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Sugar tax a no-brainer for Australia, says the ASO.

The Australian Society of Ophthalmologists (ASO) has joined calls for the Federal Government to introduce a tax on sugary drinks in Australia, as rates of diabetes and related eye disease skyrocket.

According to Diabetes Australia statistics, around 280 Australians develop diabetes every day. It is now our fastest growing chronic condition (outstripping heart disease and cancer).

Add to this the fact that more than 60% of Australians with type 2 diabetes (lifestyle diabetes) will develop diabetic eye disease within 20 years of diagnosis.*

Diabetic eye disease is a leading cause of irreversible blindness in Australian adults.

ASO President Dr Michael Steiner says the introduction of a sugar tax is a no-brainer for Australia.

“We have an obesity epidemic that offers its own compelling case for the tax, but when you consider flow-on diseases such as diabetes and eye disease then you have a whole other layer of reasoning for doing this,” he said.

“We have a battle on our hands to save Australians from lifestyle-related disease and it has to be fought on a range of fronts,” Dr Steiner said.

“A sugar tax is one way we can make an impact. What we have to do is begin to create an environment that is conducive to preventative healthcare,” he said.

ENDS.

Sarah Todman, Australian Society of Ophthalmologists media. Mob:0425 883 304

**Source: Out of Sight, A report into diabetic eye disease in Australia, 2013. Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute and Centre for Eye Research.*