

MEDIA RELEASE

Optometry Australia supports the new vision for Medicare

Monday 6 February 2023 – Optometry Australia has welcomed the new Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report and Minister for Health, Mark Butler's recent public commitments to ensuring best use of Australia's skilled health workforce.

The peak body for optometrists is committed to working with governments and stakeholders to explore how the contribution of optometry can be maximised to improve the health outcomes of all Australians.

Interim CEO of Optometry Australia, Skye Cappuccio, said, "The recommendations in the report broadly align with our vision to support optometrists practising to their fullest scope and to enhance local integration of specialists and hospitals with primary care."

"Optometry is a vital component of the healthcare system. As outlined in our [Working Together for Better Eye Care](#) policy platform, central to addressing Australia's looming eye health crisis is supporting optometrists to practise to their full scope to enhance patient access and increase the efficiency of Australia's eye health system."

"Any change needs to be implemented alongside appropriate indexation of Medicare funding to enable a system that sustainably serves the needs of the community."

The report highlights the importance of new locally relevant funding models for rural and remote communities and highlights the significance of enabling multidisciplinary team care and enhancing digital access and sharing of patient health information.

Optometry Australia supports these key initiatives and believes that by working together, optometrists and other health practitioners can provide a more comprehensive and integrated approach to patient care.

"Optometry has a crucial role to play in improving access to care for all Australians, and we welcome approaches that focus on making the best use of our skilled workforce" added Ms Cappuccio.

"However, a key issue that remains unaddressed, is the inadequacy of Medicare rebates for optometric care. The gap between the rebate and the cost of providing quality primary eye care continues to grow. This disincentivises the provision of more complex care within the community setting."

Optometry Australia has welcomed opportunities to provide input to the Taskforce, and will continue to advocate to broaden the clinical scope of optometrists and ensure they can practice to their fullness of scope.

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Optometry Australia The influential voice for Optometry

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Optometry Australia is the peak professional body for optometrists. Representing 85% of all registered Australian-based 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.