

HOPE FUNDING

HOPE for Early Learners

Through our HOPE Program, the Old Grammarians' Association (OGA) aims to help our former students to make a difference. The 2017 recipient was Margaret Paterson (76), who received funding to assist the Lishman Health Foundation in continuing their work to support research and provide better health outcomes for people living in rural, regional and remote Western Australia.



A little bit of HOPE is something we all need, and I was recently extremely grateful to receive funding from the OGA HOPE program to support the Lishman Health Foundation's Early Childhood Symposium. The pathway for children identified with learning difficulties is often long and extremely challenging, for both the child and the family. Sadly, this process is usually even more difficult in rural, regional and remote areas.

The Lishman Health Foundation was named in honour of Mr Val Lishman, who was the South West's first medical specialist as well as one

of the School's most significant founders. As a Board member of the Lishman Health Foundation, I am passionate about its work improving the health and lives of regional Australians. In 21 years of service to the community, the Foundation has funded and supported many significant regional research projects, including important findings for the control and management of Ross River virus, suicide prevention and in improving cancer outcomes in rural areas. Significant improvements in health policy and practice have been implemented within regional areas.

The OGA HOPE funding that I received was put to work to support the 2018 Child Health Symposium which built on the success of a similar event in 2017. The focus was on local solutions for local problems with a panel of South West professionals and parents exploring the challenges of the referral process and how these challenges can be more effectively addressed within this region. An

open forum was provided with people from the fields of education, general practice and paediatrics engaging with parents and carers, for a direct and frank discussion of the ways the system is working or not working.

To me, the most significant outcome from the Symposium is the establishment of a working party to address the key issues raised at the Symposium. While it is still in its infancy, this working group is a ground-breaking initiative and an excellent step forward in developing local solutions to the daunting challenges facing young children with learning difficulties as well as their families.

Many thanks to the OGA for providing me with funding from the HOPE program to support the Lishman Health Foundation and its work to improve the health and lives of regional Australians.

**Ms Margaret Paterson ::
HOPE Recipient 2017**

