



Submission to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

National Sports Injury Data Strategy

April 2022

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Information for Readers

This submission was written in response to an online survey released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in relation to their draft [National Sports Injury Data Strategy consultation report](#). Survey questions appear in blue, or as 2nd level headings for screen reader users. In case of multiple choice, the answer we selected is highlighted.

Responses to Survey Questions

Do you agree with the proposed approach to building a data collection?

Yes

No

Maybe

Is there any data or activities that you feel is missing from the data development plan?

According to the AIHW's report "[Eye injuries in Australia 2010–11 to 2014–15](#)", sport is one of the 4 most common causes of eye injuries in Australia. While some vision loss caused by these "injuries is temporary, some injuries can result in permanent vision loss, which is connected with a series of associated health, social and economic outcomes.

The report "[Clear Focus: The Economic Impact of Vision Loss in Australia in 2009](#)", produced by Access Economics for Vision 2020 Australia, found that people living with vision loss experience:

- Double the rates of falls (leading cause of injury in 65+ year old age group)
- 3 times increased risk of depression
- 4 times the risk of hip fractures
- Greater utilisation of health, aged care and social services
- Admissions to nursing homes, occur three years earlier.

Though inclusive of all potential causes, that report also estimated that vision loss could cost up to \$30,000 per person. This suggests working to decrease the number of eye injuries sustained through sporting activities could present a valuable cost-saving opportunity.

Data collected should consider the prevalence and impact of eye injuries caused by sporting activities. This data could be used to offer further evidence around the value of eye protection for preventing sports injuries.

Our members include peak bodies for optometrists, ophthalmologists and orthoptists. There is currently no national database recording eye injuries and their causes specifically, but there is likely scope to capture some data about eye injuries based on data about ED and hospital presentations. We are eager to facilitate a process of consultation to explore how we might

address this data gap. We therefore recommend that investigation of what data can be gathered around eye injuries in sport should be included as one of the longer-term activities in the strategy.

What do you feel are the key enablers or barriers to implementation of the data strategy?

The primary barriers to implementation of the strategy are inconsistent methodologies of data collection, and the lack of data sources specifically recording eye injuries, and measuring the long-term impacts of sport-related eye injuries on other aspects of health.

As noted in the draft, the strategy sits well alongside other government initiatives such as the National Injury Prevention Strategy, which focuses on "injuries which are a high burden on the community". Vision 2020 Australia was involved in consultation around that strategy. Our submission supported the strategy's goals, while recommending that eye injuries receive more attention in the final draft.

What suggestions do you have for improving the draft strategy?

Vision 2020 Australia recommends that sport-related eye injuries and their longer-term impacts should be listed as one of the priority areas for new data development as part of the strategy's work. Stakeholders in eye health are eager to assist in an investigation of how current tools can better record data about eye injuries, and how additional data-gathering projects undertaken by members could potentially be used as sources of data for the NSIDA.

What other issues do you feel should be addressed?

Vision 2020 Australia supports the proposal to create an online tool for collecting data about injuries in community sport.

We would note that it's important that online tools and digital resources should prioritise accessibility for people who are blind or have low vision, who may be accessing information via screen reading software, which verbalises on-screen text, or magnification software which improves readability of text for people who have low vision. A variety of companies have experience in creating accessible websites and/or smartphone apps, and standards also exist which can guide development, such as the frequently updated and internationally recognised [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG).

We would also recommend that both screen reader and magnification users are given the opportunity to test the accessibility of this tool in advance of its release.

About Vision 2020 Australia

Vision 2020 Australia is the national peak body for the eye health and vision care sector. Working with and representing almost 50 member organisations, we focus on supporting policy and funding changes to prevent avoidable blindness, enhance eye care delivery and better meet the needs of people who are blind or living with low vision.

Our members span a wide range of areas and engage in local and global eye health and vision care, health promotion, low vision support, vision rehabilitation, eye research, professional assistance, and community support. This means that the work we do in developing sector-supported policy and advice brings a diverse range of expertise and perspectives to bear, and that the perspectives and experiences of both service users and service providers are at the heart of our work.

Avoidable blindness and vision loss in Australia, and our region, can be prevented and treated by working in partnership across government, non-government, private and community sectors. People of all ages who are blind or vision impaired will benefit from these partnerships, with improved access to services that support their independence and community participation.

For further information about this submission, please contact Vision 2020 Australia via email, policy@vision2020australia.org.au