

Your ADRF needs you!



A good many readers will recognize the above caption, having already encountered it at the recent Adelaide Dental Congress, where its purpose was to draw attention to an *appeal* and an accompanying *offer* being launched by the Australian Dental Research Foundation. The Foundation is now, for the first time, constitutionally able to admit supporting members – as distinct from the elected persons who direct the affairs of the organization.

THE APPEAL

ADRF-assisted research has a track record of having provided much benefit to the entire dental community. To seek a contribution from that community for its furtherance is therefore appropriate. It is hoped that supporting membership will become for many a simple way of patronizing a good cause. Supporting members need take on no commitment other than an annual membership fee which has been kept low so that it might have sufficiently wide attraction to become a significant source of moral and financial support for dental research.

THE OFFER

In recognition of their support, the Foundation will permit these members to use the description 'Supporting Member of the Australian Dental Research Foundation' on stationery and signage, should they so desire. Further details can be found on the loose-leaf insert within this issue of the *News Bulletin*.

Though it has kept a relatively low profile over the years, the Foundation is regarded as the leading agency of its kind in Australia and, during the 35 years of its existence, has been able to distribute nearly \$3 million throughout the dental research community. This funding has been widely spread:

- No designated topic areas are preferred over others and great diversity is apparent in the projects that have received support;
- Grant recipients range from seasoned researchers to recent or aspiring 'post

docs', through to undergraduates (some of the latter being destined to become the old hands of the future for which reason the Foundation regards this comparatively small scale aspect of its work as a particularly good investment);

- All States are involved.

For the current year, a record total of 77 mainstream grant applications was received, surpassing the previous high of 66 applications attained only last year. No doubt many prevailing influences have contributed to the sharp rise in demand observed over the past decade. High among them, however, is the fact that grantees appreciate not only the funds they are given but also the accolade of having won through in a national, peer reviewed, competitive grants system.

Success and popularity are, of course, gratifying to the Foundation but there is a downside. They come at a price. As demand escalates, so too does the cost of satisfying it. In future, the annual income may not be sufficient to support the accustomed level of disbursement. This is a most chastening prospect – one it is hoped that can be averted.

ADRF's income has been principally derived from interest on invested capital and from the sale of an appointment book traditionally used throughout the dental profession. However, it is foreseeable that appointment books will go into decline as computers take over their role. There are early signs that this is happening.



Sales volume has been gradually decreasing over the last few years. And although it is anticipated that the decline in revenue from this source will be offset by an increase in investment income, to keep abreast of the rapidly escalating demand for its grants, the Foundation must find new sources of income generation.

This does not imply that the organization is in any danger of insolvency. On the contrary, reserve capital exceeds, by a factor of nearly six, the total liability for funds as yet unclaimed for research still in progress – well above the general run of prudential requirements.

Nevertheless, the present reality is that much needed support for dental research will be available to proportionately fewer applicants in the future unless additional income streams are developed.

It is hoped that fundraising initiatives now being progressed to attract significant corporate donors and sponsors will succeed in improving the situation. However, the Foundation anticipates that it can place more reliance on the goodwill of that much larger 'family' group, comprising dentists and persons allied to dentistry, to whom the appeal described above is addressed and who, by taking up supporting membership, can join in a collective contribution to research that is both worthwhile and close to home. Your ADRF needs you!

Fred Widdop
Chairman
Australian Dental Research Foundation