



PRESS RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY MARKS ITS 75th ANNIVERSARY

In celebration of its 75th anniversary, the Australian College of Optometry will launch “A History of Australian Optometry” written by Professor Emeritus Barry Cole at the ACO National Conference on October 24th.

Professor Emeritus Cole says, “The college has been an important player in the history of optometry over the last 75 years and whilst it has its own chapter, the book tells the story of more than 200 years and features optometric institutions and optometrists Australia wide”.

The new book traces the story from spectacle sellers to sight testing opticians who were fast adopters of the new techniques of refraction based on the breakthroughs in ophthalmic science in the second half of 19th century. The 20th century brought the first Australian optometric associations, legislation to regulate the practice of optometry and rising standards of optometric education that culminated in optometry being taught in universities. New technology expanded the scope of optometric practice in the second half of the 20th century, and the right to use and prescribe therapeutic drugs was won at the close of that century.

Professor Nathan Efron, president of the College, and editor of the book will launch the new publication at a stakeholder event which co-incides with the ACO National Conference.

Professor Nathan Efron has read the book three times and says “Barry Cole’s book brings to life the fascinating story of Australian optometry, warts and all. You will read about the movers and shakers who shaped the profession, often in the face of fierce and acrimonious opposition from organised medicine and sometimes within the ranks of the profession itself. You will learn about the closely-fought political battles for recognition, and about black knights and white knights – those from inside and outside the profession, some who obstructed and others who helped advance the profession. The book took three years of research and writing. It has been meticulously researched, as testified by its 20-page bibliography, but it is an easy read”

Professor Cole, says “I have tried to write an easy-to-read story that explains the what, when and why of the history of optometry and to do so in the context of a changing Australian society and a changing health system. I have tried to paint pictures of those



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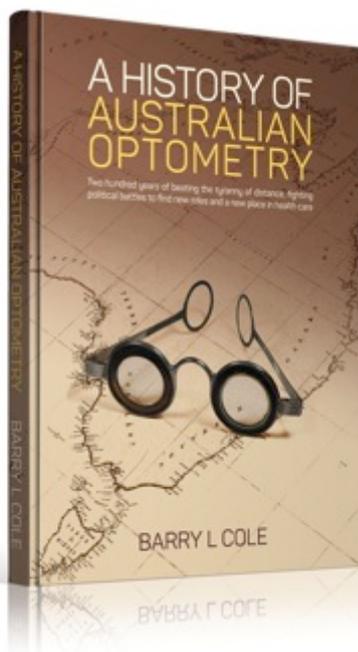
restless and aspirational optometrists who pursued their vision for a better profession and to tell a few of the tales of the quirks of fate that helped them on their way."

Professor Cole has seen a good deal of the history of optometry up close. He qualified in optometry at the Australian College of Optometry in 1954 and was appointed its first full-time lecturer in 1958. He was made the head of the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences in the University of Melbourne when it was established in 1973 and was appointed the foundation professor of optometry in the University in 1978. He is now Professor Emeritus in the University of Melbourne.

The book is A4 size and is beautifully presented in colour throughout and copiously illustrated. It is 320 pages and available in softback (\$75) and de-luxe hardback format (\$160).

Following the launch the book can be purchased from the Optometry Australia bookshop (online or in person) at www.optometry.org.au/shoponline.aspx or from the Australian College of Optometry at www.aco.org.au/history-book.

Please contact Arwen Bardsley for further information: abardsley@aco.org.au.



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**FOREWORD TO BARRY COLE'S BOOK ON THE HISTORY OF OPTOMETRY WRITTEN BY
PROFESSOR NATHAN EFRON AC, PRESIDENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY**

If ever you visit the premises of the Australian College of Optometry, you will be greeted with a grand edifice adorned with the words 'The Barry Cole Building'. There is good reason for this: Barry Cole, the author of this book, is by my reckoning the father of modern optometry in Australia. He was the leading figure who moulded the College throughout most of the second half of the 20th century into the esteemed clinical, research and continuing education institution that it is today. He has been intimately involved in the history of Australian optometry over the last 60 years as a student, teacher, researcher and professor, and since his retirement in 1999 he has been a volunteer archivist in the Kett of Optometry Museum of the College. His ideas and strategies profoundly influenced the ethos of the profession and the development of optometric education and research, and his students took leadership roles in the profession and the schools of optometry throughout Australia and New Zealand, and elsewhere. So, who better to write this book on the history of Australian optometry than the man who is an integral part of that history?

History can be told in many ways. It can be a dispassionate account of facts and events, laid out meticulously in chronological order, with copious footnotes and references to support and verify the observations presented. On the other hand, history can be written as a story – still supported by verifiable factual evidence – but with passion and flair, full of suspense, intrigue, comedy and drama. In this book, we have the latter. Barry Cole brings to life the fascinating story of Australian optometry, warts and all. You will hear about the movers and shakers who shaped the profession, often in the face of fierce and acrimonious opposition from organised medicine and sometimes within the ranks of the profession itself. You will learn about black knights and white knights – those from inside and outside the profession, some who obstructed and others who facilitated the advancement of optometry. You will discover the importance of a diverse array of factors such as hard yakka ('hard work' for the non-Australians reading this), serendipity and patronage in paving the way towards achieving the professional standing and privileges we now enjoy.

The Australian College of Optometry is proud to publish this book to mark its 75th year and proud of the progress the profession has made over those 75 years and the role the College has played in this. But of course the College is only one element of the story of the development of Australian optometry. Credit goes to the very large number of people in optometric practice and in all the optometric organisations and institutions who have contributed mightily to the progress made, not to mention the early international



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contributions of clinicians and scientists such as Newton, Young, Airy, Helmholtz, Donders and a vast numbers of others. In a letter to Robert Hooke on 15 February 1676, Sir Isaac Newton, the renowned mathematician and optician, said, 'If I have seen further it is by standing on ye shoulders of Giants'. In writing this book, Barry Cole has stood on the shoulders

of the giants of Australian optometry to survey the historical landscape and compile this fascinating account of the 200-year history of our profession in this country. I am sure you will enjoy reading it as much as I did.

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