



Shannon Davis completely blindsided by his glaucoma diagnosis

Health-conscious father-of-two Shannon Davis sadly now understands why glaucoma is commonly referred to as a silent thief of sight.

With no known family history of glaucoma and the only one in his family without prescription spectacles, 45-year-old Shannon had his eyes checked after wondering why he wouldn't need them when most of his friends and family wore them. The check-up revealed that he was legally blind.

"I was shocked, confused when I was told I had a severe chronic disease (that I knew nothing about) and that it was already very advanced in its progression," says Shannon. "This meant I had already irreversibly lost a large amount of my vision in both eyes and had very little vision left to play with for the remainder of my life. With no prospect of medical improvement to my vision I was advised I was legally blind and I could no longer drive.

"I know you're thinking, how does this happen? So did I! What was happening is the mind does a phenomenal job of compensating for the actual visual deficit and damage to the optic nerve by filling in the blanks with what it thinks should be in your peripheral visual field. I had no idea that this was happening."

Shannon's shocking diagnosis and permanent disablement was debilitating and led to him medically retiring from work. However the unconditional support of his loving family and exemplary medical care available in Australia meant not all hope was lost. With his ophthalmologist's guidance and surgical interventions, Shannon has now lowered his eye pressures and slowed down further progression of his glaucoma and the loss of sight.

"I have recovered from my surgeries and made my peace with the knowledge that the condition may continue to slowly deteriorate, and there is no prospect for any improvement in my vision," says Shannon. "It's about understanding how I can lead a full and enjoyable life with significant disability, with the acceptance that my life will be different."

Shannon's glaucoma journey demonstrates that an individual's eye health is not defined by whether you do or do not need prescription glasses. Regular eye checks need to be prioritised like other areas of overall health, such as dental, as loss of sight can be prevented through early detection.

Shannon hopes Glaucoma Australia's new fundraising initiative, **7 Sights in 7 Days Challenge**, will encourage Australians to place high value on their sight and be proactive with regular eye exams. The initiative involves sharing a photo of an amazing sight every day for seven days to raise funds to help end glaucoma blindness this World Glaucoma Week (6–12 March 2022).

The **7 Sights in 7 Days Challenge**, part of Glaucoma Australia's annual Treat Your Eyes campaign, is asking Australians to capture everyday moments to remind them sight is precious while raising much-needed funds for early detection programs and critical support services.

“People tend to take their overall health for granted until something goes wrong. Glaucoma and your overall visual health are not a trivial matter. It needs to be given greater priority in people’s health management. In Australia we are fortunate to have access to some of the best medical expertise and resources in the world, so use it! Get your eyes checked and protect your vision,” adds Shannon.

To register or find out more about Glaucoma Australia’s **7 Sights in 7 Days Challenge** go to: www.sevensights.org.au

For more information, please contact:

Jane Morey | Morey Media | Ph. 02 9436 2111 | Mob. 0416 097 678 | Email: jane@moreymedia.com.au