



THE ASSOCIATION OF DISPENSING OPTICIANS
OF NEW ZEALAND INCORPORATED

Robert Maher Award

The Robert Maher Award was created and first presented in 2005. The award is in his honour and is intended to be a reminder and a thank you for his dedication, his devotion to the association and his fight for Dispensing Opticians to be recognised as a profession and to remain a critical part of the optical industry.

Recipients:

2005	Andrew Sare	2015	Steve Stenersen
2006	David Sercombe	2016	R John Billings
2007	Denis Kennmore	2017	Vanessa Cumming
2008	Ron Bultitude	2018	Courtney Jelley
2009	David Wilson	2019	Lynette Hunter
2010	Mike Firmston	2020	Award not presented
2011	Mike Blackman	2021	Kristine Hammond
2012	Sue Kain		
2013	Andrew Judd		
2014	Andy Willmott		



Robert Hugh Maher (1947 – 2002)

Dispensing Optician, Contact lens fitter, and manufacturer of artificial eyes

ADONZ board member 1982 – 1998

ADONZ President 1999 – 2000

ADONZ President 1996 – 1997

Robert entered optics at the age of seventeen with Standard Optical Christchurch and worked in their laboratory for three years. He then moved to Proctor Opticians and later to Fairmaid and Chance Opticians in Dunedin. In 1980 he returned to Christchurch where he opened his own business “Maher Opticians”, initially in Cathedral Square and then Chancery Lane. He was to remain there until his untimely death on 17 July 2002.

Robert’s involvement with the association started in 1970, he was appointed to the Opticians Bard in 1982. In this capacity our association and indeed our profession, owes a great debt of gratitude for all he achieved, his steadying hand saw us through some difficult times. Threats of deregulation in the 1990s and later the parliamentary Select Committee Hearings (1995 – 1996) required careful handling and negotiations, which he managed very successfully on our behalf. His uncompromising and persistent stance whenever he was pursuing an issue earned him much respect by all who worked with him. He was constantly lobbying on behalf of the Dispensing Opticians and he toiled long and hard, way beyond what could be expected and he never looked for or expected public praise. His dedication to our profession and his loyalty to his colleagues and friends were exemplary.

Robert is sadly missed by all and this award, created in his honour, is intended to be a reminder and a thank you for his dedication, his devotion to our association and his fight for Dispensing Opticians to be recognised as a profession and to remain a critical part of the optics industry.



2005 – Andrew Sare

ADONZ President 2003 - 2004

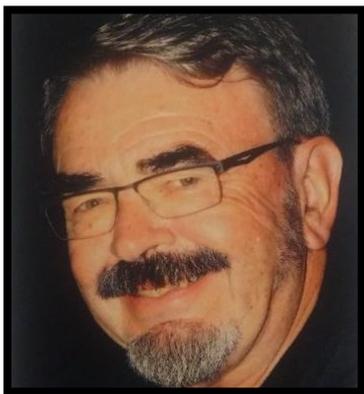
Andrew entered optics directly from school at the age of sixteen, joining NZ Optical Ltd in Christchurch. It was here that he learnt the technical skills of lens surfacing and fitting. After five years as an optical technician, he changed direction and became a sales rep for Eye Concepts Ltd, spending many hours on the road, meeting people and making a great many friends.

Andrew’s roles have changed over the years; from technician to sales representative, to assisting Ultra Lens Systems Ltd with the marketing and installation of systems for Fast Cast Lens Systems in New Zealand and Australia.

In 1999 Andrew enrolled in the OTEN Optical Dispensing course, qualifying as a Dispensing Optician in 2002. Andrew became a partner in the Eyecatchers practice in Bush Inn Shopping Mall in Christchurch in 2001. Today, his involvement in the optical industry has grown to where he now has interests in three South Island practices.

Andrew was elected President on ADONZ in 2003, not an easy time for the association, the confidence in the membership was down and there were several urgent issues to be dealt with. Through his leadership and the able support of the Vice President and Secretary, the association handled these issues and is now in a much better position to address the current issues. The membership and their confidence in the association have grown.

This award is in recognition of Andrew's dedication to the Association and its members, for maintaining the direction and integrity of the ADONZ during a difficult time, and the tireless work and many hours spent on the foundation of the Continuing Professional Development Programme. Thank you.



2006 – David Sercombe

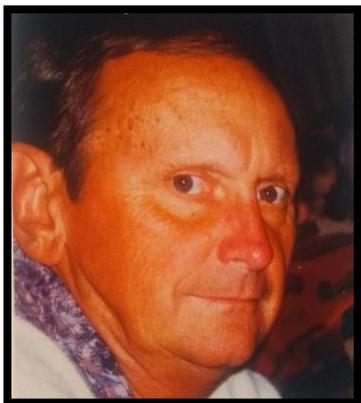
David qualified as a Dispensing Optician in the UK before immigrating to New Zealand where, in 1970, he opened his practice in The Terrace in Wellington. As was typical at that time he spent much of his day working directly with ophthalmologists. The business prospered, special thanks to his wife Dawn for that success.

By 1987 it was obvious to David that the lack of a dispensing optician's course in New Zealand was very limiting. Therefore, with several other like-minded people, he spent many hours working through the issues and politics to introduce the first course into New Zealand. Much of the credit for the success of this is due to David's efforts and his love of and dedication to the optics industry. It was an interest he pursued for any years and which earned him the highest respect of his peers and students with whom he came into contact. His reputation and mana was especially apparent in the oral examination, five hours of intensive grilling, a student who experienced it never forgot it.

There was a growing interest by students in the dispensing optician's qualification and it became vital that changes needed to be made to keep the instruction relevant, up to date, and of the appropriate quality. With the assistance of David Wilson and others, the OTEN course was instigated in 1995. David continued to keep an interest in the students coming through and was thrilled with the high standards offered by OTEN.

In 1998, David sold his interest in the practice and reduced his hours to two days a week, in exchange for more time on the golf course. By 2001 it was becoming increasingly apparent that work was getting in the way of golf, so he retired. Today he enjoys golf and learning new things to do on his computer, along with all the other things he is involved in.

David – thank you for your vision and foresight to see the need for a dispensing optician's course. The existence of today's OTEN course is due in no small measure to your effort and hard work. May you enjoy many rounds of golf and may you one day find that perfect photograph.



2007 – Denis Kennemore

Denis was born in 1933 in Narenbaum, Sydney, and his formal education was completed with three years at high school. Matriculating with school certificate. By 1948 he considered work more interesting than study, so he joined the North Shore Gas Company as a sheet metal worker.

Unfortunately, or is that fortunately, his co-workers thought he was too clever for this work and he moved on to become an optical mechanic, starting a five year apprenticeship with AG Thompson and Sons. Denis left soon after completing his apprenticeship to join Geddes as an optical technician where his skills in fitting glass rimless frames stood him in good stead and he was there until 1956. Back in the 1940s everyone had to do their national service so from 1948 to 1952 he was also a part time Navy sick berth attendant.

1956 brought the Melbourne Olympics and being an ardent sports fan, he wanted to go but Geddes couldn't give him time off so he resigned. To fund the visit, he went to Melbourne and got a job glazing sunglasses. After the Olympics he drove back to Sydney looking for work, but nobody wanted an optical technician, so he took a job painting the bottom of boats.

His next move in optics was to join OPSM where he worked in a "sweat shop" hubbing lab. Because he was aware they were looking for smart people to train as optical dispensers, and he wanted to get on, he always wore a shirt and tie to work. Eventually this paid off and they asked him to train as a Dispenser in a store in downtown Sydney. Shortly afterwards he was transferred as Assistant Manager to Tamworth, a move not entirely with his agreement. Always the keen sportsman though, Denis played rugby league for a year but gave it up as "the ground was too hard". It was also at this time that he met Enid, the lady who would later become his wife.

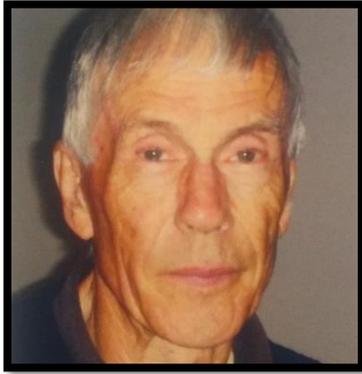
Another person to make a lasting impression was the owner of Optical Prescription Spectacle makers in NZ. They had stores in Auckland, Wellington, Lower Hutt, Christchurch and Dunedin, but by the time Denis arrived in Wellington in July 1960 there were only two. Christmas 1960, he went back to Australia to marry Enid and together they returned to NZ for a three year stint. Opportunities arose which Denis took and he bought 51% of the business. Denis and Enid were to stay in New Zealand.

IN 1982 he opened a store in Gresham Plaza (now Capital on the Quay) where he showed yet again his forward thinking by being one of the first practices to display frames rather than having them in drawers. In 1988 Denis was elected a Life Member of the ADONZ. In 1990 Denis was the first DO to employ an optometrist and in November 1990 opened another store in Porirua.

Unfortunately, in 1992 he began having health problems and in 1993 underwent heart surgery. Due to this ill health he and Enid decided to sell the practice and in November 1994 OPSM Australia purchased Optical Prescription Spectacle Makers NZ.

His most recent and probably his most important initiative was to establish the Kennemore Fund. This fund was established to support students in their education and Denis and Enid have been generous in their contributions. While Denis may have retired from optics, he still keeps a keen eye on what is happening.

Denis, your life has been dedicated to the optical industry and your influence has been immense, we thank you and pay you tribute with the Robert Maher Memorial Award.



2008 Ron Bultitude

Ron completed his school education at Christchurch Boys High School in December 1953 at the age of 16 and he had the vision of becoming an undertaker. Fortunately for us, his parents talked him out of that. He elected instead to join NZ Optical in Christchurch and began training in the optical profession, working his way up to lab manager.

Compulsory military training in 1953 meant spending three months at the Devonport naval base and later spent time at Lyttleton. A period of his life that has a great many memories for Ron, as his children will attest.

At seventeen years, Ron left NZ Optical and joined Bob Williamson in Hereford Street, again in Christchurch. It was here that he began working in-house towards becoming a Dispensing optician. Later when the profession required registration, he qualified via the grandfather clause. Fourteen years later Ron made the move to Tritschler and Searle Opticians where he stayed until his retirement in 2003.

Ron was passionate about his work and loved passing on his skills to younger members of the Association who shared his passion for learning.

In the 1980s the only way to becoming a Dispensing Optician in New Zealand was to complete the British Dispensing Opticians course via correspondence. In the late 1980s, Ron, David Sercombe, Robert Maher and Jim Tritschler, with the help of Lynn Suckling, instigated a New Zealand course based on the UK Dispensing Opticians qualification.

In 1987 we had our first four students to do that four year course; Steve Stenersen, Wayne Bell, Bruce Kennemore, and Louise Green. Ron was the secretary, accepting enrolments and looking after the administration of the course. Ron was the first point of call for the students if they had an issue.

By the late 1990s the student numbers were becoming too much to handle under the purely voluntary system, so discussions were started with John Jackson and David Wilson of Australia about an education system in Australia called TAFE. As a result, this organization was engaged to deliver the Dispensing Opticians course to New Zealand students along the same lines as was being delivered to the Australian DOs. All of this was decided over a dinner one night in Wellington in 1995, an event that goes down as a major turning point for our profession.

The name OptiBlocks, along with the OptiBlocks logo was the brainchild of Ron, and it remains the same today.

Ron, thank you for the years you have devoted to passing on your knowledge, skills and experience to our students. Your dedication to the students as well as your innovation, foresight and hard work on association matters has had a major influence on where we are today as an association.

Please accept this award in recognitions of the Association's appreciation.



2009 David Wilson

Bec Hons, DipEd, MACE, ADONZ Honorary Member

David started in the optical industry in 1972, at the age of 18 when he joined OPSM designing glass bifocal lenses. By 1976 he was teaching at the Guild of Dispensing Opticians.

He became operations manager for British Optical. During this time, he headed up one of the first correspondence courses in 1990. David has an amazing teaching ability and he soon became head teacher of this course within TAFE, a role he retained when the course was passed on to OTEN in 1992.

David assisted the founders of the NZ Dispensing Opticians course (known as OptiBlocks) with the transition of the course to OTEN. David is very experienced in all avenues of the optical dispensing field.

As a result of his work with OptiBlocks, David is well known to many within our association, especially the Optical Dispensing students. He has recently taken leave from OTEN to complete his doctorate, but is still supporting our education in New Zealand with his lectures.

His influence over the years has been considerable and he has been invited to lecture in many parts of the world, including the United States, England, South Africa, Malaysia, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, China, Australia and New Zealand. He is a fellow of the National Academy of Opticianry in the United States, and a past president of the International Opticians Association. He has been a Councillor of the Australasian Dispensing Opticians Association and is an honorary member of ADONZ.

David is a regular presenter at our annual conferences and his lectures are always very well received and full of valuable information. One memorable year an attempt was made to catch him under prepared by getting him, without warning, to do a haka on stage. Typical of David, he managed to find out in time, spending many hours practising and then processed to give a performance that any Kiwi would have been proud of.

In his free time David is an excellent squash player, having played at State level. He is also a very able drummer, something that was quite apparent when he took over the drums at the after-dinner function two years ago. He has a great sense of humour and tells us he loves joining us for our annual conferences.

David has dedicated himself to the ADONZ and its students. His knowledge has been passed onto many now qualified within New Zealand and there are many great stories to be told about this fantastic tutor.

It is in recognition of his dedication and years of service that we would like to honour you by awarding you the Robert Maher Award for 2009. From all members of ADONZ, especially the students, thank you for your knowledge, friendship and the huge contribution you have made to our industry.



2010 – Mike Firmston

- 1963** Mike commenced employment at Bycroft Mackintosh Ltd as a sales trainee
- 1966** Joined Tiscos as a purchasing officer
- 1970** In the early 1970s he joined his brother-in-law's company – Bryan Matthews Optical in Sandringham Road
- 1974** Gained Dispensing Optician qualifications
- 1975** Bryan Matthews Optical moved to Balmoral, adding shops in Symonds Street Plaza (High Street), Downtown and Parnell. Shops renamed Optique Boutique

- Mid 1980s** Optique Boutique renamed Optical Eyewear but became known as Optique Eyewear with outlets expanding by 1995 to: Mid City Plaza (High Street) , Takapuna, St Luke's, Royal Oaks, Manukau, New Lynn and Chartwell in Hamilton
- 1995** Optique Eyewear bought OPSM, Mike remained in managerial role
- 1996/7** Joined David Wilson and Steve Stenersen to make the OTEN OptiBlocks course available to NZ Dispensing Opticians
- 2000** Mike re-joined Bryan Matthews at Specs Direct with two outlets in Leslie Avenue, Sandringham and William Pickering Drive Albany
- 2001** Appointed to the New Zealand Opticians Board

Mike has been a consultant to the Health and Disability Commission, and an Executive Council member of the Association of Dispensing Opticians of New Zealand.



2011 – Mike Blackman

In 1975 Mike and his wife Geraldine shifted from Australia, and Mike began his first job in New Zealand working for Eric Soffe at Woodward's Dispensing Opticians. A few years later in 1978, their daughter Johanna was born and followed later by two boys, Luke and Tim.

Woodward's Dispensing Opticians began life back in the early 1960's when British Dispensing Opticians Eric and Muriel Soffe came to New Zealand. They set up the practice on Woodward Street off Lambton Quay.

John Sutcliffe (another UK DO) had joined Eric and they worked together for a while, but John soon left to start his own practice in Remuera. Denis Kennemore had already begun his OPSM practice in Wellington, also off Lambton Quay.

When Eric retired from work in 1984, Mike bought the practice and continues there today.

Mike became a member of the ADONZ in about 1976 and he began work on the Education Committee with David Sercombe. During his time on the Education Committee, Mike along with Oscar Bell, Mike Firmston and

more recently Steve Stenersen, helped out with the running of the NZADO courses and also the practical exams. He left the committee when he became a moderator for the Opticians Board in 1991.

Mike became a member of the Optometrists & Dispensing Opticians Board in 1999 and continued working on the Board until 2007 when his term finished.

Away from work Mike likes to stay fit, and walks and attends the gym. A knee injury from a motorcycle accident when he was younger stopped him running.

Always happy and smiling (and able to see the bright side of life) Mike now has three granddaughters to help fill up any spare time.



2012 – Sue Kain

Sue Kain was born and grew up in Gisborne.

At the age of 18 she moved to Wellington and began working in the insurance industry. While she was in Wellington, Sue studied Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Soils Sciences.

In 1989 she met Steve Stenersen and in 1991 shifted back to Gisborne. Steve and Sue set up their own practice – Steve Stenersen Opticians.

Sue decided to study and train as a Dispensing Optician in 1995. This was far more practical for use in the practice than the sciences she had previously studied. Sue has the honour of being in the very first intake of New Zealand OTEN students.

During this time Sue worked extremely hard - managing their business, studying, building a new home, caring for a new baby and covering for Steve while he was tutoring students at the OTEN Practical Blocks.

Being a high achiever as usual, it is believed that the tutors at OTEN hid when Sue's assignments arrived ready for marking! Sue put in a great effort with her studies and in 1998 was the very first Kiwi to be awarded the State Medal.

Taking over the role of secretary for OptiBlocks in 2004, Sue maintains that position today along with working in the practice. She works endlessly behind the scenes: running the optical dispensing practical blocks, doing the administrative work for OptiBlocks, and taking care of all the student's needs and requirements.



2013 – Andrew Judd

Andrew was born in Masterton. He shifted from there to Huntly, then to New Plymouth where he now owns his own practice.

During his working life he had his own Whiteware business, and also worked in radio advertising. Wanting a change of direction, he accepted a full-time position from Michael Browning who was one of his clients.

In 2001 Andrew began his optical career. He began the optical dispensing course by correspondence with OTEN, completing his studies in 2004 and graduating in 2005.

Andrew stayed quietly in the background until he stood for Vice President of ADONZ in 2007. He served in this position for two years, taking over the role of President in 2009.

In 2010 he attended the International Opticians Association Convention in Canada on behalf of ADONZ. New Zealand had not been involved in the IOA for some time, and Andrew's visit forged links with the other member countries. At this time Andrew began the initial work with ABDO in offering the FBDO qualification to NZ Dispensing Opticians.

After a very successful two years presidency, he served an additional year after a unanimous vote at the AGM. The constitution was amended so that Andrew could continue with the work involved in the strategies he had initiated for the association.

This included a continuation of work with the Ministry of Health, and the implementation of the ADONZ Strategic Plan. This Plan was put in place to formalise forward planning and to assist new Executive Committees in continuing the direction of the Association.

Since standing down as President in 2012, he has continued to work on ADONZ's behalf with the Ministry of Health and has become part of a panel finally giving Dispensing Opticians a voice within the Ministry.

During his time as ADONZ Vice President and then President, Andrew also joined the New Plymouth District Council as a councillor in the New Plymouth City Ward.

Andrew is married to Trudi and has two children, Rachel and Jacob.



2014 - Andy Willmott

Andy started his working life with ABC cinema in the UK. He made the move to optics as a trainee DO with Boots in 1987.

Having completed his DO studies in 1990 to gain his FBDO qualification, he went on to add a contact lens qualification with City and Islington in 1993. After this he returned to help tutor contact lens students at City and Islington 2004/5 with practical workshops.

Andy and his wife Bev moved to New Zealand in 2007 working in different practices, settling with Visique in Hamilton for two years. Andy and Bev looked to return to the UK when they decided to take up a partnership offer with Specsavers.

In 2009, along with Optometrist partner David Peacock, Andy went in to partnership with Specsavers.

Having built up a successful practice, Andy turned his attention back to the profession as he had done so before. This time he has been instrumental in both the optometrist grads scheme and CPD events.

The CPD events he has organised with Specsavers have been open to all Dispensing Opticians, with the single goal in mind via education, the growth of DOs.

He continues to work hard to ensure the future of optics in New Zealand, by organising resources to allow the continued up-skilling of DOs in New Zealand. It is this passion for giving back that has been rewarded today.



2015 - Steve Stenersen

Steve left school when he was just fifteen and began his working life. He worked extremely hard, with two jobs on the go – one day job and one night job!

He started in optics in late 1978 and worked for the original Standard Optical Co in Auckland. He almost lost his first optical job on the first day, arriving late after working at his night job. After about five years of working in the workshop, he moved into retail optics and dispensing.

In 1986 ADONZ developed and ran an optical dispensing course with graduates gaining FADO. Lynn Suckling wrote and delivered the theory course, with Steve in the first intake and the honour of certificate #1. The course was accepted by the Board as a registered qualification along with the UK's FBDO.

Steve began teaching the optical dispensing theory and practical blocks for the ADONZ optical dispensing course in 1989. Ron Bultitude ran the administration, and practical examinations were conducted by Mike Firmston, Mike Blackman, David Sercombe, Maurice Black, and Steve. They also received help from John Ruby and Mark Gaunt. David Wilson assisted at the New Zealand final blocks.

In 1989 he met Sue Kain, and they opened their Gisborne practice together in 1993.

In 1995 he was involved with transferring the original course to OTEN and setting up of OptiBlocks. He has remained involved in practical blocks for the full 20 years OptiBlocks has been going and, in particular, has taught and examined in all final practical blocks.

OptiBlocks has moved seven times over the years and Steve has been involved in all of these. There were three moves within Auckland, one to Hamilton, one to Wellington, one to Gisborne and another within Gisborne. Steve drove the trucks, carried the equipment and did the building of all the benches. He continues to look after the maintenance of all equipment, and has sourced sponsors to help fund operations.

Steve has been involved in monitoring and contributing to all updates of the course by TAFE NSW over the past 20 years. He has also attended several of the graduations in Sydney and was the guest of honour and keynote speaker at the June 2015 graduation.

Along with David Wilson and Mike Firmston as Directors, and Sue Kain looking after management, Steve has worked tirelessly for OptiBlocks and the New Zealand students. In short, he has devoted and donated a huge amount of time and energy to making OptiBlocks successful.

In 2002 The Kennemore Education Fund was set up with annual donations from Denis and Enid Kennemore and Essilor NZ. This fund was put in place to help the optical dispensing students, and OptiBlocks administers this fund to today.

Around this time Steve was involved in the creation of the Stenersen Frame Gauge with Brian Black from Eyeline Optical. Brian had done most of the work in creating the gauge, and asked Steve for his expertise in the final stages of development. Steve combined his efforts with Brian and the result was the patented tool that is used in practices today. The gauge was released in 2004, and some have been exported to USA, UK, and Australia.

Steve is co-author of Practical Optical Workshop with David Wilson. This was first published in 2002, and is now in its second edition.

When CPD became a requirement for DOs in 2003, Steve was appointed a member of the Optometrists & Dispensing Opticians Board DO CPD Accreditation Committee. This committee accredits lectures, articles and other forms of education for DOs in their own time. He is currently still serving on this committee.

In addition to his work with OptiBlocks and his own successful practice, he has been a strong supporter of ADONZ for decades. He became a councillor in 1997 and President in 2002, and during this long association with ADONZ, has never missed a conference.



2016 - R John Billings

John studied at Bradford College UK in the 1980s under Tunnacliffe (the text booth author and apparently all-round hater of students!).

He made the shift to New Zealand and was registered as a dispensing optician here in July 1994. His first job in New Zealand was with Denis Kennemore at OPSM. He then worked at Barry & Sargent through to 2002. He went on to work at Mysight/Vision Specialists in Wellington, until he started work at Andrew Black Optometrists in Kilbirnie where he is currently.

John was an important member of the ADONZ Executive Council from 2003 until 2006.

He was appointed to the Optometrists & Dispensing Opticians Board in March 2007 and served three terms. He kindly extended his last term by six months to reduce the impact on other Board members while awaiting the appointment of his successor.

While on the Optometrists & Dispensing Board he was convenor of the Boards CPD Accreditation Committee for Dispensing Opticians and a member of the Board's Professional Standards Committee. He also led the qualification accreditation reviews, contributing to policy development, and was the lead auditor for review of Board self-audits for Dispensing Opticians.

John has given freely of his time to both ADONZ and OptiBlocks over the years. This has included help when OptiBlocks has shifted premises, and being chief camera operator for ADONZ when filming CPD lectures at the National Conference.

His spare time is filled with outdoor activities and keeping track of his escaping chickens!



2017 – Vanessa Cumming

Vanessa was born and raised in Timaru.

In the 1980's, and at the age of seventeen, she applied for a job at a local optometry practice; Purvis and Crowley in Timaru. This was the start of her career in optics. In late 1989/1990 she met her future husband Paul.

Vanessa thoroughly enjoyed her job at the practice and continued working full time until in 1998 when she had a short break to have her daughter, Charlotte.

When Vanessa's husband became sick in 1998, she worked at the part time job that was available at the practice. In 1999 they decided that Paul would become a stay at home dad while Vanessa worked full time, so she spoke to Gary and Stella Crowley about a reference so that she could find a full time job elsewhere.

Gary decided to offer Vanessa a full-time position as he didn't want to lose her, despite not having the hours available at the time.

The practice had by then become part of the Visique group. Vanessa was offered the chance to enrol in the optical dispensing course, and began the OTEN course in 2002. She graduated in 2005 with Cert IV in optical dispensing. Being a distance learning course meant it was a lot of hard work in her spare time, but well worth the effort. She enjoyed the work and made a large number of friends while completing the course. During this time, she became a student member of ADONZ.

In 2007 Vanessa joined the ADONZ CE committee, and joined the ADONZ Executive as a council member in 2008. She became fully involved in the running of the association, taking on many jobs within the committee, and took on a major role in the planning of the conference.

She became Vice President of ADONZ in 2010 and took over the presidency in 2013, continuing with the vision for the association and optics within New Zealand that Andrew Judd had begun. In 2015/2016 she was president of the International Optician Association (IOA) with their bi-annual convention being held in Auckland in 2016 in conjunction with the ADONZ conference. Vanessa worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the events a success.

In 2012 Vanessa became a partner in the practice where she worked, until in 2016 she bought the practice. She rebranded in 2017 to become Canon Street Optometrists.



2018 - Courtney S Jelley

Courtney grew up in Zimbabwe, where her father built a small clinic in the rural area they lived in which provided medical care to their community.

Through her experience of being raised in a third world country Courtney witnessed first-hand the impact this environment has on healthcare outcomes and sparked a desire in her to help better the lives of those in need.

Originally training as a medic, Courtney served our country in the Royal New Zealand Air Force before leaving the military to pursue a career in the civilian sector. Undertaking her education in optical dispensing through Tafe NSW, Courtney's dedication to her studies saw her finishing second in her graduating class.

Having registered with the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board in September 2016, Courtney travelled to Zimbabwe where her passion to give back was reignited. Only a few short months later at the age of 23 Courtney would begin the process to embark on a journey in which she would combine her skills as a Dispensing Optician with her passion for enhancing the lives of others.

In 2017 and as a volunteer with Eyes4Everest, Courtney travelled to Nepal. The Gokyo team consisting of Courtney and nine Australian Optometrists, trekked into the Himalayas bonded by the desire to make a difference in the lives of people who don't have the same access to eye care that we do. In the village of Khumjung, 3790 metres above sea level and under the watchful eye of the Sir Edmund Hilary memorial statue, Courtney and her team provided invaluable eye care services to the Nepalese people, many of whom had travelled for hours on foot to be seen.

As we go to print Courtney has stepped forward as a nominee for the ADONZ Executive Committee writing *"I never imagined my career would enable me to contribute my skills in this way, and this was hands down the best experience of my life. I came back from that hoping to influence my colleagues in the Dispensing profession to get involved and utilise their skills in such a rewarding way."*

In what could be argued as still the early days in a career in optics, Courtney has shown the commitment and desire to both inspire and motivate others in our profession, reminding us of the true impact our skills can have in making a difference in the way others get to see and experience the world.



2019 - Lynette Hunter

Born and raised in Somerset England, Lynette Hunter embarked on her career in optics here in New Zealand.

For 11 years Lynette practiced at Optik Eyecare and during this time completed her Cert IV qualification through TAFE NSW graduating in 2002.

Following this time in private practice, Lynette went on to join the wholesale sector, spending 5 years as an account manager for General Optical. In 2013 she returned to practice first at Gary Filer and then at Visique Papakura.

2017 saw Lynette join the team at Paterson Burn as DO Practice Manager where in 2018 she was presented with the Paterson Burn Practice Manager of the year award.

While many of our members would have first met Lynette as the face of General Optical, her smile is most recognisable for the more than a decade she has spent seated in front of our members at our AGM. Lynette brought both style and glamour to the Executive, but her true contribution is one which is more keenly felt rather than seen.

The legacy of her time on the Executive is one of quiet achievement and tireless dedication to our association and our members. Her presence a comforting constant during her tenure on the Executive Committee, providing invaluable input, insight and gentle direction for both established and new coming members. With incredible attention to detail and impeccable time management Lynette was the lynchpin in the successful conference planning and execution during her time.

A true team player in every sense of the word, with only gentle coercion of the 2017 Executive, Lynette agreed to continue for another year following the completion of her fifth, 2-year term on the Executive Committee. During this, her 11th year, the wealth of knowledge Lynette possessed was documented, becoming a building block for the transfer of knowledge from one committee to the next. Ensuring that the legacy of her hard work and dedication will continue to benefit our members beyond those who had the pleasure of working alongside her.

Time is a precious commodity and one which Lynette has gifted generously to our association.

2020 – Award not presented

Due to the Covid-19 world-wide pandemic the 2020 ADONZ Annual Conference was postponed. Because of this, it was decided that the award would not be presented.



2021- Kristine Hammond

Kristine entered into optics in 1993 working for OPSM, she was branch manager 1994-2003 and then appointed as area manager in 2003/2004. Kristine completed her Advanced Certificate in Optical Dispensing (with distinction) in 1997.

She then took time out from the industry working for MSD from 2004 to 2010 before coming back to optics in 2010. From then onwards she has worked as a Dispensing Optician/ Clinical tutor for School of Vision Sciences at the University of Auckland.

Kristine, in continuing her education, is one of the first NZ qualified Dispensing Opticians to attain the Bachelor FBDO (O/S) qualification in 2015. The University recognised this qualification and appointed her as a Professional Teaching Fellow in 2019.

Whilst working at the University Kristine has elevated the profile of the DO within the organisation. Initially she was employed by the University of Auckland Clinics and regarded as a technician and described as such on the University pay grade scale. Under her influence the role has been moved from the UoA Clinics to being employed by the School of Optometry in line with our professional Optometry colleagues.

Kristine further lobbied to have the DO's skill set recognised and as a result the job description was changed from technician to Professional Teaching Fellow. This has meant that the Dispensing Optician is responsible for taking lab classes, increased pay grade and alignment with Optometry as PTFs. This has been no small feat of enduring persistence which all future employed DOs at the University will benefit from. AND very significantly, all Optometry students will see Dispensing Opticians in a collegial way from their days as students.

Kristine was appointed to the Optometrist and Dispensing Optician Board (ODOB) in 2015 and is currently serving her second term. She has been deputy chair since 2019, the first time a Dispensing Optician has held a position at this level.

Kristine is married to Bill, they have children and grandchildren and dogs, and when borders allow, loves to travel overseas to see family.