NEWS LESSON

The Glasses That Can Watch You Back



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Would you notice if someone nearby was wearing a camera?
2. Would smart glasses make a conversation more comfortable or less?
3. Where would you most want people to put recording devices away?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**spectacles**	☐	A	official rules that control how something is done
2	**captions**	☐	B	a careful search to find out the facts about something
3	**appliances**	☐	C	something that is not included in a rule
4	**discreetly**	☐	D	words on a screen that show what people are saying
5	**investigation**	☐	E	machines in the home, such as a washing machine or oven
6	**consulting**	☐	F	in a quiet way so that other people do not notice
7	**exception**	☐	G	glasses that you wear to see better
8	**regulation**	☐	H	asking people for their opinions before you decide

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Wearable cameras are helping people with disabilities and worrying everyone else. Australia is weighing up where the limits should be.

1 A pair of smart glasses can look almost identical to ordinary spectacles. Inside the frames, however, there may be cameras, microphones and software capable of describing objects, translating speech or recording video. For some users, the technology is a convenient way to capture everyday moments without taking out a phone. For others, it has become an important tool for living independently. That difference is at the centre of a growing privacy debate in Australia.

2 Chris Edwards, who is blind, uses smart glasses to read recipes, identify settings on household appliances and follow directions while walking with his guide dog. Because he can receive information without holding a phone, his hands remain free. Matt Henderson, an Australian town planner who has been deaf since birth, uses live captions during conversations and meetings. Both describe the technology as giving them confidence and reducing their dependence on other people.

3 Yet the same features that make smart glasses practical can also make them intrusive. Some models allow users to record people discreetly, sometimes in situations where filming would clearly be inappropriate. An investigation into inexpensive devices has also raised concerns about whether security protections are strong enough to prevent unauthorised access to recordings and data. As the glasses become smaller and more common, it may be increasingly difficult to tell when a camera is operating.

4 In 2026, Australian Greens politicians proposed a 12-month ban on imports of certain camera-enabled wearable devices while stronger privacy protections were considered. The proposal included an exception for genuine disability aids. However, the federal government said it had no plans to introduce its own import ban and was consulting on wider changes to privacy law. The distinction matters: the proposal attracted headlines, but it was not an existing nationwide ban.

5 Disability advocates worry that describing the devices mainly as tools for secret filming could create suspicion towards people who rely on them. A stranger may not be able to tell whether the glasses are reading a sign aloud for someone who is blind or recording the people nearby. That uncertainty could lead to uncomfortable confrontations and put people off using helpful technology in public.

6 Neither side has an easy solution. Clear recording indicators, stronger security standards and meaningful penalties for misuse could protect privacy without removing accessibility benefits. But even good rules may struggle to keep up with rapidly changing devices. The debate illustrates a familiar problem with new technology: a feature that provides independence for one person can threaten the privacy of another. Effective regulation has to take both experiences seriously.

Sources: Australian Greens. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Several Australian schools have already banned smart glasses. T F NG
2. Matt Henderson is an Australian town planner who uses live captions. T F NG
3. The federal government planned to introduce its own import ban. T F NG
4. The Greens proposed a 12-month ban on certain imports. T F NG
5. The proposal would have banned glasses used as disability aids. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

confrontations	identical	indicators	loophole	penalties	suspicion	uncertainty	visible

1. The two phones look _____ from the outside, but only one has a hidden camera.
2. Flashing _____ on the frame would show when a camera is on.
3. Without meaningful _____ , companies have little reason to follow the rules.
4. Customers who film in shops are often treated with _____ by the staff.
5. Misunderstandings in crowded places can quickly lead to angry _____ .
6. Economic _____ makes many companies delay big decisions.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By then, he _____ the glasses for a year. (USE)
2. Smart glasses _____ in many shops now. (SELL)
3. If the glasses had a bright light, people _____ the camera. (NOTICE)
4. The new rules _____ in parliament at the moment. (DISCUSS)
5. While he _____ home, the glasses gave him directions. (WALK)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Contrast and condition. Whereas compares two facts, unless means except if, and otherwise means if not.

consequently	despite	nevertheless	otherwise	provided	unless	whereas

1. Some users value the glasses for convenience, _____ others depend on them to live independently.
2. _____ the benefits, many people feel uncomfortable being filmed.
3. Glasses for disabled users should not be banned _____ they are used to film people secretly.
4. The penalties were small; _____ , few firms took the rules seriously.
5. Cameras should show a clear light; _____ , nobody can tell when they are recording.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Should a visible recording light be enough to make filming strangers acceptable?
2. What rule would let useful smart glasses coexist with privacy?
3. Would your answer change if the glasses helped someone see or hear?

9 Role-play: glasses in the cafe

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the cafe manager

A customer is wearing smart glasses with a camera. Two other customers have complained. Politely ask what the glasses do. Decide if the customer can keep them on, and say why.

Student B · the customer

You wear smart glasses to read the menu and signs because your eyesight is poor. You aren't recording anyone. Explain this calmly and suggest a way to make people feel comfortable.

Useful phrases

Excuse me, could I ask about your glasses?

I'm not recording anyone, I promise.

Some customers aren't comfortable with cameras.

I'd be happy to show you how they work.

Could we find a compromise?

That's fair, I'll make sure the light is visible.

Afterwards, tell the class: did the manager and the customer agree, and was the solution fair to everyone?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 G · 2 D · 3 E · 4 F · 5 B · 6 H · 7 C · 8 A

4 True, false or not given

1 NG · 2 T · 3 F · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 identical · 2 indicators · 3 penalties · 4 suspicion · 5 confrontations · 6 uncertainty

6 Verb forms

1 had used · 2 are sold · 3 would notice · 4 are being discussed · 5 was walking

7 Language focus

1 whereas · 2 Despite · 3 unless · 4 consequently · 5 otherwise

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