

The Australian Spinal Research Foundation: 1989-1990

Editorial Staff

This article reviews the foundation's activities from January 1988 to August 1990. This period has seen the greatest amount of financial support of chiropractic research in Australian history. It has been made possible mostly through the foundation's Bridge to the Future campaign donations.

The foundation was founded in 1976 by a group of chiropractors. It is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated in the state of Victoria. It is a separate entity not aligned with any particular chiropractic political organization.

In March 1988 the foundation began actively raising funds to support chiropractic research on a large scale, through its Bridge to the Future campaign (BTF). On September 19, 1988, \$1,000,000 in pledged donations was reached, through the generosity of 129 chiropractors and 6 non-chiropractic donors. As of August 8, 1990, \$1,201,531 had been pledged by 175.

During 1988, the executive administrator and the foundation's corporate advisor negotiated an arrangement with the Consortium of Australian bedding manufacturers to conduct research into design, testing and characteristics of bedding. The foundation does not endorse, recommend, approve or assist in selling any of the Consortium's bedding. The research and testing are coordinated by the foundation through a contract with the University of Queensland's Uniquest, employing academic staff in the departments of mechanical engineering and human movement.

In 1988 it became clear that there was the opportunity for the foundation to help establish a spinal research laboratory at Griffith University, the first such chiropractically focused activity in Australia. It was intended to link the spinal research laboratory with a master's degree in chiropractic science, particularly emphasizing clinical research. The foundation made a decision to commit its support to the establishment of the laboratory.

The commitment by the ASRF of \$250,000 over 3 years to support Griffith University based Spinal Research Laboratory under the direction of Dr. Lynton Giles, enabled the foundation to leverage further funding from the university to support this world-class facility. The ASRF pays Dr. Giles' salary; that of his laboratory assistant for two years (the FCER paid for the first year); and paid \$36,000 for initial equipment.

The foundation reaffirmed its obligation to continue supporting student chiropractic research at both Sydney College of Chiropractic and the Phillip Institute of Technology, as well as large grant applications normally received to the extent possible.

In 1989, two major developments occurred which suggested that the board policy of moving firmly ahead was, in fact, worthwhile.

The foundation's publications have received compliments from abroad. Williams & Wilkins, the world's largest publisher of chiropractic materials, entered into an agreement to sell its books and journals through the foundation specifically because of the quality of the foundation's publications.

The research segment of the International Chiropractic Congress in Sydney in 1988 was organized by the ASRF. In addition, the Spinal Symposium at the Chiropractic Australian Joint Conference in Melbourne in September 1990 was an ASRF project.

Currently, the ASRF posts quarterly copies of its selected clinical updates, ASRF newsletters, abstracts, etc., free of charge to 2,170 individuals. The Australian Spinal Research Foundation consists not only of Australian Chiropractors' Association members (all full members of whom are automatically ASRF members as it currently stands) but other association members; chiropractors not aligned with any association; a number of foreign chiropractors; and several non-chiropractors.

The Board believes that it has now reached that threshold whereby various activities will result in sufficient funds to:

Continue the support of quality research endeavors

Support university-based research which supports the chiropractic profession

Develop more liaison with such international bodies as the FCER and similar European and Canadian research groups

Seek commonwealth and state government support from appropriate departments to enable the Mobile Spinal Health Awareness Unit to continue operating

Explore the possibility of developing a research consortium in the office furniture industry

Increase support for the Charitable Bequest Program

Seek increased support for the BTF Campaign by increasing the number of individual chiropractors, their families and staff members participating in the program

The Board of Governors thanks all Australian chiropractors and those foreign members of the ASRF for their support over the past two and a half years.

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