MEDIA RELEASE | For Immediate Release

People With Vision Loss To Gather On The Steps Of Parliament House Around Australia, Calling For Smart Glasses Policy That Doesn't Compromise Independence

This International White Cane Day - Thursday 15 October, people living with vision loss, their families and supporters will gather on the steps of Parliament House in cities around Australia as part of Voice for Vision, a campaign backed by Vision 2020 Australia, the peak body for eye health and vision care, with local support from See Differently with the Royal Society for the Blind in South Australia.

The campaign is calling on government to ensure that any new policy response to smart glasses doesn't unintentionally create barriers for people who rely on the technology for everyday independence such as reading, navigating unfamiliar environments, and staying connected with community.

Voice for Vision launched nationally on the forecourt of Parliament House, Canberra, on Monday 12 October, where representatives of the eye health and vision care sector gathered to demonstrate a united position ahead of International White Cane Day.

See Differently Executive Director - Damian Papps said the strength of the campaign lay in the sector speaking with one voice.

"This is a national issue impacting on our whole community. When the eye health and vision care sector comes together like this, it sends a clear message that new policy must be developed with the people it will profoundly impact."

"We support sensible privacy protections. What we're asking is that any restrictions target harmful conduct, not the technology itself, and that people with disability aren't forced to justify or disclose their condition simply to use every day assistive technology."

See Differently Client Advisory Chair Michael Hutchison, who uses smart glasses in his day-to-day life, said the technology had become an important part of how he navigates the world.

"They have become a life changing device that I use to safely navigate in my everyday life, and a core pillar for my independence as someone who is legally blind" Mr Hutchison said.

Media are invited to join us on the steps of Parliament House and hear directly from people living with vision loss about what smart glasses mean for their everyday independence, as these are the voices decision-makers need to hear before policy on this technology is set.

Event Details
Thursday 15 October from 10.00am to 12.00pm
Parliament House
North Terrace, Adelaide

Media And Interview Opportunities

1. See Differently – Executive Director: Damian Papps re comment on the national policy debate from See Differently and Vision 2020 Australia's perspective
2. See Differently – Client Advisory Chair: Michael Hutchison re live demonstration of smart glasses supporting independence
3. Voice for Vision campaign participants re Real stories from South Australians living with vision loss

Media Enquiries
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Background Reading

- Campaign Hub | seedifferently.org.au/voice-for-vision
- Campaign Toolkit | seedifferently.org.au/voice-for-vision/toolkit
- Michael Hutchison's story on Channel 9 News Adelaide | via See Differently Facebook
- Michael Hutchison's story in The Advertiser | via See Differently Facebook
- Damian Papps' letter to the editor | via See Differently Facebook

About See Differently
Founded in 1884, See Differently is one of South Australia's oldest charities and the state's largest provider of low vision services, supporting people who are blind or have low vision to live with independence and confidence.

Vision 2020 Australia
The national peak body for eye health and vision care, bringing together members from across the sector to prevent avoidable blindness and support full participation in the community for people who are blind or have low vision.