



## Tinted lenses bring words into living colour

LIFE may look good through rose-coloured glasses, but it's even better through tints of teal and peach - especially for people with migraines and learning difficulties.

Experts say coloured lenses, popular in Britain for decades, could help up to 50 per cent of children and adults affected by glare-induced headaches and reading problems, but the treatment has been slow to gain ground in Australia. In some people visual distortions are caused by the brain failing properly to process glare. Sufferers have faulty depth perception and trouble reading because words on a page can appear to be moving, blurred, faded or swirling. The disorder was identified in 1994 by Helen Irlen, an American literacy instructor, after one of her students reported being able to read properly using a red plastic overlay left in the room from a previous class. Since then, thousands of people previously diagnosed as slow learners or dyslexic have been successfully treated using colour therapy.

There are five testing centres in NSW which treat Irlen Syndrome but Sydney optometrist David Evian believes many more people could be helped if the condition was more readily diagnosed when people presented for eye tests. More than 1500 people have been fitted with coloured lenses at his practice in the past two years, with many travelling from South-East Asia, after he spent \$10,000 on a machine offering thousands of colour and tint combinations. The machine, one of only four in Australia, was presented at the Optical Distributors and Manufacturers Association trade fair at Sydney's Darling Harbour at the weekend.

"I've been interested in colour for decades and I've seen some great results," Mr Evian said. "I am not saying colour alone solves the problem - first we find the right prescription and then add the right tint. And there is no cure for dyslexia but this certainly has been shown to give people a far greater quality of life. It stops the words running across the page like ants."

Usually people respond to one of six main colour combinations, with blue, teal and peach being the most popular, but any one of thousands of hues could work, he said. For George Joubert, 9, of Castle Hill, Sydney, new blue lenses have helped him read properly for the first time.

"He couldn't read anything without it jumping up and down on the page, but his school work has really improved in the past three months and he's a much happier boy," his mother, Zelia, said.

## 'Adventure passports' for NSW kids

NSW primary school children will be able to spend their school holidays exploring museums and art galleries for free, under a new government initiative.

The Kids' Adventure Passport gives students free access to more than 70 museums, galleries and historic sites across the state from Monday.

Sites on offer include the Australian Museum, the Art Gallery of NSW, Elizabeth Farm and the Sydney Observatory.

They can use the passport, available at the participating venues, on weekends, public holidays and school holidays until January 27, 2010.

"It's a terrific opportunity, particular-

ly as we head into the school holidays, for primary school-aged kids right across NSW to get access to our cultural institutions," Premier Nathan Rees said.

If families use the passport on Sundays, they are also entitled to cheap transport on Sydney's ferries, trains and buses.

## Burger joint puts a firm price on its gourmet moo

Sobo, the Bondi Beach venue that let diners decide how much to pay, has scrapped its no-set-price restaurant format, reopening as a gourmet burger joint.

Owner Adam Gerondis, pictured, says most customers were fair when asked to nominate the value of their meals, with a few exceptions. "We had a group of three girls in here - they ate three courses and paid \$5 in total," he says.

Moo Gourmet Burgers does have prices: a classic beef burger costs \$10.50. Gerondis says he wants to keep the burgers simple. That hasn't stopped him listing a barbecue pork belly burger on the menu. Is that moo or oink?



Article from the Sydney Morning Herald

# Changes to the definition of income

From 1 July 2009, there will be changes to how certain types of income affect some Centrelink and Family Assistance Office payments. The changes will also affect what Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office defines as income. If you report your income, these changes may affect you.

The amount of payment you receive from Centrelink or the Family Assistance Office depends in part on your income. To reduce the risk of an overpayment, you must let Centrelink or the Family Assistance Office know immediately if your income or circumstances change.

The changes to the definition of income mean that, from 1 July 2009, assessable income for Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office purposes will also include:

1. reportable superannuation contributions, and
2. net losses from investment income.

It is important to remember that what Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office defines as assessable income is not always the same as what the Australian Taxation Office defines as taxable income.

1. **Reportable superannuation contributions**

Reportable superannuation contributions include discretionary contributions and can also be referred to as concessional or before-tax contributions. Examples of these include:

voluntary salary sacrificed contributions, made by you or on your behalf by your employer. These contributions are above those required by law, such as industrial award or the superannuation guarantee. or total superannuation contributions made by you as a self-employed person, for which you can claim a tax deduction.

So, if you have any reportable superannuation contributions, you need to make sure you include this income in any income you declare to Centrelink or the Family Assistance Office, including your income estimate for the 2009 / 2010 financial year and subsequent years.

### 2. Total net investment losses

Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office already includes the amount lost from renting property in assessable income. From 1 July 2009, income will also include the amount lost by other investments. Together, net losses from rental properties and net losses from investment income are known as total net investment losses.

If you expect to make a loss from rental property income, investment

income or both, you need to give Centrelink or the Family Assistance Office details of the total amount of losses. It is important that you record losses from investment earning only, not capital losses. Investment earning includes taxable and tax-exempt interest, dividends and rental income.

Payments where you need to declare your income to Centrelink or the Family Assistance Office may be affected by these changes. Please contact Centrelink or the Family Assistance Office if this applies to you. If you are unsure if any of these changes apply to you, you should contact your accountant, financial advisor or the Tax Office.

For examples of how these changes may affect you, contact your nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre for the factsheet Changes to the definition of income could affect your payment or visit

[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

For more information about changes to the definition of income or other Centrelink payments and services, visit our website at [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) You can also call Centrelink on 13 1202 for languages other than English or, visit your nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre. To contact Centrelink's Financial Information Service for information about financial matters, call 13 2300.