

# East Asia Vision Program: Timor-Leste

## Summary of results

March to December 2013



### Eye health in Timor-Leste snapshot

- There are approximately **61,100** people aged over 40 who have a visual impairment, including **14,100** people who are blind.
- **61.7 per cent** of people with a disability have a visual impairment.
- Blindness and low vision is **twice as high** in rural than urban areas.
- **Workforce shortages** in the health sector, including in eye health, continue to be a **critical issue**.

# The East Asia Vision Program

The East Asia Vision Program (EAVP) is a three year program (2013-15) funded by the Australian Government and implemented through Vision 2020 Australia's Global Consortium. It involves Consortium members working together with country partners in Vietnam, Timor-Leste and Cambodia to reduce avoidable blindness and low vision.

## Regional results

The following results represent the combined achievement of the Consortium organisations working in Vietnam, Cambodia and Timor-Leste as part of the East Asia Vision Program:

- 692 individual training activities were completed to improve the skills of those working in eye health
- 12 people graduated with new specialist (e.g. ophthalmologist) and general (e.g. eye nurse) qualifications. More people will graduate from these longer-term training courses during the remainder of the Program.

## Program partners

- Ministry of Health
- National Eye Centre (NEC)
- Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e
- National Institute for Health
- East Timor Blind Union
- Halibur Deficiente Matan Timor-Leste Fuan Nabilan
- Fo Naroman Timor-Leste

## Consortium members involved

- The Fred Hollows Foundation
- The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists

## Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium

Established in 2009, the Global Consortium is a partnership of Australian eye health and vision care organisations involved in implementing programs in Asia and the Pacific.

Consortium members use comprehensive and harmonised approaches to support the development of quality eye care and vision-related disability services in close partnership with local governments and organisations.

For more information, visit the Vision 2020 Australia website: [www.vision2020australia.org.au](http://www.vision2020australia.org.au)



An Australian partnership working to eliminate avoidable blindness and reduce the impact of vision loss in our region

Cover photo: courtesy of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons



Consultations took place and a draft National Eye Health Strategy was prepared for Timor-Leste. The Strategy is expected to be finalised in 2014.

### Training of eye health personnel

- 151 individual training activities to improve eye health skills were completed (see section below). This training was primarily in clinical/technical areas. Participants included eye care workers, volunteer health workers and other health care workers at the request of the Ministry of Health.
- Six people graduated from training as new eye health personnel, including those trained to: test vision in patients (refractionists, nurses); make spectacle lenses (optical technicians); and teach people who are blind how to live independently (Orientation and Mobility trainers). More people will graduate from longer training courses during the Program.

### Building capacity of eye care professionals

During 2013, the East Asia Vision Program helped build capacity of eye care professionals in Timor-Leste by conducting a range of training activities.



- **124** clinical and technical training activities
- **25** 'train the trainer' training activities
- **2** management, communication and leadership training activities

## Delivering eye care

- 20,454 patients were screened nationally.
- 15,582 treatments were delivered at the National Eye Centre in Dili, primarily in testing the vision of patients and dispensing spectacles.

## Improving eye care data

An eye health database has been developed for the National Eye Centre. This will link up with the Ministry of Health's data collection system. The database will assist with national data collection on the scale and quality of delivery of eye health services and monitoring the eye health of the population. This data will be used to inform national eye care planning and policy development.

## Reaching all people

Three training modules in eye health were developed or upgraded in 2013 in Timor-Leste. They all included some training on the provision of eye care services to people with a **disability**; ensuring **women** have **equal access** to eye care; and making sure **children** are treated and cared for appropriately during service delivery.



### Reaching women

- An equal number of treatments at the NEC were delivered to men and women.
- More training activities were completed by men than women. The EAVP continues to actively encourage the participation of women in training.

### Reaching the poor

- Screening and treatment of patients was carried out in almost all districts in 2013, including those with a high incidence of poverty such as Manufahi, Ainaro, Manatuto, Aileu and Oecussi.

### Reaching people with a disability

- This is the first time in Timor-Leste that people have graduated as Orientation and Mobility trainers (to work with people with a disability to increase their independence).
- The EAVP collaborated with disability-focused organisations to raise awareness of district-level outreach eye care services. This resulted in an observed increase in people with a disability accessing these services.

### Reaching children

- Child Protection manuals and codes of conduct have been translated into Tetum for local EAVP and NEC staff.