

GET TO KNOW WHAT SUSTAINABILITY LOOKS LIKE IN OPTOMETRY

READY TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT
SUSTAINABILITY FOR YOUR OPTOMETRY
BUSINESS AND OUR INDUSTRY?

AUSTRALIA'S OPTOMETRY SECTOR HAS POWER WHEN IT COMES TO MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

Limiting greenhouse gas emissions, reducing waste and changing our behaviours are the first steps towards sustainability.



WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

In its simplest form, sustainability is an approach to sustaining life and supporting the planet – both in the present, and for future generations too. Climate change is one of the most pressing sustainability challenges we are facing. But the good news is there are tangible steps we can take to mitigate its impact on people and our planet.

The United Nations defines sustainability as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

WHY DOES IT MATTER TO ME?

In our industry, we show up to work because we make a difference in people's lives. So considering sustainability at the core of it all is the most powerful gift we can give to our customers. Those customers are becoming more conscious by the day. They're seeking clear and trustworthy information about the products they use, and it's up to us to meet their needs.

We're dedicated to providing our members with practical and relevant guidance and tools to support every effort – big and small – towards sustainability.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

When we start looking at or talking about sustainability a lot of jargon and buzzwords come up. You'll be seeing some of these in this guide and might be starting to use them yourself as you take action on sustainability in your practice.

To help you get clear on what terms like 'Scope 3' and 'lifecycle assessment' mean, we've put together a summary of useful terms. You'll find it at the end of this guide.

3 WAYS SUSTAINABILITY IS CHANGING OPTOMETRY



CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR

Our patient base is becoming more interested in sustainability and changing their buying choices as a result. A recent IBM research paper¹ reported 51% of people surveyed consider sustainability more important than they did a year ago. The study also shows 49% have paid more for sustainability products or services in the past year.



WEATHER EVENTS

In its first National Climate Risk Assessment released in 2024, the Australian Government found we are likely to see an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather including floods, wildfires, heatwaves and droughts. These weather events will directly affect both our customer base and people working in our industry.



RISING INSURANCE COSTS

Even if you're not directly affected by a flood or fire event, you can expect to begin paying more on your insurance premiums each year. In fact, home insurance premiums have risen over 50% since 2020² and are expected to keep soaring. Optometry Australia has already had members find their practices are no longer insurable because of risks from extreme weather events.

¹ IBM Institute for Business Value, Balancing sustainability and profitability research brief, 2022

² Home insurance premiums are up 56pc, but insurers are making a loss, Australian Financial Review, 5 April 2024

WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY LOOK LIKE IN OPTOMETRY?

Climate change affects every aspect of our society – including the businesses, supply chains and communities that make up our industry. Many of the challenges our industry faces are complex and systemic, which has pushed the optometry profession to show leadership and accelerate our efforts.

The optometry industry has an important role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preventing the planet from warming to extreme temperatures. To make this happen, we need to change our behaviour, choices and systems to make sure our communities stay resilient.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO OPTOMETRY AUSTRALIA?

Optometry Australia is committed to guiding our members on the steps towards a more sustainable future. Our 2021-2024 Shared Strategic Plan explored ways we could make stronger moves to mitigate the impacts our industry is having on climate change. Emerging evidence on the impact of climate change on eye health has been a core driver for making sustainability a part of the way we do business.



WHY SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT MATTERS

Money is a powerful way to cast a 'vote' for the way we want our world to look. As consumers get to know why sustainability is important, they're looking to spend with ethically minded brands that can be clear and transparent about the action they're taking on social and environmental sustainability.

The optometry industry pairs consumers with products that help them navigate the world with more elegance and ease. So it makes sense that redefining procurement should be a top sustainability priority for the optometry industry.



OUR SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES



**SUSTAINABILITY
KNOWLEDGE**

We need to empower our optometrists, customers and industry players to make better choices using accessible information.



CARBON

As a globally growing concern, we aim to mitigate our carbon impact as much as possible. We can do this through improving our understanding of carbon emissions, outlining carbon emission reduction opportunities and addressing the carbon intensity burden within our sector.



WASTE

Our industry faces significant waste challenges, with recycling constraints and issues within supply chains and retail settings. We need to minimise the waste going to landfill, improve circular solutions and design waste out of the picture.

WHAT MAKES A SUPPLIER SUSTAINABLE?

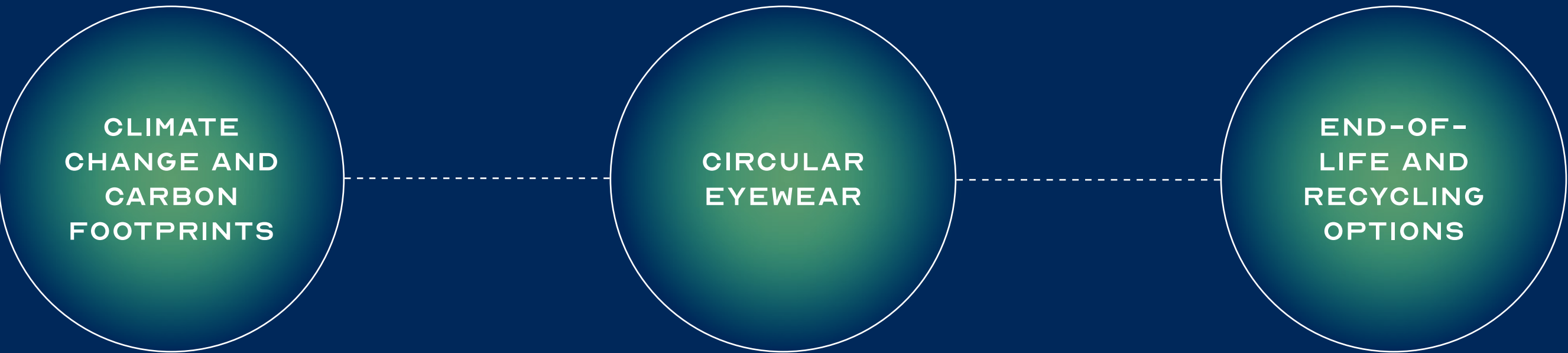
Sustainable suppliers work hand-in-hand with optometrists to help the world see clearly – while taking steps to offer products that meet environmental and social standards.

These standards are ever-evolving based on new information and government and industry regulation. Which means our suppliers need to be engaged with change and up for the challenge.

Collaboration between your practice and suppliers is pivotal. So it's important to set up a process that can help you select suppliers that can support your goals for bringing sustainability into your business.



OUR KEY SUPPLIER ISSUES



Did you know that over 80% of carbon emissions from our industry come from production and procurement of lenses and frames in our supply chain? This highlights the importance and value of reducing emissions within our supply chains.

Climate change is encouraging consumers to get conscious about the things they buy – and this includes eyewear.

Our communities are looking for proof that the purchases they're making support a fairer, more sustainable future.

Taking action in this space can give optometry practices a competitive edge with these customers.

In the past, raw materials have been used to create products designed for convenience and short life spans. With so many products designed to be thrown away, a circular supply chain is about looking at ways to make the most of products and the materials that go into making them.

If we could design, produce and distribute eyewear in a way that minimises waste and maximises value, our industry would be making great moves towards reducing our environmental impact.

A circular design is nothing without an effective end-of-life solution. Right now, we have access to a number of end of life and recycling schemes, including:

- [Opticycle](#): spectacle and CL blister packs
- [TerraCycle](#): CL case and CL blister packs
- [Banish Recycling and Disposal Program](#): CL blister packs
- [Lions Recycle for Sight Australia](#): enables single vision spectacles to be reused by those in need overseas.

Offering customers access to one of these schemes in your business gives them a much-needed opportunity to recycle their eyewear, contact lenses and packaging – which reduces the impact of their purchase.

GREEN FLAGS TO LOOK FOR IN YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN

When working with or scouting for sustainable suppliers, it's important to know what positive behaviours to look for from suppliers to help you make informed decisions.

We've put together some key considerations here. And if there are some terms you haven't seen before, check in with our sustainability language guide on the following page.

[illegible]

GETTING TO
KNOW THE
JARGON –
WHAT WE MEAN BY...

CARBON EMISSIONS

Carbon dioxide (CO2) is a greenhouse gas produced as a by-product of human activities. Burning fossil fuels – coal, oil, and natural gas – is the number one source of carbon emissions.

CARBON FOOTPRINT

An environmental indicator that represents the total amount of carbon emissions that are emitted directly or indirectly from the operations of a company.

GREENHOUSE GASES (GHGS)

Gases that trap heat and are responsible for warming the Earth and causing climate change. The major types are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

LIFECYCLE ASSESSMENT (LCA)

A science-based framework for reporting on and analysing the environmental impact of businesses and products.

SCOPE 1, 2 AND 3 EMISSIONS

When companies are measuring and reporting on their carbon emissions, these fall into three categories:

Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by the company.

Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions coming from the generation of energy the company uses in its operations.

Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that come from the company’s whole value chain. This includes emissions resulting from the all activities in their supply chain (upstream emissions) and use and disposal of their products or services (downstream emissions).



A SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE CAN'T
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WE SHOW UP
AND DEMAND
MORE FROM OUR
SUPPLY CHAINS.

With the right knowledge and guidance to navigate the ins and outs of this new era for our industry, we have the power to make change.

To take your next steps towards the future, take a look at our Cheat Sheet. It aims to help you make empowered decisions by asking the right questions, so you can get the answers you're looking for.

Ready to take a closer look at sustainability for your optometry business and our industry?

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