



OPTOMETRY AUSTRALIA ANNUAL REPORT **FY2022-2023**

CONTENTS

Who we are	2
Acknowledgement of country	3
Membership snapshot	4
Your board and board reports	5
President's Report	6
CEO's Report	7
Treasurer's Report	8
Your sector in numbers	10
Your strategic plan and report	11
Lead	12
Engage	14
Promote	15
Enduring organisation	17
Committees & advisory groups	19
Committees	19
Working & Advisory Groups	20
Contact us	22

WHO WE ARE



Optometry Australia is the peak professional body for optometrists in Australia and is instrumental in shaping the future of the profession. We do this by placing the needs of our members front and centre of all our decision making.

For over 100 years we have united the optometry sector to make Australia a world leader in the delivery of vision and eye health services and patient care. Servicing optometrists and evolving the optometry profession since 1918, we are the influential voice for optometry.

Benefits of membership

Membership means you are part of Australia's largest community of optometrists and because of this, you are never alone.

With 85% of all registered optometrists members of our organisation, we can provide the networks, support and guidance to help you succeed.

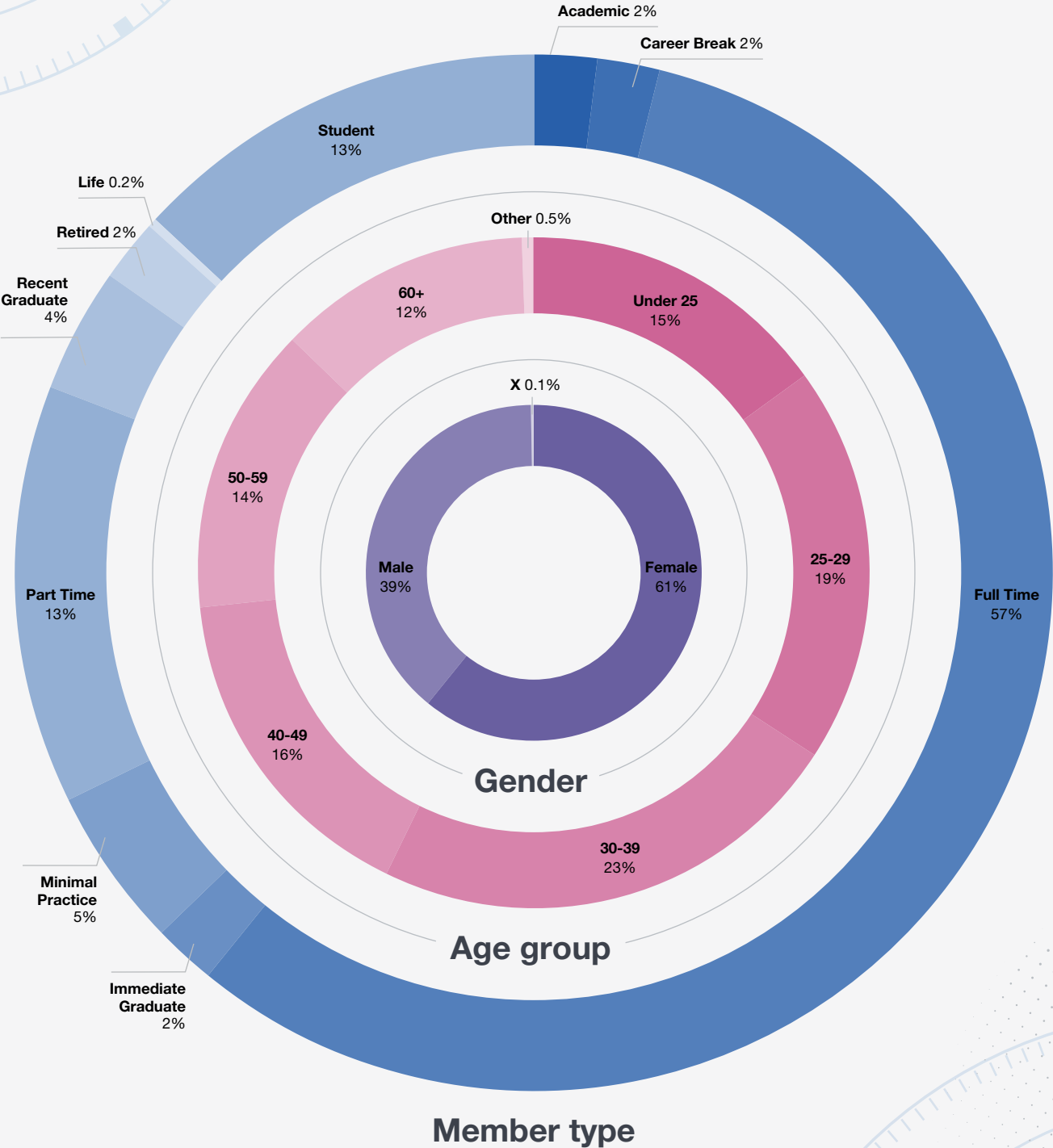
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Optometry Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we live, work and gather. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the rich and diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who have been caring for and stewarding this land for thousands of years. We recognise their deep connection to Country, their knowledge, wisdom and ongoing contributions to our community.



MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT



Note: Percentages have been rounded up or down to whole numbers
X: Non-binary or prefer not to say

YOUR BOARD



Margaret Lam
Director/President

*appointed on 28 June 2022 and
re-appointed on 25 November 2022*



Theo Charalambous
Director/Deputy President

appointed on 26 November 2021



Albert Lee
Director/Treasurer

appointed on 21 July 2022



Lee Baumwol
Director

appointed 22 November 2022



Shuvagata Bose
Director

appointed on 25 November 2022



Kevin Sun
Director

appointed 25 November 2022



Ramy Aziz
Director

appointed 26 June 2023



Sarah Byrne
Director

resigned 25 September 2023



Tori Halsey
Director/Treasurer

resigned 21 November 2022



Robert Howie
Director

retired 25 November 2022



Fiona Moore
Director/Deputy President

retired 25 November 2022



Neil Wesley
Director

resigned 9 January 2023

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



I am delighted to open the Optometry Australia Annual Report for the year 2022-23 and provide an overview of our progress and achievements during this period. Representing 85% of all optometrists in Australia, our dedication to supporting the profession remains paramount, along with our commitment to members and their evolving needs.

I am delighted to open the Optometry Australia Annual Report for the year 2022-23 and provide an overview of our progress and achievements during this period. Representing 85% of all optometrists in Australia, our dedication to supporting the profession remains paramount, along with our commitment to members and their evolving needs.

One of the cornerstones of our success has been the high level of member engagement we've been able to create and maintain. Our diverse range of continuing professional development (CPD) offerings, which span from regular interactive workshops to our educational magazine Optometry Connection, to our online CPD conference, has played a crucial role in this. This is evidenced by online CPD remaining one of the most valued services in member's self-reported decision to maintain membership.

We are also proud of the positive feedback we have received for our Optometry Advisor Help Desk, that provides members with access to professional information, support, and guidance from an optometrist peer. During the January to June 2023 period, 92% of members who engaged with our Optometry Adviser team rated our service to meet their needs extremely well, with an additional 8% finding it to meet their needs well. Furthermore, 89% of respondents said they would recommend the service to their peers, highlighting its value to members.

I have taken great pleasure this year in observing the new Optometry Australia Instagram account flourish with the personal stories and perspectives of so many members. Launched on World Optometry Day, 23 March 2023, the purpose of the new channel is to celebrate Australian optometry, optometrists, and eye health in an aspirational way. I look forward to learning more about our members there in the future.

Whilst maintaining our focus on members, we were also pleased at the news that the proposed move in the southern states to operationally integrate Optometry Victoria South Australia and Optometry Tasmania with Optometry Australia received the 'yes' vote from respective members, paving the way for integration

to occur during 2023-24. This move will allow us to continue to enhance collaboration, ultimately benefiting our members.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Skye Cappuccio, who stepped into the CEO role this year. Under her stewardship, the Optometry Australia team has continued to deliver exceptional service for members, whilst actively working to pursue a robust future for our profession and maintain momentum on our consumer-focused Good Vision for Life program, which builds community awareness of the importance of regular optometric examinations. Skye highlights many of these achievements in her CEO report below.

I would like to offer my thanks to my fellow Directors on the Optometry Australia Board and acknowledge their dedicated contribution to the association and ongoing commitment to ensuring the good governance of the organisation. During the year we have continued our practice of reviewing and updating our fiscal and governance processes to ensure alignment with good practice.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to all our members for their ongoing support and trust in Optometry Australia. It is through your engagement and dedication to your profession that we have been able to achieve these successes and more.

As we look towards the future, we remain focused on advancing the optometry profession and ensuring ready access to quality eye care for communities across Australia.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Lam'.

Margaret Lam
President

CEO'S REPORT



Optometry Australia's strategic plan focuses on four key pillars: to lead, engage and promote the optometry sector while ensuring the organisation's enduring success. These pillars provide a framework for all that we do.

In my first CEO's report for Optometry Australia, I am pleased to share that we have delivered successfully against our goals for the year, the detail of which you can read about within. I will touch here on a few highlights.

We have continued to lead the sector through ongoing advocacy and political engagement, with a focus on ensuring optometrists can add maximal value to community eye health through full, and expanded, clinical scope, and increased implementation of effective collaborative care models.

Further, in our quest to ensure entry-level education reflects the evolving scope of the profession and evolving community needs, we worked to develop revised entry-level competency standards for the profession. We are most grateful for the many members and stakeholders who lent their expertise to supporting the development of the standards.

We also continue to progress several new initiatives designed to secure a preferred future for optometry, including ongoing development of a national optometry dataset and of a program of recognition for optometrists with specific areas of advanced practice, allowing them to differentiate themselves and receive appropriate recognition for excellence in primary eye care.

Engagement with our members is of utmost importance to us. We work diligently to provide education and communications that are highly relevant and timely. Our efforts to enhance member communications this year have yielded strong results. We have focused on improving the quality and reducing the frequency of our direct emails to members, resulting in higher open rates across all our newsletters. And of course, we are pleased that the high level of member engagement via our diverse CPD offerings continues, including record registration to our annual online conference, *Optometry Virtually Connected*. We were also pleased to support more members to access comprehensive cultural responsiveness training, designed to support allied health practitioners.

Promoting the value of optometry to the wider community remains a core focus for us. The *Good vision for life* campaign has continued to gain traction, generating record publicity this year off the back of the 2022 Vision Index. This consumer-focused initiative continues to raise awareness about the importance of regular eye care and the role of optometrists in maintaining good vision.

Our strategic pillar focused on the organisation's enduring success is about future proofing the organisation, developing high performing teams, optimising structure and reforming as required, and using data and evidence to monitor conditions and continually improve organisational practices.

This year we relinquished our physical office in South Melbourne, Victoria, resulting in significant cost savings. The team operates virtually for the most part, while also incorporating focused, all-staff get togethers on a regular basis to mutually harness the respective benefits of remote and face-to-face work, underpinned by flexibility.

We have an exceptional team, and our staff engagement remains strong. I am pleased to report that Optometry Australia performed well above industry averages in engagement, wellbeing and progress, in our annual organisational culture survey. Notably, we scored particularly well in the areas of health and safety, values and involvement.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Optometry Australia team for their passion and commitment, and to our members for their continued support and trust. It is through our collective efforts that we can drive positive change and continue to shape a positive future for optometry.



Skye Cappuccio
CEO

TREASURER'S REPORT



I am pleased to report that Optometry Australia's audited financial statements for the financial year ending 30 June 2023 highlight that Optometry Australia is in a sound financial position, with a healthy cashflow and strong balance sheet.

The financial year 2022/2023 coincided with the second period of the Shared Strategic Plan 2021-2024. The plan has key goals to drive the maximisation of expenditure on direct member services and support.

Astute management and focus on raising revenue from alternative sources, allowed Optometry Australia to enhance services to members considerably.

Despite the current economic climate, Optometry Australia created exceptional member value. A small loss was reported in the profit and loss. This small loss was due to returns on the portfolios coming in below expectation.

Optometry Australia holds two portfolios, managed by First Financial, one of which returned 10.86% and the other 7.87%, net of fees, compared to the relevant Morningstar Category average return of 12.50% and 9.27% respectively.

The organisation made a small loss against a forecast break-even budget position for FY2022/2023. This loss particularly relates to performance of investments which, whilst positive, was slightly below expectation. The other notable deviation from budget was royalty payments above budget.

Operating results

In our 2023-member survey, most members cited the following services as being 'very valuable' to them:

- professional indemnity insurance;
- online CPD, including webcasts and online conferences;
- professional advice;
- advocacy and representation to government, and
- face to face CPD.

Members were also asked to rank what roles they felt it most important that Optometry Australia perform. The top 5 roles of most importance to members were:

- advocating on behalf of the profession;
- leading the profession to a robust and sustainable future;
- supporting individual members with professional issues; and
- providing CPD.

The non-member revenue has predominantly come from the active pursuit of advertisers, sponsors, and financial partnerships, with the aim of improving the services from which the membership benefits, without them being subjected to further financial impost.

Overall expenses for the year were contained to budget which has been achieved by ongoing consideration and review of expenditure associated with all initiatives before they are instigated.



TREASURER'S REPORT



Statement of financial position

This statement reflects the financial position of Optometry Australia. For FY2022/2023, there was an increase in total equity for the year of 3%. This figure is reflective of the increase in the value of the organisation's investment portfolios and decrease in liabilities.

The asset allocation policy establishes the investment parameters for the organisation's investment portfolio managed in cooperation with First Financial. The organisation maintains a balanced portfolio, allocating up to 25% to defensive assets and the remainder in equities and managed investment funds. This diversification provides a risk-based approach to the portfolio while still allowing opportunity for the realisation of increased investment returns. Over the investment cycle these returns have historically been higher than they would have been had funds been invested in standard bank accounts or term deposits.

Optometry Australia maintains a set level of reserve funds that ensures sustainability and surety for the future.

The organisation's operational cash holdings, excluding cash held within our investment portfolios, are down 14% from last year. Notably, cash not required for operational purposes is reinvested into our investment portfolios. The decrease in the cash position is due to the small loss incurred and the reinvestment of portfolio income back into the financial assets.

Financial management and the future

As noted above, Optometry Australia has a significant portion of its assets in shares and managed funds. This position is monitored closely at each Optometry Australia Board meeting and by the board's Finance, Risk and Audit Committee.

During the FY2022/2023 the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee was comprised of the Treasurer, President, Vice-President and two board directors. The principal representative of Optometry Australia's portfolio manager, First Financial, was an advisor to the Finance Committee as were the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Financial Officer.

As a member-based organisation, the Optometry Australia board is acutely aware of the need to provide services and to support directly to grassroots members, on behalf of and in conjunction with state divisions, while remaining within our financial means.

The year ahead

During the year ahead, FY2023/2024, Optometry Australia will:

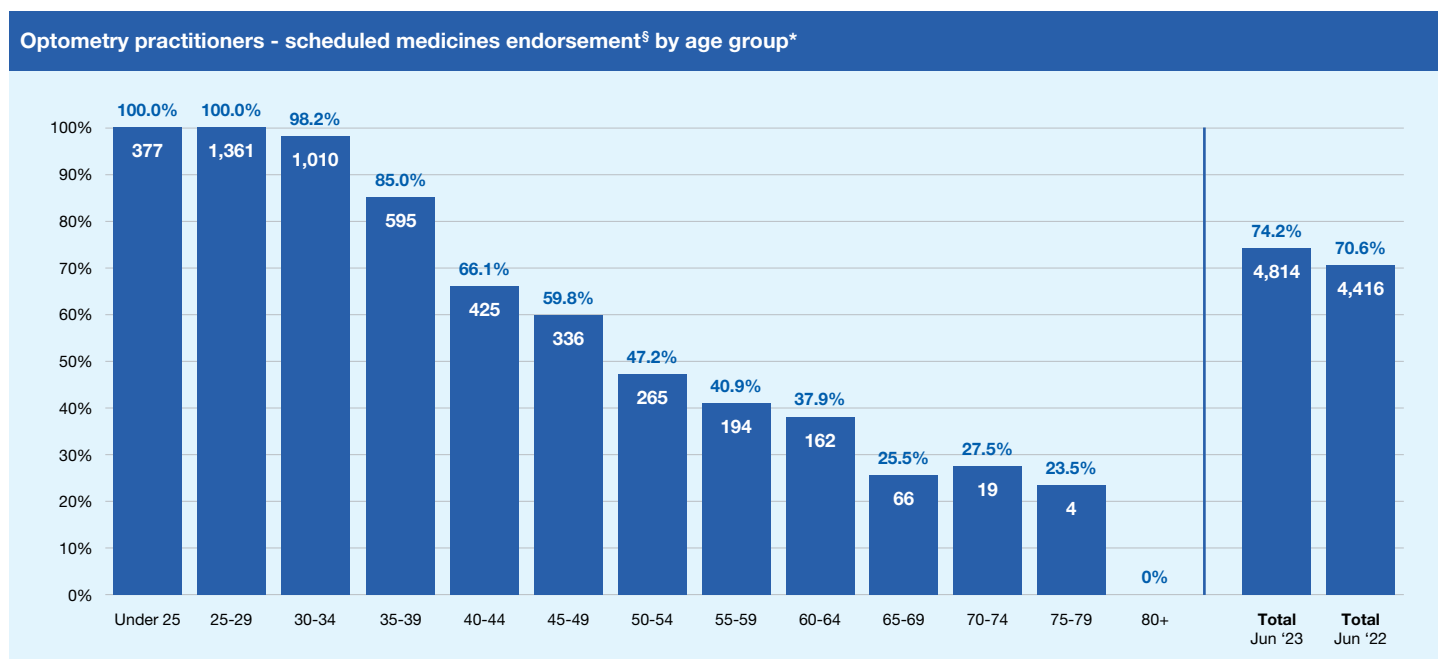
- Continue to provide a comprehensive program of online CPD for members and enhance the Learning Plan to support improved interaction for members;
- Continue to provide members with ready access to one-on-one professional support and guidance;
- Advocate for the ongoing evolution of optometric scope of practice and the better alignment of MBS items to contemporary practice;
- Continue to focus on the national data project to establish the foundations of an Optometry Australia-owned national optometry data set;
- Continue the delivery of the awareness campaign, Good vision for life, seeking to enhance its impact through industry partnerships;
- Provide comprehensive professional indemnity insurance for member;
- Ensure members are connected and updated with key information for their profession through electronic newsletters, social media platforms and websites;
- Deliver our flagship publication Optometry Connection and world-class journal, Clinical & Experimental Optometry;
- Deliver initiatives to develop leadership capability throughout the professions, such as the Student Leadership Program, early career optometrists' Think Tank, LOOK international travel scholarship program;
- Continue to offer human resources legal support for all members;
- Pilot a program for recognition of advance practice in optometry; and
- Ensure we grasp the opportunities identified in the Optometry 2040 transformational strategy for optometry.

Albert Lee
Treasurer

YOUR SECTOR IN NUMBERS

During the year under review 10,938,784 Medicare rebatable optometry services were delivered by 6,503 practising optometrists. Rebatable services increased by 1,004,505 or 10.1% compared to the previous financial year. Medicare benefits paid totaled \$545.2m, up 12.0%.

		Principal place of practice									
Optometry practitioner*		ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP†	Total
Registration type Registration sub-type											
General		118	2,089	35	1,322	441	121	1,781	516	61	6,484
Limited	Postgraduate training or supervised practice		3		2		1	4	5	4	19
Non-practising		3	60		39	8	2	59	10	78	259
Total		121	1,252	35	1,363	449	124	1,844	531	143	6,762
Endorsement											
Scheduled Medicines§		91	1,367	30	966	364	102	1,510	360	24	4,814
% of general registrants who are endorsed		77.1	65.4	85.7	73.1	82.5	84.3	84.8	69.8	39.3	74.2
Gender split											
% Female		63.6	59.2	65.7	57.4	60.8	56.5	60.1	49.9	61.5	58.6
% Male		36.4	40.8	34.3	42.6	39.2	43.5	39.9	50.1	38.5	41.4
% Not stated or Intersex or Indeterminate								<0.1			<0.1



* Source: Ahpra, June 2023 data

† NPPP – No principal place of practice

§ Only optometrists holding general registration are eligible to hold the scheduled medicines endorsement

YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

LEAD

We will lead members and the profession through market and sector evolution and change to achieve the preferred future identified in Optometry 2040.

1. Ensure all optometrists are able to work to their full and evolving scope and that they are recognised for their expert skills within that scope.
2. Ensure members have access to evidence-based advice on immediate 'best practice' and emerging 'next practice' optometry.
3. Embrace a culture of innovation that leads both optometry and the health sector and that supports the development, testing and scaling of new business and operating models so that the profession can realise its preferred future.
4. Support the profession in our region and actively participate in the international sector for the betterment of the Australian profession.
5. Support timely access to culturally safe care across the country, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
6. Explore and develop initiatives as appropriate on emerging evidence on the impact of climate change specifically on eye health.

ENGAGE

We will efficiently and effectively deliver an essential suite of member services that are tailored to meet the specific needs of specific groups within the membership.

1. Reshape our membership model so that it aligns to reflect optometrists at different stages of their careers and professional journey.
2. Be the pre-eminent provider of quality continuing professional development.
3. Implement a coordinated continuing professional development strategy that embraces and reflects the needs of members irrelevant of where they live within Australia.
4. Develop and deliver flexible and responsive service offerings that can be tested, scaled, re-invented and retired based on changing conditions.

PROMOTE

We will ensure that Optometry Australia is the 'go to' organisation in eye health and that optometrists are the first port of call for eyes.

1. Increase public awareness, knowledge and understanding of the role of optometry in eye health in Australia and, through this, generate more optometry appointments.
2. Embed optometry as an integral profession in the broad health and medical sector.
3. Shape coordinated and concerted national and state advocacy and lobbying efforts as practicable and required to realise our evolving scope of practice efforts.

ENDURING ORGANISATION

We will collaborate, work effectively, share resources and capabilities to ensure consistency of services for all members through efficient and effective models that uplift the profession.

1. Identify, cultivate, and support current and future association leadership through the development of high performing teams.
2. Future-proof the organisation by sourcing innovative new revenue streams, identifying funds that can be reinvested for the benefit of members.
3. Optimise structure and reform the federation as required, to ensure capability to deliver on this plan.
4. Use continual data, evidence and conditions monitoring to improve organisational practices.
5. Introduce initiatives and programs to reduce our environmental footprint.

LEAD

In the pursuit of leading our members and the profession through evolving market and sector changes, Optometry Australia has diligently worked to achieve the goals set forth in Optometry 2040, by:

1. Evolving scope and building recognition

Optometry Australia continued to advocate for Australia's highly skilled optometry workforce to be utilised at their maximum scope across the health system, and for the profession's scope of practice to evolve to meet community need.

2. Building a clinical evidence base

Providing our members with access to evidence-based advice on 'best practice' and emerging 'next practice' optometry remains a priority. In a rapidly evolving field, staying at the forefront of optometric care is essential.

3. Embracing a culture of innovation

At the heart of our leadership is a culture of innovation. We strived to lead not only in optometry but also in the broader healthcare sector. This approach supports the development, testing and scaling of new business operating models, driving us closer to our preferred future.

4. Supporting our profession at home and abroad

Optometry Australia's commitment to bolstering our profession extends not only within our region but also much further afield. Collaborating with our regional and global counterparts this year strengthened our position.

5. Supporting culturally safe care

Our commitment extends to ensuring timely access to culturally safe care across the nation, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

6. Exploring the impact of climate change on eye health

We recognise the emerging evidence regarding the impact of climate change on eye health. We continued to explore and develop initiatives to address this growing concern.

Summary of Lead Achievements

- Delivered a series of interactive workshops on oral therapeutics attracting over 700 members.
- Hosted a collaborative care symposium in Sydney in May 2023 with optometrists working in collaborative care arrangements sharing their knowledge and identifying parallel challenges or barriers to progress that Optometry Australia could contribute to alleviating. The objective was to foster information sharing, and to support and develop collaborative care 'champions'.
- Participated in the Medicare Benefits Schedule Optometry Implementation Liaison Group (MBS OILG) advocating for recommendations to help contemporise the Medicare Benefits Schedule.
- Delivered a series of key recommendations to introduce a system for recognising and supporting optometrists to obtain recognition in specialised areas of advanced practice, providing practitioners with the opportunity to differentiate themselves and receive appropriate recognition for excellence in primary eye care. This system of recognition is enabling career progression opportunities by mitigating observed attrition often related to career trajectory limitations following graduation, facilitating prospects for new funding or the potential to modify existing ones, and ensuring promotion of interprofessional and intraprofessional referrals.
- Three LOOK scholarships were awarded as part of our international program, with members undertaking trips in June 2023 to participate in an intravitreal injection training course run by Moorfields Eye Hospital; to understand ways in which optometrist and practice involvement in clinical trials can be increased; and to explore collaborative models of glaucoma care and management. We will continue to offer this valuable scholarship to members in 2024.
- To ensure entry-level education reflects the evolving scope of the profession and continues to meet community needs, we worked in consultation with member and stakeholder advisers to develop revised Entry-level Competency Standards for Optometry, which were released in February 2023.
- We published an evidence-based 'Guide to OCT interpretation for macula disease and glaucoma' in partnership with Centre for Eye Health, with work underway on the development of a clinical practice guide for pre-and post-operative care of cataracts, as well as a clinical practice guide for the quality use of medicines, supported by advisory groups of members skilled in these spaces.
- Roundtable discussions were held with the Australia/NZ Childhood myopia working group to elevate the standard of paediatric eyecare to include not only myopia control but to more accurately assess *pre*-myopia in an attempt to prevent any child born from today onwards from developing high myopia.

LEAD

- Actively worked to leverage the potential opportunities presented by funding announced in the 2023-24 Federal Budget to enhance the usability of the My Health Record. This includes collaborating with software providers to understand the technical updates required and engaging with AHPA to align advocacy positions and proposals for this endeavour.
- Launched our commitment to building a National Dataset for optometry, with specific governance advisory committee established.
- Continued the implementation of our Community of Practice and Education (COPE) groups, in rural health and glaucoma, facilitating interprofessional learning through sharing of cases and new research, and supporting practitioners operating in unique areas of practice which have specific challenges. COPE groups provide mentorship, support, networking, education and overall, support practitioners to increase their confidence.
- Secured the right for optometrists to be among those who can train to be accredited Diabetes Educators.
- Our commitment to international collaboration remains steadfast, and we've continued our valuable partnerships related to our clinical journal, *Clinical and Experimental Optometry* (CXO), emphasising our dedication to the exchange of knowledge and insights. We've engaged in ongoing information exchange with Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board and New Zealand Association of Optometrists (NZAO), fostering collaborative efforts and identifying areas of alignment and opportunity to support and strengthen our profession.
- We have renewed our contract with NZAO, furthering our commitment to the New Zealand optometry community by providing extended paid CPD offerings to NZAO members. This comprehensive offering includes CXO, *Optometry Connection*, webcasts, and a partnership to deliver our online conference, *Optometry Virtually Connected*, enhancing professional development opportunities.
- As part of our international outreach, we extended support to Brien Holden Vision Institute in their hosting of a delegation of Chinese optometrists. This support included a presentation on paediatric care, sharing expertise and knowledge with our international peers. We also renewed our partnership to provide CXO to HKSPPO members, ensuring access to valuable resources for optometrists in Hong Kong.
- Initiated a content sharing arrangement with the UK Association of Optometrists. In exchange for providing them with *Optometry Connection*, we gain access to their online publication, *Optometry Today*, enhancing our access to global insights and knowledge.
- Extended complimentary access to comprehensive online cultural safety training delivered by Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), enabling all members to participate in this important training, a requirement of the updated Ahpra Code of Conduct. The training was offered via the Institute of Excellence until June 30, 2023. To maximise member participation, we enhanced promotion through various communication channels, including sector publications *Insight* and *Mivision*. We are also exploring opportunities to further promote cultural safety within the profession.
- Our first Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was launched in November 2023, incorporating bespoke artwork developed by Aboriginal-owned design firm Bayila. Work towards delivering on the commitments set out within the plan is underway.
- Facilitated a Special Interest Group for our members, providing a platform for discussions and sharing of developments and initiatives related to climate action in optometry.
- To better understand and mitigate the environmental impact of optometry practices, we engaged Edge Consulting to conduct climate impact assessments on archetypes of typical optometry practices, aiming to identify the most impactful opportunities for our profession in reducing carbon footprints. Once assessment results were received, we held a workshop with sector leaders to explore Optometry Australia's potential role in addressing climate change, and our continued collaboration with Edge Consultants led to the development of a Sustainability Roadmap for optometry, finalised in February 2023.
- Held meetings with the UNSW chemical engineering department and new entrants to the recycling industry to explore new initiatives related to contact lens blister pack and frame end of life recycling, aligning with our commitment to sustainability.



ENGAGE

As part of our 'Engage' strategic pillar, we showcase our dedication to efficiently and effectively delivering an essential suite of member services, specially designed to meet the unique needs of different groups within our membership by:

1. Reshaping our membership model

Optometry Australia works with state divisions to ensure the membership model reflects the distinct needs of optometrists at various stages of their careers and professional journeys.

2. Being the premier provider of quality CPD

We continued our commitment to providing top-notch continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities, and we are pleased to report significant accomplishments for the year under review.

3. Implementing a coordinated CPD strategy for all members

We remained committed to ensuring that our CPD strategy caters to the diverse needs of our members, regardless of their location within Australia.

4. Developing flexible and responsive service offerings

Developing and delivering flexible, responsive service offerings remained a key focus. Our ability to adapt, scale, reinvent and retire services based on changing conditions ensures that we remain nimble and aligned with member needs.

Summary of Engage Achievements

- Worked with the state divisions to take meaningful steps in reshaping our membership model to better align with optometrists at different stages of their careers and professional journeys. A new 'career break' membership category has now been implemented across the federated organisation. New communications have also been designed to connect and support members on career break.
- The third *Optometry Virtually Connected* (OVC) event held in June 2023 saw remarkable success, with 2,185 delegate registrations, including a record 144 delegates from New Zealand.
- Delivered a wide range of CPD resources, including 11 of our flagship webcasts, 16 interactive online workshops, and 8 educational podcast episodes, with impressive member participation throughout.
- Our Learning Plan has seen extensive use, with over 4,600 members utilising it in the last CPD year, with indications of increased usage in the current year. Version 2.0 of the Learning Plan is scheduled for release before the 2023/24 CPD year, adopting a data-driven, feedback-led approach to continuous improvement.
- Produced five issues of *Optometry Connection*, each tailored to meet the evolving needs of our members.
- To enhance member preparedness in an increasingly hostile online environment, we introduced unique CPD offerings aimed at addressing cyber resilience and privacy concerns and provided updated template practice privacy policies.
- In partnership with AVANT, we've developed eight new risk management modules to enhance member understanding and preparedness.
- Our main communication channel for CPD remains the fortnightly, *Your Education* eDM, with an exceptional open rate of around 60%. This channel is instrumental in keeping our members informed about upcoming CPD opportunities.
- Following our response to the challenge set forth by International Women's Day 2022 to #BreaktheBias, we launched a long-term campaign, Respect. Always! which proclaims that any form of bias, harassment or aggression will not be tolerated within optometry.
- Member resources have been delivered under the Respect. Always! campaign, including a suite of videos featuring our Optometry Advisors, addressing topics related to discrimination and harassment as well as workplace policies that members can tweak and adopt for their own practices.
- Received exceptional feedback for our Optometry Advisor Help Desk, with 92% of members rating the service as meeting their needs 'extremely well'.
- Refined our member communications channels, focusing on delivering fewer, and better emails. This refinement has seen an increase in member engagement, reflected by growth in average open rates of *Snapshot*, our primary e-newsletter, from 53% in July 2022 to 61% in July 2023, well above average Australian open rates across all industries of 21.5%.
- Introduced a fresh new Instagram presence to celebrate optometry, optometrists and eye health.
- Showcased mental health resources for members, including a free counselling service, via our support of The Push Up Challenge.
- Launched the first bi-annual CPD survey as part of a renewed evaluation plan and commitment to continuous improvement of our CPD offering.

PROMOTE

In our efforts to ensure that Optometry Australia is the 'go-to' organisation in eye health and that optometrists are the first port of call for eyes, we have delivered a range of initiatives this year through:

1. Enhancing public awareness and knowledge

Optometry Australia worked to increase public awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the role of optometry in eye health throughout Australia, ensuring that more Australians seek optometry appointments for their eye care needs.

2. Embedding optometry within the health and medical sector

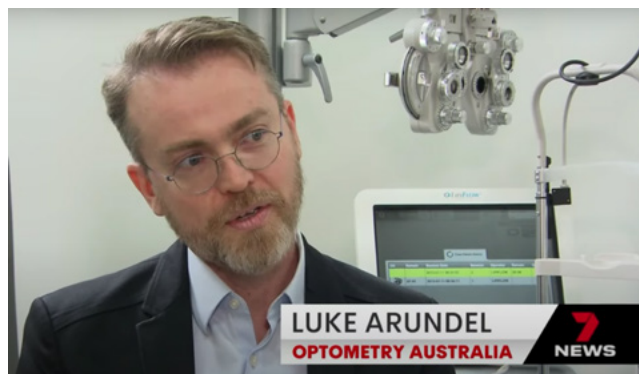
We worked relentlessly to embed optometry as an integral profession within the broader health and medical sector, making progress to ensure that optometrists are recognised as essential contributors to overall healthcare.

3. Shaping coordinated national and state advocacy efforts

Our strategic approach to advocacy and lobbying at both national and state levels has helped us to continue to realise the evolving scope of practice for optometrists, ensuring their contributions are valued and expanded.

Summary of Promote Achievements

- As part of our well-established consumer-focused *Good vision for life* campaign, we commissioned a second round of research to gain a broad understanding of Australians' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours around maintaining their eye health. In July 2022 the resulting 2022 Vision Index was released.
- The 2022 Vision Index achieved remarkable media coverage, with 455 editorial hits across online, print, and broadcast media for several months post the release of the research. An influencer campaign complemented these efforts, resulting in a combined reach of over 195 million people. This impressive reach was boosted by coverage in high-profile media outlets like *The Daily Mail* and *Weekend Sunrise*.
- Created and published 33 news stories on eye health on the *Good vision for life* website, which are promoted through the campaign's Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as emailed directly to our consumer database, reaching a combined following of around 7,000 people.
- Launched a fresh new Instagram profile on World Optometry Day, 2023.
- We have established a bank of members across Australia who can assist with consumer media inquiries, especially when state or regional-based spokespersons are needed. Several members have been profiled in this capacity during the year.
- Secured 111 media articles in sector media covering various topics, showcasing our activities, membership value, advocacy efforts and CPD. This represents the highest in-sector media coverage support achieved over the last four years.
- Continued our work in partnering with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA) to raise public awareness of myopia and the role of optometry in limiting myopia progression, and we also created video content, in partnership with the Australia/New Zealand Child Myopia Group, to promote myopia management by optometrists to parents.
- We are now providing the National Transport Commission regular articles on vision, driving, and the role of optometrists for its quarterly newsletter, reaching over 30,000 health professionals nationwide. This continuous engagement reinforces the importance of optometry in transport safety.



PROMOTE

- A key focus has been on promoting collaborative care between optometrists and ophthalmologists while further integrating optometry into public tertiary eye care pathways. Some state divisions have received support in advancing local efforts in this area. At the national level, we've been advocating for this cause and showcasing collaborative care models implemented nationwide.
- Continued to provide Continuing Professional Development (CPD) articles for pharmacists through our partnership with the Australian Pharmacy Journal.
- Regular engagements with colleagues and stakeholders in the allied health sector have ensured that optometry is at the forefront of discussions on reforms to the primary health care system. This includes meetings with the Chief Allied Health Officer and discussions with Allied Health Professionals Australia (AHPA) counterparts.
- After the change of government and a significant influx of new MPs in federal parliament, Optometry Australia delivered a post-election engagement campaign. This campaign was designed to establish and strengthen relationships with the new government and cultivate awareness of optometry among new MPs and Senators, emphasising alignment with our 'Working Together for Better Eye Care' policy positions.
- In the wake of the new Commonwealth government's budget release, we launched a member political engagement activation campaign. This initiative encouraged and supported members nationally to engage with their federal political representatives, emphasising the value of optometry and its skilled workforce.
- Continuous advocacy for the evolution of clinical scope, adoption of collaborative care models, the optimal utilisation of optometrists in healthcare pathways and Commonwealth and State investments to facilitate healthcare innovations.
- Actively lobbied the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to approve additional concentrations of unpreserved, non-compounded atropine for import into Australia, and successfully amended TGA restrictions on the prescribing of Eikance 0.01%
- Continuous advocacy for collaborative care models and the optimal utilisation of optometrists in healthcare pathways.



ENDURING ORGANISATION

Our commitment to collaborating, working effectively, sharing resources and capabilities to ensure our organisation and profession endure, has been demonstrated during the year via:

1. Cultivating leadership and high performing teams

At Optometry Australia, we understand the importance of identifying, cultivating, and supporting current and future association leadership while fostering the development of high-performing teams.

2. Innovative revenue stream initiatives

We have focused on maximising revenue from sponsorship, partnerships and advertising, to support the delivery of further member benefits.

3. Optimising structure and federation reform

We have worked with the state divisions to consider reforms to optimise our capabilities to serve members.

4. Focusing on data-driven excellence and continuous improvement

Our commitment to utilising continual data, evidence and conditions monitoring has led to improved organisational practices, ensuring that we adapt to changing conditions effectively.

5. Reducing our environmental footprint

We have introduced initiatives and programs to reduce our environmental footprint, demonstrating our dedication to sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.

Summary of Endure Achievements

- Our annual student leadership program took place as a fully online event with an innovative format that promoted engagement, networking, and self-reflection. The program provided opportunities for students to learn from established leaders in optometry, and it saw the successful completion of 22 students. The participants for the 2023 Optometry Australia Student Leadership Program were confirmed in this reporting period and the program launched successfully in July 2023.
- Engagement has begun with the 2023 Optometry Student Society Australia and New Zealand (OSSANZ) in planning for the annual National Optometry Student Conference.
- Hosted two online Think Tank sessions, gathering leaders of Early Career Optometrist (ECO) networks in collaboration with each state division. These sessions allowed for in-depth discussions on policy interests and the exchange of ideas regarding ECO network activities. A face-to-face ECO ThinkTank was also hosted in Sydney in March 2023.
- Established ECO knowledge sharing sessions for discussions on strategic vision, evolving scope advocacy, CPD and education, and member engagement and communications.
- The GOLD program, aimed at upskilling interested members in corporate governance practices, concluded in October 2022. A total of 23 participants (10 general members and 13 divisional directors) took part in the self-paced course.
- To uphold our commitments within our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), new staff members commenced the IAHA Cultural Responsiveness training. IAHA Cultural Responsiveness Training was also offered to all members.
- Initiated exploratory work aimed at diversifying revenue sources and engaged expert advisers in this area. A consultant conducted interviews with eight key informants to map potential opportunities and approaches for diversification and the outcomes from this effort are now informing both short- and longer-term planning.
- A successful all-staff meeting was organised at the OVSA offices in Carlton in June 2023. The event included knowledge-sharing and collaboration segments, providing insights into business structures, cultures and monetisation opportunities, with participation from OVSA and OT staff.
- The *Optometry Virtually Connected* event garnered substantial support from trade revenue. Many sponsors expressed eagerness to secure their participation for future events.
- The inclusion of the Dry Eye Guide within the September 2022 issue of *Optometry Connection* contributed significantly to the publication's revenue.
- In a positive move towards federation reform and optimising structure, the proposed move in the southern states to operationally integrate Optometry Victoria South Australia and Optometry Tasmania with Optometry Australia received the 'yes' vote from respective members, paving the way for integration to occur during 2023-24. This move will allow us to continue to enhance collaboration, ultimately benefiting our members.
- A comprehensive review of our workforce plan has led to multiple changes in our organisational chart, ensuring that we have the necessary capabilities to deliver on our strategic plan.

ENDURING ORGANISATION

- The marketing and communications team underwent a restructuring process in order to more efficiently meet member needs.
- Delivered successful service arrangements between OA and OV/SA, boding well for integration in November 2023.
- Introduced online booking system for our help desk, enabling members to schedule appointments with our optometrist advisors easily and seamlessly.
- Streamlined the data collected on each member interaction. This enhancement will provide more comprehensive information on each call or email from members, ultimately supporting better member assistance, resource production, and communication output.
- In our commitment to data security, we initiated a cybersecurity audit, where an external consultant assessed vulnerabilities and provided recommendations for improvement.
- We finalised a scoping report that assesses the impact of mental health and burnout on the optometry profession. The next step is to draft a sector commitment statement outlining key actions to address these issues.
- Annual staff engagement survey completed achieving above industry averages in all three areas: Engagement, Wellbeing and Progress.
- Closed national office in South Melbourne, making use of day passes in a shared office space, significantly reducing costs and our environmental footprint.
- We are in the process of transitioning our investment portfolios to an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) portfolio structure. This shift aligns our financial practices with environmentally conscious principles.



COMMITTEES FY2022/2023

The following is the current list of committees that Optometry Australia is a representative on as at 30 June 2023.

Committee	Purpose	Representation lead
Optometry Board of Australia's (OBA) Regulatory Reference Committee	Peak group of the sector providing views to Optometry Board of Australia	Skye Cappuccio
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency's (Ahpra) Professions Reference Group	Provides feedback, information and advice on strategies for building better knowledge from within the professions about health practitioner regulation, and advising Ahpra on issues affecting the professions	Skye Cappuccio
OCANZ, member	To appoint the OCANZ Board and other governance matters	Skye Cappuccio
Indigenous Eye Health Data Report Advisory Group	Advice to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare regarding development of a report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health	Skye Cappuccio
National Rural Health Alliance	Peak advisory and advocacy body for rural health matters	Sarah Davies
Vision 2020 Australia	Vision 2020 Australia represents the vision and eye care sector in Australia and draws together members to exchange views, share information and collaborates and develops policies, strategies and submissions to improve eye health and vision care for all Australians	Skye Cappuccio, Prevention and Early Intervention committee; Anthea Cochrane, member of Independence and Participation committee; Sarah Davies, member of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee. Optometry Australia representatives are also involved in a number of Vision 2020 Australia project and working groups.
Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA)	AHPA is the peak national organisation for allied health professions in Australia, representing and advocating for the role of allied health professionals in our health system	Skye Cappuccio

Government-appointed

Department of Veterans' Affairs Health Consultative Forum	Provides principal global advice on areas impacting on optometry and issues consistent with other primary and allied health sectors	Kerryn Hart
------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------

OPTOMETRY AUSTRALIA MEMBER-LED COMMITTEES & ADVISORY GROUPS FY2022/2023

The following lists members who participate in our current advisory and working groups.

Working group name	Members	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Working Group	Mitchell Anjou (Chair) Gary Cerie Sinead Denny Jose Estevez Matthew Gregory Jack Guan	Luke Higgins Lauren Hutchinson Nilmini John Josiah Murphy Sarah Nicholls Kate Pecar
Competency Standards Working Group	Skye Cappuccio James Armitage, Optometry school representative Prof Sharon Bentley, Optometry school representative	Jayesh Chouhan, ODOB Paula Katalinic, Optometry NSW/ACT Susan Kelly, OCANZ Helen Mees, Consumer Wilson Sue, NZAO Julie Wheeler, Consumer
Cataract CPG Working Group	Rebekah Hopps Vianh Huynh Can (John) Komser Konrad Pesudovs	Jason Tan Ruxi Wang Jacqueline Warren
Communities of Practice and Education (COPE) Glaucoma	Jason Holland – Co-chair Graham Lakkis – Co-chair Mark Fonseca Riki Gibson Damon Hannay Rebekah Hopps Tina Jong	Christopher Law Thi Thi Nguyen Bregan Soh Daniel Thompson Mary Travis Hiromi Yoshikawa
Communities of Practice and Education (COPE) – Rural	Alex Craig – Co-Chair Fiona Moore – Co-chair Kayla Adams Anthea Cochrane Michelle Ferguson Byron Klein	Candice Pearson Jessica Penna Rhiannon Richer Horst Reiss Clarissa Sheehan Maliha Shorab
Continuing Professional Development Advisory Group	Christina Ly (Chair) Alex Craig Anna Delamadoros Tina Huynh	Tina Jong Nicola Mountford Angie Trinh
Evolving Scope of Practice Advisory Group	Assoc Prof Nicola Anstice Monica Lette Lauren Ayton Mark De Paola Jane Duffy	Garry Fitzpatrick Jason Holland Dr Christopher Law Dr Amanda Sobbizadeh Robyn Weinberg

OPTOMETRY AUSTRALIA MEMBER-LED COMMITTEES & ADVISORY GROUPS FY2022/2023

Working group name	Members	
Glaucoma Clinical Practice Guide Working Group	Kerryn Hart (Chair) Ben Ashby Sandra Au Alan Burrow Cameron Dyson (Private Practitioner)	Cassandra Haines Graham Lakkis Leanne Nguyen Jack Phu Murray Smith
Standards Australia Working Group	Annette Hoskins David Stephensen Nicole Carnt	
Transport and Vision Standards Working Group	Amanda Douglass Tony Gibson Vanessa Honson Josiah Murphy	Neil Murray Sharon Oberstein Ho Wah Ng Joanne Wood



CONTACT US

Contact details

A: PO Box 1037, South Melbourne Victoria 3205

T: 03 9668 8500

E: national@optometry.org.au

Website: optometry.org.au

Consumer website: goodvisionforlife.com.au

Social media platforms

Facebook members: facebook.com/OptometryAustralia/

Facebook consumers: facebook.com/goodvisionforlife

Twitter: twitter.com/OptometryAus or [@OptometryAus](https://twitter.com/OptometryAus)

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/optometrists-association-australia/

Instagram: [@optometryaustralia](https://instagram.com/optometryaustralia)

Instagram: [@goodvisionforlife](https://instagram.com/goodvisionforlife)

Optometry Australia ABN: 17 004 622 431

