

scope



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EDITORIAL

COVID-19 has impacted optometry and optometrists in ways not seen in our lifetimes. The ability to see and care for patients, to run businesses and to collaborate with peers, colleagues and other health professionals has radically changed, and will continue to evolve as we wade into uncharted waters.

This is a stressful time for most people, and everyone is affected. We hope that you and your families, as well as your friends and colleagues are safe and well and are coping in this strange and uncertain environment.

Optometry Victoria South Australia (OV/SA), in close collaboration with our national organisation Optometry Australia (OA) and the other State Divisions, have been working hard since the onset of the pandemic to ensure that members are kept up to date on the latest clinical information, business support and HR and employment advice.

OA has led the way for the entire optometric sector throughout the crisis phase of this response. OA's calm, measured and ethical leadership has been very much appreciated by us.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents an ever-changing environment – it can feel like the sand shifts under our feet every day and we're sure many members feel that too. Advice from the federal government, from state governments, from health experts and from our national association will continue to change fairly rapidly, so we must stand ready to pivot and adapt, and ultimately evolve.

Despite these challenges we commit to keeping members informed with the very latest information and advice as it's updated. We also will continue to keep members connected through our events and online forums, and supported through our services and expertise.

Membership renewal 2020-21

In recognition of the significant financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on optometrists and optometry practices, we have announced that membership fees across all member categories will be halved for 2020-21.

This is equivalent to six months of free membership for every member, and members will also have the option to delay payment until later in the year if they wish.

This arrangement is in place for all members across Australia irrespective of where they practice and is the result of wonderful collaboration between OA and all State Divisions.

In no small part the deal was able to be struck through a decision taken by the OA Board to fund half of the fee reductions for all states. That OA can do this for all State Divisions says much about their leadership, financial prudence, and steadfast desire to preserve the collective strength of the association.

Optometry Victoria and Optometry South Australia as separate businesses were strong and financially well run – together OV/SA is demonstrably stronger. We have determined that the very significant shortfall in membership revenue we will experience in 2020-21 as a result of fee reductions can be funded through reserves without the need to take on debt or reduce member services.

We must stress, though, that reductions offered for 2020-21 will be a one-time only arrangement. OV/SA will not be in a position to reduce fees again in 2021-22, and it is anticipated that as we emerge from the pandemic membership levels will return to (approximately) 2019-20 levels. If members have any questions about that please feel free to contact us.

To take advantage of the 2020-21 fee reductions, members MUST renew by 30 June 2020.

To renew simply go to optometry.org.au and log-in to the member portal. Indicate your intended membership category, which will be based on the number of hours you are most likely to be working across the 2020-21 financial year [following the removal of COVID-19 restrictions](#).

Once you have done this you will have the choice of the following options:

- pay the discounted fees in full by 30 June 2020, OR
- pay the discounted fees in full by 31 December 2020, OR
- pay 12, monthly installments at the discounted rate from 1 July, OR
- pay six, monthly installments at the discounted rate from 1 January 2021.

If you decide to pay later we will contact you in around October or November – rest assured you will have full access to all OV/SA and OA services and benefits if you decide to pay later in the year. However you must indicate that this is what you intend to do, by 30 June 2020.

Advocacy for the profession

Advocacy on behalf of members and the profession has never been more important than throughout the changing environment of COVID-19. Together with our national association we have advocated at state and federal levels in an effort to ensure that optometry can emerge from this pandemic well placed to continue to care for the health and wellbeing of our patients.

In the early stages of social distancing restrictions there was a very real risk of a complete shut-down of optometry practices. OA advocated to the Federal Government for optometry practices to be able to remain open to provide essential and emergency eye care for patients. The Federal Department of Health heard and accepted this call, and their subsequent recommendation to optometrists and patients reflected this position.

In parallel OV/SA wrote to the lead ophthalmologists in each of the public hospitals in South Australia and Victoria, the South Australian and Victorian chapters of RANZCO and the South Australian Department of Health and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

We reiterated the benefits of optometry practices remaining open for emergency and essential eye care, in particular the benefit to patients of being able to remain in their local community for eye care where possible, the potential to reduce the burden on the public health system and, to free-up ophthalmology to focus on critical surgical or COVID-19 related care.

The majority of responses to these letters were positive, with a number of ophthalmologists expressing interest in talking further about opportunities to collaborate, once the crisis phase of the pandemic is over.

OA and OV/SA both advocated for access for optometrists to personal protective equipment (PPE). However the very limited supplies of PPE in the National Stockpile were severely rationed to frontline hospital staff and

those treating people diagnosed with COVID-19, and stocks unfortunately remain limited to these groups.

OA has continued to strongly advocate for a Medicare item number for telehealth for optometry. Medicare has been overwhelmed by requests from a wide range of health professions for telehealth item numbers and has been steadily working their way through the list. OA continues to advocate for this and will advise members as soon as any updates from Medicare are received.

OV/SA has also advocated for optometry access to the Victorian Business Support Fund which is providing grants of up to \$10,000 to business significantly affected by the pandemic. Phase one of distribution of grant funds saw optometry applications rejected on the basis of their ABN registration number.

OV/SA immediately spoke with and wrote to Small Business Victoria to outline the enormous impact of the pandemic on optometry practices, and were heartened by the advice that phase two of the program would be open to allied health professions including optometry. We continue to closely watch this space and urge any members experiencing difficulties with this program to contact us with details.

OV/SA in partnership with OA, will continue to advocate for optometry throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, in order to ensure a viable and ongoing future for the profession.

CPD and member events

Our plans to deliver in 2020-21 a twelve-month, comprehensive calendar of CPD events for members has evolved over the last couple of months in line with the limitations imposed by social distancing requirements.

Throughout late May and June we will be delivering online CPD and career events for members with the Careers Expo 2020 for final year students from Deakin University, Flinders University and the University of Melbourne to be held in late May; the next ECOV/SA seminar at the beginning of June and, the last of the

rural and regional seminars with guest speaker Richard Lenne in mid-June.

We are currently anticipating the lifting of domestic travel restrictions sometime in the coming months, and we are planning a host of face-to-face events for members across the two states, including Blue Sky Congress 2020 in Adelaide in November.

You can read more about a number of these upcoming events in this edition of *Scope*, and we will continue to update members as events are confirmed.

Once again we thank you for your ongoing support of the association, for your resilience in the face of significant adversity and, for your dedication and care for your patients. It has been said often, that these are unprecedented times. However we will endure as a profession, and we will grow stronger, together.

Elise Pocknee-Clem, President OV/SA
Pete Haydon, CEO OV/SA



ALEXIS 'CEECEE' ZHANG: POSTGRADUATE TRAVEL GRANT WINNER



The winner of OV/SA's postgraduate travel grant for 2020 is Alexis 'Ceecee' Zhang. Ceecee's research aims to understand the attitudes and practice behaviours of optometrists towards recommending nutrition interventions, in the form of dietary changes or supplements, to patients with ocular disease. Ceecee surveyed over 250 optometrists from Australia and New Zealand for her study.

"Four out of five optometrists participating in the research indicated recommending omega-3 fatty acids, via dietary modification or oral supplementation, to their patients for improving their ocular health. These findings suggest that optometrists are actively engaged in providing dietary and nutritional guidance for ocular health, to patients," Ceecee said.

"We also identified, from our survey, areas where future guidance could support optometrists in making evidence-based nutrition recommendations in eye care practice," she said.

Ceecee had originally planned to use the travel grant to present her research findings at the Scientific Educators' Meeting in Optometry (SEMO), which was to be held in Auckland, New Zealand in April. However, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of the conference. Ceecee now intends to use the prize money to travel to the Ocular Surface laboratory at the University of Auckland once travel restrictions have been lifted.

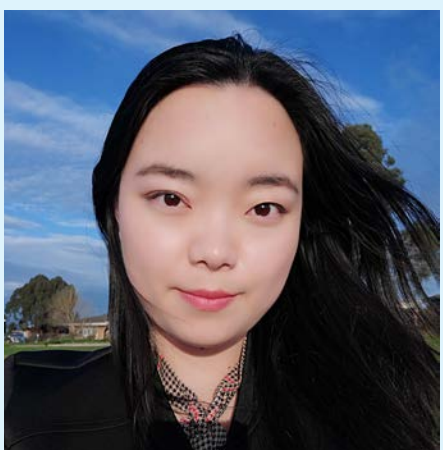
"The Ocular Surface laboratory has a corneal aesthesiometer, one of only a few comparable instruments that exist in the world. It was built by an Auckland-based ophthalmologist and provides a non-invasive method to measure corneal sensitivity," Ceecee said.

"In terms of promoting my research results, our survey results are now published in a scientific journal (PMID: 32331489). I also plan on sharing these findings with the wider optometry community via continuing education channels and, if possible, at professional conferences later in the year," she said.

"I'm hoping that these findings will help inform future education programs about eye health and nutrition, particularly in clinical education articles and conferences. These are the main sources of information optometrists indicated using to guide their clinical decision making," Ceecee said.

"I'd like to thank OV/SA for awarding me this grant and the opportunity to further my research," she said.

ZOE ZHANG: ACADEMIC AWARD WINNER UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE



The OV/SA Academic Award recognises a graduating student who epitomises the highest commitment to patient care, including outstanding clinical aptitude, commitment to evidence-based practice and professionalism. The student receives \$1,500 which they can choose to spend however they wish.

OV/SA is proud to announce that this year's winner of the Academic Award (University of Melbourne), is Zoe Zhang. Zoe completed her optometry degree at the University of Melbourne in 2019.

We asked Zoe how she found the optometry degree at the University of Melbourne.

"The optometry degree at the University of Melbourne provided us with a solid foundation of theoretical knowledge integrated with an excellent range of placements. The teaching staff were very supportive and encouraged us to become skilful, empathetic and compassionate clinicians," Zoe said.

"I really enjoyed the placements during the final year of the course. My overseas externship was in New Jersey where I consulted under the guidance of both optometrists and ophthalmologists. This increased my exposure to different ocular pathologies and consolidated my skills in detection, treatment and ongoing

management of significant eye conditions," she said.

Since graduating Zoe has taken on a role with OPSM in Morwell and Traralgon. We asked Zoe how she's found the transition to practice.

"Transition into practice has been a very steep learning curve. Working in East Gippsland has been both challenging and rewarding. It has ranged from detecting a retinal detachment during my third week, to removing three corneal rust rings in a day at the start of social restrictions. This really highlighted the need for wearing eye protection whilst working from home as well!" Zoe said.

"Winning this award is a great surprise. It's a really nice recognition of all the hard work from the past four years. I graduated with such an excellent cohort of peers so it feels surreal to have been selected. I am certainly very honoured and thankful for the support from the University of Melbourne and OV/SA," she said.

LOCAL NEWS

OV/SA'S GOLF DAY 2020 WINNER GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE

OV/SA's 97th Annual Golf Day this year raised \$2,604.68 for charity to improve eye health outcomes for disadvantaged communities.

The event was held on 16 March at the Peninsula Kingswood Country Golf Club in Victoria, just prior to the introduction of social distancing restrictions. The event was generously sponsored by CR Surfacing, Eyes Right Optical, Good Optical, Hoya, Maui Jim and Provision Eyecare.

Not only does the annual event raise funds for charity, it's also a great social and networking opportunity for members and optometric suppliers and equipment company representatives.

This year 44 members and company representatives participated in the day. There was a wide range of prizes on offer, and a highly enjoyable cocktail event to round out the day.

The golf itself was highly competitive with the prestigious perpetual Golf Day trophy won this year by Wonthaggi optometrist Malcolm Gin.

Malcolm's acceptance speech was thoroughly entertaining, harking back to the first (and only other) time he won the trophy.

"Last time I was lucky enough to win this trophy was 36 years ago when I was two months into my optometric career with Gippsland practice, Leunig

& Farmer. I remember it vividly...it was at Woodlands. I was playing with Rick Good (from Good Optical) and Rob Holloway (an optometrist from Wangaratta in North East Victoria)," Malcolm said.

"I was the youngest player by about 20 years, I had the oldest car in the car park and I was the only Asian. I was fortunate to meet some of the doyens of the profession who became mentors once I opened my own business," Malcolm said.

Congratulations to Malcolm on his win, and thank you to all the players and sponsors who made the day such an outstanding success.



Golf Day perpetual trophy winner Malcolm Gin (on right) with Mark Wymond from Eyes Right Optical who sponsored the course drinks



Malcolm after he first won the Golf Day perpetual trophy in 1984.

VICTORIAN STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS REMOTELY

OV/SA's State Advisory Committee Victoria (SACV) held their first meeting for 2020 in late March. The meeting was held online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic social distancing requirements.

The committee discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ability of members to practice; the flow-on effect to patients and the communication and leadership from OA up to that point. The committee also discussed the anticipated impact on the association's 2020-21 budget.

The committee noted the recent formation of the State Advisory Committee South Australia (SACSA) and opportunities for the two committees to work together and share information and learnings over time.

They also provided feedback on current OV/SA work in progress on children's vision and a KPI resource for early career practitioners, as well as opportunities to improve cultural safety awareness for members.

The next committee meeting will be held in the second half of 2020.

The SACV members are: Mitchell Anjou (Chair), James Armitage, Rod Baker, Jessica Chi, Mark De Paolo, Phillip Fent, Graham Lakkis, Alice McLennan, Genevieve Napper, Ken Thomas and Kon Zagoritis. Committee secretariat support is provided by Lyn Hsieh.

FIVE EARLY CAREER OPTOMETRISTS JOIN THE ECOV/SA COMMITTEE

OV/SA is delighted to announce that five early career optometrists are joining the ECOV/SA committee: Pooja Bhindi, John De Francesco, Hayley Gobell, Marcelle Malka and Mina You.

Nineteen outstanding applications were received from early career members who are up to ten years from graduation.

The new committee members will join current committee members Jillian Campbell, Laura Carson, Rowena Fuller, Zenia Jaitley, Jo Rohrlach, Patrick Mac, Alek Sims and Katrina Yap.

The ECOV/SA committee aims to identify and support the needs and interests of early career optometrists across Victoria and South Australia through the delivery of CPD seminars, peer mentoring dinners, advocacy and, through the development of resources.

OV/SA would like to thank all of the members who took the time to apply to join the committee.



Pooja Bhindi
Pooja graduated from Flinders University in 2019 and has taken on a role with Innovative Eye Care in Adelaide.

Pooja was the President of the Flinders University Optometry Student Association (FUOSA) during her final year of study. She is also a committee member of the SA branch of the Cornea and Contact Lens Society of Australia (CCLSA).

Pooja's vision for the committee is that "political, clinical and social issues faced by early career optometrists are supported by ECOV/SA. This includes hosting events that encourage young optometrists to come together, identifying common issues and working as a community to push our scope of practice."



John De Francesco
John graduated from optometry at Deakin University in 2016 and currently works for Oscar Wylee at a practice in

the north western suburbs of Melbourne. John has also participated in outreach optometry services to the Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea. John is an active subcommittee member of the Australian-Italian Leaders of Tomorrow (ALTO) organisation.

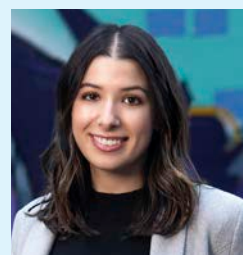
John's says that "ECOV/SA is critically important as it gives voice to the new members in our optometry family. Graduates and early career optometrists will steer the ship of trends to come in our industry and so need an avenue to be heard, supported and protected. As a group ECOV/SA should be facilitating debate and discussion of issues and create a platform for the promotion of new ideas from our early career constituents."



Hayley Gobell
Hayley graduated from Flinders University in 2018 and currently works for OPSM in the southern suburbs of

Adelaide. During her time at university Hayley held a number of roles with FUOSA including as Vice-President in 2016 and 2017.

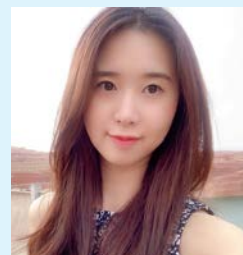
Hayley's vision for the committee is "to build a culture where new optometrists feel valued within their workplace and their community. I would love for more opportunities such as leadership summits to be offered to help early career optometrists excel in their workplace. I also hope to inspire more early career optometrists in my workplace, to be more involved with the ECOV/SA social and CPD events."



Marcelle Malka
Marcelle graduated from Deakin University in 2016 and currently works as a locum optometrist. She also holds

a part-time role leading Marketing and Communications at a digital health startup accelerator, and is also studying part-time for an MBA at the University of Melbourne.

Marcelle's vision for ECOV/SA is to "focus on other areas where early career optometrists might need support, for example learning more about business, finances, owning a practice, alternative career paths for optometrists and marketing. She believes younger optometrists should also be aware of non-clinical career paths in optometry such as head office and corporate roles with optometry companies. Marcelle is passionate about increasing engagement with young optometrists through marketing, social media and diverse and interesting events."



Mina You
Mina graduated from the University of Melbourne in 2019, and has taken on a role with the Australian College

of Optometry in Melbourne. At the University of Melbourne Mina was involved in a range of activities and committees including as a co-convenor of the Doctor of Optometry Student Conference in 2019 and a Student Ambassador for the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences in 2018-19. Mina also participated in the inaugural OA Student Leadership Program (2019).

Mina's vision is that the "ECOV/SA committee play a crucial role in preparing and supporting our profession for various challenges. Through my leadership experiences I have witnessed the benefits of early establishment of connections amongst optometrists through effective networking opportunities. I have also seen how effective intra and inter-professional education can promote collaborative care to achieve the best patient care."

MEMBER PROFILE

SAO TYLER:
HERE AND WILLING TO HELP

Sao Tyler graduated from her optometry degree at the University of Melbourne in 2009. After graduating she started work with Graham Hill Eyecare in Shepparton, and has been there for over ten years. During this time Sao has also taken on locum work in various settings all over Australia. She has a particular clinical interest in myopia control and contact lenses.

We asked Sao to tell us a little more about the practice and how she found making the move from the city to the country.

"Graham Hill Eyecare was established in Shepparton over 50 years ago. It's a single-clinic practice of five optometrists and eight support staff. We do everything here - disease management, Ortho-K, myopia control, low vision, subsidised eyecare scheme for low income people and contacts," Sao said.

"Our relationship with the local GP's, ophthalmologists and other health care professionals is strong, so people trust us with their eye health. I am so grateful and proud to be a part of a team that is so dedicated to eye care and community health," she said.

"Before moving to Shepparton I'd lived in the same family home all my life. But the move from city to country was unexpectedly seamless. I got involved with the local young professionals' group soon after settling, and Shepparton has a strong social scene when it comes to sports and fitness. I've found that regional living suits me well," Sao said.

We asked Sao about the strategies that have been put in place in the practice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Due to social distancing measures we have had to cut back to a skeleton staff, as the waiting room becomes quite full when all five optometrists are working. Patients are now asked to use hand sanitiser on entering the building before sitting in the waiting room alone, and to wash their hands at the sink in the optometrist's office with soap and running water. Our frames are also all hand washed with detergent after each patient," she said.

"Before lockdown we were booked three weeks in advance, so we're calling each patient and triaging their need to be seen during this time. Routine recalls have been put off for now, but we've placed notices on our social media and in the local newspaper that we're still available if they think they need us. They just need to call first," Sao said.

"We've also introduced an after-hours service for the weekends and after 5pm every day where we'd usually be closed. Anything to alleviate the stress on the local hospital and our patients in general," she said.

"Personally I'm doing more co-managing of patients with their ophthalmologist via telehealth. We usually have two or three ophthalmologists visiting Shepparton on a regular basis, but they've now either ceased their visits or severely cut back," Sao said.

We asked Sao how patients have responded to these strategies.

"It's been very rewarding seeing the relief in people's faces when they hear that not only are we open, but we are here and willing to help. Everyone is obliging with the hand-washing protocols and social distancing overall. You do get some people miffed about the amount of sanitising or washing of hands, however it's more for the reason that we're living in strange times, and their concern is that this is now the new normal," she said.

"We anticipate that as the restrictions lift we will slowly run the practice back to capacity. It is all unknown and ever-changing, but at least our patients have some certainty that we are still open," Sao said.

We asked Sao what she enjoys most about working as an optometrist, and what she finds most challenging.

"I love the variety of optometry! The science of the job might sometimes be straight forward, but the needs of each patient are different. I might see lots of kids one day, maybe a few AMD patients, or a new keratoconic contact lens fit. Patients with low vision are another example of how I need to tailor as often there's no 'standard' treatment. I love that I can help these patients locally and they don't have to travel hours to Melbourne for care," she said.

"That variety also applies to locum work. It's so interesting seeing how other practices work, what they offer their patients and what optometry is like in each state. Those experiences definitely helped me to become a more well-rounded and knowledgeable practitioner," Sao said.

"The thing I find challenging is that I do wish that the Medicare rebate better reflected the work we do, especially in a regional area where there are less resources," she said.

"But I've been seeing some of my patients for over a decade. I've seen some grow up from toddlers to young adults ready for their driver's license. All my regulars were wishing me well when I was pregnant recently with my first child, and they are very much involved and interested in my life as I am in theirs," Sao said.

We asked Sao what inspired her to become an optometrist, and what keeps her going now?

"Growing up I was very science-minded, and I still am. I also had a calling to help others in the medical sense. Optometry felt like a good fit for me, and I was very impressed with the course at the University of Melbourne," she said.

"I knew I wanted to practice in a regional setting after doing country placements in my final year because of the experience that is unique to working in the country. I actually never intended to stay in Shepparton past two years, but ten years later I can't fathom going back to Melbourne," Sao said.

"Working at Graham Hill Eyecare continues to keep me driven as a practitioner. I've been encouraged right from the beginning to be at the forefront of optometry, for the benefit of our patients, and the longevity of my career," she said.

MITCH HANCOCK: IF IT'S WORTH DOING, DO IT THE BEST IT CAN BE.



Mitch Hancock grew up on the northern coast of New South Wales and graduated from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in 1995. Following graduation he took a role with Laubman and Pank in South Australia working in various locations across the state. He became branch manager in Port Augusta in mid-1996 moving to the same role in Mount Gambier three years later. Mitch and his wife Tiffany took over an independent practice in Port Augusta in 2005.

Mitch completed the UNSW Therapeutics course in 1998, and a postgraduate Masters from UNSW in 2007. Due to the delay in getting therapeutics approved in SA he returned to study a few years later and once again completed a Therapeutics course, this time through Queensland University of Technology.

We asked Mitch about his practice in Port Augusta and his approach to running it.

"Tiffany and I have the ethos that 'if it's worth doing then do it the best it can be'. We aim to provide a standard of clinical expertise and equipment at our practice that far exceeds what is available to patients in the city," Mitch said.

"Patients in the country can be the poor cousins when it comes to access to health care and health outcomes, but we were determined that this would not be the case for eye care in our region. So technology and therapeutics have been areas of special interest for us," he said.

"We first installed OCT in 2009 so that patients could access anti-VEGF injections locally and we installed the third upgrade of Angio OCT a few years ago. We have most of the clinical tools an optometrist could ever want or

need, much to our accountant's horror, but it does allow the broadest scope of practice and access to care for our patients," Mitch said.

We asked Mitch about the sort of strategies they have put in place in the practice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We were watching the developing crisis closely and the type of measures being implemented, and Tiffany would provide updates to the team each day," he said.

"Infections in SA were not yet really present when we made a host of changes so we could still manage the volume of emergency and essential ocular care patients that we see," Mitch said.

"To reduce the number of clients in the practice at any one time, we split the team into morning and afternoon shifts with closure in between for cleaning of the practice and to allow time for the morning team to exit before the afternoon team arrived. We extended the practice hours from 8am to 8pm with a 20 minute gap between all appointments to allow full disinfection between each patient," he said.

"We brought forward appointments for higher risk patients that had ocular care needs such as wet macula or glaucoma so that they were effectively managed before the increased restrictions. We also established hand sanitising stations for patients on entry, taping on floors for social distancing guidance and ensured that we had only hard surface chairs that were spaced appropriately," Mitch said.

"We modified the layout of the consulting rooms, and ensured we had slit-lamp shields and face masks for all staff. We converted spare consulting rooms into dedicated space for clients to be directed to on arrival, and we opened other exits so that patients arrive through the front door and exit through an alternate door," he said.

"We started conducting health screening and phone triage before making appointments for clients, which was followed by additional health screening and part-exam history conducted by the optometrist before the patient attended for their appointment," Mitch said.

"We implemented protocols for all staff in regards to travel and social events, much of this well in advance of the announcements coming from national cabinet. Our staff have been fantastic throughout all of this and very accepting of the changes," he said.

"Our team continue to work part of their hours from home and are involved

in team meetings via videoconference. During home work time staff do training (including the SA health COVID-19 infection control trainings), social media work, and make calls to our more vulnerable patients to check that they were feeling well not just physically, but socially and emotionally," Mitch said.

"We also started making texts and calls to our team at the end of each weekend to make sure that everyone was well and coping," he said.

We asked Mitch how patients had responded, and whether some strategies were more effective than others.

"Patients have generally been great with the changes. Initially some were a bit surprised and a bit blasé about it all. There was feeling that as a more remote country location, this was not something they had to worry about. But the level of seriousness with which we were taking patient safety helped to educate them and, as the weeks went on, more patients were relieved they could still get their eye health attended to," Mitch said.

"We believe it's important to continue to do things in this new way, even when some people no longer see it as necessary. We're assessing which of the strategies we've put in place have improved patient experience and care so we can retain those into the longer term," he said.

"The current crisis has forced many tough changes, but not all have been bad, and we'll be focussing on retaining those positive silver linings personally and professionally," Mitch said.

We asked Mitch what he enjoys most about working as an optometrist.

"It's the people, and the relationship that you build with them over time that I enjoy most. When I first started it was the fascination with the eye and vision, and I still do get a buzz out of that, as well as the technology and solving problems," he said.

"But finding a way to help people understand what is going on with their eyes and vision and how they can be involved in making the best out of their most dominant sense, is now the biggest driver for me," Mitch said.

Mitch Hancock will be guest speaker at the South Australian locations of OV/SA's rural and regional CPD seminar series 2020-21. Dates and locations will be announced in June 2020.

MEMBER EVENTS

PLANNING RACES AHEAD FOR BLUE SKY CONGRESS 2020 IN NOVEMBER

Planning for OV/SA's Blue Sky Congress 2020 is racing ahead in leaps and bounds, with the Congress intended to be held as a face-to-face event on 20 and 21 November 2020, at the Adelaide Convention Centre, South Australia.

Confirmed key note speakers for Blue Sky are the ever popular Nate Lighthizer and Blair Lonsberry.

While both men hail from the US, Nate and Blair have spoken at a number of Australian conferences over the last decade, and have an excellent appreciation of the Australian optometric context and scope of practice.

Both speakers have a reputation for delivering engaging and thought-provoking presentations designed to inform and in some cases, challenge the audience.

OV/SA is planning for both Nate and Blair to attend the event and for the

Congress to remain as an in-person event. However it is possible that current international and domestic travel restrictions may put paid to those plans.

If this is the case, there are a range of alternative options in that can be activated involving but not limited to the use of technology, alternative speakers and/or an adjusted program if required.

We will keep members informed about any changes to the event, but will ensure that no matter the format or speakers, Blue Sky Congress 2020 will deliver the highest quality CPD for members in a collegial and fun environment.

Registrations for Blue Sky Congress 2020 will open in the coming months. See if you can score a goal with the soon to be announced social theme for the event!



Nate Lighthizer

Born and raised in Bismarck, North Dakota, USA, Dr Nate Lighthizer is a graduate of Pacific University College of Optometry. Upon graduation, he completed a residency in family practice optometry with an emphasis in ocular disease through Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry.

Dr Lighthizer has since joined the faculty at the Oklahoma College of Optometry and serves as the Chief of Specialty Care Clinics and the Chief of Electrodiagnostics Clinic. In 2014, he founded and now heads the Dry Eye Clinic at the College of Optometry. Also in 2014, he was named the Director of Continuing Education as well as the Assistant Dean for Clinical Care Services at the Oklahoma College of Optometry.

He is a founding member, and currently serves as Vice President, of the Intrepid Eye Society which is a group of emerging thought leaders in optometry. He was named a member of PCON 250, a list of the top 250 optometrists in the country who practice progressively, provide innovative patient care, conduct optometric research or excel in academia and share what they have learned with other optometrists to advance the profession.

Dr Lighthizer lectures nationally on numerous topics, most notably advanced ophthalmic procedures, electrodiagnostics, and ocular disease.



Blair Lonsberry (on right) with OV/SA's CEO Pete Haydon and OA National Board Director Murray Smith

Blair Lonsberry

Dr Lonsberry grew up in Rosburn, Manitoba, Canada. He obtained his optometry degree from the University of Waterloo in 1996 after completing a Master of Science in Physiology from the University of Manitoba.

He completed his residency in Primary Care Optometry from the Illinois College of Optometry in 1997, then joined the faculty at Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tennessee. During his time at SCO,

he completed a Masters in Education with an emphasis in adult learning.

Currently, Dr. Lonsberry is a Full Professor with Pacific University College of Optometry in Oregon.

Dr Lonsberry is a Diplomate of the American Board of Optometry, a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, the Optometric Retinal Society, the Optometric Glaucoma Society, and the Ocular Surface Society of Optometry.

'CAN I TREAT THIS PATIENT?' REGIONAL SEMINAR SERIES GOES ONLINE IN JUNE



Guest speaker Richard Lenne

OV/SA's highly successful regional seminar series for 2019-20 ventures into the world of online events in June, with two online seminar times available for OV/SA members.

In this seminar guest speaker Richard Lenne will provide participants with

an overview of the clinical use of therapeutics to treat patients with a wide variety of presentations.

Richard delivered the seminar in Traralgon and Warrnambool in Victoria and Port Lincoln in South Australia in 2019, but with the onset of COVID-19 restrictions, planned trips to McLaren Vale and Mildura have had to be cancelled. Hopefully we'll be back in those areas in the near future.

Richard will address some of the factors that influence a decision to treat, rather than refer, a patient. He will provide some examples on the varied presentation of Herpetic eye disease and a grading scale for the assessment and management of ocular chemical trauma.

Richard will also discuss the potential adverse outcomes of glaucoma treatment.

Participants will receive 4.5T CPD points (with assessment).

The seminar will be delivered as a webinar on Tuesday 17 June with two session times to choose from.

A matinee session will be held from 12.30pm-2pm (AEST) and an evening session from 7pm-8.30pm (AEST).

Registration is essential, and the event is free for OV/SA members.

To register visit www.optometry.org.au/cpd-publications-events/cpd-event-calendar/ Scroll to 17 June on the calendar and click on either the matinee or evening session.

'Can I treat this patient?' regional seminar series

Date:	Tuesday 17 June, 2020
Time:	12.30pm-2pm (AEST) OR 7pm-8.30pm (AEST)
Venue:	Online webinar
CPD points:	4.5T CPD points
Cost:	Free to OV/SA members

ECOV/SA'S EYELID SURGERY AND COSMETIC PROCEDURES: WHAT OPTOMETRISTS NEED TO KNOW

The latest ECOV/SA CPD seminar is proving exceedingly popular with members, with over 200 members registered to participate within 24 hours of registration opening.

The seminar will be delivered online as an interactive webinar on Monday 1 June from 6.30pm-8.30pm (AEST).

The event will provide members with useful and practical information on the emergence of new cosmetic treatments such as blepharopigmentation, episcleral tattooing, cosmetic laser procedures, eyelash extensions, dermal fillers and botulinum toxin, including how to recognise adverse outcomes.

The seminar will also provide an overview of 'droopy eyelids', including how to recognise the cause in each patient to avoid missing dangerous underlying conditions and, information on understanding the factors in considering surgical repair of 'droopy eyelids'.

Guest speakers are Dr Jonathan Kam and Dr Charles Su.

Dr Kam is an Australian trained Eye Surgeon and General Ophthalmologist. He is a leader in cataract and lens surgery, and dedicates his time to both public and private work in Melbourne. He holds public hospital consultant appointments at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, and with Northern Health, where he is the supervisor of ophthalmology training, and private appointments at the Epworth Freemasons and Manningham Private.

Charles Su is an Ophthalmic and Oculoplastic Surgeon in private practice and at the Eye and Ear Hospital in Melbourne. He is a past President of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Ophthalmic Plastic Surgeons. He is involved in training eye registrars and fellows and lectures in undergraduate optometry students at the University of Melbourne.

He is a regular tutor in an instruction course at the American Academy

of Ophthalmology and an examiner for the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists. He has presented in many local and international meetings and has publications in peer reviewed journals.

Participants will receive 6 CPD points (with assessment).

The seminar is free for OV/SA members. Registration is essential.

To register visit www.optometry.org.au/cpd-publications-events/cpd-event-calendar/cpd-events/ecovsa-cosmetic-surgery-seminar-monday-1-june-2020/

ECOV/SA's Eyelid surgery and cosmetic procedures: what optometrists need to know

Date:	Monday 1 June, 2020
Time:	6.30pm-8.30pm (AEST)
Venue:	Online webinar
CPD points:	6 CPD points
Cost:	Free to OV/SA members

NATIONAL NEWS

OPTOMETRY AUSTRALIA'S COVID-19 RESOURCES WEBSITE HUB

The COVID-19 resources hub on OA's website provides members with everything they need to know to manage and respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regularly updated, the hub includes the latest clinical advice on defining and managing urgent eyecare, personal protection equipment (PPE), infection control, telehealth and contact lenses.

Practice resources include posters to display about COVID-19, your practice operations and expectations of patients, as well as social media tiles to help keep your patients informed and up-to-date.

Information about staffing, HR and financial support is also available

targeted to the particular and differing needs of employees, employers and locums.

Information on business continuity and support, and other useful resources are also available.

The section on COVID-19 mental health support connects members to websites, resources and online support aimed at helping members to manage their own wellbeing during this difficult and stressful time.

The COVID-19 resources hub can be accessed at www.optometry.org.au/practice-professional-support/coronavirus-covid-19-what-optometrists-need-to-know/



One of the practice posters available for members to download from the OA website.

OPTOMETRY AUSTRALIA'S MEMBER RESEARCH PROJECT

OA is conducting a major research project that aims to understand how members are coping during the COVID-19 pandemic both personally and professionally.

A team of 30 members has been recruited to support this important project. From mid-May the team of optometrists commenced calling as many members as possible to see how they are coping during these difficult times.

All members will also be invited to participate in a 10-12 minute online survey. A link to the survey was emailed to members in early May. The survey will close on 31 May.

The results of the phone calls and survey feedback will be used to guide

how OA can continue to support members, refine the advocacy work, consumer promotions and wide-ranging member engagement activities.

The results are also expected to highlight whether OA is providing the right level of services to assist members through the crisis, including whether additional services may be needed.

Importantly OA is keen to identify how best to take the sector forward as we emerge from the pandemic.

To find out more about the project, or to arrange for the survey link to be resent to you contact OA through their website www.optometry.org.au/about-us/contact-us/



OV/SA member Kirsten Matthews is making calls to members as part of OA's member research project.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Back row (L-R): From L-R: Rowan Prendergast, Murray Smith (National Director), Allison McKendrick, Anne Weymouth (Vice-President), Timothy Lo (Treasurer), Elise Pocknee-Clem (President), Cassandra Haines, Kurt Larsen, Jason Tan (Associate Director).

The Optometry Victoria South Australia Board welcomes discussion and input from our members.

If you have an issue or point of discussion you would like to raise with the Board, please feel free to contact President Elise Pocknee-Clem directly at e.pockneeclem@optometry.org.au

Alternatively you can reach individual Board members via the Optometry Victoria South Australia office on (03) 9652 9100 or email office.vicsa@optometry.org.au



DIARY
DATES

OV/SA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

In recognition of the significant financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on optometrists and optometry practices, membership fees across all member categories will be halved for 2020-21.

Membership renewal opens on Friday 15 May and closes on Tuesday 30 June.

The following membership renewal options will be available:

- pay the discounted fees in full by 30 June 2020, OR
- pay the discounted fees in full by 31 December 2020, OR
- pay 12, monthly installments at the discounted rate from 1 July, OR
- pay six, monthly installments at the discounted rate from 1 January 2021.

To take advantage of this offer visit www.optometry.org.au and log in to the member portal.

ECOV/SA'S EYELID SURGERY AND COSMETIC PROCEDURES: WHAT OPTOMETRISTS NEED TO KNOW

This webinar, targeted to early career optometrists, will provide useful and practical information on the emergence and adverse outcomes of a range of cosmetic treatments, and the causes surgical repair options for 'droopy eyelids'.

Date: Monday 1 June, 2020
Time: 6.30pm-8.30pm (AEST)
Venue: Online webinar
CPD points 6 CPD points
Cost: Free to OV/SA members

'CAN I TREAT THIS PATIENT?' REGIONAL SEMINAR SERIES

This seminar will provide members with an overview of the clinical use of therapeutics to treat patients with a wide variety of presentations, including Herpetic eye disease, assessment and management of ocular chemical trauma and potential adverse outcomes of glaucoma treatment.

Date: Tuesday 17 June, 2020
Time: 12.30pm-2pm (AEST) OR 7pm-8.30pm (AEST)
Venue: Online webinar
CPD points 4.5T CPD points
Cost: Free to OV/SA members

BLUE SKY CONGRESS 2020

Save the date for Blue Sky Congress 2020, with international keynote speakers Blair Lonsberry and Nate Lighthizer.

Date: 20 and 21 November, 2020
Venue: Adelaide Convention Centre

For more information on any of the above events or to register online visit:
www.optometry.org.au/cpd-publications-events/cpd-event-calendar/