

## Executive Director's Report – George Owen

Members, the last three months have seen a lot of activity with Lions as we continue to raise substantial funding for Lions Australia Spinal Cord Fellowships which have been our main supporter over many years. It's actually been over ten years now since we've had the Lions Australia Spinal Cord Fellowships during which time they have collectively raised well over \$700,000.00. We are on target this year to meet the \$180,000.00 that we are hoping to raise this year. Barbara and I attended the National Multiple District Convention in Mildura in May. Our presentation was well received by the many Lions members attending. Next week we will be attending the International Lions Convention in Sydney. This is a very special event for the Australian Lions as it's only the second time an International convention has been held in this country. It is predicted that visitors to the convention will number 15,000 who will travel from all over the world. This is obviously a great opportunity to tell them about the work of StepAhead and the Lions Australia Spinal Cord Fellowships and about our plans both nationally and internationally to cure chronic spinal cord injury.

The scientific side of things is progressing well with a consolidation of programs in Melbourne, a link between the extra cellular matrix of Stephen Livesey's work to the project in Argentina is very promising and may see the application of this work into a human trial in Argentina sooner than we could possibly ever get it done here in Australia. We are putting the finishing touches to a replication study of Stephen Davies work. This will be done at Yale University. Some administrative problems have occurred which have held it up, but this should be signed off in the very near future. It is most important that we replicate his very exciting work and verify that others can do it. Currently, the Chairman of our Scientific Committee, Brent Reynolds is in Italy negotiating some links for work with Angelo Vescovi. We are very hopeful of some corporate funding being available at the end of this year which will support the four avenues that we are currently taking in Melbourne, the USA, Italy and Argentina. The current VNI project in WA is due to finish in August. We will keep you posted in the Spring Newsletter as to the outcome of that study.

It's a good idea to check the website regularly as we now have scientific articles on the site which are being rotated on a regular basis so each week you should see something new.

Any support you can offer is vital to our program.

Mr George Owen  
Executive Director, SAA