

**Subject:** Submission  
**Date:** Thursday, 3 March 2011 1:53:42 PM

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to express my opinion regarding therapeutics and the registration of optometrists, both now and in the future.

Let's be frank here. The profession of optometry is evolving, as all professions must. We have moved beyond watchmaker/jeweller status to refractionists to optometrists prescribing diagnostic drugs. Evolution, change – call it what you will - is a normal part of life. While frightening to some, it is a way of becoming better at what we do and more complete in who we are.

Certainly with new graduates now having therapeutic status, the time is now to expect the same of optometrists immigrating to Australia and seeking registration here. Therapeutic endorsement should be the minimum standard for those initiating registration, be it new graduates or overseas applicants. Our universities are already stretched providing post-graduate courses for the optometrists in Australia, let alone having to cater for another significant intake.

Optometrists in Australia currently not therapeutically-endorsed should be given a fair window of opportunity to upgrade their qualifications, say ten years. This way the universities would be able to cater for the demand. Those optometrists who are in the twilight of their careers would also have a decade or so to retire without having to upgrade their skills if they so chose.

I think that ultimately (say ten years time) it would be confusing and counter-productive to have a two-tier system of optometrists. The public should be able to expect a uniformity of eyecare, and with this decent time-frame for implementation, this should satisfy most parties. Those who are quite vociferous in their opposition to change should perhaps ask themselves why. CPD and continuous enhancement of skills is what being a professional is all about (be it engineer, accountant or medical practitioner). Like it or leave it.

Yours sincerely,

Janelle Coates