

Your membership at work



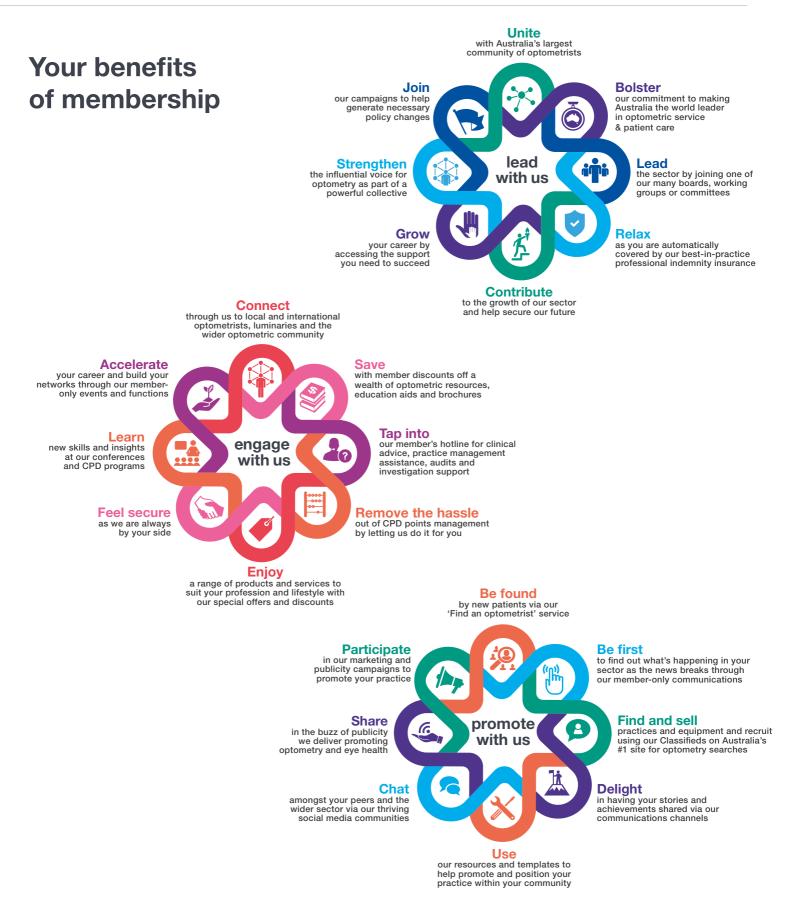




Who we are

As the profession's peak body, Optometry Australia represents the largest community of optometrists in Australia. Because we are 100 per cent owned by our members, no other organisation understands optometry like us or has a more influential voice. Since 1918 we have united the sector to make Australia a world leader in the delivery of vision and eye health services and patient care.





Your membership at work



lead Lead and influence

Lead and influence the optometry sector



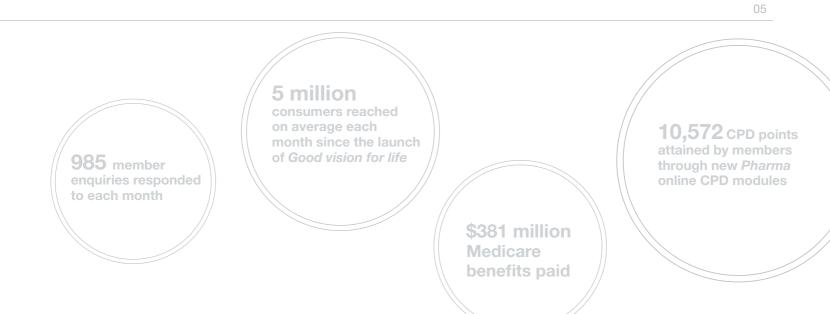
engage

Engage with optometrists, stakeholders and the wider optometry profession

- 8.47 million Medicare rebateble optometry services delivered
- \$381 million Medicare benefits paid
- Eight in every 10 registered optometrists elected to take out membership; plus membership offered free to all optometry students
- 58 members elected to our boards/ councils throughout Australia

- **57** members participated in committees and working groups
- 12 submissions made to regulatory bodies, standards committees and other government agencies
- Foreign body removal Medicare item introduced after eight years of advocacy through MSAC
- 4 new telehealth Medicare items introduced to improve rural and remote health care
- 260 member emails and phone calls responded to a month on a range of subjects
- 727 member emails and phone calls managed a month specifically on CPD
- **6,400** fans and followers engaged on four social media platforms
- 7 state conferences delivered
- 753 CPD courses accredited
- **10,572** CPD points attained by members through new *Pharma* online CPD modules
- New OPTAUS online CPD video education portal launched
- 43,684 educational aids, books and brochures dispatched
- **100** peer reviewed articles delivered in *Clinical and Experimental Optometry*
- **240,000** *Clinical and Experimental Optometry* **articles downloaded**
- 50 Pharma articles published highlighting clinical topics including contact lenses, dry eye, diabetes, age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma

- 513 articles featuring sector news and information delivered
- **529,000** news and features pages viewed online
- 8 print or online publications delivered
- Continuous the delivery of news and information via our online news portal
- 1st CASA credentialed optometrists' refresher course to up-skill optometrists who provide pilot examinations
- 34,470 average sessions on optometry.org.au each month by an average 14,580 users
- **4,925** *Find an optometrist* searches on average per month on optometry.org.au and goodvisionforlife.com.au
- Over 400 members assisted with regulatory body, Medicare and private health audits
- 1,081 classifieds uploaded





promote

Promote optometry, optometrists and community eye and vision health

- 1 new national consumer marketing campaign launched – Good vision for life – which delivered in the first two months:
 - o **29,800** page views on goodvisionforlife.com.au by 15,340 visitors
 - o **1,051** fans engaged in the campaign's new Facebook page
 - o **5 million** consumers reached on average each month
 - o **2.17 million** digital impressions delivered on average each month

- 1 GP referral campaign launched to increase understanding of the role of optometry among GPs
- 16 media releases dispatched
- **275** pieces of editorial delivered in print, online and broadcast channels
 - o 82% of articles focused on community eye health issues



endure

Build an enduring organisation

- 24 core benefits of membership defined
- **15** years of continuous partnership with Australia's largest medico-legal insurer Avant
- **24/7** Avant's in-house medico-legal advice line available to members with confidential support, also through national office
- \$0 excess members pay on an insurance claim and unlimited retroactivity for peace of mind
- 23 staff employed nationally to provide members with year-round support
- **5** days a week HR Assist available to members

Your strategic plan



promote

 Campaigns designed to raise awareness of the optometry sector, optometrists and community eye health

Strategy

Core measurable activities

Lead

By 2018 sustained effort by Optometry Australia and optometrists will position the profession to meet the growing eye health needs of the Australian community

• Lead membership through market and sector evolution change

- Facilitate greater access to optometry services by segments of the Australian community not accessing, or under-accessing, optometry services
- Develop, support and promote professional standards
- Facilitate members of the profession to work to their full scope within systems that acknowledge their role, to better meet community need

Engage

By 2018 optometrists are equipped and supported to meet the growing eye health needs of the Australian community

- Inspire collegiality in membership
- Deliver and promote an essential suite of member services delivered efficiently and effectively
- Demonstrate the importance of membership of Optometry Australia

Promote

By 2018 Optometry Australia will be the authoritative voice driving and facilitating the improvement of community eye health and vision care

- Position Optometry Australia as a recognised authority in relation to eye health
- Increase public awareness, knowledge and understanding of the role of optometry in eye health in Australia
- Influence the wider eye care and health care sectors to support and promote the role of optometry

Enduring organisation

By 2018 Optometry Australia is a nation-wide team working cohesively to support the delivery of better eye health and vision outcomes for the Australian community

- Drive performance and efficiencies, and reduce duplication
- · Listen, collaborate and speak as a united voice

Your CEO leadership team

Your CEO leadership team works with members across Australia, providing exceptional membership value through the delivery of services, support and guidance. This team has been instrumental in driving the federated organisation's achievements in 2015-2016 and is supported by a group of committed, experienced and enthusiastic staff.



Genevieve Quilty CEO Optometry Australia



Andrew McKinnon CEO Optometry New South Wales Australian Capital Territory



Cathryn Baker CEO Optometry Queensland Northern Territory



Libby Boschen CEO Optometry South Australia



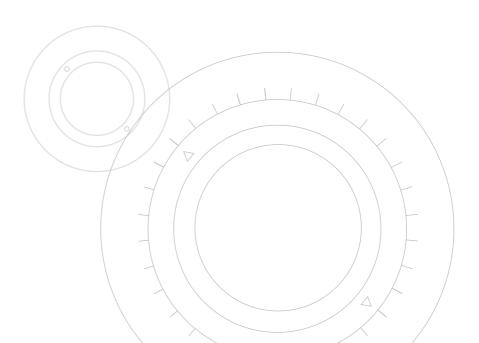
Geoff Squibb CEO Optometry Tasmania



Pete Haydon CEO Optometry Victoria



Tony Martella CEO Optometry Western Australia



Your board and board reports

Optometry Australia board members



Kate Gifford President



Steve Zantos Director, New South Wales



Jason Holland Director, Queensland



Gavin O'Callaghan Treasurer and Director, South Australia



Andrew Hogan Director, Tasmania



Associate Professor Allison McKendrick Director, Victoria



Darrell Baker Deputy Chair and Director, Western Australia





President's Report

With our new strategic plan entering into its second year, FY2015-2016 was a busy one as our federated organisation worked collaboratively to deliver common goals around leadership, engagement and promotion of optometrists, optometry and community eye health.

Lead

Optometry Australia's core role is to lead the profession to ensure optometrists are well positioned to meet the growing primary eye health and vision care needs of the Australian community. We do this in a variety of ways through advocacy, submissions and collaboration within the Australian health care sector.

While we had significant wins during the year with five new Medicare items introduced - one of which was the first procedural item - our patients continued to suffer as cuts to Medicare rebates, which commenced on 1 January 2015, took effect. Combined with the expanded rebate freeze until 2020, FY2015-2016 proved to be challenging for our profession's patients along with optometrists bulk billing clinical services. Although the ability to privately charge patients was permissible from 1 January 2015, competition in the sector saw the bulk billing rates decrease only marginally from our historic rate of 97 per cent which has put more financial pressure on optometrists.

In response, Optometry Australia launched a national *Eye Care for All* campaign designed to engage with and motivate action among patients and politicians to raise awareness of the impact of the ongoing government funding reductions. This multi-layered campaign culminated in dozens of important meetings with federal politicians in October 2015 and the tabling of the third largest paper petition in Australia, designed to seek a reversal of the five per cent patient rebate cut and the reinstatement of Medicare indexation. We will continue to put emphasis on resolving these issues.

To support optometrists through these changes, we created a range of valuable practice economic tools including private billing and patient fee calculators.

During the year we made 12 submissions to regulatory bodies, standards committees and other government agencies over a wide variety of topics, and Optometry Australia participated on sector committees with Vision 2020, the ACCC, AHPRA, OBCC and DVA.

Engage

We are particularly proud of the wide variety of carefully curated services and programs that we offer to optometrist members and this year was no different.

To assist practice and registration requirements, high quality and comprehensive PII is automatically provided to all optometrist members through Avant, our insurer of 15 years. Around-the-clock confidential advice from Avant Legal supports this service which, combined with personalised advice from our Professional Services team, offers members peace of mind.

Ensuring the profession meets its CPD requirement, our accreditation business unit Eye on CPD accredited over 750 courses and collated points for all members, fulfilling a vital role in assisting them to demonstrate their ongoing learning development for AHPRA registration purposes.

Our communications platforms continued to perform impressively with strong progress towards our conversion to a digital news powerhouse. We can now distribute news quickly to members via our website, blog and app, and by social media on Twitter, Facebook and Linkedln. Our publications *Equipment, Pharma* and *Clinical and Experimental Optometry* enable us to delve deeper into their specific subject matter and they remain strongly regarded for their clinical value.

I was delighted to deliver a number of presentations during the year at major CPD conferences delivered by the state organisations, as was our Professional Services team. In addition to the numerous emails and phone calls we receive and respond to, these conferences provide me, fellow board members, CEOs and staff with the opportunity to engage with, and receive feedback from individual optometrists and key stakeholders.

Promote

The board spent considerable time evaluating the merits of supporting a community eye health and vision care awareness campaign. We felt that the decision to launch the *Good vision for life* campaign was an astute use of member funds as this investment would help to promote our profession to millions of Australians. We are heartened by the early results of this campaign which launched in September 2016, and which reached over five million Australians across print, radio, television and digital media in its first month.

We also launched a GP referral campaign aimed at increasing understanding of the role of optometry among GPs, and how optometrists can work closely with GPs to give a complete picture of their patients' eyes. We are also pleased with the early results of this campaign.

Our other major promotional platform – media profiling – delivered extensive, quality publicity on a range of health topics within Australia-wide media channels. This publicity is generated through our own media releases and increasingly, through journalists approaching Optometry Australia for comment.

Enduring organisation

All the work we do at Optometry Australia would not be possible without the expert advice and work of member volunteers and staff who service the optometry profession at a national and state level.

Throughout the year CEOs of each of our member bodies – the state organisations – met formally three times to discuss an enormous variety of matters. Their contribution and that of our National Chief Executive Officer, Genevieve Quilty, cannot be overestimated and I wish to thank them for the work that they undertake on behalf of our profession. The CEOs are supported by dedicated and enthusiastic staff members whose output benefits all optometrists across the country. I would also like to thank my 58 colleagues who lead our profession as members of our national and state boards, as well as nearly another 60 who volunteer on numerous committees and working groups charged with improving community eye health.

In addition, our peak publications – *Pharma* and *Clinical and Experimental Optometry* – would not exist without the volunteer contribution of expert editors and chairpersons.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Optometry Australia board directors for their hard work during the year. Each director has influenced the optometry sector through the guidance and delivery of Optometry Australia's strategic plan. We met seven times during the year and supported each other throughout with countless communications which helped to evolve our decision-making for the benefit of our profession.

On behalf of the board I wish to express our gratitude and thanks to Associate Professor Allison McKendrick, who now retires from the national board after six years of service.

After a similar six years, and two as National President, I will also retire from the Optometry Australia board at the 2016 AGM. I am enormously proud of the goals achieved and grateful to the people I have worked with, and I look forward to seeing our profession continue to evolve through the challenges and opportunities ahead, with a strong Optometry Australia leading, engaging and promoting along the way. I wish all the best to the incoming President, Andrew Hogan, the national board, state organisations and all of the outstanding staff across our federation in building on our successes into the future.

Thilled

Kate Gifford President Optometry Australia



Treasurer's Report

Optometry Australia was highly productive in a challenging financial year, with a profit reported in the profit and loss. The portfolio, managed by First Financial, returned 3.09 per cent net of fees, outperforming the ASX200 return of -4.14 per cent. A term deposit managed by Optometry Australia forming part of the investment portfolio, returned 2.05 per cent for the year, so the total portfolio returned 2.7 per cent for the year. Operating results were positive and through stringent management of operational expenses Optometry Australia exceeded budgeted expectations.

The organisation's forecast negative budget position for FY2015-2016 was not fully realised. This positive result to budget was due to a combination of tight budget constraints; and sensible financial management and monitoring through monthly reporting to the organisation's finance committee, audit and risk committee and the national board.

Operating results

With membership fees contributed from state organisations' members accounting for 86 per cent of Optometry Australia's income, efforts continued to secure revenue from other sources, including financial support of our programs and activities, such as advertising on our website, our publications and continued support of Member Advantage partners.

Despite active pursuit of advertisers and potential financial partners this year, our organisation was not able to secure significant additional external revenue from advertisers and sponsors. This situation reflects the market we are operating in where marketing from our key stakeholders is plateauing or reducing or being utilised in other markets such as state organisation conferences. We continue to pursue external income with the aim of maintaining and improving the services from which members benefit.

Overall expenses for the year were contained at 8.38 per cent below budget. Examples of cost containment include the organisation's meeting and travel expenses. This has been achieved by implementing tight controls over the amount of travel and also ensuring that the most economical fare and accommodation option is chosen, along with an increase in the use of video and telephone conferencing. Consultancy fees were donated back to Optometry Australia in some instances saving further funds for member-based projects.

Total expenditure on salaries was 8.4 per cent lower than budget due to the over provision of annual leave. The organisation's budget also contributed \$309,181 to assisting our smaller state organisations in South Australia and Tasmania deliver services to members in line with the organisation's state support funding policy.

Both the purchase of professional indemnity insurance and financial assistance for our smaller state organisations represent substantial outlays; however, both demonstrate the significant support and empowerment of the profession.

Statement of financial position

This statement reflects the financial position of the organisation. For FY2015-2016, there was an increase in total equity for the year of 8.6 per cent. This figure reflects of the increase in the organisation's investment portfolio value combined with the operating profit generated.

The asset allocation policy, modified by the national board in May 2012, establishes the investment parameters for the organisation's investment portfolio as managed by First Financial. The organisation maintains a balanced portfolio, allocating 27 per cent 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 investing these funds in standard bank accounts or term deposits.

The organisation's cash holdings are up 8.0 per cent from last year. The increase in this cash position is as a result of careful spending coupled with investing surplus funds in high yielding cash investments.

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 national board meeting and by the board's finance committee.

We supplement this advice with regular reports from an independent business adviser who supports the organisation's assessment of the investment portfolio's performance. The finance committee comprises the Treasurer, President of the board, Vice-President of the board, the National Chief Executive Officer and National Chief Operating Officer, as well as an external independent business adviser, Terry Wakefield.

As a member-based organisation, the national board is acutely aware of the need to support the state organisations so they can provide the services members require to meet the growing primary eye health and vision care needs of patients while remaining within our financial means. We continue to manage our finances conservatively and, although the new financial year will see further investment in member services and in particular in our new awareness campaign, *Good vision for life*, and the board has forecast a deficit budget for the FY2016-2017 financial year, our overall financial position is forecast to remain positive.

During the year ahead - FY2016-2017, the organisation will be:

- delivering on the awareness campaign, Good vision for life
- delivering key member engagement services and benefits, including professional indemnity insurance
- continuing to identify additional external revenue sources
- embarking on the second year of a new strategic plan to take the organisation to 2018
- relocating to new offices that will better suit the organisation.

At the same time, we will continue to enhance our national operations with a new member database system, as well as enhancing member services with more dynamic CPD monitoring and a new website presence.

Gavin O'Callaghan National Treasurer Optometry Australia



Genevieve Quilty CEO Optometry Australia

Executive Support team



Maria Wallis Executive Assistant

CEO's Report

It was a pleasure to lead the Optometry Australia team during FY2015-2016 as the national Chief Executive Officer. Working with the national board, our team of 15 FTE staff commenced delivering the first year of our three year strategic plan. This plan is strongly backed by a new name and brand identity, providing Optometry Australia with the firm mission to lead, engage and promote optometrists, optometry and community eye health.

For the first time, all states adopted a shared strategic plan ensuring that work across our seven organisations was guided by consistent core strategic objectives aimed at meeting growing community eye health needs as well as strengthening and positioning our profession to undertake this key work with patients at our centre.

Change, they say, is the new norm and certainly that was the hallmark for Optometry Australia during the year under review.

As well as embedding our new brand framework, we continued to enhance our member communications with an emphasis on strengthening our digital channels following the decision to cease printing *Australian Optometry*. Funds previously set aside for the print and mailing of this publication have now been diverted to other activities. Importantly, our digital footprint allows us to accurately measure channel interaction which then enables us to continually adjust news delivery techniques in line with member feedback. As a result, we are constantly tweaking our website, blog, eNews, app and social media platforms to make them more engaging.

This year we confirmed our 15 year partnership with Avant for professional indemnity insurance providing members with a strong and reliable insurance cover with a partner that understands optometry. We supplemented this cover with confidential advice from our Professional Services staff and 24 hour/7 days a week legal advice from Avant Legal to provide unparalleled benefits for all members.

We represent the largest community of optometrists in Australia.'

Following a competitive process, we were awarded during FY2015-2016 the ability to accredit all optometric CPD for three years. To meet our goals, we established Eye on CPD which not only delivers these services but has the added responsibility of collating member CPD points.

We were disappointed that our robust efforts did not stymie cuts to the Medicare schedule for optometry patients from January 2015, and even more frustrated that this is coupled with a five per cent cut and freeze of patient rebates until 2020 as well as a reduction in government funded comprehensive eye health and vision care for patients younger than 65 years. Our efforts combined proactive lobbying, the tabling of a major consumer petition to the government, and engagement with politicians at every level of Australian government through our Eve Care for All campaign. While all other major political parties supported a reversal to the indexation freeze, the winning Coalition party was mute on this issue.

On a positive note, we welcomed access to an annual eye health examination for those over 65 plus the introduction of five new Medicare items, including our first procedural item recognising the work our profession undertakes to remove ocular foreign bodies. Both items were secured by proactive work by Optometry Australia and four telehealth items, through an active collaboration with RANZCO Fellow, Dr Angus Taylor.

Lastly, responding to a core request from members highlighted in the 2014 member survey, Optometry Australia commenced significant planning for a large consumer oriented awareness campaign, badged *Good vision for life*. Funded by members, extensive campaign planning in FY2015-2016 placed us in a strong position to launch in the first quarter FY2016-2107.

Our work would not be possible without the support of our six state division members, and in turn the support of optometrists all over Australia. We represent the largest community of optometrists in Australia with eight in 10 registered optometrists being a member of our federated organisation. This unity and support provides Optometry Australia with a strong voice to government and within the eye care sector. It also provides us with the essential funds to deliver a wide variety of programs and services designed to benefit and support members.

I wish to thank the staff of Optometry Australia for their diligence during the year and the support that they have not only provided to me, and our national board, but to all our state organisations. It is a pleasure to work in such a collaborative network.

Enjoy our annual report. We look forward to working with the profession in the coming years.

genniere Quilt

Genevieve Quilty CEO Optometry Australia

Your sector

During the year under review, 8.47 million Medicare rebatable optometry services were delivered by 5,130 optometrists. Medicare benefits paid totalled \$381 million.



Optometry practitioner *		Principal place of practice											
Registration type	Registration sub type	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP**	Total		
General		73	1,700	29	1,012	277	83	1,280	406	106	4,966		
Limited	Postgraduate training or supervised practice				1						1		
	Teaching or research		3								3		
Non-practising		1	41	1	14	2	1	34	10	56	160		
Total		74	1,744	30	1,027	279	84	1,314	416	162	5,130		

Optometry practitioner *	Principal place of practice										
Endorsement type	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP**	Total	
Scheduled medicines	32	590	19	466	156	59	835	188	25	2,370	
% of general registrants who are endorsed	44%	35%	66%	46%	56%	71%	65%	46%	24%	48%	

Optometry practitioners*	Age group	U – 25	25 – 29	30 – 34	35 – 39	40 - 44	45 – 49	50 – 54	55 – 59	60 – 64	65 – 69	70 – 74	75 – 79	80+	Total
Practitioners who hold scheduled medicines endorsement***	General registration	216	581	330	230	187	156	124	101	55	18	2			2,370
	% of general registrants	99%	88%	57%	43%	37%	30%	26%	24%	21%	27%	5%			48%

Source: AHPRA, June 2016 data
 ** NPP – No principal place of practice
 *** Only optometrists holding general registration are eligible to hold the scheduled medicines endorsement

Your team and its achievements

Policy and advocacy

The policy and advocacy team continued to keep pressure on the Australian government to invest in primary eye care while reaching out to other health professions to increase awareness of the role of optometrists in eye health diagnosis and management. We continued to represent the sector on a number of important working groups and eye health partnerships while developing research, workshops, practices and standards designed to assist members with changes to Medicare, clinical practice and scope of practice.

Keep eye care sustainable campaign

Optometry Australia's President Kate Gifford led a successful delegation to take a strong message to the Australian government about the importance of investing in primary eye care. This delegation, in October 2015, saw 15 optometrists hold meetings with 26 members of Parliament. This culminated in the tabling of a petition calling on the Australian government to keep eye care fair and sustainable, and to lift the indexation freeze on Medicare rebates. The petition was signed by 18,000 optometry patients from across the country, and tabled by the then Labor member for Chisholm, Anna Burke.

Throughout May and June of 2016, in the lead up to the federal election, we led a second national campaign to press the Australian government to lift the indexation freeze. With an online petition, practice resources, a tailored YouTube advertisement, and activity on Facebook and Twitter, optometry was part of an important message about primary health care at a tightly-fought election.

Professional partnerships

The policy and advocacy team has worked hard to develop partnerships with other health professions including GPs, pharmacists and nurses, presenting at the Australian Practice Nurses Association, and collaborating with the Pharmacy Guild to develop online learning material to aid pharmacists in the management of minor eye conditions. This also included the launch in September 2016, of a new GP referral campaign aimed at heightening awareness of the role of optometrists among general medical practitioners to improve referral pathways. The campaign will run until May 2017 in key GP publications and associated websites.

Optometry scope of practice

During the year, we conducted the first national survey designed to find out more about optometry scope of practice. Over 600 members provided vital statistics about practice equipment, ocular disease management and therapeutic prescribing, and areas of professional interest, highlighting the true diversity of the profession and its contribution to primary care, with results written up for Optometry Australia's journal, *Clinical and Experimental Optometry.*

New Medicare items

Optometry Australia supported the successful introduction of five new optometry Medicare items for which we had advocated: four of these items enable optometrists to provide patient-end support for teleconferences with ophthalmologists (a great development for rural and regional patients), and an item for the removal of an embedded corneal foreign body, which has already helped over 5,000 Australians. To support these changes, we developed practice notes and podcasts on both items, and launched workshops to upskill optometrists in foreign body removal.

Guidelines and standards

To support optometrists practising at the highest level of professional standards, we ran a consultation process and developed two new clinical practice guides on paediatric examinations and the diagnosis and management of glaucoma. In a first, new optometry practice standards ratified in 2015 were made available in an online format with a practice self-audit tool allowing members to work through the standards and undertake new learning or practice improvement as part of their self-directed CPD.



Optometry Australia made 12 submissions to regulatory bodies, standards committees and other government agencies during the year.

Optometry Australia presented two live webcasts and several podcasts during the year on topics such as working smarter with Medicare, private billing, telehealth services reimbursement, the removal of embedded corneal foreign body and other Medicare items. Simon Hanna, National Clinical Policy Advisor led these presentations to members.



Optometry Australia held meetings with key federal MPs and health sector leaders in February 2016 to promote the role of optometry in the health landscape. On 22 February Optometry Australia CEO Genevieve Quilty (L) and National President Kate Gifford (R) met with Senator Nick Xenophon.



The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Working Group of Optometry Australia met in Canberra on 18 October 2015 to discuss priority issues in Indigenous eye health. They included (L-R) Gavin Bigland, Tricia Keys, Senator Deborah O'Neill and Rowan Churchill.

The policy and advocacy team



Kirsty Machon National Policy Manager (Acting)



Dr Patricia Kiely Standards & Research Advisor



Simon Hanna National Clinical Policy Advisor



Tin Nguyen Policy & Advocacy Advisor

Submissions

Optometry Australia has an important role in ensuring the profession's voice and views are heard strongly in many forums. We made several submissions to important national reviews and inquiries including submissions on the review of the medical benefits schedule (presently underway), private health insurance and chronic illness. We made submissions in relation to regulatory issues including entry level optometry accreditation programs, and policies reviewed by the Optometry Board of Australia.

Working groups

The work of the national policy and advocacy team is supported by working groups in Indigenous eye health, rural and regional practice, and low vision. The Low Vision Working Group developed a comprehensive national services guide, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group supported the development of national guidelines for quality subsidised spectacle schemes, to promote quality and access in state-based services.

Partnership across the health sector

Optometry Australia supports and works in partnerships, with regular representation on high profile national peak health organisations including Vision 2020 Australia, the National Primary Healthcare Partnership, and Allied Health Professions Australia.

Professional services

Optometry Australia's professional services team is one of the most visible to the profession, offering a combination of problem-solving, advice to members and the application of clinical knowledge. Our professional services team also provides optometric input to submissions developed by the policy and advocacy team, presents a clinical voice within the media on behalf of the profession and negotiates key contracts.

Professional indemnity insurance

Optometry Australia continued its partnership of 15 years with Australia's largest medico-legal insurer Avant. The National Professional Services Manager also provides timely assistance with medico-legal issues and this year, to further support members, we added a range of additional insurance and risk related resources to the national website. As an added benefit, Avant delivered a series of practical workshops on risk management at five of the federated organisation's state conferences.

Medicare compliance

Our professional services team responds regularly to members' requests to assist their understanding of Medicare and in particular, the use of the optometry MBS schedule. This has been particularly important to members given the significant changes that were introduced to the MBS in January 2015 with the removal of the fee cap and introduction of new MBS items. To further respond to these changes, we delivered a series of workshops at our state conferences and presented a nation-wide webinar.

Our team further provided specific advice to members involved in Medicare audits and to the Department of Human Services on Medicare compliance.

Regulatory bodies

Optometry Australia was very active in the regulatory arena through our involvement in:

- Submissions to the Optometry Board of Australia (OBA) for its review of the Australian Continuing Professional Education system. We have assisted a large number of members who were routinely audited by the profession's registration board along with members facing disciplinary action by the OBA.
- 2. Revision of the National Transport Commission Assessing Fitness to Drive guide with RANZCO and government bodies. The updated guidelines were released in October 2016.
- Submissions on latest sunglass standards review with the support of Professor Stephen Dain and Annette Hoskin, who represent the optometry sector, on a number of Australian Standards committees.
- 4. The development and delivery of the first CASA aviation refresher course in March 2016 to upskill members interested in the delivery of aviation ocular examinations.

Pharma online CPD modules vere launched in March 2016 as a new, exclusive service for nembers. **Pharma** now offers six points in each issue, a total of 24 points for a year.

PHORE

61





The head of professional services Luke Arundel, assumes the role of Senior Resident Optometrist when dealing with media inquiries. During the year he responded to numerous television, radio and print media requests for interviews.



In August 2016, Optometry Australia offered members free access to OPTAUS – the largest resource of optometry continuing professional development video resources in the world.

Eye on CPD

Professional services heads a small team of staff members who are responsible for administering OBA's accreditation of CPD and the collation of CPD points for all members. As part of our three-year agreement to perform this function for the OBA, Eye on CPD was formed to deliver this program in November 2014. A tri-level model of accreditation is used to ensure CPD remains at a very high standard and an independent CPD review panel was formed to provide a second level of oversight and to assist Eye on CPD monitor delivery of events on the ground. The Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) provides the third level in this model by independently auditing accredited CPD activities to ensure compliance to OBA standards. An increase in accreditation activity of 15 per cent was noted in 2016 and OCANZ has completed three independent audits with quality improvement suggestions being passed on to CPD providers.

Private health insurance

Optometry Australia is the main interface between the profession and private health insurance companies and we are very active in ensuring the optometry sector remains high on their agenda for rebates and improvements. To assist our members we have provided ongoing assistance in the second round of Medibank Private audits – including successfully reversing two-year claiming bans for some members – and in compliance audits from other insurers.

Media

The head of our professional services team assumes the role of Senior Resident Optometrist when responding to media enquiries and of the 275 pieces of editorial delivered in the year under review, he was quoted in 51 per cent of publicity. A large number of enquiries from television, print, broadcast and online media were fielded with a range of topics from myopia, eye safety, novelty contact lenses, UV protection to children's vision being discussed.

Professional services team



Luke Arundel National Professional Services Manager and Senior Resident Optometrist



Andrew Kotsos Professional Development Officer



Rounak Moshfegh CPD & Projects Officer

Communications

The communications team continued to refine the way news and information is delivered to members, moving progressively to a primarily digital format. This decision recognises that members require immediate, timely information 24/7 and that we are making smarter use of membership fees through digital efficiencies. By reducing print and postage costs, Optometry Australia has been able to refocus resources on other member services such as increased advocacy and promotion to consumers, pharmacy and general practice. Excellent engagement is being recorded across all our digital news platforms, reflecting strong support for this transition.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

News portal and app

Our transition to digital means that we can keep our news portal constantly updated. This has enabled us to grow visits to our portal, which is now averaging 50,000 page views a month. The portal is supported by the *Australian Optometry App*, which means members have access to breaking news 24/7 through two main delivery channels. This free app was launched in December 2015 and it works on all smartphones and tablets to provide a live open-access direct feed from the news portal.

Australian Optometry Weekly Alert

We utilise electronic newsletters and electronic mail to keep members updated. The flagship Australian Optometry Weekly Alert was introduced in January 2016 to replace the monthly Australian Optometry news alert and the fortnightly eNews. The new weekly format achieves an open rate of 37 per cent which exceeds Australian benchmark standards across all industry sectors.

Clinical and Experimental Optometry

The introduction of an app to support *Clinical and Experimental Optometry,* and its transfer to a 100 per cent online publication has also been very successful. Ours is one of the world's top three optometry journals, providing exceptional online access to literature. The Wiley Online Library website offers the options of viewing a PDF or the enhanced article in HTML that adapts to any device. An app for android was also launched, to complement the app for iOS. About 240,000 journal articles were downloaded in 2015 alone.

While Professor Emeritus H Barry Collin continues his dedicated contribution of 23 years as editor of the journal, Professor Emeritus Barry Cole resigned as chairman of the journal's editorial board in August 2015 after 15 years of strong leadership. Professor Emeritus Leo Carney accepted the appointment of chairman of the editorial board and of the review committee. Following Professor Carney's resignation, Professor Nathan Efron accepted both these roles in August 2016. The review committee was convened in February 2015 and will submit its report to the national board at the end of 2016. Professor Nathan Efron was awarded the 2015 H Barry Collin Research Medal.

The professional associations in New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore are partners with Optometry Australia in the journal. Content alerts for each issue are emailed to members and to academics world-wide.

ECO and student hubs

We recognise that optometrists in their first few years in practice and students have requirements that differ from those of more experienced colleagues. To support these groups, in August 2015 we launched the Early Career Optometrists hub (ECO) where members find information and advice on clinical and business practice, employment, legal and regulatory matters, and CPD. It complements the open access student hub which was launched in 2014.

 Matrix
 Matrix

 Matrix
 Matrix

Clinical and Experimental Optometry and its transfer to a 100 per cent online publication



A review of Clinical and Experimental Optometry was launched in April. It is being led by the chairman of the journal's Editorial Board, Emeritus Professor Leo Carney (pictured) and a review committee. The committee will consider the content, operations and management of the journal to determine how it can be delivered in the most relevant and cost effective way.



Optometry Australia's flagship mastheads Australian Optometry and Clinical and Experimental Optometry became exclusively digital publications in 2016. The final print issues were published in November and December 2015, respectively, but both continue to be published online.



The introduction of the Australian Optometry App in December 2015 continued the organisation's push to become a digital news powerhouse. The app works on all smartphones and tablets and provides live open-access direct feed from the Australian Optometry news website.

HYBRID PUBLICATIONS

Pharma

With article peer review and referencing, the quarterly *Pharma* sits uniquely in optometry, filling the gap mid-way between a magazine and a scientific journal. Under the direction of clinical editor, Associate Professor Mark Roth, *Pharma* delivers topical clinical information and case reports relevant to day-to-day practice.

Pharma is published in print and online, and is also distributed to members of the New Zealand Association of Optometrists.

To enhance this important publication, in March 2016 Optometry Australia launched *Pharma* online CPD modules as an exclusive member service designed to offer high-quality and convenient professional development. The service, delivered with the assistance of the professional services team, enables members to go online to answer a series of multiple-choice questions to obtain accredited, clinical, therapeutic CPD points based on the content of each *Pharma* magazine. Each member's CPD points are then entered into their MyCPD record.

Equipment

Equipment magazine continues to be the benchmark buyers guide to state of the art ophthalmic equipment. Published annually in high quality print and online, it provides members with product reviews and case reports written by leading optometrists and ophthalmologists.

Communications team



Sandra Shaw National Communications Manager



Rhiannon Riches Assistant Editor



Jeff Megahan Features Editor



Ashleigh McMillan Journalist



Helen Carter Journalist



Nicholas Walker Journal Administrator





Marketing

The launch of the *Good vision for life* campaign, aimed at promoting optometry and community eye health, was a highlight of the marketing team's activities during the year. This was supplemented by a complementary GP referral campaign and the delivery of hundreds of pieces of editorial on a wide range of corporate and eye health issues. Marketing also developed a fresh approach to communicating member benefits while delivering a comprehensive membership strategy.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Good vision for life

On 6 September 2016 Optometry Australia launched a national consumer eye health awareness campaign – *Good vision for life* – aimed at making Australians more aware of their eye health by highlighting the need for regular eye examinations throughout life and promoting the role of optometrists in preventative eye health care.

The target audience is Australians aged 40-59 – a demographic selected by Optometry Australia as they are considered the primary health decision-maker or influencer across three generations – themselves, their children and ageing parents.

Campaign message delivery is mainly via banner advertising and search engine marketing across digital channels as well as Facebook community engagement. The strong digital push is supported by radio advertisements and live reads on metropolitan Austereo channels as well as television advertorials on Channel 7's *The Morning Show* and *The Daily Edition* programs.

The main call-to-action is our new website, goodvisionforlife.com.au where consumers can go to find more information on eye health and to search for an optometrist. Visits to this site continue to grow strongly at around 7,700 users and 15,000 page views per month. The *Find an optometrist* search function is also growing at around 16 per cent per month.

GP referral campaign

To complement the *Good vision for life* campaign Optometry Australia launched a campaign aimed at heightening awareness of the role of optometrists among general medical practitioners to improve referral pathways.

This campaign launched in October 2016 and will run until May 2017. It incorporates advertising and editorial placed in key medical publications including *Australian Family Physician*, *Australian Medicine* and *Medicine Today* supported by a digital campaign on racgp.com.au. We are also collaborating with ThinkGP.com.au to deliver an educational video on the role of optometry in diabetes management which will feature online for 12 months.



Optometry Australia has launched a campaign aimed at heightening awareness of the role of optometrists among general medical practitioners to improve referral pathways.

Publicity

Optometry Australia continued to work with media channels nationally and in the year under review we delivered 275 editorial pieces in consumer publications, online and on broadcast channels. Of this coverage, 82 per cent highlighted eye health issues with children's vision, and in particular myopia, receiving the most publicity. Early indications for 2016-2017 reveal a similar trend with coverage strongly swayed to 'screen time versus green time'. Broadcast coverage continues to increase with 39 per cent of coverage in 2015-2016 delivered on radio and 23 per cent on television.

To support our media push, Optometry Australia distributed 16 media releases in the year under review.

We further worked with Macular Disease Foundation Australia to raise awareness of this disease, The RANZCO Eye Foundation to support JulEYE, and Vision2020 to generate publicity on World Sight Day. Support was offered to several members seeking to manage media inquiries, and a series of press release templates was issued for members to use to generate publicity within local media channels.





Optometry Australia launched a national consumer campaign to raise awareness among Australians of eye health and vision issues and the need for regular eye examinations throughout life.





The Good vision for life campaign was featured in a series of national television news programs highlighting children's vision issues.

Optometry Australia supported members to manage media requests during the year including Victorian-based optometrist Amy Giang whose prompt actions ensured the retinoblastoma in her young patient Emily Walsh was diagnosed and treated.

Social media

Optometry Australia has four active social media communities – two on Facebook, as well as LinkedIn and Twitter – which we use to engage with members and the wider optometry sector and a Facebook page where we are quickly building an engaged consumer community.

We continue to steadily build our memberfacing social media pages, adding around 2,000 new followers over a 12-month period, bringing our combined community to almost 6,400 at October 2016. With our concentrated effort to develop our Facebook presence since 2014, this remains our most active social media community and the more recent additions of Twitter and LinkedIn have allowed us to extend our communication channels and styles.

Member collateral and strategies

The strong desire by Optometry Australia to highlight the value of membership provided marketing with the challenge of converting core membership benefits into an easyto-understand set of infographics. The resulting graphics highlight 24 benefits of how members can utilise their membership to lead, engage and promote optometry, optometrists and community eye health.

Marketing also delivered a comprehensive strategy designed to consolidate our approach to membership recruitment, retention and engagement. This is the fourth plank of the organisation's rebranding program and follows the adoption of a new name and recalibrated business direction. the introduction of employee values that underpin our business philosophy and the implementation of the marketing strategy, the centrepiece being the Good vision for life campaign. This latest strategy identifies the need for us to continually evolve in order to meet a changing membership demographic, an increasingly savvy and highly educated patient, and a rapidly changing business environment driven by consolidation and technology.

Marketing team



Kerry l'Anson National Brand & Corporate Relations Manager



Trinity Scarf National Campaigns Manager



Laura Gulbin Graphic Designer

Operations

Our operations team supports the day-to-day activities of Optometry Australia. Working across the organisation we deliver projects involving human resources, web site and business systems, as well as membership services. During the year the operations team was instrumental in bringing about significant workplace efficiencies and a stable working environment that has attracted high calibre personnel to the organisation.

PEOPLE

Optometry Australia's staff work enthusiastically to support the interest of our federated organisation in delivering our diverse membership services. The national office comprises 23 staff members – or around 15 FTE staff – who work across all business units.

During the year we were joined by four new staff members - Rounak Moshfegh, Professional Development & Projects, journalist Ashleigh McMillian and Graphic Designer Laura Gulbin. A key appointment yet to be made is National Chief Operating Officer, a position vacant since the departure of Matthew Monaghan in early 2016. CEO Genevieve Quilty has been acting in the role of COO while an assessment is made of the position, key deliverables and business structure. We also welcomed Jill Young as Office Co-ordinator who has provided Genevieve with assistance in office management and has assumed responsibility for managing the organisation's relocation in early 2017.

Office relocations

We continue to operate from two offices – one in Drummond Street, Carlton (Victoria) where the majority of our team is located and a second office in Canberra which supports the Chief Executive Officer and National Policy Manager.

In March 2016, the organisation sold its Drummond Street building, and Melbournebased staff will move in February 2017 to a modern new office located at 201 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne. The decision to sell Carlton after nearly 40 years was due to the age of the existing terrace buildings and their inability to continue to service our organisation without the extensive refurbishment required to meet not only legislated occupational health and safety but also a modern, progressive tech-savvy business. After extensive investigation, the organisation felt that the significant cost of updating these premises would not be a wise investment of member funds.

The Canberra team also moved office during the year, relocating from a serviced office environment to a stand-alone suite in Northbourne Avenue. This move has also resulted in reduced costs.



Workplace health and safety

Optometry Australia is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment and during the year we implemented a staff-nominated occupational health and safety committee to work collaboratively to ensure that the organisation maintains an OH&S fit and healthy workplace in accordance with Victorian law. The committee meets quarterly.

We continue to offer an Employee Assistance Program for staff and their immediate family through an external, independent health and well-being counselling service. This program further promotes well-being in the workplace and especially through times of change.



Optometry Finance Australia and Partner Legal joined Optome Australia's Advantage Program during the y offering members ac a comprehensive ran financial and legal se

DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Infrastructure review

This year we commenced an extensive review of our digital infrastructure with the goal of enhancing our integrated membership database and web presence. Our last overhaul of this infrastructure was almost five years ago and while it has served us well, changes in technology and consumer usage mean that there are now much more streamlined and powerful approaches to IT that will help us to be more efficient.

We anticipate launching a new member database in early 2017 that will provide an easier to use system for updating member details, CPD and event management. These changes will integrate with our *Find an optometrist* search functionality ensuring consumers can easily find our members. Once fully operational, it will also allow a more tailored approach to member communications and provide us with additional reporting tools and insights.

Following the launch of this database we will turn our attention to updating optometry.org.au to ensure it is supported by current web technology and search functionality while ensuring that the content is fresh and engaging and responsive to all screen sizes.

optometry.org.au

optometry.org.au continues to be the leading site in Australia for searches for optometry (Google rankings) attracting almost 34,470 sessions each month by 14,580 users. It also supports a *Find an optometrist* search along with a Google map locator. These options have been designed for the community to easily find an optometrist within a specific location, who speaks a specific language, or who provides a particular service such as home visits or children's vision. Only members are listed on this service. The *Find an optometrist* search functionality has now been mirrored on our consumer site, goodvisionforlife.com.au.

A comprehensive online database supporting member CPD records and a nationwide CPD events calendar introduced in FY2015-2016 continues to attract strong support from members. Likewise, the classified section of our website supported more than 1,080 advertisements across 10 categories.

Telephone switch

Our digital transformation was also enhanced when we shifted from a traditional telephone service provider to a voice-over-internet provider. This switch has enabled us to generate considerable savings in local and nationwide phone charges.

MEMBER SERVICES

We continue to support members nationally with easily accessible resources such as books, brochures and accessories that can be used in practices. Our online store, featuring advanced search and purchasing functionality, offers insights into best sellers in books, brochures and accessories. During the year we dispatched over 43,680 items including 571 books, 4,244 accessories and 38,870 brochures. This year almost 300 purchases were generated through the online store, with phone, fax and email also used for purchases.

Our team also responded to over 985 calls and emails a month from members. The majority of queries related to CPD accreditation followed by a range of subjects such as advice on professional indemnity insurance, marketing materials and member website login and general use.

Member Advantage program

This year we were delighted to welcome two new Advantage partners. Optometry Finance Australia has come on board to offer members a one-stop-shop for finance while Partners Legal can provide members with legal advice with expertise in healthcare and retail business.

They join a range of other quality Advantage partners offering business and finance services including business and health insurance, human resources, financial planning and foreign exchange as well as travel and lifestyle and information technology products via deals and services that otherwise may not be available to independent optometrists and students.



Optometry Australia has commenced an extensive review of our digital infrastructure with the goal of enhancing our integrated membership database and web presence.

Operations team



Catherine Roubos Financial Controller



Rosy Dolan-Murphy Special Projects Officer



Natalina Bortone Bookshop & Brochures Manager



John Karis Member Benefits & Website Manager



Helen Podbury Receptionist



Jill Young Office Coordinator

Committee memberships at 30 June 2016

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	Kate Gifford and Genevieve Quilty				
OBA's CPD and Accreditation Committee	Assists the OBA in ensuring the CPD program remains effective, relevant and essential for the optometry profession	Luke Arundel				
OCANZ member	To appoint the OCANZ Board and other governance matters	Genevieve Quilty				
National Primary Health Care Partnership	Promote collaboration across the primary health care sector, including between professional associations in pursuit of shared advocacy objectives	Skye Cappuccio				
National Rural Health Alliance	Peak advisory and advocacy body for rural health matters	Dr Philip Anderton, on behalf of the Rural Optometry Group				
Vision 2020 Australia	Vision 2020 Australia represents the vision and eye care sector in Australia and draws together members to exchange views, share information, collaborate and develop policies, strategies and submissions to improve eye health and vision care for all Australians	Genevieve Quilty, Chair of Prevention and Early Intervention committee; Optometrist Dr Sharon Bentley and then optometrist Anthea Cochrane, member of Independence and Participation committee; Skye Cappuccio, member of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee				
Government appointed						
Optometric Benefits Consultative Committee (OBCC)	Advisory committee which assesses the Optometric MBS	Kate Gifford, Genevieve Quilty and Simon Hanna				
ACCC's Small Business Consultative Committee	An ACCC convened forum through which competition and consumer law concerns related to the small business sector can be considered and addressed collaboratively	Genevieve Quilty				

Member participation in working groups and ad hoc committees

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Working Group

Mitchell Anjou AO Stephanie Bahler Rowan Churchill Gary Crerie Daryl Guest Prof Brian Layland OAM Anna Morse Dr Genevieve Napper Emily Procopis Helen Summers David Welch

Rural Optometry Group

Dr Philip Anderton Steven Davis Cameron Dyson Lara Foster Kelly Gibbon Mitch Hancock Katherine Jorgy Peter McClurg Alex Norris Gary Page Sally Quirke Bill Robertson

Low Vision Working Group

Kevin Adams Dr Sharon Bentley Pelayia Berdoukas Mae Chong Anthea Cochrane Zeinab Fakih Dr Mav Ho Martin Hodgson Dr Alan Johnston Susan Kalff Rosemarie Kavanagh Robyn Main Andrew Maver Dr Genevieve Napper Sharon Oberstein Dr Grace Soong Dr Stephen Vincent

Position Statement Advisory Group

Giuliana Baggoley Janelle Coates Andrew Hogan Kurt Larsen Dr Stephen Vincent John Warren

Paediatric Clinical Practice Guide Working Group

Stephen Leslie Christine Nearchou Rod Baker Tim Martin Liz Jackson Marissa Megaloconomos

Glaucoma Clinical Practice Guide Working Group

Graham Lakkis Ben Ashby Cameron Dyson Alan Burrow Murray Smith Michael Yapp Giuliana Baggoley Dr Genevieve Napper Leanne Nguyen







Contact us

Optometry Australia

204 Drummond Street Carlton VIC 3053 T: 03 9668 8500 E: national@optometry.org.au

Canberra

Optometry Australia

Suite 6A, Level 1, 51/55-57 Northbourne Ave Canberra ACT 2601 T: 02 6247 3682 E: national@optometry.org.au

optometry.org.au

Facebook members: facebook.com/OptometristsAssociationAustralia Facebook Consumers: facebook.com/goodvisionforlife https://twitter.com/OptometryAus or @OptometryAus Optometry Australia ABN 17 004 622 431