**MEDIA RELEASE**

**The one statistic Australians need to know when it comes to eye health**

[City, State – Date] – During the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant drop in total rebateable optometric services under Medicare indicates that many Australians put off having eye examinations.

Given the restrictions that were put in place in some parts of the country, these figures aren’t entirely surprising.

They are, however, concerning to [insert practice name]. This is because the most important statistic Australians need to know when it comes to their eye health is that the[vast majority (90 per cent) of vision loss and blindness is preventable or treatable when identified early.](https://goodvisionforlife.com.au/better-vision/)

Optometrist [insert name] said that whilst there is now an upward trend in consultations, local residents of [insert location] who put off looking after their eye health should now not delay in having an eye examination.

**What are the risks of not visiting the optometrist?**

There’s a misconception amongst Australians that visiting the optometrist is only necessary when something is noticeably wrong.

The reality is that many eye diseases occur slowly, over years, and sometimes without any obvious signs or symptoms. This is why regular eye examinations with an optometrist are essential to make early detection more achievable and combat potential issues.

#### Many eye diseases have no early symptoms. They may be painless and you may see no change in your vision until the condition has progressed. Because of this, the single best way to protect your vision is through regular eye examinations.

It’s vital that all Australians visit the optometrist, with Optometry Australia recommending regular eye examinations from the time just prior to starting school and then throughout life. Australians should visit an optometrist immediately if they notice changes in vision such as:

* Loss of vision
* Blurred, hazy or double vision
* Severe, sudden or recurrent eye pain
* Seeing flashes of light or sudden dark floating spots
* Unusual or painful sensitivity to light or glare
* Swollen, red eyes
* Excessive discharge from the eyes - particularly if green or yellow

Whilst COVID-19 continues to impact life in varying degrees, people should not neglect their eye health, endure discomfort or poor vision. Tele-health, videoconferencing and face-to-face consultation options are being offered for these reasons.

For more information contact: [Insert practice name and contact details]