



OPTOMETRISTS  
ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

**Media release**

**14 February 2007**

## **FEDERAL RECOGNITION OF THE DANGERS OF PLANO CONTACT LENSES**

Australia's optometrists today welcomed the Commonwealth Government's warning the community about the dangers associated with the incorrect use of plano (novelty) contact lenses.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, Chris Pearce MP, has added his voice to calls by State and Territory Governments for people considering using plano contact lenses to seek professional advice prior to using them.

The novelty contact lenses which are being sold through toy stores, markets and on line without prescription, increase the risk of eye infection if used incorrectly or shared. Without treatment, incorrect use of plano contact lenses can lead to permanent scarring of the eye and permanent vision loss.

"There are several reports of teenagers using the lenses without proper instruction and suffering terrible corneal scarring and even loss of sight," said Mr Ian Bluntish, the National President of the Optometrists Association Australia.

"The case highlighted by the Parliamentary Secretary of a 13 year old Queensland girl who developed an eye infection, then had to spend three weeks in hospital and is now legally blind in one eye, is only one of many," said Mr Bluntish.

Ian Bluntish applauds the Federal Government lending its support to this argument.

"For some time we have called on State and Territory Governments to regulate plano contact lenses as they do regular contact lenses. Optometrists Association Australia believes that contact lenses should only be available with a prescription from an optometrist or medical practitioner," said Mr Bluntish.

When dispensed and worn properly contact lenses are safe for the eyes. Almost 700,000 Australians wear contact lenses without any problems.

**For further information or to schedule an interview please call:**

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