is little chance of regaining the precious details of the world he once saw so clearly.

"It's impossible to read now, and I can't see photographs anymore," says Jim. "I know it's getting worse. But you can't stop, can you? You've just got to get on with it."

With the support of donors like you, Professor Robyn Guymer AM and the team at CERA's Macular Research Unit are driving research that promises to create a brighter future for people like Jim.

In the CERA labs, our teams are investigating the genetic causes of AMD, developing new therapies to treat retinal diseases, and looking at improved, less invasive ways to deliver AMD treatments.



**“CERA has a unique opportunity to lead the world in preventing blindness through gene therapy. We want to make these pioneering therapies available to as many Australians as possible.”**

- Professor Keith Martin,  
CERA Managing Director.

This work includes well over 20 clinical trials focused on AMD, one of which Jim was able to take part in.

“The trial aimed to improve blood flow to the retina, potentially offering an effective new treatment for dry AMD”, explains Jim.

Sadly, Jim wasn’t a candidate for the surgery involved. But with research advancing every day, there is still hope for Jim’s sight.

**“This research may not help me, but it might help my grandkids and others who have similar problems in the future. If I can be part of helping to find a solution, I’m proud to have been involved,” says Jim.**

Professor Guymer says: “There is still lots of work to be done to achieve better outcomes for people with AMD. But thanks to the collective effort of the Macular Research Unit, and the kindness of our supporters, the prognosis is much better than it once was.”

**By leaving a gift in your will to CERA, you will be helping world-leading researchers, including Professor Guymer, continue their important work that is giving hope to people like Jim.**

**(Below)** Jim with Lauren, having his eyesight tested. ▼



**(Right)** Jim Langdon and his wife Clare with CERA Senior Research Co-ordinator Lauren Hodgson. ►



# A visionary like you

## **A dairy farmer from South Gippsland, Philip Neal's generous gift in will to CERA is driving crucial advancements in the treatment of glaucoma**

In the 1980s, when Philip was still working as a farmer, he found himself suddenly unable to read the phone book. He was diagnosed with Optic Atrophy – a rapid degeneration of the optic nerve.

A fiercely independent man, Philip didn't let his deteriorating eyesight slow him down.

He undertook further study, developed keen computer skills and began investing in the share market.

Before he passed away, Philip made the decision to leave a gift in his will to CERA, to advance eye stem cell research.



(Right) Philip Neal ▶

**Philip’s generous bequest has helped light the way for groundbreaking research resulting in the development of a genetic roadmap for glaucoma.**

One of the leading causes of blindness worldwide, glaucoma is predicted to impact more than 80 million people by 2040.

The study, led by a team including CERA’s Professor Alex Hewitt, compared the stem cell models of the retinal ganglion cells of people with glaucoma, to those without the disease.

Retinal ganglion cells are crucial to healthy sight. They carry information from the eye to the brain via the optic nerve. In a person with glaucoma, gradual damage and death of these cells lead to progressive, irreversible vision loss.

Scientists have known for some time that retinal ganglion cells hold important clues to how glaucoma occurs. Yet obtaining these cells from living donors is simply too invasive.

To overcome this challenge, our team used Nobel prize-winning stem cell technology to turn skin cells into retinal ganglion cells in the lab. They then sequenced the

individual gene expression of almost a quarter of a million cells, looking for patterns that could contribute to vision loss.

The sequencing identifies which genes are turned on in a cell, their level of activation and where they are turned on and off – like a road network with traffic lights.

**This gives us a genetic roadmap of glaucoma and identifies 312 sites in the genome where these lights are blinking. Understanding which of these traffic lights should be turned off or on, will be the next step in developing new therapies to prevent glaucoma.**

CERA’s Managing Director Professor Keith Martin, a world renowned glaucoma researcher, says Professor Hewitt’s research is the first important step toward developing new treatments that can reverse or prevent glaucoma-related vision loss.

“We are truly grateful for Philip’s great legacy,” says Professor Martin. “By helping advance glaucoma research, Philip is playing a role in potentially saving the sight of millions of people, for generations to come. It’s truly an extraordinary legacy.”

# Frequently Asked Questions

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► **How can my bequest have the biggest impact?**

At CERA, we are extremely grateful to receive any kind of gift in will. If you are unsure of what kind of gift to leave, we generally recommend a residual untied bequest. This means that after your loved ones are taken care of, and your debts are settled, the remainder of your estate will be gifted to CERA. An untied gift means we can use your gift in the area it is needed most, at the time we receive it.

► **Can CERA help me write my will?**

Unfortunately, we cannot help you write your will. We recommend you contact a solicitor or the Public Trustee in your state that offers will-writing services. If you wish to leave a gift in your will to the CERA, you can find suggested wording in this booklet.

► **Can I bequest property or personal items of value to CERA?**

We are honoured to accept personal property, such as jewellery, real estate or artwork, as long as you grant us permission to sell these items to fund our vital research projects and clinical trials.

► **Can I leave a bequest to a specific clinician, or research project?**

Because eye health care, research staff and priorities change over time, leaving a bequest to a specific clinician may mean that it cannot be used in the future. For this reason, we encourage you not to tie a gift to a specific person but if necessary, to a department or area. Having flexible funds is essential in enabling our researchers to address the highest priorities at the time. This is why an untied bequest is the most effective and impactful way to leave a gift in your will to CERA.

► **Are gifts of any size accepted?**

At CERA, it is a privilege to receive a gift in will of any size. We can assure you that no matter what kind of gift you leave, it will have an impact on research that will continue improving outcomes for people with eye disease in the future.

► **Who should I tell about my decision to leave a gift in my will to CERA?**

We strongly recommend that you advise your loved ones of your intention to leave a gift in your will to CERA, so they can help make sure your wishes are carried out.

If you decide to leave a gift in your will, we would love you to let us know so we can personally thank you for your kindness, and keep you up to date with our research and impact.

► **Suggested wording:**

Using the right wording in your will is important to ensure we are able to use your gift as you wish. For this reason, we ask that you use the suggested wording for a residuary gift:

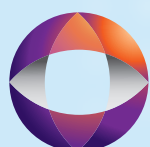
“I give free of all taxes and testamentary expenses the whole (or percentage share) of the residue of my estate to the Centre for Eye Research Australia Foundation (ABN: 24 684 029 499) to be used for its general purposes, and the receipt of an authorised officer from the Foundation shall be full and sufficient discharge to my executors.”

► **The suggested wording for a pecuniary gift (a specific sum of money) is:**

“I give free of all taxes and testamentary expenses the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (in figures and words) to the Centre for Eye Research Australia Foundation (ABN: 24 684 029 499) to be used for its general purposes, and the receipt of an authorised officer from the Centre for Eye Research Australia shall be full and sufficient discharge to my executors.”

**If you would prefer to leave a gift in your will for a particular purpose or project, please email us or call 1300 737 757 to speak with a member of the Philanthropy team.**

**With a gift in your  
will to CERA, you  
will leave a legacy  
of sight for future  
generations**



CENTRE FOR  
**Eye Research  
Australia**

**CERA Philanthropy team**

**T** 1300 737 757

**E** [giftsinwills@cera.org.au](mailto:giftsinwills@cera.org.au)

**W** [cera.org.au](http://cera.org.au)