

Chairman's Report 2001



The first year of the new millennium has been a year of great uncertainty. The Menzies Foundation, like many similar organisations, has been affected by a downturn in global economic performance that was compounded by the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September. Last year I reported that the Foundation had allocated its portfolio to three investment managers: Credit Suisse Asset Management (\$6 million); JB Were Asset Management (\$4 million); and Westpac Investment Management (\$4.2 million). With an average return of around 10% in 2000 and some uncertainty in the financial markets, the Board agreed that expenditure in 2001 should not exceed \$1 million. This budget was met with the expenditure for 2001 being \$0.9 million.

However, in the difficult financial climate, all three investment managers suffered setbacks and their results, after fees, for the 12 months ending 31 December, 2001 were lower than forecast at the beginning of 2001: Credit Suisse (3.4%); JB Were (5.3%) and Westpac Investment Management (3.1%). Accumulated funds at the end of the financial year were \$14.17 million (2000: \$14.58 million). The operating deficit was \$405,715 (2000: surplus

\$454,859). Although there were some signs of recovery by all three investment managers in the December quarter, the Board agreed it was prudent to reduce the budget for 2002 to \$0.79 million. This reduction will mean that the Foundation is unable to commit funds to any new initiatives during the coming year, which will be one of consolidation of our financial position. The situation will be reviewed again towards the end of 2002 when plans are made for subsequent years.

In 2001 the Foundation's regular activities have, nevertheless, proceeded well. They are of the same nature as previously – in scholarship and in medical science. Our postgraduate scholarship program continues strongly. The Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Scholarship in Law to the United Kingdom attracted 39 candidates of the highest calibre and I was privileged to again Chair the Selection Committee in 2001. Similarly, the Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Research Scholarship in the Allied Health Sciences received applications from thirty candidates. The Foundation expresses its gratitude to the interviewing panel which has had the task of selecting the top candidate from such diverse disciplines as psychology, social work, physiotherapy, nursing, occupational therapy and speech pathology. The Foundation is proud to be associated with the NH MRC/R G Menzies Fellowship as well as the R G Menzies Scholarship to Harvard in association with the Harvard Club and the Australian National University. This year funding of \$25,000 per annum also commenced for the Menzies Foundation Fellowship at the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, Kings College, London. In all, \$170,484 was committed to the scholarship and fellowship program.

During the year, the Foundation was pleased to have each of the Directors of the two Menzies medical research centres attend one of our meetings and to make a presentation to our Board of Directors. Professors Terry Dwyer and Kerin O'Dea, Directors of the Menzies Centre for Population Health Research in Hobart and the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin respectively, brought us up to date with their aims, achievements and future goals. Both centres have achieved international recognition in their respective fields of research and the Foundation is proud that they carry the Menzies name. Detailed reports from the two Directors appear later in this Annual Report and the Hobart centre outlines its proposed incorporation as the Menzies Research Institute Pty Ltd. We wish it well in its new endeavours.

This year marks the twentieth year that Clarendon Terrace has been home to the Menzies Foundation and it continues to serve us well as office accommodation for our Secretariat and meeting rooms for both the Foundation and outside groups such as the East Melbourne Group and the East Melbourne Historical Society. The Foundation also made the venue available this year to the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies and Deakin University who jointly convened a meeting entitled "The Liberals and Australian Foreign Policy" in September 2001. It was also particularly pleasing to see Clarendon Terrace used as the venue for the annual Menzies Memorial Scholars Association dinner. The three scholars (Ms Sarah Martin, Mr Oren Bigos and Ms Deborah Walsh) who received scholarships in law and the allied health sciences during 2001 were presented with a Menzies Medallion and, for the first time, the recipient of the Menzies Centenary Prize at Dimboola Memorial Secondary College, Ms Belinda Smith, was presented with a medallion. We were very pleased to also welcome Belinda's grandmother, Mrs Frances Smith, who had travelled from Dimboola for the occasion.

In addition, the evening also provided me with an opportunity to present to Mr Mike Codd the Life Membership medallion and to thank him for his services to the Foundation. Mike, who retired on 24 November

2001, had been a Director of the Foundation since 1993 and Deputy Chairman and Treasurer since 1996. During 1997 and 1998 when our Chairman, Sir Ninian Stephen, was called overseas, Mike took on the role of Acting Chairman in his absence. He has also been of great assistance to me since I became Chairman of the Foundation and his experience and counsel will be missed.

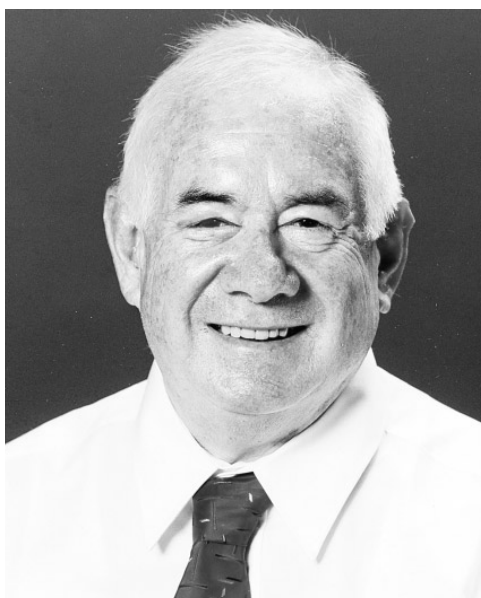
The 2002 Australia Day Honours list brought welcome news for the Foundation with awards for two persons closely associated with us. Mr Ken Spencer, a Director of the Foundation since 1998 and the Chairman of our Finance Committee, received an AM "for service to the accountancy profession, particularly through the pursuit and development of an internationally accepted set of accounting standards" and Ms Sandra Mackenzie, the Foundation's General Manager and a member of the Secretariat since its inception in 1979, received an OAM "for service to the community, particularly through the Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Foundation". On behalf of the Foundation, I offer them both our warmest congratulations.

*The Honourable Sir Daryl Dawson, AC, KBE, CB
Chairman*



The Hon Sir Daryl Dawson presents Mr Michael Codd with the Life Membership Medallion in recognition of his services to the Menzies Foundation.

Executive Director's Report 2001



The Secretariat has continued to work extensively on the Menzies Virtual Museum setting the Robert Gordon Menzies time line in the context of Australian and world events. This major educational web site – which includes historic photographs, audio and film clips and 25,000 words of supporting text – is now in the testing phase before being publicly launched in mid-2002. Along the way we have become minor experts on the location, availability and cost of collections of images world wide. We do stay in close contact with the cultural program of the Museum of Victoria. As part of our agreement with Museum Victoria, the Menzies Virtual Museum will be linked by “hot buttons” to the Museum’s web site, thus making it available to schools locally and internationally. The Menzies Virtual Museum test site is accessible from the Foundation’s home page at www.vicnet.net.au/~menzies. We hope you will take the time to visit the site. It is of great general interest but also technically very sophisticated.

Despite the expectation on the Board that a change of fund managers would improve our investment income, 2001 proved to be a difficult year. Sir Daryl Dawson, in his Chairman’s Report, has detailed the outcome for 2001.

The Board had agreed in November 2000 that expenditure for 2001 should not exceed \$1 million. In the event this was controlled to \$900,000. There was an operating short fall of \$406,000 which cannot continue indefinitely. The forecast expenditure has been set for 2002 at \$790,000. The broad policy of new initiatives is still in place but some items have been deferred, to be restored when income improves. The organisation chart, on pages 20 and 21, has been revised to reflect the reality of our present situation. A major deferment was the Scholars Workshop/Symposium which is an important feature on our calendar and will hopefully be restored in 2003.

Our public image is improved by our series of sponsored public lectures. In 2001 three eminent international speakers – Lord Winston, Professor Christopher Mathias and Sir Philip Cohen – gave the Menzies Foundation Lectures. These are detailed elsewhere in the report.

It is twenty years since the Foundation restored Clarendon Terrace which had been in a state of disrepair for many years. As part of its “peppercorn lease” with the National Trust, the Foundation is responsible for the maintenance and care of this beautiful terrace which was built in 1857. After twenty years, many items such as security equipment, guttering and floor coverings, have reached their “use by date”. Replacement of the fire alarm system was a recent compelling and expensive issue. Fortunately, income from the tenancy in the northern terrace helps to maintain the building. In 2001 we welcomed new tenants – the Accurate Management Group and Silks Magazine. But our headquarters building continues to serve us well. Not only does it provide office accommodation for our Secretariat but the function rooms on the first floor provide excellent space for the Foundation’s meetings and symposiums. The ambience of the nearby Fitzroy Gardens adds greatly to many meetings held at Clarendon Terrace which was the setting this year for “The Liberals and Australian Foreign Policy” conference and for a very successful Menzies Memorial Scholars Association dinner.

I am also pleased to report that the building continues to be hired on a regular basis by the East Melbourne Group, the East Melbourne Historical Society and the East

Melbourne Community Bank Steering Committee for their meetings. This local use has made the building much more accessible to the community and has enhanced the local profile of the Foundation.

The Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Michael Codd, who retired from the Board on 24 November, 2001, for his enthusiastic support and encouragement.

It is with great sadness that I report the untimely death of Professor Christopher Silagy, AO on 13 December 2001 aged 41 years. Chris was the Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Scholar in Medicine to the United Kingdom for 1992. On his return to Australia he took an active



Professor John Coghlan, the Menzies Foundation's Executive Director, welcomes the Hon Mark Birrell, MP to "The Liberals and Australian Foreign Policy" conference which was held at Clarendon Terrace.



Members of the East Melbourne Historical Society enjoying a musical soirée in the gallery of Clarendon Terrace, December 2001.

interest in the work of the Foundation and the Menzies Memorial Scholars Association and in 1998 he convened the First Menzies Scholars Symposium on evidence-based health advice. Details of Chris' remarkable achievements are outlined in an obituary later in this report.

In 2002, the Secretariat is looking forward to planning the Foundation's Silver Jubilee activities in 2004 which will mark 25 years since the Menzies Foundation was established by the Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Trust in 1979.

*Professor John Coghlan, AO
Executive Director*

In Memoriam

Professor Christopher Allen Silagy AO

14 September 1960 – 13 December 2001

Menzies Memorial Scholar in Medicine, 1991



The following obituary was written by Michael Kidd, Rowan Doig and Christopher Fairley (from the MBBS class of 1983) and is based on words Chris Silagy wrote in the last week of his life.

Chris Silagy, the son of Hungarian-born parents, was born in Melbourne and went to school at Wesley College where he was a long distance runner, a superb debater and a high-achieving scholar. In 1978 he enrolled in medicine at The University of Melbourne. His university friends recall that he was renowned for being hopeless at keeping secrets. In fact this was more about a desire for truth; an endearing quality which would command substantial respect in later life.

He graduated in 1983, with honours in all subjects, becoming an intern at the Royal Melbourne Hospital before moving to the Royal Children's Hospital in 1985. He worked as a general practitioner in Eltham in 1986 while pondering his future career path. In 1987 he joined the Monash University Department of Community Medicine on an academic fellowship under the mentorship of Professor Neil Carson AO.

In 1989 Chris married Dr Jane Russell at Wesley College Chapel. Chris and Jane had been great friends since they were medical students together.

He received the Fellowship of The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) in 1989 and was appointed Senior Lecturer in Community Medicine at Monash. He was also Research Fellow in Social & Preventive Medicine, completing his PhD in 1992 and being made a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine of The Royal Australian College of Physicians.

In 1991 Chris received the prestigious Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Scholarship in Medicine. He travelled to Oxford University where he became involved with the Cochrane Collaboration, named in honour of the late Archie Cochrane, a British medical researcher who contributed greatly to the development of epidemiology. Chris embraced and developed Cochrane's philosophy and went on to become a key international figure in the emerging discipline of evidence-based medicine.

Chris returned to Australia after two years at Oxford to take up his appointment, at the extraordinary age of only 33 years, as Foundation Professor of General Practice at Flinders University. He brought the discipline of evidence-based medicine home with him and in 1994 was funded by the commonwealth to establish the Australasian Cochrane Centre. He was passionate in his belief of the need for an evidence-based approach to health care and advocated strongly in public for change and this was accentuated by his personal need for reliable information following his diagnosis with a non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 1997.

In February 1999 Chris and his family made their final move back to Melbourne where he had been appointed as Professor of Public Health and Foundation Director of the Monash Institute of Health Services Research. In 2000 he was appointed by Dr Michael Wooldridge to chair the board of the new National Institute of Clinical Studies.

Chris has an outstanding international research record especially on the application of clinical epidemiology to clinical practice and health care policy, as well as the prevention of cardiovascular disease and tobacco control.

He authored hundreds of contributions in medical journals, medical books and government reports. His prodigious outpouring of medical writing was a legacy of his super human drive and determination. While the rest of us slumbered, Chris was writing.

He also worked as a general practitioner for 13 years and in 1998 received the Rose-Hunt Medal from the RACGP for his exceptional contribution to Australian General Practice.

Chris was involved in many national and international committees and research activities, far too many to list here. Importantly he chaired the International Cochrane Collaboration from 1996-1998, a role that required his presence at research centres and meetings all around the globe.

He was also an inspirational teacher and orator and a great mentor to many researchers and colleagues who came to rely on his extraordinary wisdom and insight and who enjoyed the experience of working with a man of such remarkable talent.



Professor Chris Silagy speaking at the "Health Consequences of Ozone Depletion" Conference sponsored by the Menzies Foundation in 1996.

He also found time to serve the community for almost 20 years through the Scout Association of Australia, holding posts of Branch Commissioner for Scouts in Victoria and National Commissioner for Youth Program. Among many other community activities, Chris was also a Patron of Cancer Aid.

For the last five years of his life, Chris had a public battle with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. His strength, wisdom and unflagging enthusiasm and drive during these difficult times were an inspiration.

He managed to combine all this activity with a strong and devoted commitment to his family. He was immensely proud of the achievements of Jane and his four young sons. Chris often remarked on the strength and wonderful support he received from Jane. They had a great marriage based on a great friendship.

In the 2000 Queen's Birthday honours list, at the age of 39, Chris was made an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) for service to medicine, particularly in the areas of research and education, and in developments in the field of evidence-based medicine, an award of which he was immensely proud. Over the subsequent 18 months, as his body started to fail him but his mind remained razor-sharp, he took on an appropriate mantle as a senior figure in Australian health care.

In the end, his battle with lymphoma was lost. Knowing that his death was imminent, Chris approached his last 24 hours, as he said his final farewells to his beloved family members and friends, with the same remarkable courage, care and concern that had characterised his life.

Chris Silagy was a truly great Australian. He is being mourned by the great many people whose lives he touched and influenced and inspired in Australia and overseas. His vision and legacy will live on in so many ways.

Chris is survived by his wife, Jane, his four sons, Andrew, 11, Michael, 9, Nicholas, 8, and Benjamin, 6, his parents, Marian and Les, and his brother, Geoffrey.