

# WHEN SOMEONE TAKES A CHANCE ON YOU



## DISPENSER DETAILS

**Name:** Lucija Valentic

**Position:** Director

**Location:** Base Curve  
Optical, Victoria

**Years in industry:** 17

### 1. What initially attracted you to a career in optical dispensing?

I've been wearing glasses since the age of five so as early as I can remember I've been surrounded by optics. Growing up in Germany, I always thought optics was a little out of my reach, so it took until my early 30s (now in Australia) until I was given a chance to step into optical industry. I will forever be grateful to my mentor and a guy that took a chance on me, Mr Chris McDonald. He is retired now but we keep in touch and every now and then he pops into my practice to say hello.

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

Opening my own practice, Base Curve Optical, in February 2019. This is located in Sandringham, Victoria. Also, winning the Outstanding Practice Owner Award at the recent 2024 ODA National Excellence Awards in Melbourne.

### 3. What are your strengths as an optical dispenser?

My strengths are product knowledge and having an innate ability to pick the most appropriate frames for my clients. I have a little check list in my head and when all boxes are ticked, I'm happy and my clients are happy. What excites me about my job is dispensing for children and helping them navigate the news of having to wear glasses or contact lenses, and dispensing for all their sporting needs. I am huge on sports eyewear, being sporty my entire life, I know how important it is to have great fitting glasses or goggles.

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

I should've done it sooner because I love everything about it. But there's no regrets. I fell

into it when the time was right for me and fell in love with it. So as the saying goes: do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life. That's how I feel about it.

### 5. What are the opportunities and challenges facing optical dispensing in Australia?

I think optical dispensing is rewarding on so many levels. The challenges we face are probably the depth of training and number of trainees.

I feel there's a shortage of skilled optical dispensers. The optical industry should think of some great incentives to entice more people into optical dispensing.

On another front, dry eye disease (DED) is emerging as a problem for many people and this is what prompted me to incorporate a dedicated dry eye treatment clinic within my practice. I suffer from it, and so does my mum, and we have some great success stories from our clients and their DED management.

### 6. How do you ensure your skills and knowledge stay up to date?

I try to attend as many seminars and new launch products as I can, be it in person or online. Over the years I've developed strong relationships with many product development

managers, and they keep me in the loop. I follow fashion trends in Europe and try to stay relevant with my product.

### 7. Why did you become a member of ODA?

I am grateful that ODA exists, and that it represents optical dispensers within the industry. I like to network and ODA is the perfect place where I can find other likeminded people – plus there is always a chance to learn something new. I also believe in the importance of giving back, and ODA is certainly doing that with its expedition to Fiji and probably other places in the future.

### 8. What did it mean to win the Outstanding Practice Owner Award at the 2024 ODA National Excellence Awards?

It meant validation of all the hard work I've put into building my own practice (greenfield). It was tough because the world stopped for two years due to the pandemic but somehow Base Curve Optical stayed afloat.

### 9. What would you say to others thinking of joining ODA?

Just do it, it's a no brainer. The more members we have, the more voices we have. ■



Lucija Valentic's Base Curve Optical is a greenfield independent optometry practice she opened in Sandringham, Victoria, in 2019.

Founded in 2022, OPTICAL DISPENSERS AUSTRALIA'S mission is to transform the optical dispensing industry by creating a community where optical dispensers and their associates can feel supported and inspired through education, events, networking, and employment advice, plus more. Visit: [www.odamembers.com.au](http://www.odamembers.com.au)