

The Hon. Peter Dutton, MP
Minister for Health
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

**Re: Funding Macular Disease Foundation Australia Helpline
Commonwealth pre-budget submission 2014-2015**

I respectfully ask for your support of Macular Disease Foundation Australia's pre-budget submission 2014-2015 to the Commonwealth Treasury, requesting \$6 million over three years to fund Australia's only national macular disease Helpline.

Despite the high prevalence and enormous impact of macular disease in this country, the Foundation has received an average of only \$163,000 per year (excl. GST) in Commonwealth funding since 2005. No Commonwealth funding is received for the Foundation's Helpline.

The Foundation is the sole national organisation addressing macular disease and has filled an enormous gap in public health by providing world-recognised prevention, early detection and support programs. It now needs funding support to promote and provide the Helpline.

The Foundation's national work in prevention, early detection and enhancing quality of life is producing improved health outcomes for Australians by reducing the social, emotional and economic burden of macular disease.

Macular Disease Foundation Australia Helpline:

- A frontline service providing callers (patients, family, carers, and health professionals) with information and support on macular disease, low vision aids and support services.
- The only telephone helpline in Australia covering all macular diseases – macular degeneration, and recently diabetic retinopathy, retinal vein occlusions and other macular dystrophies.
- Services macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in Australia which primarily affects older Australians. Over one million people show some evidence of this disease and it accounts for 50% of all blindness and severe vision loss.

Full name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ State: _____

Postcode: _____ Telephone: (0_____) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____