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ALBURY-WODONGA, FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 1987. 35¢

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HEALTH CRISIS

ROLF WON'T LOSE SIGHT OF HIS DESTINY

THE gift of sight is something Rolf Kaiser says is being stolen from hundreds of Australians every year.

What's more, he knows who the thief is, and yesterday launched a national campaign to alert people before it strikes again.

"To See Or Not To See" is the name of the booklet about the eye disease glaucoma, and the campaign that will take him 30,000km in 14 months.

Glaucoma, to explain it simply, is a disease which causes a build-up of fluid pressure behind the eye.

This brings on a gradual loss of vision which, if allowed to run its course unchecked, leads to blindness.

Mr Kaiser has put together a

display that features six of his model ships — each built from plans and drawings of the originals — video tapes on glaucoma, and a locally-produced audio tape about the disease.

He will take the display around the country in a bid to educate the public, encourage people to ask for glaucoma tests, and to tell them of the treatments now available.

Mr Kaiser is a retired engineer, who loved to build model ships, but now suffers from glaucoma.

He has learnt a lot about glaucoma — terms more familiar to an ophthalmologist roll easily off his tongue.

But he keeps those phrases for health professionals.

When talking with other people interested in the disease, Mr Kaiser can explain it in common terms.

He uses the analogy of an unattended kitchen sink with the plug left in, and the tap turned on, to describe glaucoma.

Admittedly, they are simple terms to describe a complex disease, but Mr Kaiser says it is "the only way to make people understand it can happen to them".

Once he discovered he had the disease, two years ago, he was determined to discover more.

But he was thwarted by the lack of public awareness about glaucoma.

In fact, Mr Kaiser said the Government had no figures or policy on the disease.

The member for Farrer, Mr Fischer, who launched the appeal yesterday at the Myer City Centre, had approached the Federal Health Minister, Dr Blewett, on Mr Kaiser's behalf.

Dr Blewett replied that Mr Kaiser's campaign would "provide a valuable community service" and urged him to produce educational and promotional material on the subject.

Mr Kaiser's booklet gives clear and concise definitions to the types of glaucoma, the causes (with diagrams), the treatments, and living with glaucoma.

His glaucoma is now in remission after medication, laser treatment and microsurgery.



● Mr Kaiser prepares to fight Glaucoma.