

MEDIA RELEASE

Optometry Australia Federal Budget submission outlines pathway to accessible, affordable eye care

25 January 2024: Optometry Australia has lodged its [Pre-Budget Submission](#) for the 2024-25 Federal Budget.

The Submission focuses on practical, low-cost initiatives that will make a tangible difference in areas of unmet need, addressing structural and systemic issues that impact the ability of optometrists to deliver services to disadvantaged Australians.

CEO of Optometry Australia, Skye Cappuccio, said that with an ageing population and the increased prevalence of chronic eye conditions, there is a need to maximise opportunities to increase the contribution of optometry and optometrists in the health system.

“Optometry Australia’s 2024-25 Pre-Budget Submission focuses on three overarching areas of strategic importance to patients and the future of the profession,” Ms Cappuccio said.

1. Adjustments to optometrists’ remuneration under Medicare, through a review of optometric scheduled fees which have not kept up with inflation, along with the fast-tracked establishment of telehealth items for brief and comprehensive tele-optometry consultations, and asynchronous tele-ophthalmology consultations.
2. Investment to embed innovative, collaborative models of eye care in the health system, enabling optometrists to practise in a multidisciplinary treatment environment, underpinned by shared data and enhanced use of digital technologies. The benefits of collaborative eye care have been clearly demonstrated and align with the Strengthening Medicare Reforms and the Mid-Term Review of the National Health Reform Agreements.
3. Funding for targeted initiatives to deliver benefits in areas of need. These include:
 - Increasing the optometric domiciliary loading to \$85.00 per visit (paid proportionally for multiple patients) to ensure the ongoing provision of timely and affordable access to eye care for elderly Australians in aged care.
 - Increasing investment in the Visiting Optometrists Scheme (VOS) to support the delivery of 29,000 additional eye examinations to First Nations people annually, to provide population parity with non-Indigenous Australians.
 - Supporting the First Nations Eye Health Alliance (FNEHA) to lead the development of identified sector priorities for First Nations eye health, by investing in initiatives to build the capability of the First Nations eye health workforce, and the development, implementation and evaluation of the next National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health sector plans.

- Partnering with the eye care sector in a multi-channel campaign to raise community awareness of the global myopia epidemic reducing its impact on younger Australians now and into the future.

Ms Cappuccio said that Optometry Australia will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of the optometry profession for these much-needed enhancements to eye health.

[A full copy of Optometry Australia's 2024-25 Pre-Budget Submission can be found here.](#)

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Optometry Australia is the peak professional body for optometrists. Representing 85% of registered Australian optometrists, Optometry Australia's focus is to lead and advance the profession of optometry by putting eye-health front and centre of Australian health care.