



A model shows off some of the lenses being questioned by professionals

Fancy lenses get the evil eye

by Katie Miller
health reporter

SALE regulations for novelty contact lenses that can potentially cause blindness in 24 hours are slowly coming into focus.

Gold Coast optometrists have joined eye specialists around the state in lobbying the State Government to introduce legislation governing the sale of the devices, also called plano, cosmetic or coloured contact lenses.

Queensland Health has responded by asking stakeholders to give feedback on four possible legislative options before the end of this month.

Novelty contact lenses are popular with young people because they can create the appear-

ance of odd-coloured or animal-like eyes. They are sold at markets, food outlets, shows and sometimes pharmacies but generally do not come with proper instructions for care, according to concerned eye specialists.

Nerang optometrist Ian Rosser said the biggest dangers from the novelty devices were infections such as pseudomonas and acanthamoeba.

The optometrist of 27 years said improper and unhygienic use of the lenses, which do not improve vision, could result in irritation, allergic reactions, vision loss or blindness. "In the worst case scenario an infection can invade the cornea and cause blindness in 24 hours," he said.

Optometrists Association Australia Queensland executive director Greg Johnson said the organisation wanted laws in place so a prescription was required to buy the lenses, which is one of the Government's mooted options.

The other alternatives are requiring the lenses be sold under the supervision of optometrists and medical practitioners, requiring they be sold under the supervision of registered health practitioners and nurses, or moving cosmetic lenses into the definition of beauty therapy so retailers have to comply with appropriate infection control standards.