



2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Strategy in action

**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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A photograph of two men standing in an office hallway. The man on the left is older, with grey hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt and dark trousers. The man on the right is younger, with dark curly hair and a goatee, wearing a dark blue polo shirt with a logo and khaki trousers. Both are giving a thumbs-up gesture. The background shows office cubicles, a glass door with a green exit sign, and a stack of blue boxes on the left.

**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.

CLARUS
700

2022 - 2023 Snapshot OUR YEAR OF IMPACT

23

submissions,
reports and
policy papers
delivered.



474

people participated in
GP eye health webinars.



275k+

people reached during
World Sight Day
activities and
initiatives.



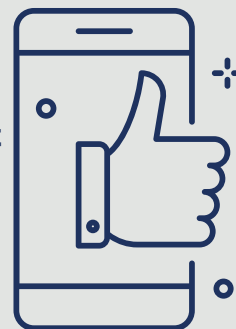
seventy-nine

meetings with
politicians, advisors,
department
representatives and
sector leaders.



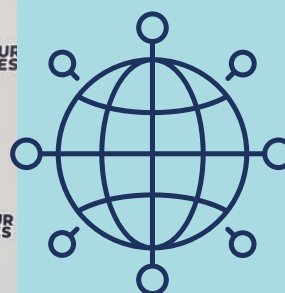
75%

increase in
audience
engagement
through
Facebook
posts.



38.1%

open rate of our
Sector News Alert,
16.7% higher than
the industry
average.



93%

increase in
unique
LinkedIn
visitors.

Chair's Message

Having served as Chair of Vision 2020 Australia for the last three years, this past year has been one of positive progress to improve equity and access of eye health and services to prevent, manage and treat vision loss, as well as the full participation of people who are blind or have low vision.

Our relationship with the Australian Government is healthy and our programme of doing more at the State and Territory level of government is growing.

I would like to acknowledge former CEO, Patricia Sparrow, who departed the organisation in December, 2022. Patricia laid the groundwork of our strategic direction which has begun to bear fruit through the efforts of the team over the past 12 months.



It has been a pleasure to work with current CEO, Carly Iles. Carly has transferred her enthusiasm and dedication to the sector from her previous role as policy and advocacy manager to leading the organisation. Her vigour in approach to make a positive impact and drive our strategy has provided a solid foundation for the organisation. Additionally, Carly's commitment to meaningful engagement with our members has fostered a culture of open communication and collaboration across our member base.

There have been several personal highlights this year, including hosting our annual Parliamentary Friends Group for Eye Health and Vision Care event with co-chairs Meryl Swanson MP and the Hon David Gillespie MP to raise awareness of how easy it can be to deliver accessible and inclusive events.

I was delighted to introduce this year's Barry Jones Vision Oration, which was delivered by ABC disability affairs reporter, Nas Campanella. Nas lost her sight when she was six months old and her oration was personal and powerful, detailing her journey of preparing for motherhood when you also live with disability, including the supports and services available and overcoming prejudice.

The establishment of a genuine Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) that places the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the centre of our efforts has been an achievement I, and the Board, are proud of. We will soon embark on the next stage of our reconciliation journey in the development of our Innovate RAP.

Our Committees have continued their valuable input and the 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, the organisation is in a strong position which can be attributed to prudent financial management. We appreciate the ongoing support of our funding partners and the financial support of members.

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

Vision 20/20 Australia

"Our relationship with the Australian Government is healthy and our programme of doing more at the State and Territory level of government is growing."

Meryl Swain
Co-Chair
Member for

Carly Rae
Chair, 20/20 Australia

CEO's Message

It was a privilege to be appointed as CEO of Vision 2020 Australia in December 2022, and lead our efforts in the prevention of avoidable vision loss and improving equity and access to eye care services for all Australians. My thanks to former CEO, Patricia Sparrow, Chair the Hon Christopher Pyne and the Vision 2020 Australia Board for their support and guidance during the transition period.

The previous year concluded with the finalisation of the five-year strategic plan and this year has been characterised by putting the strategy in action. It's well known to the sector that 90 per cent of blindness or low vision cases could be prevented with the right treatment or early intervention, however only around 20 per cent of the general public are aware of this.

It's a goal of Vision 2020 Australia to increase awareness and build a platform for proactive eye health. And the power of the collective membership can ensure that this message is amplified and heard, in the community and in the corridors of parliament.

With over half a million Australians living with blindness or vision loss, we have a responsibility, through the NDIS and inclusive policy decisions, to ensure that these people can remain independent and fully participate in society. It was great to be part of the development and launch of Audio Described (AD) content on ABC iview so that those who are blind or have low vision can enjoy accessible content, when it suits them.

I have been pleased with the inroads we have made with political engagement and advocacy efforts over the past 12 months at the state and territory level. This commenced with a successful World Sight Day screening event in NSW Parliament that set the scene for greater Parliamentary engagement throughout the year. For the first time we launched a campaign ahead of the NSW state election, led by the key calls for action on the reduction of cataract surgery waiting times in public hospitals. The NSW Ministry of Health announcement of changes to the urgency categorisation of cataract surgery for the second eye of a patient following the election represented a major outcome for the sector.

The organisation progressed its position to become a stronger ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, this is reflected in the completion of the organisation's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and, active support and participation for the Voice to Parliament and Allies for Uluru Coalition.

I have been committed to fostering a vibrant, diverse and engaged membership. My priority coming into the role was to connect with members in person, which I have found extremely beneficial to gain greater insight into individual and collective challenges and opportunities. This year we also increased our benefits by launching a new education and information series exclusive to members. Our Lunch & Learn series offered relevant, sector-based sessions to inform and inspire, and have been well received.

The achievements of the past 12 months have been made possible through the support of the Board. From our superb Chair, The Hon Christopher Pyne, to our Board Directors who, through their wisdom and guidance, positively progress our organisation and cause.



To the four Committees, their Chairs, and the entire membership – your input and expertise has ensured that we have developed salient policy positions that deliver tangible solutions to inequities in access to eye care services. A healthy membership is important to enhancing the reach, relevance and effectiveness of our advocacy efforts that benefit the whole sector. We now have the largest membership collective in Vision 2020 Australia's history which is an important milestone to acknowledge.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the dedicated and energetic people that make up the Vision 2020 Australia team. I am proud of what has been achieved by them and it is testament to their ongoing effort and passion.

We have made real progress but there is much more to be done. The next 12 months provides great opportunity, and I am excited about what can be achieved.

Carly Iles
CEO



"We now have the largest membership collective in Vision 2020 Australia's history."

Our Board (2022-2023)

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.

JANE SCHULLER DEPUTY CHAIR

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.

JAKI ADAMS

Jaki was born and raised in Garramilla (Darwin) on Larrakia Nation Lands and is of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, with ancestral links to the Yadhagana and Wuthathi people of Cape York Peninsula and the Gurindji and Kungarakana peoples of the Northern Territory, and extended family ties across the Torres Straits and Warlpiri (Yuendumu). Jaki has some 30 years experience in government and non-government / international development sectors. In 2022 Jaki completed a Masters of Social Change Leadership and is a Global Atlantic Fellow.

Jaki has held significant roles in The Fred Hollows Foundation for the past eleven years, including eye health programming, strategic leadership,

partnerships and advocacy across the Indigenous Australia Program, the Pacific, Timor Leste, Philippines and Indonesia.

Jaki's current role, as Director Social Justice and Regional Engagement, sees her leading The Foundation's positioning in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples having the right to sight, good health and self-determination, with a more specific focus on supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart (Voice, Treaty, Truth), allyship accountability and health equity more broadly.

Jaki is also supporting the Strategic Partnership with FHFNZ and convenes the IAPB Indigenous Peoples Special Interest Group.

DALE CLEAVER

Dale Cleaver is the CEO of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. He was first appointed to the Vision 2020 Australia Board in 2019 and co-opted in March, 2023.

Dale's history of working in the health, not for profit and charity sectors includes positions as CEO of Campbell Page (National Provider of Employment Services), CEO of the Royal District Nursing Service South Australia (SA) and prior to this, 17 years with The Australian Red Cross including roles as Acting CEO and National Chief Operating Officer.

He has a professional passion for making a difference and empowering people with disabilities, and has experience in strategic, operational and transformational change to further increasing the quality of service-based organisations.

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.

Our Board (2022-2023)

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.

CLIN A/PROF NITIN VERMA

Nitin is Past President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) and longtime Board Director. He is also a Director of the Macular Disease Foundation of Australia. He has been active both locally and internationally through involvement in establishing the eye health program in Timor L'este.

During his tenure as RANZCO President he oversaw the implementation of the Vision 2030 and beyond plan, which aims to enhance equitable service provision across Australia and develop and maintain a sustainable ophthalmology workforce, with the goal of working towards eliminating avoidable blindness in Australia.

DR KATE REID

Dr Reid has provided 15 years of service to public Ophthalmology at Canberra Hospital, where she was instrumental in funding Eye Clinic infrastructure projects in excess of \$4 million, and initiating patient co-management with both public and private Optometry.

She is an experienced educator, inaugurating then leading the ANU Medical Student Ophthalmology Program for a decade. She is a regular presenter of her research at scientific conferences. Now in private practice, Dr Reid continues her research interests in neuro-ophthalmology, and her advocacy for utilising limited public Ophthalmology resources as efficiently as possible.

FIONA WOODS

Fiona is the President of Blind Citizens Australia and has been a Director since 2017.

Fiona has also held positions with the National Women's Branch, has chaired the National Policy Council and led the development of BCA's Expectations of Service Providers, which sets out what we believe people who are blind and vision impaired should expect when they access services designed for them. In addition, Fiona was a graduate of the first Executive Leadership Program.

Fiona is a passionate advocate for growing awareness of vision impairment, blindness and inclusion, and that access to and knowledge of eye health should not depend on socio-economic or geographical factors.

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.

MURRAY SMITH

Murray Smith is passionate about optometry as a profession and its role in health care of the community. A past director and president of both Optometry Australia and Optometry Victoria, and past director of Optometry Victoria/South Australia, Murray has special interests in detection and management of eye diseases, paediatric optometry and specialty contact lenses.

Based in Victoria, he has worked in most states and territories in Australia and spent five years as a lecturer and clinical supervisor/assessor in Papua New Guinea. Murray has also volunteered as an optometrist in East Timor several times.



Committee Highlights

Vision and Eye Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Committee

The Vision and Eye Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Committee (VECATSIPC) plays a pivotal role in the work of Vision 2020 Australia. It strongly supports the Australian Government's commitment to end avoidable blindness in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by 2025.

VECATSIPC remains dedicated to ongoing collaboration with stakeholders, including community organisations and government bodies, in pursuit of this goal. While significant strides have been achieved, there remains substantial work ahead in realising this vision.

This year, the Committee has reached a new level of maturity, engaging in thoughtful introspection regarding its purpose and direction. While upholding its dedication to ensuring access and equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Committee has actively supported Vision 2020 in refining its approach to allyship and deepening its commitment to fostering stronger partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, communities, and organisations.

This steadfast commitment will serve as the cornerstone guiding VECATSIPC's relationships and strategic direction in the years to come.

During this period, several VECATSIPC members continued to extend their governance and support to the National Subsidised Spectacle Scheme Project (NSSS), through their involvement in the NSSS Project Group. Notably, the NSSS concluded on the 28th February 2023.

Despite the challenges faced by the NSSS Project during the COVID-19 pandemic, it achieved several successes, including:

- Distribution of 11,529 spectacles across seven jurisdictions.
- Implementation of system enhancements in six jurisdictions to improve existing spectacle subsidy schemes.
- Execution of community engagement activities in five jurisdictions to raise awareness about available spectacles subsidy schemes.
- Completion of the PrioritEYES Survey by 115 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation's (ACCHOs), providing invaluable support for community-led decision-making in

the future.

- Conclusion of the NSSS evaluation and innovation elements which make recommendations to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led spectacles subsidy schemes and primary eye care services into the future.

As we draw near to the conclusion of the Strong Eyes, Strong Communities sector plan in 2024, the insights garnered from the PrioritEYES Survey and NSSS Project will serve as invaluable assets. These resources will play a pivotal role as the committee embarks on a collaborative journey with our allies to explore the future of eye health and vision care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In addition to expressing gratitude to VECATSIPC members and their proxies for their vital contributions to the Committee, I would also like to extend my appreciation to the dedicated members of the NSSS Project Group and all those who actively engaged in activities that contributed to shaping the Committee's work.

A/Prof Kris Rallah-Baker

Committee Chair for the 2022-23 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)
Nicole Leonardis	Eye Bank Australia and NZ
Jeremy Anderson	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Khoa Nguyen	Guide Dogs Victoria (2022)
Jaklinna Michael	Guide Dogs Victoria (2023)
Hugh Taylor	Indigenous Eye Health Unit, University of Melbourne (2022)
Mitchell Anjou	Indigenous Eye Health Unit, University of Melbourne (2023)
Angus Turner	Lions Eye Institute
Sabine Ostrowski	Macular Disease Foundation Australia
Fiona Crimmins	OneSight
Sarah Davies	Optometry Australia (2022)
Ben Hamlyn	Optometry Australia (2023)
Madelaine Moore	Orthoptics Australia
Jo Croft	Sight for All
Jane Poxon	The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (2022)
Leanne Turner	The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (2023)
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
Khyber Alam	University of Western Australia
Noela Prasad	VACCHO
Jodie Cox	Vision Australia

COMMITTEE PROXIES

Robyn Cooper	Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia
Sarah Nicholls	Brien Holden Vision Institute
A/Prof Peter van Wijngaarden	Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA)
Gwyn Low	Guide Dogs VIC
Mitchell Anjou	Indigenous Eye Health Unit, University of Melbourne (2022)
Lose Fonua	Indigenous Eye Health Unit, University of Melbourne (2022)
Christine Stott	Lions Eye Institute
Skye Cappuccio	Optometry Australia
Rosamond Gilden	Orthoptics Australia
Fiona Moran	The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
Amanda Sheppard	The Fred Hollows Foundation (2022)
Jason Ware	The Fred Hollows Foundation (2023)
Nosa Omokaro	The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Jessie Huang-Lung	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Garry Fitzpatrick	University of Western Australia
Angee Ross	VACCHO (2022)
Abe Ropitini	VACCHO (2023)

Prevention and Early Intervention Policy Committee

Over the 2022–23 year the Committee focussed its sights on advocating for the adoption of the National Framework for Vision Screening in 3.5 to 5-year-olds and planning the next steps for the Mental Wellbeing and Vision Loss Project following the completion of the Rapid Literature Review in July 2022.

Sabine Ostrowski stepped down as Committee Chair after July 2022 following her departure from the Macular Disease Foundation. The Committee was grateful for Sabine's dedicated and diligent service. Nellie Deen commenced as the new Chair and facilitated two meetings during this period.

The National Framework for Vision Screening in 3.5-5-year-olds aims to ensure that across the country, vision problems in children are detected and managed before school commencement. Vision 2020 staff and committee members advocated for the adoption of the Framework at both the state and federal level, engaging with key Parliamentarians and their Advisors, including those involved in leading the development of the new Early Years Strategy. Engagement has led to an increasing interest in the Framework from Parliamentarians as well as the Department of Health.

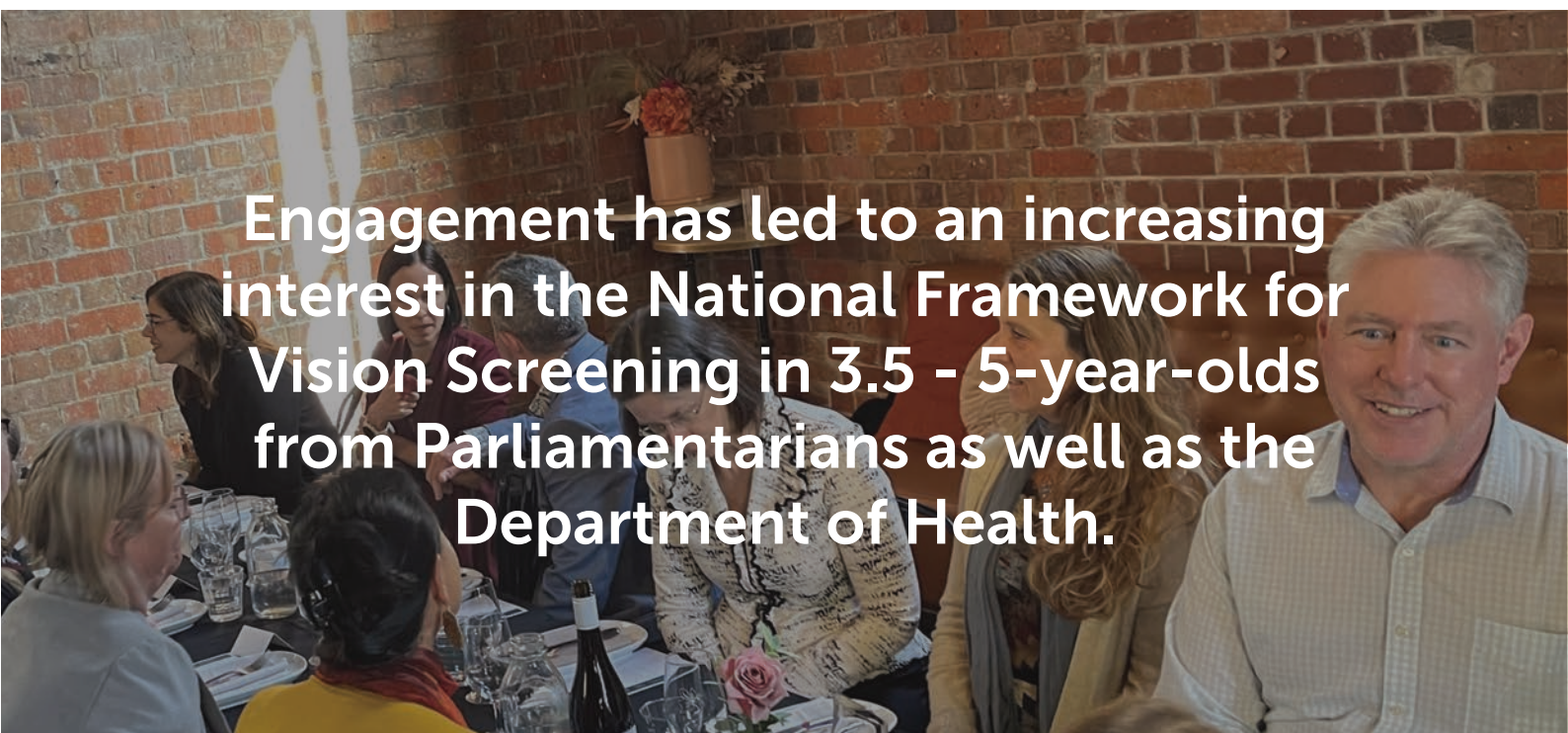
The Mental Wellbeing and Vision Loss Project is a shared priority with the Independence and

Participation Committee aimed at improving mental wellbeing support for people with vision loss. The Mental Wellbeing and Vision Loss Working Group, consisting of representatives from across the two committees, developed an Online Resource Guide which provides an organised and centralised repository for useful mental wellbeing resources aimed at consumers and health providers. The Resource Guide can be found on the [Vision 2020 Australia website](#).

A campaign was developed to build awareness of the Resource Guide, which included an abstract submission to exhibit a poster at the international Optometry conference (OMEGA/WCO4). The poster outlined the findings from the 2022 Rapid Literature Review that underpinned the development of the Resource Guide. Additionally, a survey was developed to better understand Optometrists experience and confidence in managing patients whose mental wellbeing is at risk. Work was also undertaken in the areas of collaborative care and pathways for improving equitable access to eye care services.

As always, thank you to all Committee members for your time, assistance, and contributions over the past year.

Dr Nellie Deen
Committee Chair for the 2022-23 period.



Engagement has led to an increasing interest in the National Framework for Vision Screening in 3.5 - 5-year-olds from Parliamentarians as well as the Department of Health.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Amanda French	Orthoptics Australia (2023)
Gerhard Schlenther	Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Gregory Harper	Keratoconus Australia
Guy Gillor	Indigenous Eye Health, University of Melbourne
Jane Poxon	Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (2022)
Jane Schuller	Orthoptics Australia (2022)
Jason Ware	The Fred Hollows Foundation (2023)
Jessie Huang-Lung	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Leighton Boyd	Retina Australia
Lien Trinh	Brien Holden Foundation (2022)
Lisa Lombardi	Centre for Eye Research Australia
Luke Chehade	Sight For All
Lyndall De Marco	IDEAS Van Partnerships/St Johns Ambulance
Meera Chandra	Queensland Macular Disease Foundation Australia
Mei Ying Boon	University of Canberra, School of Vision Science and Optometry
Noela Prasad	VACCHO
Rebecca Hodges	Brien Holden Foundation (2023)
Richard Wylie	Glaucoma Australia
Sarah Holland	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Sarah Sabell	Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Assoc National Council
Skye Cappuccio	Optometry Australia
Terry Couper	Eye Bank Australia and NZ

COMMITTEE PROXIES

Margaret Lum	Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (2023)
A/Prof Peter van Wijngaarden	Centre for Eye Research Australia
Abe Ropitini	VACCHO
Cesar Carrillo	Sight for All
Faran Sabeti	University of Canberra, School of Vision Science and Optometry
Fiona Moran	Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (2022)
Isabelle Jalbert	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Cowen	Orthoptics Australia
Larry Kornhauser	Keratoconus Australia
Legend Lee	Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Mark Choo	Macular Disease Foundation Australia
Maxwell Holmes	Lions Eye Health Program
May Ho	The Fred Hollows Foundation
Neville Turner	Australian College of Optometry (2023)
Rachel Knight	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Renee Chmielewski	Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
Rosemary Boyd	Retina Australia

Independence and Participation Policy Committee

As always, this period saw our Committee campaign for systemic reform in a variety of areas. Alongside two meetings of the full Committee, five discussion workshops allowed interested members to guide development of submissions on more specific topics.

Early in the year, V2020A staff participated in an intensive three-day discussion with the Department of Health and Aged Care and other key stakeholders about how Assistive Technology should be delivered in the new support at home Program for people over 65. The Department's report on the consultations showed they had heard some of our suggestions, though elements of the program are yet to be finalised. We continue to support the work of the Assistive Technology for All campaign, and having recently joined the National Assistive Technology Alliance, we are taking every opportunity to seek improved access to vital equipment for people with vision loss outside the NDIS.

The Committee also developed a proposal for a new funding approach for specialist vision services in aged care, which would empower a generalist assessor to trigger a secondary assessment by an expert in vision rehabilitation. The decision, announced in the latest Federal Budget, to delay launch of the new Support at Home Program to July 2025 offers us further opportunities to advocate for this and other initiatives.

Meanwhile, the NDIS remained high on our agenda, with many reforms delivered and others promised during the period. The Committee helped prepare a presentation at a hearing by the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS, as part of their inquiry into the Capability and Culture of the Agency delivering key aspects of the scheme. Input and feedback from members also directed meetings with an advisor to NDIS Minister Bill Shorten and to representatives from various branches of the NDIA.

We also prepared two submissions to the Independent Review of the NDIS, launched by Minister Shorten to work through issues that have been difficult to resolve in the scheme's first decade of operation. This review is expected to recommend major changes to the way disability supports are structured, with a focus on people with disabilities who don't meet NDIS eligibility criteria. This is a key opportunity for our sector, since there are

many people who have low vision who are missing out, due to a lack of funding streams outside the scheme. A third and final submission to the Review was in development at the end of the period.

We also sought to capitalise on a decision by a United Nations Committee finding that, by failing to legally require Audio Description on free-to-air TV, the Australian government was in violation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. While the Government, in their response, didn't agree to securing Audio Description through legislation as per both the UN Committee's recommendations and our own campaign, we were pleased to see a renewed commitment to Audio Description on ABC and SBS in the most recent Federal Budget.

In all, this was another busy year for our Committee, harnessing the expertise of our members to work toward the full independence and participation of people who are blind or have low vision.

John Simpson AM

Committee Chair for the 2022-23 period.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Simpson	Blind Citizens Australia
Annette Clarke	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Anita Egan	Orthoptics Australia
Anthea Cochrane	Optometry Australia
Bhaj Grewal	Centre for Eye Research Australia
Brandon Ah Tong	The Fred Hollows Foundation
Chris Edwards	Vision Australia
Colina Waddell	Brien Holden Foundation
Fleur O'Hare	Centre for Eye Research Australia
Heather Machin	Australian Ophthalmic Nursing Associate National Council
Jessica Leung	Brien Holden Foundation
Jess Styles	NACCHO
Julie Bleasdale	Australian Ophthalmic Nursing Associate National Council
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
Noela Prasad	VACCHO
Remy Di Ponio	Foresight Australia
Sharon Oberstein	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Shelley Pannier	Guide Dogs Victoria
Dr Sue Silveira	NextSense
Tina Jong	University of Canberra
Tony Starkey	See Differently/ Beyond Blindness
Kai Lyn Goh	Centre for Eye Research Australia
Jackson Reynolds-Ryan	Blind Citizens Australia
Jane Britt	Blind Citizens Australia
Nathan Jones	Eye Bank Australia and NZ

COMMITTEE PROXIES

Ana Raddis	NextSense
Callie Moran	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Caitlin McMorrow	Vision Australia
Jaqui Bond	Guide Dogs Victoria
James Colligan	Beyond Blindness
Jane Schuller	Orthoptics Australia
Jody Martin-Rankin	See Differently
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	VACCHO
Abe Ropitini	VACCHO
Skye Cappuccio	Optometry Australia
Corey Crawford	Blind Citizens Australia
Laura Ferreira	The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Meera Chandra	Macular Disease Foundation Australia
Selina Madeleine	Brien Holden Foundation

Global Committee

The Committee met on three occasions over the reporting period. During this period the committee welcomed the University of Western Australia to the Committee.

Vision 2020 Australia, in collaboration with members of the Committee, made a submission into Australia's International Development Policy in November 2022. This submission incorporated the following recommendations:

- Include a long-term health strategy for the region that focuses on prioritising health system strengthening for health security.
- Prioritise investment in integrated people-centred health care to address the growing burden of non-communicable disease, achieve gender equity and disability inclusion targets and contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Invest in workforce development, technological innovation and health care system strengthening and partnerships.
- Ensure meaningful participation and leadership of local actors is prioritised.

In February 2023, the committee welcomed the Australian Government announcement regarding the allocation of \$620 million funding for health system improvement in the Pacific and Southeast Asia across five years, including \$50 million to address non-communicable diseases. The Committee had been advocating for greater investment in the Indo Pacific region since 2021 and were pleased to see this realised.

During this reporting period the Committee initiated discussions regarding the potential advantages of embracing a more integrated approach to global eye health. This approach would signify a departure from the more siloed strategies that had been employed in recent times.

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) hosted 2030 In Sight Live in June 2023, a gathering to advance accessible, available, and affordable eye care for all by 2030. Vision 2020 Australia CEO Carly Iles attended the event along with several Vision 2020 Australia members. There were many productive discussions over the few days and Vision 2020, along with our colleagues Eye Health Aotearoa, hosted an Antipodean Breakfast for Australian and New Zealand leaders, innovators, and changemakers.

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 2022-23 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)
Else Draheim	Eye Bank Australia and NZ
Remy Di Ponio	Foresight Australia
Wayne Hogan	OneSight
Amanda French	Orthoptics Australia
Himal Kandel	Save Sight Institute
Judy Hatswell	Sight for All
Philippa Nicholson	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Vicki Evans	University of Canberra
Professor Lisa Keay	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Neilsen De Souza	University of Western Australia

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
Jane Cowan	Orthoptics Australia
Verity Winter	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Myra Leung	University of Canberra
Sheela Kumaran	UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science
Garry Fitzpatrick	University of Western Australia



2022 - 2023 Highlights

World Sight Day

This year's World Sight Day (October 13, 2022) was the most successful for Vision 20/20 Australia, based on media coverage, social media activity and political engagement.

Our activities were anchored by two initiatives: an activation at NSW Parliament House and national media coverage via a live interview with Chair, Christopher Pyne. Overall, our earned traditional media coverage for World Sight Day 2022 resulted in an audience reach of 274,310 people.

The NSW Parliament activation proved effective, with a tangible value proposition for parliamentarians (free eye tests) and a set-up that enabled sharable content across their personal communication channels. Eighty-five people were tested over a seven-hour period at the activation site.



NSW Election Campaign

Vision 2020 Australia launched a campaign ahead of the NSW state election on March 25, led by the key calls for action on the reduction of cataract surgery waiting times in public hospitals, which are the highest in the country.

Led by earned media, social media content and engagement with election candidates, this was a successful campaign, and was capped by the NSW Ministry of Health announcing changes to the urgency categorisation of cataract surgery for the second eye of a patient, three days after the state election.

This change means that a patient presenting for cataract removal for their second eye at a public hospital will be entered on to the elective surgery waitlist as a category 2, resulting in surgery within 90 days.

During March, 2023 until election day on March 25, our campaign resulted in:

- 25 media articles (19 online media articles, two radio stories, two external social media stories, two mainstream media print stories, including coverage in the Australian)
- Potential Audience Reach of 2.3 million people as a result of our earned media coverage
- Advertising Value Equivalency of \$217,671 over 30 days.

2022 Accessibility and Inclusion are Easy Dinner

Vision 2020 Australia, our members, and parliamentarians from all sides of politics gathered at Parliament House in November, 2022, for an evening to draw attention to the importance of services and accessibility for people who are blind or have low vision.

Parliamentary Friends Group for Eye Health and Vision Care co-chairs, Meryl Swanson MP and Hon Dr David Gillespie MP, and Vision 2020 Australia Chair, Hon Christopher Pyne were thrilled to host our special guests, including the wonderful Maggie Beer AO who curated a delectable three course, accessible vegetarian meal.

Julee-anne Bell delivered an emotive performance for our guests, while Blind Citizens Australia president and Vision 2020 Director, Fiona Woods, gave an insight from someone with lived experience as to why it's important to make events accessible.

We're thankful for the support of The Fred Hollows Foundation, Novartis, Optometry Australia, The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) for this year's event and also thank Vision Australia and Bindi Maps for their counsel and assistance to make the night accessible and inclusive.



Lunch & Learn Series

As an added benefit to being a member of Vision 20/20 Australia, we launched a new education and information series in 2023 that is exclusive to members.

Our Lunch & Learn series offered relevant, sector-based sessions to inform and inspire and is the first step in building a education repository for member-only access, on demand.

During the year topics included the World Health Organisation's Vision and Eye Care Program and the Eye Care Competency Framework, as well as environmental sustainability strategies for organisations.

We look forward to bringing more insightful sessions over the next 12 months.



2023 Barry Jones Vision Oration

The annual Barry Jones Vision Oration is an event to recognise an outstanding Australian who has worked tirelessly to either eliminate preventable blindness and vision loss as well as to ensure the full participation in society of people who are blind or have low vision.

We were thrilled to have ABC Disability Affairs reporter, Nas Campanella, deliver this year's oration.

Nas lost her sight when she was six months old and has a sensitivity condition called Charcot-Marie-Tooth which means she can't read Braille. Nas has supported young people with vision impairments to transition into mainstream schooling and also works as a mentor to people with disabilities and mental illness.

In 2022, Nas became a mother for the first time and she shared her journey of preparing for motherhood when you also live with disability, including the supports and services available, the pregnancy journey and overcoming prejudice.

Her oration continued the tradition of a powerful and thought provoking address as she challenged for meaningful change across health, education and employment for people who are blind or have low vision.



Audio Description for ABC iview

Vision 2020 Australia was proud to have been involved with the development and launch of Audio Described (AD) content on ABC iview.

In 2020 the government provided \$3 million to the ABC over three years to ensure the continuation and expansion of audio description. With this year's budget, the funding for ongoing audio-description services was rolled into the ABC's base funding, which represents a very real and substantial commitment to greater participation for blind and low vision Australians.

With AD now available on iview, it enables Australians who are blind or have low vision to enjoy accessible content, when it suits them. We were also pleased to meet with Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, to talk about progressing assistive technology options for mass consumed entertainment.



Education and Development

Vision 2020 Australia continued to successfully roll out its Embedding Eye Health Preventative Care into Primary Care Pilot Project in Victoria, funded by the Victorian Government and supported by the Australian Government through the Primary Health Network (PHN) program, led by Eastern Melbourne and Murray PHN.

Over 400 GPs and primary healthcare professionals participated in webinars that covered topics such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), cataracts and diabetes. Additionally, Vision 2020 Australia became accredited by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) to offer continuing professional development (CPD) points for GPs participating in our education sessions.

Our education and development team also increased support to members by launching an education portal through the kineo platform that delivered on-demand workplace and eye health modules to build capacity for staff, including Introduction to Eye Health and Bullying and Harassment for Managers and Employees.



Our Members

Principal



Silver



Bronze



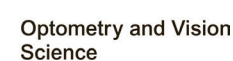
Major Supporting



Supporting



Corresponding Member



Associate



**Vision
20/20
Australia**

Vision 2020 Australia

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