

claim the cost over four years. If you pay less than \$1,000, you can claim that cost as an outright deduction.

Small business owners can also claim an outright deduction for some ongoing expenses associated with running and maintaining a website, such as domain name registration fees and server hosting costs.

Scenario 1

You are getting ready to open an optometric practice and you spend \$2,000 for a website design. The \$2,000 you spent before your business started

will not refer to an area of speciality optometric practice. The OBA's Guidelines for advertising regulated health services is a useful document that sets out optometrists' obligations to laws regulating advertising, and the consequences if found to be in breach.

Scenario 3

You run a small rural optometric practice and have decided to promote your services online. You buy an \$800 static website and pay \$100 a month for hosting. The \$800 can be claimed as an outright deduction, and you can also claim the monthly hosting fees as a deduction against your business income.

Source: Australian Taxation Office

Social media

AHPRA released a *Social Media Policy* in March 2014. When using social media, registered health practitioners should post only information that:

- complies with professional obligations
- complies with confidentiality and privacy obligations (such as by not discussing patients or posting pictures of procedures, case studies, patients, or sensitive material that may enable patients to be identified without having obtained consent in appropriate situations), presenting information in an unbiased, evidence-based context
- is not making unsubstantiated claims.

Source: AHPRA Social Media Policy

Sahara Desert fundraiser

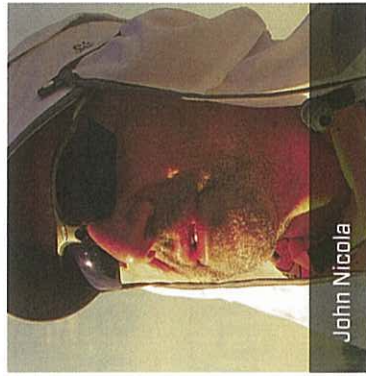
JOHN NICOLA, the founder of frames supplier Optique Line, will run the toughest footrace on earth next month, a 254-kilometre race in the Sahara Desert to raise funds for the National Vision Research Institute.

It will be the second time Mr Nicola will have run the Marathon des Sables (Marathon of the Sands). In 2013, the funds he raised by racing were donated to Optometry Giving Sight.

This year's race, on 3-13 April, will be the 30th time the event has been held. Competitors carry all they need for the journey, except for water.

Mr Nicola had raised half of his \$20,000 goal when *Australian Optometry* went to press.

The National Vision Research Institute is a division of the Australian College of Optometry, and oversees basic, clinical and translational vision research programs at the college.



John Nicola

including the supervision of PhD and Masters students in association with university partners.

The institute is also involved in the development of bionic eye devices with Bionic Vision Australia to restore vision in people with retinitis pigmentosa and age-related macular degeneration.

To make donations in support of Mr Nicola's efforts see www.aco.org.au/mds.

OPTOMETRY Australia has been ramping up its media relations efforts in a bid to drive editorial opportunities around key messages relating to the sector. The media relations strategy is part of the organisation's new brand promise to raise the wider public profile of optometrists, optometry and community eye health.

'Working in partnership with Royce Communications, the organisation has been successful in generating some strong media results across a variety of major metropolitan media, as well as in regional press around the country while our children's 3-D glasses story generated some global coverage,' national brand manager Kerry T'Anson said.

'We have pitched several stories: Optometry Australia warning against the dangers of eyelash extensions, optometrists warning on novelty contact lenses vision risk, the optometry sector being hit hard by government health changes, optometrists recommending eye protection for children, and cautioning children's 3-D glasses use,' Ms T'Anson said.

'Our national professional services manager, Luke Arundel, has been the key spokesperson for the majority of media opportunities, and has done an excellent job of getting our messages across, within an environment where you naturally relinquish some control of the message.'

Mainstream media take notice

Optometrists attack 'short-sighted' Medicare cuts

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Short-sighted: Optometrists say eye health could decline as a result of Medicare cuts. Photo: Owen Gibson
More patients will pay to see an optometrist as a result of a cut to Medicare rebates that took effect at the start of the year, optometrists say.
The 5 per cent cut to the optometry rebates announced in the May budget means that an optometrist who bulk-bills their patient will receive \$3.55 less from Medicare for a standard visit.

However, optometrists, who previously were not allowed to charge more than the Medicare scheduled fee, are now free to charge patients as much as they like.
Kate Olfend, the national president of Optometry Australia, said while allowing optometrists to set their own fees was welcome, the cuts to rebates, which are estimated to save about