



**JOINT
MEDIA ALERT
NOVEMBER 13, 2007.**



OPTOMETRISTS SEE THROUGH STREET YOUTH EYESIGHT ISSUE

The Optometrists Association Australia (NSW) has responded to calls for help from Father Chris Riley's charity organisation, Youth Off The Streets. Staff at Youth Off The Streets are concerned that vision problems are impacting on the learning of some students who attend Chapel School in Merrylands or access the Eden Learning Centre at Macquarie Fields.

The Association will initiate a program this Thursday (November 15) to conduct vision screening for 25 teenagers to determine visual acuity, peripheral vision, eye tracking and how well their eyes work in a team – all critical to effective learning. A basic eye health check-up for eye diseases will also be carried out.

OAA-NSW Executive Director Andrew McKinnon said this was the first time support had been requested by Youth Off The Streets, and the optometrists association was delighted to help the disadvantaged teenagers.

A report will be provided to the schools for each teenager tested, along with any necessary recommendations.

The media is invited to the vision screening.

WHEN: Thursday, November 15 at 10:30am. **WHERE:** Youth Off The Streets, Chapel School – 102 Kenyons Road, MERRYLANDS, NSW

IMAGES/VISION: Media are welcome to film/photograph the eye tests. Optometric equipment will also be used for disease screening.

INTERVIEWS: Executive Director of the Optometrists Association Australia (NSW Division), Andrew McKinnon, and Optometrist Paula Katalinic are available for interviews. Youth Off The Streets Chapel School Teacher, Grant Dodds is also available for comment. (*Radio media requiring telephone interviews should contact 0404 074 299).

Released by: Bill Pickering, Flagship Communications [(02) 4722 2252 or 0404 074 299] on behalf of the OAA (NSW) and Ina Mullin, for Youth Off The Streets [(02) 8332 5005 or 0412 377 217].