

A History of Australian Optometry to be launched at ACO Conference

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 24 October.

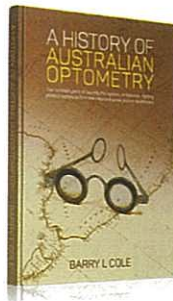
Professor Emeritus Cole says: "The college has been an important player in the history of optometry over the last 75 years and whilst it has its own chapter, the book tells the story of more than 200 years and features optometric institutions and optometrists Australia wide".

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 ACO and editor of the book will launch the new publication. He has read the book three times and says: "Barry Cole's book brings to life the fascinating story of



Barry Cole

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

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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 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 fulltime 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 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. ■