

Tuesday, 8 October 2019

Put your Vision First on World Sight Day

Now is the perfect time for Australians to think about their sight, with **Thursday 10 October** marking World Sight Day for 2019.

This year's World Sight Day theme is *Vision First* – and with around 90% of blindness and vision impairment preventable or treatable if detected early enough, Vision 2020 Australia is reminding Australians to put their vision first by having their eyes checked.

The risk of developing an eye condition increases as people enter their forties, while people who smoke, have diabetes, have a family history of eye disease, or are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent are also at increased risk of eye disease.

Eye tests can be arranged directly through an optometrist, by referral to an ophthalmologist, or by speaking with your GP, and are often covered by Medicare.

Quotes attributable to Vision 2020 Australia CEO Judith Abbott:

“As we approach the year 2020, it's never been a more appropriate time for people to put vision first to keep their eyesight 20/20.”

“Approximately 90% of vision loss and blindness is preventable or treatable if identified early, so having regular eye tests is an important part of maintaining good eye health and spotting potential concerns before it's too late.”

“People who are aged over 40, smoke or have diabetes may be at added risk, and should make having an eye test one of their health priorities.”

Key tips for looking after eye health:

- Make sure you have a regular eye check, especially if you are over 40
- Wear a hat and sunglasses when outside
- Wear eye protection when playing sports like squash, or performing hazardous
- Do not smoke, or quit smoking
- Maintain a healthy diet with regular exercise
- Manage your diabetes (bloods glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels)

ENDS

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Vision 2020 Australia is the national peak body working in partnership to prevent avoidable blindness and improve vision care in Australia and our region. We represent around 45 member organisations involved in local and global eye health and vision care, health promotion, low vision support, vision rehabilitation, eye research, professional assistance and community support. vision2020australia.org.au

Facts about blindness and vision loss in Australia

- More than 453,000 Australians are blind or vision impaired.
- Approximately 90% of vision loss and blindness is preventable or treatable and can be attributed to five main conditions: refractive error (needing glasses), diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, cataract and glaucoma.
- The risk of developing an eye condition increases for people aged over 40, smokers, diabetics, those with a family history of eye disease or people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are three times more likely to be blind or vision impaired than non-Indigenous Australians.

About World Sight Day

World Sight Day is an annual day of awareness to focus global attention on blindness and vision impairment, and is held on the second Thursday in October each year.

Established by the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** in 2000, World Sight Day is the main advocacy event for raising awareness about blindness and vision impairment for **Vision 2020: The Right to Sight**, a global initiative created by WHO and the **International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)**.