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Walker's glaucoma mission nears end

Megan Gnad | 1st August 2011

Doug Wilson of Tauranga walked into Oamaru late last week on a mission to raise awareness about glaucoma.

The 75-year-old set off from the Cape Reinga lighthouse on June 20 and aims to reach Bluff by tomorrow or Wednesday.

Glaucoma NZ held its annual awareness appeal during July to inform people that the disease is the number one preventable cause of blindness in the country.

Mr Wilson told The Oamaru Mail people did not realise the extent or impact of glaucoma.

"It can even affect a child in a mother's womb," he said.

"People should be getting treatment straight after diagnosis and you can go through the public sector for eye drops."

Mr Wilson speaks from experience. In September he was forced to stop driving because of failing eyesight, but after being given the correct treatment he can now read small print.

"It's changed me right around," he said. "The Government don't put any research into it. It's all by public donations."

Mr Wilson, who was the president of the Western Bay of Plenty Grey Power, started out from Cape Reinga to Whangarei, but now hitchhikes between towns and walks through them.

"I'm not doing this for me," he said. "It's a cause that needed to be addressed and needed to be in the public arena."

"I want to get that message into the home."

If anyone wishes to make a donation to support Glaucoma NZ, its bank account details are ASB 12-3013-0180964-00.



On the Road: Tauranga man Doug Wilson, 75, arrived in Oamaru last week as he travels the country raising awareness about Glaucoma.

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