

Who's who in the eye health and vision care sector



General practitioners

General practitioners are often the first health professional you visit when you have an eye concern. They can provide an immediate assessment and treatment of some problems and may refer you to an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

For more information visit The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners website www.racgp.org.au

Ophthalmologist

Ophthalmologists (also known as eye specialists or eye surgeons) are medical doctors who specialise in the human eye. They provide eye examinations, diagnosis of diseases and defects of the eye and manage associated treatments which may include surgery.

Referral from a general practitioner, optometrist or other medical specialist is required to obtain the Medicare rebate.

Appointments are triaged (prioritised) according to medical need, with red eyes commonly seen immediately upon referral.

For more information visit The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists website www.ranzco.edu

Ophthalmic nurses

Ophthalmic nurses work alongside ophthalmologists to provide nursing care to patients during their treatment. Ophthalmic nurses can be registered or enrolled nurses.

For more information visit the Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Association website www.aonavic.com.au

Optometrists

Optometrists are primary health care specialists who examine eyes to detect defects in vision, signs of ocular injury, ocular diseases or abnormalities and problems with general health. A detailed eye examination can reveal conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes.

Optometrists make a diagnosis, offer advice and when necessary prescribe, fit and supply glasses and contact lenses.

Optometrists may provide treatments for some eye disease and will refer you to an ophthalmologist for further diagnosis and treatment if necessary.

You do not need a referral to see an optometrist and there is generally little or no waiting time for appointments. Medicare provides a full rebate for most optometry consultations.

For more information visit the Optometrists Association Australia website www.optometrists.asn.au

Orthoptists

Orthoptists are allied health professionals who specialise in the diagnosis and management of disorders of eye movements and associated vision problems.

Orthoptists often work alongside ophthalmologists and help with rehabilitation of people experiencing vision loss.

For more information visit the Orthoptic Association of Australia website www.orthoptics.org.au

Optical dispensers and optical mechanics

Optical dispensers interpret optical prescriptions as well as fit and service optical appliances such as spectacle frames and lenses.

Optical mechanics operate machines to grind, polish and surface optical lenses to meet prescription requirements. Optical mechanics also fit lenses to spectacle frames.

Optical dispensers and mechanics often work alongside optometrists.

For more information visit the Australasian Dispensing Opticians Association website www.adoa.com.au

Low Vision Services

Low vision services are provided by low vision organisations, some optometrists, orthoptists and ophthalmologists. They can help by providing information, devices and rehabilitation to assist a person with vision impairment to remain independent.

Most low vision services do not require formal referral from a health professional.

It is important to maintain regular appointments with your eye health professional while accessing low vision services.

For more information on services offered by low vision organisations visit the Vision Initiative website www.visioninitiative.org.au

Australian College of Optometry

Formerly the Victorian College of Optometry, low vision clinics are run in partnership with Vision Australia.

For more information visit www.aco.org.au or call the Australian College of Optometry on (03) 9349 7400.

Guide Dogs Australia

Guide Dogs Australia represents all of Australia's state based guide dog organisations. They assist people who are blind or have a vision impairment to gain the freedom and independence to move safely and confidently within the community.

For more information visit www.guidedogsaustralia.com or call Guide Dogs Australia on 1800 804 805.

Optometrists Association Australia

The Optometrists Association Australia can provide information on local optometrists that provide low vision services.

For more information visit www.optometrists.asn.au

Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children provide educational services to children with hearing and/or vision impairment.

For more information visit www.ridbc.org.au or call the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children on (02) 9871 1233.

Royal Society for the Blind of South Australia

The Royal Society for the Blind of South Australia provide services for South Australians who have vision impairment.

For more information visit www.rsb.org.au or call the Royal Society for the Blind of South Australia on (08) 8232 4777.

Vision Australia

Vision Australia offers a wide range of services to assist people who are vision impaired across their life span.

Vision Australia has merged with Seeing Eye Dogs Australia to provide enhanced orientation and mobility services.

For more information visit www.visionaustralia.org.au or call Vision Australia on 1300 847 466.

Vision loss support organisations

Vision loss support organisations provide support and information for people living with vision impairment and blindness.

- Blind Citizens Australia 1800 033 066
www.bca.org.au
- Glaucoma Australia 1800 500 880
www.glaucoma.org.au
- Keratoconus Australia 0409 644 811
www.keratoconus.asn.au
- Macular Degeneration Foundation 1800 111 709
www.mdfoundation.com.au
- Retina Australia 1800 999 870
www.retinaaustralia.com.au

For more information on eye health visit www.visioninitiative.org.au