

## Marsfield Senior Tony Bourke says Australians Need to Open Their Eyes When it Comes to Glaucoma

At 41, Tony Bourke realised his eyesight was deteriorating, and despite being aware of his family history of glaucoma, he was in disbelief when he left his specialist appointment with a positive diagnosis.

Tony's mother, Mollie, lived with glaucoma for almost 30 years. Beyond her laser treatment it appeared to Tony that her glaucoma was managed and didn't have an adverse effect on her life or her ability to function in everyday activities.

"My mother was one of eight siblings, and I don't know if her brothers and sisters ever had a glaucoma diagnosis. Families were very private in those days and a physical illness was seen as a weakness. Sharing a glaucoma diagnosis really was unheard of, even if it may have been beneficial for others to know," explains Tony.

Tony has been living with glaucoma since 1980 and has had several surgeries including laser, cataract and an emergency trabeculectomy to save his right eye.

"Although some of my liberties have been taken away, such as driving, I feel grateful that I still have some vision left and can see"

Tony's sister, Margaret, four years his junior, had a very different journey with glaucoma. She was prompted to get her eyes checked when Tony was diagnosed.

"Due to early detection and intervention, she was able to manage her glaucoma through eye drops and lived almost as though it was non-existent in her daily life. With very little deterioration of her sight when diagnosed and regular ophthalmology check-ups, Margaret found living with glaucoma was very manageable."

In terms of his glaucoma diagnosis Tony says, "You've only got to **open your eyes** and see that a lot of people are worse off than yourself and you need to get on with life."

Tony is encouraging all Australians to get involved with Glaucoma Australia's new fundraising initiative, **7 Sights in 7 Days Challenge**, 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 a photo of everyday moments in their local surroundings to remind them that sight is precious while raising much-needed funds for early detection programs and critical support services.

“If you have a family history of glaucoma, make the time to go and get your eyes checked regularly. Early intervention was the difference between my sister and myself. I am grateful for my sight, so please be grateful for yours and get your eyes checked,” adds Tony.

To find out more about how you can be involved in **7 Sights in 7 Days Challenge** go to: [www.sevensights.org.au](http://www.sevensights.org.au)

**For more information, please contact:**

Jane Morey | Morey Media | 0416 097 678 | [jane@moreymedia.com.au](mailto:jane@moreymedia.com.au)