**Key messages regarding changes to the NSW Spectacles Program on 1 July 2014**

* A new program model will be implemented for the NSW Spectacles Program from 1 July 2014.
* Vision Australia will commence as NSW Spectacles Program provider on 1 July 2014, taking over from VisionCare NSW at the expiry of their contract on 30 June 2014.
* The technological and commercial landscape has changed dramatically since the program was launched over 20 years ago.
* The changes to the program model will streamline the application and delivery process for the network of participating optometrists. It is also anticipated to reduce timeframes for client approval and spectacle delivery.
* A key component of the new program model is moving from the current external supply chain servicing client orders to utilising each participating optometrists existing suppliers. This change is anticipated to provide optometrists greater control of program applications they are managing and the ability to leverage existing supplier relationships.
* This will result in a vastly improved service to clients, increase the range of products available, and produce faster product turnarounds.
* The NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) would like to thank OAA and ODMA for their support and participation in the development of the new, contemporary model for the NSW Spectacles Program.

**Background:**

* The NSW Spectacles Program provides free spectacles and other vision aids to the most vulnerable people in NSW.
* The NSW Spectacles Program has been administered by VisionCare NSW on behalf of FACS since 1992
* The Government has reviewed the program in its entirety in order to identify how it can improve service delivery to clients and participation in the program for optometrists and optical dispensers.
* Findings from the review and stakeholder consultation informed Government’s decision to pursue a more contemporary program model; to commence 1 July 2014.
* Maintaining a level of continuity of service provision over the transition period is imperative to FACS to ensure the most vulnerable people in NSW receive assistance with their vision aid needs.
* Under the new arrangements, clients to the program will still be required to meet eligibility criteria. However, significant improvements in business and operational processes will enable many efficiencies in assessing and approving client applications.
* FACS will also continue to provide ongoing funding in support of the program’s improvement and expansion.
* Both FACS and Vision Australia will be carefully monitoring the transition period to ensure implementation of the new program model is successful.