

# CONFIDENCE THE KEY TO DISPENSER'S SUCCESS



## DISPENSER DETAILS

**Name:** Peter Lock  
**Position:** Store manager  
and optical dispenser  
**Location:** Warrnambool &  
Portland Eyecare, Victoria  
**Years in industry:** 34

### 1. What initially attracted you to a career in optical dispensing, and how did you enter the profession?

As a 17-year-old who'd just finished Year 12, I planned to follow my mates into a building or plumbing apprenticeship. After celebrating the end of secondary school, the local newspaper was the only source of job opportunities and while skimming the *Saturday Warrnambool Standard*, sitting there was my entry into the world of optics. OPSM were looking for an apprentice in optical fitting and surfacing. I never knew such a thing existed, but after some research I was excited, and a qualification and schooling at RMIT in Melbourne sounded cool for someone from country Victoria. Somehow I got the job. The week-long training blocks at RMIT, underground in the optics 'dungeon', was fun. We had many great times that are still discussed today.

### 2. What are your main career highlights?

Successfully completing my apprenticeship through the RMIT system was an early highlight. Being in the industry for 34 years, the last 24 in practice management, has been the source of my greatest memories and continues today with the amazing team at Warrnambool & Portland Eyecare. Seeing dispensers get their opportunity before growing into leaders and teachers themselves has been rewarding. The friendships and relationships with people from the various sectors of our optical community has provided many highlights, especially during conferences and trade fairs. I'm sure O=MEGA23 will produce highlights galore.

### 3. What are your strengths as an optical dispenser and what excites you about your job?

Product knowledge and being confident as an optical dispenser. It gives the patient confidence in you to guide them towards the right frames and lenses for their needs. Seeing people wearing a frame that complements their personality is a great feeling – and they may not have even tried that frame if you didn't give them the confidence to give it a go. On a different note, I had a young boy come into our practice a few years ago – all he wanted to do was play footy but his everyday glasses were not suitable. I arranged a pair of sporting goggles and now every time I see not-so-little Darren, he has a beaming smile and

his dream to one day play for his beloved Collingwood Magpies is alive. He makes me smile every time.

### 4. If you could go back and provide advice to yourself at the beginning of your optical dispensing career, what would you say?

You don't know what you don't know. And I still don't know what I don't know.

### 5. What do you see as the key opportunities and challenges facing the future of optical dispensing in Australia?

There are opportunities for optical dispensing to be more regulated as an industry and I believe that will happen as courses are now government-funded, in part, which will hopefully be attractive for employers to put their staff through formal training options. The challenges we face is being able to attract people to our industry. We have a low profile for whatever reason, and I'm hoping ODA can boost this in the future. Gaining a foothold with secondary school career advisors would be a huge benefit. There would be a tiny percentage of school kids that would look at optics as a career.

### 6. How do you ensure your skills and knowledge stay up to date in such a fast-moving industry?

Keeping up with the latest in our industry is almost a day-to-day-prospect. At Warrnambool & Portland Eyecare we facilitate regular visits from our lens companies who keep us up-to-date, usually over a nice dinner, of course. We also make use of the ProVision training opportunities they provide. The resources and CPD events provided by ODA are also a great platform to upskill and stay current. It's important to show support and make use of all the training and information available.

### 7. Why did you become a member of Optical Dispensers Australia, and what value do you see in the organisation?

I see the organisation as being a great concept to bring dispensers together and share knowledge and experience. To have regular events and networking opportunities was also very appealing to me.

### 8. What would you say to others thinking of joining Optical Dispensers Australia?

The more the merrier. If ODA can build its member base, the benefits for all members will grow. Get involved and help make our industry the best it can be. Don't sit on the sideline looking on, get involved in the game! ■



Peter Lock's extensive dispensing career has also seen him move into practice management.