



# 2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Vision  
20/20  
Australia





**We respect and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and future.**

**We acknowledge the stories, traditions and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community.**

Artwork by Timothy Buckley - Iris, 2022

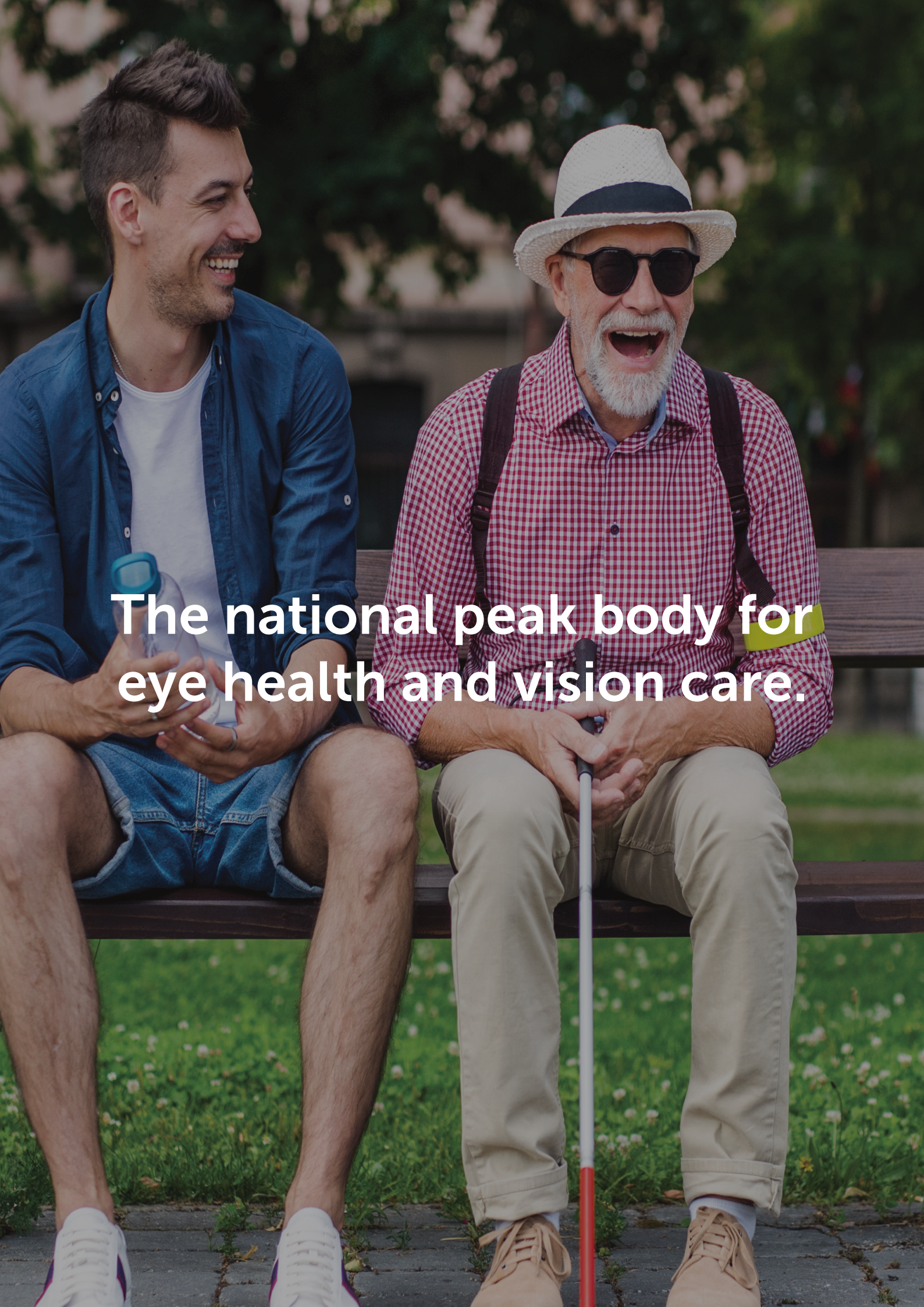


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The national peak body for  
eye health and vision care.



# About Us

Vision 2020 Australia is the national peak body for eye health and vision care.

Our mission is to prevent avoidable vision loss and improve opportunities and outcomes for people living with blindness or low vision. We do this by working to ensure that eye health and vision care remains high on the health, disability and international development agendas of Australian governments.

Vision 2020 Australia works with member organisations, governments and other relevant stakeholders to develop effective policy solutions focused on improving eye health and vision.

Our member organisations have the knowledge and expertise to identify the crucial issues that need to be addressed for improved eye health outcomes and come together through Vision 2020 Australia to speak with a united voice.

## We advocate

We articulate and reflect our sector's views and, with the aim of improving equity and participation:

- We influence, through proactive policy development and problem solving
- We leverage government, and public and private sectors
- We walk with, and are led by the priorities of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples organisations and communities
- We are guided by people with lived experience.

In our advocacy, we acknowledge Australia as an international leader in eye health, and therefore:

- We collaborate with our members and work in partnership with international aid entities to ensure vision and eye health matters are advanced in the international arena
- We leverage the Australian government's international support for vision issues
- We provide a forum for collaboration and information exchange for the benefit of our members and all Australians.

## We build awareness

We communicate with the aim of increasing eye health and vision care knowledge in all related sectors, as well as the general public:

- We make issues relating to eye health visible to varied audiences
- We generate and aggregate evidence on eye health and vision care
- We highlight areas for improvement in services and participation for people who are blind or have low vision.

In our awareness building, we do so in ways that:

- Capture multiple perspectives, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples voices and those with lived experience of blindness and low vision
- Engage with, and build on, the successful communications and activities of our members.



# 2021 - 2022 Snapshot OUR YEAR OF IMPACT

21

submissions,  
reports and  
policy papers  
delivered.



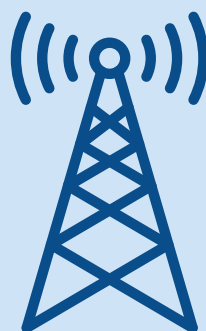
Twenty-five

introduction to eye  
health seminars  
delivered.



national

media coverage  
obtained for  
World Sight Day  
activities and  
initiatives.



22

meetings with  
politicians, advisors  
and department  
representatives.



1.1k%

increase in audience  
reach via Facebook  
posts.



32.7%

open rate of our  
Sector News Alert,  
11.3% higher than  
the industry  
average.



28%

increase in  
LinkedIn  
followers.



# Chair's Message



**The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to linger over the past 12 months while the transition to recovery gathered pace. In some respects, this has echoed the experience of Vision 2020 Australia, particularly from an organisation perspective.**

While the year has seen Vision 2020 continue its positive work to support and advocate for the whole eye health and vision care sector in Australia, we have also undertaken important, transformative approaches to our strategy, advocacy and operational structures.

I would like to acknowledge our CEO, Patricia Sparrow, who joined us in September, 2021. Patricia's immediate enthusiasm to ensure we make a positive impact has been welcome. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Patricia and the contribution she has made to drive our strategic approach that will provide a solid foundation for the next five years. It is a truly exciting time for the organisation as we are placed in a strong position to enhance our influence.

In a federal election year, Vision 2020 was a vocal advocate for the sector to ensure the views of our members and people with blindness and vision loss were recognised. This includes tangible policy solutions that were briefed to the incoming Albanese government. We look forward to engaging further with the 47th Parliament to influence positive change.

The Board is extremely proud of being able to complete and launch Vision 2020's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This is a crucial step in the ongoing journey of meaningful First Nations allyship and one the organisation has unconditionally committed to. Our Reflect RAP is an important piece of work to guide how we develop stronger relationships with our First Nations partners and make a real contribution towards reconciliation.

Personally, I was delighted to introduce the second annual Barry Jones Vision Oration, which was delivered by A/Prof. Kristopher Rallah-Baker, Australia's first Aboriginal ophthalmologist. Kris is a proud Yuggera and Biri-Gubba man and is one of the founding members of the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association. He's on the Board of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, a service that my own father worked for in the 1950s. It was a highlight for me to have him as our guest speaker this year.

Our Committees have continued their valuable contribution and the insight, expertise, collaboration and exchange of ideas emulating from these groups has delivered more robust policies, strategies and submissions to improve eye health and vision care for all Australians and across the region.




Financially, Vision 2020 is in a sound position with healthy organisational reserves consolidated by good financial management. We appreciate the ongoing support of our funding partners and the financial support of members. We will continue to navigate challenging fiscal environments to ensure Vision 2020 Australia remains financially strong.

I would like to thank all of those who have helped us in our achievements this year. Our committed staff, our Board, Committee members and of course, our membership. Our members remain at the centre of Vision 2020's endeavours and I thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to improving eye health and vision care.

**The Hon Christopher Pyne**  
Board Chair





**“In a federal election year, Vision 2020 was a vocal advocate for the sector to ensure the views of our members and people with blindness and vision loss were recognised.”**



# CEO's Message



**It was an absolute honour to be appointed as CEO of Vision 2020 Australia and commence in September, 2021.**

The figures the sector know so well – that 90 per cent of vision loss is avoidable and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are three times more likely to have vision loss – was staggering to me. And learning about the realities for a blind person or someone with vision loss, as we discussed access to RAT testing or someone being able to exercise their right to vote which others of us take for granted, was an eye opener.

This year has been characterised by planning, strategising and transforming our operations. A new Strategic Plan was developed which reaffirms the organisation's mission and commitment to equity for all in access to eye and vision care and full participation in society for people who are blind or have vision loss. In addition, work also commenced on a new advocacy strategy with a focus on getting action on the excellent policies the sector develops at both state/territory and federal level. These two documents chart an exciting course forward.

The organisation took a huge step forward with the finalisation and launch of its first (Reflect) Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). And with Board leadership much consideration has been given to evolving our organisation to become a stronger ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Our work on the 2022 election platform and campaign has set the agenda for the reforms the sector believes are necessary to achieve equity in eye health and support for people who are blind or have vision loss. This was followed up by an Incoming government brief to reinforce key statistics and solutions – many of which are already at hand and just require a decision to act.

The year continued to be affected by COVID-19 lockdowns and uncertainty but through that we managed to continue to connect with our members, stakeholder and politicians via Zoom - imperfect connections but it has enabled us to all stay in contact.

None of this would have been possible without the direction and support of the Board. My thanks to our wonderful Chair, The Hon Christopher Pyne, and all of our Board Directors who volunteer their time and wisdom to support our organisation and our cause.




Our four Committees and their Chairs – Marion Rivers, Kris Rallah-Baker, John Simpson and Brandon Ah-Tong - and all of the members made sure that we developed excellent policy positions. Highlights for me included a sector research agenda and national screening framework for 3.5 – 5-year-olds.

I also want to acknowledge a remarkable team of dedicated and hard working individuals who keep on keeping on no matter what happens. My heartfelt thanks to the leadership team of Carly Iles, Jess Darwishpanah and Che Stockley and all staff for making my job an easy one.

It's now on to 2022-23 with a renewed vigour and purpose for equity and action.

**Patricia Sparrow**  
CEO



**"This year has been characterised by planning, strategising and transforming our operations."**



# Our Board (2021-2022)

## THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE CHAIR

The Hon Christopher Pyne is Chairman of Pyne and Partners and a Professor in the UniSA Business School amongst other appointments.

Christopher served as a member of Federal Parliament from 1993-2019, leading reforms across the Ageing, Education, Industry Innovation and Science, Defence Industry and Defence portfolios.

Christopher's father, Remington, was a past President of RANZCO, contributing to the creation of the first National Trachoma and Eye Health Programme. Christopher has witnessed firsthand, particularly in indigenous communities, the work of the eye sector and is keen to ensure it receives the support it deserves.

## MAUREEN O'KEEFE DEPUTY CHAIR

Maureen was first appointed to the Vision 2020 Australia Board in November 2013 and has been the Deputy Chair of Vision 2020 Australia for several years following a term as Chair of Audit and Finance Committee. Qualifications: BSc(Hons); MBA; DipEd; GAICD, WCLP.

Maureen is an experienced CEO, having recently completed an eight year term as CEO and Board Director of the Australian College of Optometry/ National Vision Research Institute. This followed 8 years as COO of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, and previous senior executive roles in the higher education sector.

Maureen has extensive governance experience as a Board Director outside the eye health and vision sector including Very Special Kids, ARC Centre of Excellence in Convergent Bio-Nano Science and Technology, Board Director and Deputy Chair of BioMelbourne Network (BMN) and Ministerial appointments on three Victorian Government translational research bodies, including the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Medical Research Strategy, the Ministerial Consultative Council for Clinical Trial Research, and the Victorian Cancer Agency.

## JAKI ADAMS

Jaki was born and raised in Darwin (Larrakia Nation) and is of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, with ancestral links to the Yadhagana and Wuthathi people of Cape York Peninsula, traditional family ties with the Gurindji people, and extended family relationships with the people of the Torres Straits and Warlpiri.

Jaki has 25 years' experience in government and non-government/international development sectors. As Director Program Implementation – Oceania, Jaki oversees eye health programming, social justice and advocacy for The Fred Hollows Foundation's Indigenous Australia Program, as well as programming and stakeholder management across the Pacific, Timor Leste, Philippines and Indonesia.

## DALE CLEAVER

First co-opted to the Vision 2020 Australia Board on 28 March 2019, Formally ratified at the 13 November 2019 AGM.

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (Social Work), Senior Exec Leadership and Coaching Program. Experience: CEO, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT; Chairman, Australian Blindness Forum. Former; CEO of Campbell Page LTD, Royal District Nursing Service SA, Australian Red Cross- National Office, Australian Red Cross – South Australia; Board Member Centre of Eye Health; Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors; Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management; Former Board Director, Spastic Centres of South Australia; Honorary Life member of Spastic Centres of South Australia; Former Chairman Volunteering SA.

## DR JESSICA GALLAGHER

Elected to the board in 2014 and global ambassador since 2010, Dr Jessica Gallagher is aware of the issues and importance of eye health through her own unique experiences personally and professionally as a person with low vision. Jess seeks to provide a relevant firsthand perspective and continued advocacy to the ongoing vision and success of Vision 2020 Australia.



As someone with low vision she is focused on helping the board connect with a different audience and would bring lived experiences of the people Vision 2020 are advocating on behalf of so that people can participate and live an independent life in the way they choose to.

## ANDREW HARRIS

First appointed: Nov. 2016- November 2019. Andrew Harris is a well-known Melbourne optometrist registered by the Optometry Board of Australia since 1990.

Andrew owns and has run his own optometry practice in North Melbourne from 1992. Andrew has a depth of experience as an optometrist and leader of the optometry sector having been involved in optometry leadership position at both the state and federal level Experience: Immediate former National President, Optometry Australia; Former Director, Optometry Australia; Former President, Optometry Victoria; Former Director, Optometry Victoria; Former Member; National Vision Research Institute Board; Former President, Australian College of Optometry; Former Councillor, Australian College of Optometry; Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors. Graduate of the AICD: 2008.

## SHAUN TATIPATA

Shaun is Narrindjeri/Wuthathi with family connections in the Torres Strait, Cape York and South Australia.

Shaun's professional career has been devoted to advancing the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Having trained as an Aboriginal Health Worker (AHW), Shaun gained extensive experience in delivering Primary Health Care and designing and implementing outreach programs in communities.

It was through these roles that Shaun developed a passion for preserving and restoring sight, and set out to specialise in delivering culturally safe eye care services combining the unique skill set and cultural brokerage role of an AHW with the clinical expertise of Optometrists and Ophthalmologists.

## TONY STARKEY

First appointed as a director of Vision 2020 Australia November 2019, Tony Starkey has been part of the Eye Health and Vision Rehabilitation sector for over 30 years.

As a person with lived experience of severe vision loss Tony has an extensive knowledge of Rehabilitation Services, Public Policy covering Eye Health and Disability / Aged Care. Tony is currently President of the Blind Welfare Association, employed by the Royal Society for the Blind SA and a previous Director of Blind Citizens Australia and the Australian Blindness Forum. Tony was involved with the formation of Vision 2020 Australia and maintained a keen interest in its development.

## JANE SCHULLER

Jane has 25 years' experience in eye health care. She is a qualified orthoptist in both Australia and the USA and has had 10 years' experience in large teaching eye hospitals and private ophthalmology practices in Singapore, Bangkok and the USA. She is President of Orthoptics Australia, past Victorian Chair and has held a number of other state and federal roles. In 2019, she completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Directors Course. She continues to work at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and in several private ophthalmology practices.

## A/PROF HEATHER MACK AM

Clinical Associate Professor Heather Mack (B Med Sc, MBBS, MBA, PhD, FRANZCO, GAICD) is an Australian ophthalmologist. She has held senior leadership positions with the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists over the past 17 years, including President (2018-2020).

She works in her private ophthalmology practice, and has experience in clinical research in academia, with industry and with government. She has been involved in 19 clinical trials (Phases 1-3), and is on the Advisory Board for voretigene neparvovec gene therapy in Australia. A/Prof Mack has been an invited speaker at over 20 times and has over 47 peer reviewed publications.



A woman with dark, curly hair is shown in profile, looking intently at a laptop screen. She is wearing a maroon and gold patterned top. In the background, a light-colored dog is visible, and there are green plants. The text "Committee Highlights" is overlaid in white.

# Committee Highlights



# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee

## The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee is critical to the work Vision 2020 does.

It strongly supports the Australian Government's commitment to end avoidable blindness in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by 2025, and continues to collaborate across the sector, with community organisations and with government to help achieve this goal. While progress has been made there is still a lot to do.

This year has seen the Committee mature with reflections on its purpose and focus. While maintaining the commitment to access and equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the Committee has supported Vision 2020 to evolve its approach and intent to further strengthen its allyship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations. This commitment will drive the Committees relationships and work plan for the coming years.

The National Subsidised Spectacle Scheme project (NSSS) has continued to deliver spectacles to communities around Australia despite significant delays being experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Excitingly, the PrioritEYES survey has been undertaken and will form the base of a community-led priority setting process which will guide all future activities.

Strong Eyes.Strong Communities stands as a statement of sector needs but the priority setting occurring as part of the survey and the broader Closing the Gap agenda will determine the future of eye care and vision health in communities. This is a practical demonstration of how Vision 2020 Australia will work as an ally.

We have continued to provide advice to government on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including the review of the outreach program.

The Vision 2020 team and the Committee have also been working on strengthening consideration of what is needed and what will work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across its full policy agenda with specific consultations held on the National Screening Framework for Children aged 3.5 – 5-year-olds, the sector's research agenda and the development of the organisation's Strategic

Plan.

Alongside the committee members, I would also like to thank the members of the Strong Eyes Implementation Working Group, the NSSS Project Group and others who participated in workshops and other activities to inform the work of the Committee.

I'm looking forward to how our allies' approach and the renewed vigour of the Committee will positively impact our future achievements.

## A/Prof Kris Rallah-Baker

Committee Chair for the 2021-22 period.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kris Rallah-Baker	Chair
Chris Reksinis	Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia
Neville Turner	Australian College of Optometry
Colina Waddell	Brien Holden Foundation
Rosie Dawkins	Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA)
Jeremy Anderson	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Khoa Nguyen	Guide Dogs Victoria
Hugh Taylor	Indigenous Eye Health Unit, University of Melbourne
Angus Turner	Lions Eye Institute
Sabine Ostrowski	Macular Disease Foundation Australia
Fiona Crimmins	OneSight Foundation
Sarah Davies	Optometry Australia
Madelaine Moore	Orthoptics Australia
Jane Poxon	The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
Vincent Bin Dol	The Fred Hollows Foundation
Legend Lee	The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Layal Naji	University of Canberra, School of Optometry and Vision Science
Kathleen Watt	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Noela Prasad	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
Jodie Cox	Vision Australia

## COMMITTEE PROXIES

Robyn Cooper	Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia
Sarah Nicholls	Brien Holden Vision Institute
Gwyn Low	Guide Dogs Victoria
Mitchell Anjou	Indigenous Eye Health Unit, University of Melbourne
Christine Stott	Lions Eye Institute
Mark Choo	Macular Disease Foundation Australia
Wayne Hogan	OneSight Foundation
Skye Cappuccio	Optometry Australia
Rosamond Gilden	Orthoptics Australia
Fiona Moran	The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
Amanda Sheppard	The Fred Hollows Foundation
Nosa Omokaro	The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Jessie Huang-Lung	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
A/Prof Peter van Wijngaarden	Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA)
Angela Thiel	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
Angee Ross	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)

**The Vision 2020 team and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee have been working on strengthening consideration of what is needed and what will work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across its full policy agenda.**



# Prevention and Early Intervention Policy Committee

**The 2021–22 year saw a focus on finalising a National Framework for children's vision screening, commencement of the second National Eye Health Survey, and priority-setting for the future.**

Alongside three meetings of the full Committee, smaller working groups met on several occasions to focus on specific details. Two webinars were also held to update the vision and eye health sector on progress of the second National Eye Health Survey, now renamed the Australian Eye and Ear Health Study, which commenced in 2022 following delays caused by the pandemic.

The first half of the period saw Committee members undertaking significant work to finalise the National Framework for Children's Vision Screening. The framework, which prioritises screening of children aged 3.5 to 5, was designed to ensure children could have vision problems diagnosed and/or treated prior to entering school.

The framework is intended to set the standard for state-based programs, and Vision 2020 Australia called for its adoption by the federal government in our 2022 election platform.

Also included in the election platform and our 2022 Federal Budget submission, was an ask for an increase in access to sight saving eye treatments such as cataract surgeries and intravitreal injections.

The end of the Committee term saw the departure of Chair Marion Rivers, who had served in that role since 2019. The Committee benefited significantly from Marion's dedicated and diligent service. Sabine Ostrowski was accepted as Committee Chair for the new term.

At the commencement of the new term Committee members were asked to identify key areas of focus. Priorities chosen for immediate attention in the current calendar year included:

- Improving eye health pathways for all Australians through better coordination. This will include ensuring timely and responsive access for all and culturally safe specialist eye services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other disadvantaged groups.

- Improving eye healthcare access for children (from preschool aged onwards), which includes vision and pre-school screening programs.
- Improving education and advocacy around access to preventative eye-health services, annual eye examinations, timely eye-care and relevant assistive technology and/or support to function with sight loss, targeting over 50s.
- Supporting mental wellbeing for patients living with vision loss.

The Committee endorsed an action plan against these priorities in the last meeting of the period.

Our project to improve mental wellbeing for people with vision loss continued, with initial discussions unpacking some of the challenges faced by eye health clinicians and people with vision loss seeking assistance. A rapid literature review was commissioned to collate research into the intersection between mental wellbeing, vision loss and blindness, with the Committee accepting a new project proposal in the last meeting of the period.

The Committee provided input on the following consultations:

- Submission to the Department of Health: Embedding Vision in Primary Care (September 2021)
- Submission to the Department of Health: Consultation on draft Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan (November 2021)
- Submission to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: National Sports Injury Data Strategy (April 2022).

Thanks to all the Committee members and proxies for their input and assistance this year.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Annie Gibbins	Glaucoma Australia
Belinda Ford	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Carla Abbott	Centre for Eye Research Australia
David Murray	Centre for Eye Health / Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Gerhard Schlenther	Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Gregory Harper	Keratoconus Australia Inc.
Hugh Taylor	Indigenous Eye Health Unit, University of Melbourne
Jane Poxon	Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
Jane Schuller	Orthoptics Australia
Jessie Huang-Lung	School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of New South Wales
Leighton Boyd	Retina Australia
Lisa Lombardi	Centre for Eye Research Australia
Luke Chehade	Sight for All Foundation
Lyndall De Marco	IDEAS Van Partnerships/St Johns Ambulance Queensland
Lyn Brodie	Optometry Australia
Marion Rivers	Orthoptics Australia (Chair 2021)
Mark Hassall	Sight for All Foundation
Mei Ying Boo	School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Canberra
Noela Prasad	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
Neville Turner	Australian College of Optometry
Sabine Ostrowski	Macular Disease Foundation Australia (Chair 2022)
Sarah Holland	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Sarah Pervan	Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Association
Tim Fricke	Brien Holden Vision Institute
Tracy Siggins	Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
Wendy Drummond	Vision Australia
Vincent Bin Dol	The Fred Hollows Foundation

## COMMITTEE PROXIES

Angee Ross	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
Blanka Golebiowski	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Cesar Carrillo	Sight for All Foundation
Faran Sabeti	School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Canberra
Fiona Moran	The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
Guy Gillor	Indigenous Eye Health Unit, University of Melbourne
Jane Cowen	Orthoptics Australia
Jess Walbank	Vision Australia
Larry Kornhauser	Keratoconus Australia
Legend Lee	The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Lien Trinh	Brien Holden Foundation
Mark Choo	Macular Disease Foundation Australia
Maxwell Holmes	Lions Eye Health Program
May Ho	The Fred Hollows Foundation
Peter van Wijngaarden	Centre for Eye Research Australia
Rosemary Boyd	Retina Australia
Sarah Nicholls	Brien Holden Foundation
Simone Kenmore	The Fred Hollows Foundation
Skye Cappuccio	Optometry Australia
Stephen Porter	IDEAS Van Partnerships/St Johns Ambulance Queensland



# Independence and Participation Policy Committee

**This period saw the Committee take a wide range of opportunities to ensure that systems facilitate the inclusion of people who are blind or have low vision in every aspect of society.**

The Committee met three times over the period, with an additional eight discussion workshops allowing smaller groups to discuss specific topics in more detail.

Sector forums provided opportunities to influence and inform key government decision makers, including representatives from the Departments of Health and Social Services, working to align regulation across the care and support sector as well as the proposed Home Support Program. We also engaged with NDIA Board member Ms Leah van Poppel and Mr Bill Jolley who is on the Council of Elders.

The period began with the announcement by state, territory and federal disability Ministers that the planned introduction of independent assessments to the NDIS would not proceed, and would be replaced by a new, co-designed approach to Information Gathering for Access and Planning (IGAP). This was the culmination of a significant advocacy effort by the whole disability sector, including many submissions and conversations informed by or involving Committee members.

The Committee assisted in developing Vision 2020 Australia's 2022 election platform, which included asks for audio description on free-to-air TV, NDIS reference packages, accessibility and support in education.

Assistive technology (AT) remained high on our agenda. Through our ongoing support of the Assistive Technology for All (ATFA) campaign, we've seen issues relating to people with vision loss referenced in their documents and position statements. Vision 2020 Australia and member organisations were represented in a variety of consultations around AT in the New Support at Home Program for older Australians.

We also consulted on planned refinements to provision of AT for children in the NDIS, offering insight into our sector's experience in loan schemes and online marketplaces. Adaptations to AT price limits and approval processes for NDIS participants, announced in March 2022, reflected frequent

recommendations from our members. These improvements will likely result in people who are blind or have low vision accessing the AT they need more quickly, and service providers enjoying relief from burdensome administrative requirements.

At the commencement of the new term, Committee members were asked to identify key areas of focus. Priorities chosen for immediate attention in the current calendar year included:

- Inter-professional collaboration - referral pathways, education, developing and sharing resources/information
- Improving funding streams for disadvantaged Australians and those outside NDIS/Aged Care
- Ensuring assessment workforces are well-equipped to recognise the needs of, and allocate appropriate packages to, people who are blind or have low vision.

Action against these priorities was ongoing at the end of the period, with a rapid literature review having been commissioned into mental wellbeing research, led by a working group including members of our Independence and Participation and Prevention and Early Intervention Committees.

With advocacy to the agency and the Minister ongoing, a working group was also convened to refine our asks around NDIS access and planning for children, with an initial meeting setting key parameters and raising crucial questions for investigation.

Committee members contributed feedback and submissions to the Australian Building Codes Board. NDIA, Department of Health and Department of Social Services across topics such as AT, choice in care, disability employment and code of conduct in care.

I'd like to conclude by thanking all the Committee members and proxies who've assisted in this work throughout the period.

**John Simpson AM**

Committee Chair for the 2021-22 period.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Simpson	Blind Citizens Australia
Annette Clarke	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Anita Egan	Orthoptics Australia
Anthea Cochrane	Optometry Australia
Brandon Ah Tong	The Fred Hollows Foundation
Chris Edwards	Vision Australia
Colina Waddell	Brien Holden Foundation
Dian Rahardjo	Brien Holden Foundation
Fleur O'Hare	Centre for Eye Research Australia
Jessica Leung	Brien Holden Foundation
Jess Styles	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
Julie Bleasdale	Australian Ophthalmic Nursing Associate National Council
Kate Brill	VisAbility
Leighton Boyd	Retina Australia
Mae Chong	Australian College of Optometry
Margaret Lum	The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Mark Choo	Macular Disease Foundation Australia
Michelle Waugh	Centre for Eye Research Australia
Noela Prasad	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
Remy Di Ponio	Foresight Australia
Rikki Chaplin	Blind Citizens Australia
Sharon Oberstein	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Shelley Pannier	Guide Dogs Victoria
Dr Sue Silveira	NextSense
Tina Jong	School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Canberra
Tony Starkey	Royal Society for the Blind/ Beyond Blindness

## COMMITTEE PROXIES

Ana Raddis	NextSense
Callie Moran	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Caitlin McMorrow	Vision Australia
Jackson	Blind Citizens Australia
Reynolds-Ryan	
Jaqui Bond	Guide Dogs Victoria
James Colligan	Beyond Blindness
Jane Schuller	Orthoptics Australia
Jody Martin-Rankin	Royal Society for the Blind
Lien Trinh	Brien Holden Foundation
Lisa Dillon	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
May Ho	The Fred Hollows Foundation
Nosa Omokaro	The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Rosemary Boyd	Retina Australia
Sabine Ostrowski	Macular Degeneration Foundation Australia
Shahnoor Shah	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
Skye Cappuccio	Optometry Australia



# Global Committee

**The Committee met on three occasions over the reporting period, as well as additional meetings to refine the proposal and advocacy plan to tackle high rates of blindness in Papua New Guinea (PNG).**

A new committee cycle commenced in 2022 which brought new members to the committee including Save Sight Institute, University of Canberra School of Optometry and Vision Science and the Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Association National Council. The first meeting of the committee cycle saw a welcoming of new members and an introduction to the new Vision 2020 CEO Patricia Sparrow. It was an opportunity to identify strategic priorities for the Committee and an action plan for achieving these. Members nominated to increase committee meetings to three per year to ensure momentum and accountability.

The Committee continued to advocate for government investment to tackle high rates of blindness in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The proposal, which has been a key focus of the Global Committee since 2021, was a priority in the Vision 2020 Australia federal election platform and federal budget submission.

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) launched their new 2030 Insight Strategy in Dubai which was attended by CEO Patricia Sparrow. The conference provided an opportunity to learn about the new strategy and how it will be implemented as well as meeting with IAPB members working in global eye health.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) was held in Rwanda in June 2022 where Heads of Government highlighted the progress made “in increasing access to quality eye care, including eliminating blinding trachoma and early detection of glaucoma” and called for a multi-pronged approach for access to screenings and affordable vision treatments, especially for children. This aligns with the Vision 2020 Australia focus on children’s eye health and recent development of a National Framework for Vision Screening for 3.5 - 5-year-olds.

A side event was held at the World Health Organisation in May to launch the Eye Care in Health Systems Guide for Action, a toolkit to support the implementation of integrated people

centred eye care (IPEC). It’s an important resource for eye health advocates, providing an overview of the global eye health policy landscape and key advocacy messages and approaches.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all Committee members and their proxies for their participation in the Global Committee, and their ongoing contributions to our shared work.

**Brandon Ah Tong**

Committee Chair for the 2021-22 period.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Brandon Ah Tong	The Fred Hollows Foundation
Neville Turner	Australian College of Optometry
Heather Machin	Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Association National Council
Selina Madeleine	Brien Holden Foundation
Laura Nicholson	CBM Australia
Prof Mingguang He	Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA)
Remy Di Ponio	Foresight Australia
Wayne Hogan	OneSight Foundation
Jane Schuller	Orthoptics Australia
Amanda French	Orthoptics Australia
Himal Kandel	Save Sight Institute
Judy Hatswell	Sight for All Foundation
Philippa Nicholson	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Vicki Evans	School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Canberra
Professor Lisa Keay	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science

## COMMITTEE PROXIES

Gillian Cochrane	Brien Holden Foundation
Renee Dodds	CBM Australia
Katerina Kiburg	Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA)
Geoffrey Painter	Foresight Australia
Wayne Tennent	OneSight Foundation
Jane Cowan	Orthoptics Australia
Verity Winter	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Sheela Kumaran	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science

# World Sight Day

World Sight Day 2021 spread the message to #LoveYourEyes and the participation of Vision 2020 Australia and members resulted in more than 700 messages and articles being shared in print and online with over 65 million readers.

As part of World Sight Day, Vision 2020 Australia achieved national media coverage, including a feature piece on Channel 7's The Morning Show and Channel 7 News.

The feature focused on providing practical tips to maintain eye care and the importance of eye health.



# National Eye Research Collaborative

**Investment in eye and vision related research has been relatively low compared to that made in other areas of medical research (0.1% of MRFF funding).**

In 2020, Vision 2020 Australia established the National Eye Research Collaborative to facilitate a cross sector approach to agreeing to priorities in eye and vision related research and advocating for an increase in funding streams.

Following on from a successful research forum in April 2021 and the subsequent development of the Vision for the Future – 10 Point Plan to enhance Australian Ophthalmic Research, a second forum was held in November 2021, with over 60 participants from across multiple disciplines attending.

Participants identified key priorities in each of the focus areas from the 10 Point Plan which was then used to develop a roadmap and investment strategy.

Vision 2020 Australia continued to advocate for investment in eye and vision research and a dedicated Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) vision mission throughout the 2021-22 period, with the inclusion of the 10 Point Plan in the Vision 2020 Australia federal election platform and federal budget submission.

The roadmap and investment strategy will also be a useful tool in advocating to relevant bodies for increased funding for eye and vision research and a dedicated Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) vision mission going forward.

Vision 2020 Australia would like to thank those who attended the research forums and provided input into the development of eye and vision research priorities.

In particular, we would like to show our appreciation to the members of the Project Management Group for your ongoing support and guidance.





o Your Sight  
your eyes  
checked



Vision  
Initiative

A partnership promoting eye health and vision care

# Vision Initiative



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# 2021-2022 Highlights

In 2021-22 the Vision Initiative delivered focused and targeted eye health training and awareness raising activities to primary health professionals and community audiences.

Activities included:

- World Sight Day health promotion
- 25 Introduction to Eye Health training sessions for health professionals
- 199 members of the community from three language groups educated about eye health and vision care
- Three topic specific webinars
- Project to increase referrals from primary practice
- Maintenance and development of online accredited training for health professionals
- Development of Advanced Eye Health module for primary care
- Social media messaging about the Vision Initiative and the importance of eye health
- Advertising campaign through paid social media and print advertising to health professional audience
- Paid social media campaign in Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin and Vietnamese.

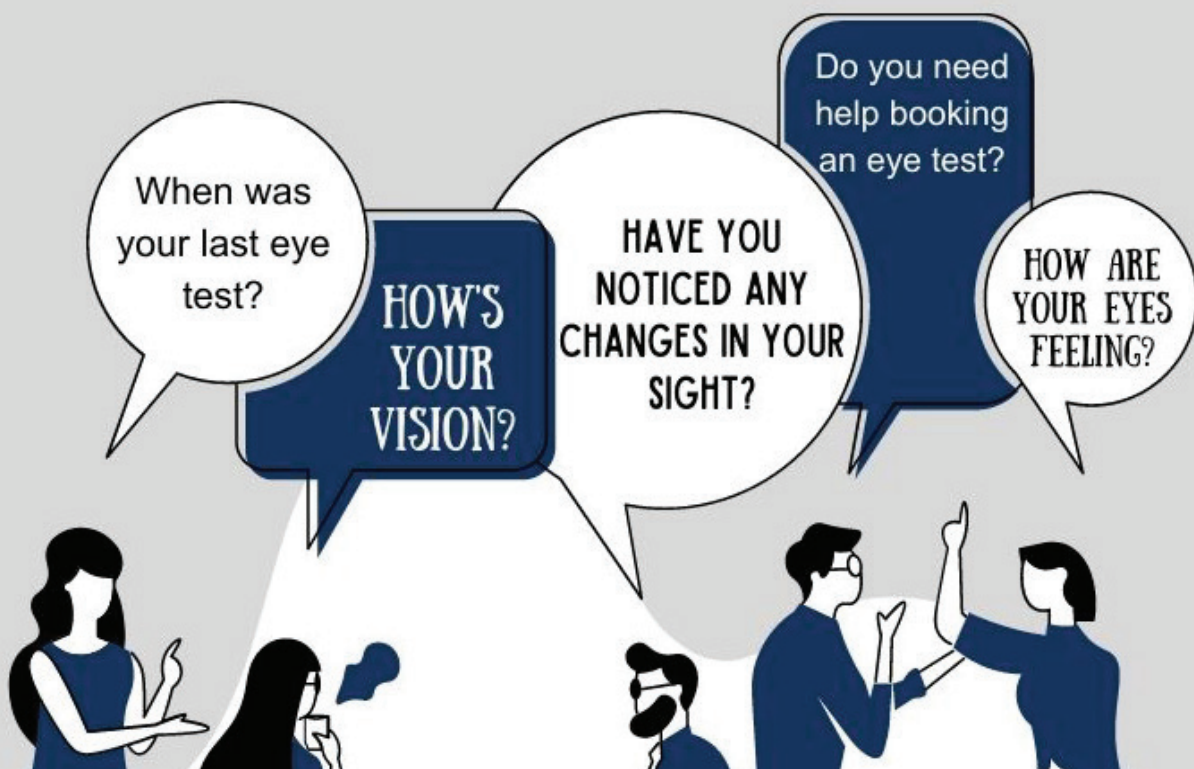
## EMBEDDING PRIMARY CARE REFERRALS PILOT

In June, 2021, Vision 2020 Australia and Murray Primary Health Network (PHN) entered an agreement to improve referrals from general practice to eye care professionals in their catchment area.

The multi-faceted project aimed to assist participating general practices to identify patients who might be at greater risk of vision loss and increase engagement with them and build in referral pathways. Three general practices participated, reporting 58 additional referrals to eye health professionals for the period of the pilot.

The pilot laid the foundation for the new PHN managed Eye Health Prevention project which is now being implemented state-wide.

## 20 Community Health Trainings 22





# 20 Years of the Vision Initiative

**Established in 2002, the Vision Initiative was the Victorian Government's public health response to the National Framework for Action to Promote Eye Health and Prevent Avoidable Blindness and Vision Loss. The Vision Initiative delivered an integrated eye health promotion program for 20 years.**

Vision 2020 Australia would like to acknowledge the achievements of the Vision Initiative, the partners we worked with and the organisations that participated in the Steering Committee since its inception in 2010.

Partnerships were a key mechanism to the success of the Vision Initiative. The people we worked with on the ground and through the Steering Committee provided invaluable advice, clinical expertise and genuine collaboration and collegiate support to develop and deliver the various activities of the Vision Initiative.

We extend our gratitude and thanks to the following organisations for their contribution to the work of the Vision Initiative through the Steering Committee:

- Australian College of Optometry
- Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
- Centre for Eye Research Australia
- Deakin University
- Diabetes Victoria
- Guide Dogs Victoria
- General Practice Victoria
- Optometry Victoria/South Australia
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- SunSmart
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO)
- Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (RVEEH)
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
- Vision Australia.

Vision 2020 Australia would also like to thank the board members who were instrumental in working with the Victorian government to establish the Vision Initiative.

We would also like to acknowledge our colleagues at the Victorian Department of Health for their ongoing commitment to collaborative working relationships throughout the life of the Vision Initiative.

Direct funding from the Victorian Department of Health for the Vision Initiative has now ceased, with a policy refocus on supporting Victorian Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to embed eye health prevention in general practice. To support this new direction, the Vision 2020 Australia Education and Development team will be providing eye health and vision care training to health professionals working in general practice.

Training will be delivered through a bespoke Vision 2020 Australia training portal and through HealthPathways. The Education and Development team will also continue to curate live webinars to coincide with eye health awareness events.

A Subject Matter Expert Committee will ensure an ongoing connection between the eye health and vision care sector and the embedding project.

# Vision Initiative History

- The Vision Initiative is established as the Victorian Government's public health response to the National Framework for Action to Promote Eye Health and Prevent Avoidable Blindness and Vision Loss.

2002-04



2004-08



- Vision Initiative releases John Clarke and Bryan Dawe TV Community Service Announcement
- Vision Initiative established online presence through website and web-based training
- The Vision Initiative wins the Victorian Health Award for Program Excellence (2004).

2009

- Integration of the Vision Initiative key messages into the "Make a Move", a DHS funded initiative to encourage older Victorians to get active
- Online training modules for nurses released.

2010

- Establishment of stand-alone steering committee to guide the work of the program, representing organisations that remained part of the fabric of Vision Initiative throughout its tenure.

2011

- Online training for General Practitioners launched
- 'Don't be blind to the risks' campaign with Diabetes Australia Victorian launched
- Victorian Public Health and wellbeing Plan 2011-2015 acknowledges the Vision Initiative as an example of a good practice early detection and intervention approach.

- Vision Initiative commences focused work to promote the importance of regular eye tests to the Victorian community through communicating with health providers, community and local media
- Invited to join in the Koolin Balit Aboriginal Eye Health Advisory Group
- Launch of Diabetes and eye health project, a collaboration between Vision 2020 Australia, Diabetes Victoria, and the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes to combat diabetic retinopathy in Victorians newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

2012





- LGA project commences, piloting mechanisms to improve referral pathways, education health professionals about eye health and increase the knowledge and awareness of at risk groups. Over the course of this program we delivered eye health promotion to Victorians living in 14 metro and regional LGAs.



- Participation in the First Diabetes Expo event by Diabetes Victoria. This started an ongoing commitment to participate in the Expo in coming years.



- Translation of information sheets into additional community languages (Hazaragi, Dari, Tamil and Burmese)
- Formal recognition y approved as an Information Partner of HealthDirect by the HealthDirect Clinical Reference Group allowing VI resources to be distributed via the HealthDirect website.

2013



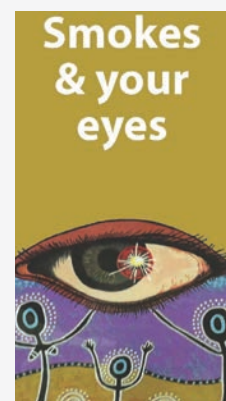
- Information sheets, posters and brochures about the main causes of vision loss translated into Arabic, Cantonese, Greek, Italian, Mandarin and Vietnamese (the most commonly spoken community languages, other than English, in Victoria)
- Eye Health Kit for GP Practices and Pharmacies is released and distributed: it includes a Guide to Eye Health, referral guidelines, information on available trainings and health promotion resources to use within practice
- Training partnership with the Pharmacists Society of Australia (PSA) results in launch of a webinar and podcast which are broadcast and recorded for ongoing access by PSA members.

2015

- Eye health resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people launched. Partnership with Victorian Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) included brochures and posters on diabetic retinopathy, refractive error, cataract, smoking and vision loss and the Victorian Spectacles Subsidy Scheme.

2016

2017



2018

- Creation and launch of TV Community Service Announcements
- Eye health advertising campaign in print, radio and TV outlets reached around 2.7 million Victorians
- Online training completed by 1000+ health professionals
- Vision Initiative used as a case study in Australia's National Review of its progress against the Sustainable Development Goals. The Review was submitted to the UN in June 2018.

- In collaboration with VACCHO, launch of Looking Deadly, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused eye health training module developed.

2019

- Pivot to webinar format – delivering webinars to 330 community members in partnership with multicultural and older persons' peak bodies
- Training 1800+ health professionals completed eye health education, with a focused expansion to health professionals working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities including bilingual health workers, refugee health nurses
- Sustained efforts to move health promotion online with a 76% growth in social media followers across LinkedIn and Facebook, delivering timely messaging about eye health and leveraging significant awareness raising days to promote eye health to community and professional audiences
- In collaboration with VACCHO launch of social media tiles to promote Aboriginal children's eye health
- Launch of diabetes educators training.

2020

- Completion of a pilot to embed eye health promotion within general practice, in partnership with Murray Primary Health Network (PHN)
- Launch webinars to coincide with key eye health awareness days
- Coverage on Channel 7 News for World Sight Day.

2021

- Development of Advanced Eye Health module for primary care
- Social media messaging about the Vision Initiative and the importance of eye health
- Advertising campaign through paid social media and print advertising to health professional audience
- Social media campaign in Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin and Vietnamese
- PHN-managed Embedding Eye Health Prevention in Primary Care. Vision 2020 Australia continues as a commissioned partner in the project.

2022

Save your sight. Get tested.

[visioninitiative.org.au](http://visioninitiative.org.au)



# Our Members

## Principal



## Corporate



## Silver



## Bronze



## Major Supporting



## Supporting



## Corresponding Member



## Associate



**Vision  
20/20  
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