

Nominee Statement: Nitin Verma

Position: IAPB Group B Trustee

Nominee Job Title

Clinical Professor and Ophthalmologist

Nominee Organisation

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists

Nominating IAPB member organisation

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists

Nominated by

Nitin Verma

Nominating Statement

Nitin is an experienced ophthalmologist, teacher, collaborator, mentor and diplomat. He has a special interest in international health, macular disease and teleophthalmology.

A passionate educator, Nitin inspires students in Australia and beyond with his teaching and facilitation of their research and professional careers. He has been involved in the development of educational courses at the Universities of Sydney, Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea; including the Diploma and Master of Medicine in Ophthalmology and instigated the hands-on training of ophthalmologists from the Australasian and Pacific Island region to improve their surgical skills.

He served on the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) Board as President of the College (2020-2022) and Vice President (2018-19). He currently chairs the Vision 2030 and Beyond Committee, charged with implementing RANZCO's advocacy plan addressing workforce issues in Australia and New Zealand, advocating for equity of access for First Nations Peoples, and sustainable service provision. He also chairs the Global Eye Health Committee of RANZCO, with its main focus on building partnerships to strengthen the eye health workforce and service provision capacity in the Pacific through governmental liaison and advocacy and harnessing the expertise of ophthalmic societies to support initiatives.



He is also Director of Vision 2020 Australia, the peak body representing the eye health sector in Australia advocating to the federal and state governments on eye health matters; Chair, International Society for Manual Small Incision Cataract Surgery (Aus NZ Chapter) and the APAO Gateway Committee.

Nitin is known to bring stakeholders together to achieve common goals utilizing his many affiliations with blindness prevention organisations and his role of honorary consul of Timor Leste to advocate eye health and attract donor and recipient governments' attention.

In recognition of his contributions, service, and philanthropic works Nitin was awarded: The Order of Australia and The Order of Timor Leste; The RANZCO Distinguished Service Award (2006) and College Medal (2023); The Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology's Distinguished Service Award (2001) and Meritorious Service Award for the Prevention of Blindness (2009); He was made a Companion of the Royal College of Australian Surgeons (2014).

Seconded IAPB member organisation

Singapore Eye Research Institute

Seconding by

Anna Tan

Seconding Statement

Nitin has the necessary skillset to assist the IAPB in fulfilling its objectives and meeting the requirements of all relevant legislation. As former RANZCO President and Board member, and current Director of Vision 2020 Australia, Nitin is familiar with the challenges and opportunities for engagement with stakeholders that come with the privilege of serving on a membership-based organisation such as the IAPB. These roles involved making decisions regarding overall strategic direction of the organisations, ensuring legal and financial obligations are met, and appropriate processes are in place for implementation, expenditure and reporting.

Added to that Nitin's governance experience also include serving other Boards and advisory committees such as the International Society for Manual Small Incision Cataract Surgery (Aus NZ Chapter); Indian Journal of Ophthalmology; Consular Corps of Tasmania; Order of St John, Australia; The Eye Foundation, etc.

Nitin has a broad skill set and knowledge that he will generously share with



the Board, Chief Executive and staff as may be required. In addition to his governance skills, Nitin's eye health and clinical ophthalmology expertise, experience of working in low and medium resource settings, and working collaboratively with multiple stakeholders will be very useful to help IAPB meet its objectives, provide leadership when needed, and contribute to decision making.

Nitin is a relationship builder. An example of a successful endeavor is the East Timor Eye Program that Nitin initiated in 2000: Coordinating work by doctors, optometrists, nurses and various NGO's from all over the world to establish a self-sufficient, national, eye care program to provide eye care to the people of Timor Leste and eradicate preventable blindness. Twenty-four years later the program is now run by the Timorese government and, in the last decade, the prevalence of blindness in Timor Leste has come down from 7.7% to 2.9%.

I believe Nitin will consider the interests of the global coalition as a whole and will be an asset to the IAPB.

Nominee Statement

I am writing to apply for the position of IAPB Board Member. With the commitment to global eye health and a strong background in clinical ophthalmology, I would like to contribute my expertise and leadership to support the mission of IAPB.

Over the past few decades, through various roles, I have been actively involved in advocacy, research, education, and mentorship, gaining a comprehensive understanding of eye care systems across different countries and global perspectives on ophthalmology. I have also had the privilege of collaborating with both Australian and international stakeholders in the eye health sector to advance international eye care and philanthropic initiatives.

My passion for education and training has driven me to develop the educational programs at the Universities of Sydney, Timor-Leste, and Papua New Guinea. Additionally, I have instigated the hands-on training of young ophthalmology Fellows, in PNG and East Timor, to improve their surgical skills. Notably, I established the East Timor Eye Program, which has brought together ophthalmologists, optometrists, nurses, and various NGOs from around the world to provide essential eye care to the people of Timor Leste and eradicate preventable blindness.

I have had the honour of serving on the Board of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) for many years, including as President. I am still actively involved in RANZCO activities, as the Chair of Vision 2030 Steering Committee, and the Chair of Global Eye Health Committee.



My other roles in global eye care and philanthropic work in the past included director of Vision 2020, a member of the International Engagement Committee of Royal Australian College of Surgeons, and one of the founders of the St John Ophthalmic Association, now the global arm of St John Eye Hospital group for training, teaching and fundraising for the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. I am also the Honorary Consul for Timor Leste in Tasmania.

I am deeply honored to have received various awards recognizing my dedication and service to the eye care sector. With this experience and commitment, I look forward to the opportunity to serve on the IAPB Board and contribute to eye health advocacy work towards ending avoidable sight loss and achieving affordable, accessible eye care.

Thank you for your time and consideration.