

A/Prof. Watkins Life Award

Associate Professor and Head of Optics Teaching, Rod Watkins AM FACO has been awarded Australian College of Optometry Honorary Life Membership "in recognition of distinguished service to the ACO and to the optometry profession". Professor Watkins developed the Watkins Fundus Lens and is one of a select few to be honoured with this award in the College's 76 year history.

Byblos Returns to Australia

The Rimoptics Group has re-acquired the distribution rights for Byblos eyewear throughout Australia and New Zealand. The company, which previously held the agency for Byblos in the early 2000s when it was manufactured by Luxottica, has teamed up with Byblos' new license owner and manufacturer JetSet Group S.R.L. of Italy to bring the brand back to the Australian market.

"We are thrilled to partner with JetSet Group and deliver this revived and exciting range to the Australian market," said managing director of The Rimoptics Group, Alon Cohen. "Their passion and dedication for creating fashion eyewear is evident in the end product, as is the unparalleled craftsmanship. We're looking very forward to Byblos finding its place again in the Australian eyewear market."

Byblos was created in 1973 and brought to life by Gianni Versace. All Byblos eyewear products are designed and manufactured in Civitanova Marche, Italy and will be available in Australia and New Zealand exclusively from The Rimoptics Group.

Specsavers Stores Break Through \$2.5m Average Revenue

Specsavers has announced that its Australian stores are now averaging more than AU\$2.5 million per annum in sales revenue,* with a total of 76 Australian Specsavers stores reporting an annual sales revenue of more than \$3 million and of those, 26 turning over more than \$4 million last year. Five broke through the \$5 million annual sales mark in the financial year 2015/16.

Collectively, Australian store revenues grew by 11 per cent across the year from AU\$708 million to \$786 million. In New Zealand, the story was similar with an annual growth rate of 9 per cent taking earnings from NZ\$106 million to \$115 million.

Charles Hornor, Director of Communications at Specsavers commented that despite a relatively pessimistic economy, the overall local optometry market had grown consistently over more than ten years. "In 2007 a then IBIS Report estimated the size of the Australian optometry / prescription optics market to be worth around \$750 million.

"Fast forward to the 2015/16 financial year and the market is said to be worth closer to \$2.5+ billion," said Mr. Hornor. "That shows there has been enormous growth in optics and that is not always highlighted. Yes, we have grown as a network of stores and we are still growing, but so too has the market as a whole."

Rather than opening new stores in 2015/16, Mr. Hornor said Specsavers' focus was on expanding existing stores.

"In 2015/16 we opened a total of 12 new stores and expanded 54 stores. We took on more than 130 graduates from UNSW, QUT, Melbourne, Deakin and Auckland Universities. Ninety-six of those joined in our January 2016 intake, with 39 joining from Deakin University in August 2015," said Mr. Hornor.

Across both Australia and New Zealand, more than three million eye tests were conducted by around 950 Specsavers optometrists and for the first time in one calendar year, the Specsavers manufacturing laboratory in Port Melbourne dispatched more than 4 million pairs of glasses to its stores in Australia and New Zealand, for collection by customers.

Millward Brown market share tracker research (commissioned by Specsavers on a rolling six monthly basis) showed that Specsavers market share in Australia and New Zealand was more than 40 per cent for prescription eyewear in the sixth months to 31 December 2015 (i.e. more than 40 per cent of Australian and New Zealand residents who purchased prescription eyewear in the six months to 31 December 2015).

Mr. Hornor said Specsavers promises its franchise partners that 6.5 per cent of every dollar earned will be invested in marketing. Based on revenue reported for the last financial year, that means Specsavers franchise partners can expect to be supported by a marketing budget of over AU\$51 million in 2016/17. "In 2006, the total spend on marketing for the optical market was approximately \$6 million," he said.

*Excludes 12 new stores opened during FY 2015/16.

CCLSA Master Class in Adelaide

The Cornea and Contact Lens Society of Australia (CCLSA) will host a Master Class in Adelaide, immediately after the Blue Sky Congress in late November, at Ayers House.

Experts will provide clear take-home messages on topics including:

- Finding the confidence to increase the percentage of contact lens wearers in your practice
- Three different perspectives on applications of contact lenses outside of refractive correction: myopia control, prosthesis, dry eye management, ocular surface disease.
- Identifying dry eye, functional treatment strategies
- Secrets of the edge design of RGP contact lenses
- Managing acute contact lens complications
- Experts' secrets to orthokeratology,

miniscleral contact lenses, soft toric contact lenses and multifocal contact lenses.

Jessica Chi, CCLSA National President said the decision to host the conference in Adelaide was made following the success of a Perth Master Class which attracted delegates from across the country.

"We are looking forward to a great event in a beautiful setting that will hopefully provide our members with new and current information from expert speakers while also allowing them to network and connect with their peers," said Ms. Chi.

Registration is now open and includes a casual three course dinner on Saturday November 26, giving delegates the opportunity to network and hear a key note presentation with additional CPD points attached.

For more information, regular updates and to register visit: cclsa.org.au/events/event/cclsa-masterclass-2016