



**OPTOMETRISTS**  
ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA  
QUEENSLAND & NORTHERN TERRITORY

**WORLD SIGHT DAY**

Within 20 years 800,000 Australians will be vision impaired but 80% of these cases could be prevented, according to optometrists.

In launching World Sight Day, Optometrists Association Australia (OAA) President-Elect, Andrew Angeli, said that “the message to Queenslanders is simple – don’t take your sight for granted. Make sure that you receive regular eye examinations from your family optometrist or medical practitioner.”

He continued, “sadly people throughout Australia and the rest of the world are blinded or have impaired vision through treatable disorders like cataracts, trachoma, childhood blindness and amblyopia and simple refractive error. For example, cataract, which is a cloudiness of the lens stopping light from entering the eye, can be corrected by a simple low cost operation.” Most blindness can be prevented or cured – yet the problem is growing. At present, there are 45 million people in the world who are blind and 135 million more who have serious visual impairment. Since 80% of this blindness is either preventable or curable, a further 100 million people will go needlessly blind over the next 20 years if action is not taken now. In simple terms one person in the world goes blind every 5 seconds and a child every minute. Mr Angeli said, “World Sight Day is an annual event, held on the second Thursday of October, that focuses attention on the problem of global blindness. The day gives us an opportunity to remind all citizens that they should think about regular eye examinations. We are fortunate in Queensland to have over 600 family optometrists scattered throughout the State meaning that eye examinations are accessible. Even if there are no symptoms people are advised to have a regular examination and children should initially be examined at ages 3, 5, 7 & 9.

He concluded, “there really is no excuse for Queenslanders to put off having regular eye examinations particularly as they are bulk-billed under Medicare.”

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For immediate release. Authorised by Greg Johnson, Executive Director, OAA Queensland/Northern Territory, media enquiries invited to 07 3839 4411 or 0414 783 343.