

## **mEYE World Photographic Competition call for entries**

Today the Macular Degeneration Foundation (MDF) launches the inaugural **mEYE World Photographic Competition** to raise awareness of Macular Degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in Australia.

Australians are invited to capture their visual story through the lens of a camera and help raise awareness of this devastating eye disease.

Macular Degeneration affects central vision which is responsible for our ability to see faces, read, drive, distinguish colours clearly and see the focus of our world.

The mEYE World Photographic Competition provides an opportunity for enthusiasts and budding photographers to share and showcase their talent whilst raising awareness of the disease, to save sight and support the Macular Degeneration Foundation.

Renowned Australian photographer and competition judge, Robert McFarlane, realises the importance of early detection after his mother was diagnosed with Macular Degeneration.

“Vision affects the way we experience life on every level. My mother was diagnosed with Macular Degeneration which means I have a 50 percent chance of developing the disease because of my family history. This photo competition is a perfect way to raise awareness of Macular Degeneration as our sight is crucial to us for seeing the world we live in and especially our loved ones,” said Mr McFarlane.

MDF CEO, Julie Heraghty is encouraging all Australians to enter and have the chance to win prizes including cameras and photography software.

“This is an exciting project as our focus is your vision. The Foundation wants Australians to use photography, a powerful and popular medium, to illustrate the precious gift of sight. We’re asking everyone to help raise awareness, support the Foundation and save sight. Join in, have a go and help ensure we all have our eyes on the future,” said Ms Heraghty.

“Early detection of this disease saves sight. We want to spread the word for people to get their macula checked especially those at risk, which includes people over 50, those with a family history of the disease and those who smoke,” said Ms Heraghty.

Entries must include 50 words or less that explains how the entrant’s photograph conveys the theme, ‘*eyes on the future*’. Entries will be judged on their creativity, composition, content and technique. To enter go to [www.meyephotocomp.com.au](http://www.meyephotocomp.com.au) and enter your photograph online.

### **Competition details:**

Entries open Monday 14 March, and close midnight Wednesday 27 April.

Categories:

- Open – the general public
- Macular Degeneration community
- Healthcare professionals
- Junior – under 18

The winners will be announced at the Macular Degeneration Foundation 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary - One Decade Gala Fundraising Dinner at the Hilton Hotel, Sydney, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May which will also launch Macular Degeneration Awareness Week (22<sup>nd</sup> May – 28<sup>th</sup> May 2011).

Macular Degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in Australia and affects one in seven Australians over the age of 50.

Macular Degeneration symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Difficulty with reading or any other activity with fine vision
- Distortion where straight lines appear wavy or bent
- Distinguishing faces becomes a problem
- Dark patches or empty spaces appear in the centre of your vision.

To find out more about Macular Degeneration and to receive your free information pack, please phone the Macular Degeneration Foundation on the free call number 1800 111 709 or visit

[www.mdfoundation.com.au](http://www.mdfoundation.com.au)

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### About the Macular Degeneration Foundation

The Macular Degeneration Foundation is a charity that is committed to reducing the incidence and impact of Macular Degeneration in Australia. The Foundation achieves this through awareness, education, research, support services and representation. Raising awareness of the disease and its potential impacts is one of the key objectives of the Foundation.

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### About Macular Degeneration

Macular Degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in Australia. All Australians over age 50 should have an eye test and make sure the macula is checked.

The macula is the central part of the retina, which is the light sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. The retina processes all visual images and is responsible for the ability to drive, see colours clearly, read and recognise faces. Macular Degeneration causes progressive macula damage resulting in central vision loss.

You can have the early signs of Macular Degeneration without even knowing.

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- Difficulty with reading or any other activity with fine vision.
- Distortion where straight lines appear wavy or bent.
- Distinguishing faces becomes a problem.
- Dark patches or empty spaces appear in the centre of your vision.

These symptoms can all indicate that there is something wrong. The major risk factors for Macular Degeneration are age, smoking and a family history of the disease.