



Eye Health and Vision Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - Victoria

Eye examinations and eye health

Vision loss from diabetes, cataract and refractive error (the need for glasses) is common in Aboriginal communities in Victoria and **94% of vision loss is unnecessary as it is preventable or treatable**. Regular eye examinations, early detection and treatment of eye problems helps prevent vision loss. An eye examination with an optometrist generally takes about 40 minutes and allows investigation of all aspects of how your eyes are functioning. Your eyes will be tested for eye diseases such as cataract, diabetic eye disease, macular degeneration, glaucoma, dry eye, binocular vision problems (how the two eyes work together) and your glasses prescription. Drops to dilate the pupil are usually used (especially if you have diabetes) to allow the optometrist to check the health of the retina, macula and optic nerve at the back of the eye. If cataract surgery or laser treatment is needed, the optometrist will arrange a referral to an eye specialist (ophthalmologist) in a public hospital eye clinic (eg. Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital) or you may choose to see a private specialist.

Children's eye examinations will help to find any eye problems that affect your child's ability to see clearly and comfortably for near vision and long distance vision.

Victorian Aboriginal Spectacle Subsidy Scheme (\$10 scheme)

The Victorian Aboriginal Spectacle Subsidy Scheme (VASSS) is a "Close the Health Gap" initiative funded by the Victorian Department of Health and administered by the Australian College of Optometry in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and a network of optometrists in regional Victoria. It provides glasses at a subsidized rate of \$10 for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in Victoria. A range of metal and plastic frames approved by community Elders is available to choose from. Depending on your glasses correction, single vision lenses for long distance and/or reading, bifocals or multifocal lenses are available. Unfortunately transitions lenses and spare pairs are not available under the \$10 scheme but are available at extra cost (ask your optometrist for details).

Locations

The Australian College of Optometry has primary care optometry services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at a range of locations around Melbourne. To arrange an appointment at any of the following clinics, please contact the site directly:

Aboriginal Health Services – Melbourne metropolitan area

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)
186 Nicholson St Fitzroy
Phone 9419 3301
Optometry clinic operates Tuesdays and Fridays

Bunurong Health Service
3 Carroll Ave Dandenong
Phone 9794 5933
Optometry clinic operates monthly

The Gathering Place Health Service
Unit 5/44-57 Hampstead Road Maidstone 3012 ph 9318 7855
Optometry clinic operates monthly
also occasional services at 7 Wedge Street Werribee 3030
ph 8742 3144

Community Health Services – Melbourne metropolitan area

Western Region Health Service

107 – 139 Churchill Ave Braybrook

Contact the community health nurse – Indigenous focus (9334 6659) for referral to optometry clinic

Darebin Community Health Centre

Cnr Blake and Crevelli St Reservoir

Contact the optometry clinic to arrange appointment (8470 1199) and mention wish to access Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Spectacle Scheme

Peninsula Community Health

8-10 Hastings Rd Frankston

Contact Koori Programs unit to arrange appointment (9784 8367)

EACH - Eastern Access Community Health (linked to Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Croydon)

75 Patterson Street Ringwood ph 9837 3999 and ask for an appointment in the visiting optometry clinic (optometry service operates one day each month)

Merri Community Health Service – Glenroy

5D Cromwell Street Glenroy

Contact the Koori engagement officer (9304 9200) and ask for an appointment in the visiting optometry clinic (optometry service operates one day each month)

Other services are available in association with community organisations eg Billabong BBQ (North Yarra Community Health) and Rainbow Place (Inner South Community Health). Please contact the Australian College of Optometry for details. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are welcome to attend the Australian College of Optometry main clinic corner Keppel and Cardigan Streets Carlton ph 9349 7400.

Regional and Rural Services

The following rural Aboriginal health services are visited by optometrists from the Australian College of Optometry three or four times each year. Contact the health service to find out when the next visit is scheduled and to arrange an appointment.

Lake Tyers Health & Children's Service	Mungabareena Aboriginal Co-operative (Wodonga)
Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland (Orbost)	Njernda Aboriginal Corporation (Echuca)
Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative (Bairnsdale)	Swan Hill Aboriginal Health Service
Ramahyuck Aboriginal Co-operative (Sale)	Winda Mara Aboriginal Co-operative (Heywood)
Mildura Aboriginal Corporation	Kirrae Aboriginal Health Service (Framlingham)
Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-operative (Robinvale)	Budja Budja Health Service (Halls Gap)
Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation (Dareton NSW)	

A network of participating Victorian Eyecare Service (VES) private optometrists also provides access to the Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Spectacle Subsidy Scheme in most towns in rural Victoria. Please let the staff at the optometry practice know that you wish to access the scheme or ask for a referral from one of a range of local community sources eg. your local Aboriginal Health Service, Aboriginal Liaison officer, community health worker or your GP.

For more information regarding additional eye care services please contact:

Genevieve Napper Manager Aboriginal Services

or

Cheryl Vickery Aboriginal Liaison Officer

gnapper@aco.org.au

cvickery@aco.org.au

Australian College of Optometry

The Barry Cole Building

cnr Keppel and Cardigan Streets Carlton Vic 3053

ph (03) 9349 7400 fax (03) 9349 7498 aco@aco.org.au

www.aco.org.au

Victorian Aboriginal Spectacle Subsidy Scheme Optometry Practices - Rural

BAIRNSDALE	GLENN & JUDY WICKS	29 SERVICE STREET, BAIRNSDALE 3875	5152 4380
BALLARAT	EYE Q OPTOMETRISTS	805 STURT STREET, BALLARAT 3350	5333 5707
BENDIGO	CARTWRIGHTS & ASSOCIATES	43 QUEEN STREET, BENDIGO 3550	5443 5137
BROADFORD	BROADFORD OPTICAL	29 POWLETT STREET, BROADFORD 3658	5784 4029
CAMPERDOWN	PENRY ROUSTON	159 MANIFOLD STREET, CAMPERDOWN 3206	5593 2286
ECHUCA	HORSFALLS OPTOM	134 HARE STREET, ECHUCA 3564	5482 1975
EUROA	GRAHAM HILL EYECARE	EUROA MEDICAL CLINIC, 90 BINNEY STREET, EUROA 3660	5795 2011
GEELONG	EYECARE PLUS GEELONG	80 MOORABOOL STREET, GEELONG 3220	5229 2176
GEELONG REGION: BELMONT	EYECARE PLUS BELMONT	54 THOMSON STREET, BELMONT 3216	5243 9596
GEELONG REGION: BELMONT	ROBINSON FAMILY EYECARE	SHOP 5, 165 HIGH STREET, BELMONT 3216	5241 7115
GEELONG REGION: CORIO	EYECARE PLUS CORIO	9 GELLIBRAND STREET, CORIO 3214	5275 3997
GEELONG REGION: DRYSDALE	EYECARE PLUS DRYSDALE	2/7 PALMERSTON STREET, DRYSDALE 3222	5253 1313
GEELONG REGION: NEWCOMB	VOGUE VISION	25/71 BELLARINE HWY, NEWCOMB 3219	5248 5690
GEELONG REGION: TORQUAY	EYECARE PLUS GEELONG-TORQUAY	100 SURF COAST HIGHWAY, TORQUAY 3228	5261 3001
HAMILTON	GLENN HOWELL	85 GRAY STREET, HAMILTON 3300	5572 2185
HORSHAM	WIMMERA EYECARE	149 BAILLIE STREET, HORSHAM 3400	5382 1429
LAKES ENTRANCE	LAKES ENTRANCE OPTOMETRISTS	363 ESPLANADE, LAKES ENTRANCE 3909	5155 2899
LANG LANG	LANG LANG EYECARE	31 WESTERNPORT ROAD, LANG LANG 3984	5997 5525
MILDURA	STEPHEN JONES – Plaza	SHOP 4 - 829 FIFTEENTH STREET, MILDURA 3501	5023 1314
MILDURA	STEPHEN JONES	96 LANGTREE AVENUE, MILDURA 3500	5023 7075
MORWELL	LATROBE EYECARE	13 GEORGE STREET, MORWELL 3840	5134 2555
ORBOST	GLENN & JUDY WICKS	17 MCLEOD STREET, ORBOST 3888	5152 4380
PORTLAND	MCPMAHON & OWEN PORTLAND	64A PERCY STREET, PORTLAND 3305	5523 1189
SHEPPARTON	GRAHAM HILL EYECARE	98 MAUDE STREET, SHEPPARTON 3630	5821 2277
WARRNAMBOOL	PENRY ROUTSON	CNR KEPLER & LAVA STREETS, WARRNAMBOOL	5561 2331
WARRNAMBOOL	MCPMAHON & OWEN WARRNAMBOOL	152 LIEBIG STREET, WARRNAMBOOL 3280	5562 2244
WODONGA	PEACHEY OPTOMETRY CLINIC	112 HUME STREET, WODONGA 3690	02 6024 1177

Aboriginal Health Services

Rumbalara Aboriginal Medical Clinic Mooroopna 3629 Phone 03 5820 0035
(visiting service from Graham Hill Eyecare Shepparton)



Australian College of Optometry

The Australian College of Optometry (ACO) is a not-for-profit organisation providing affordable eye care and glasses in Victoria through clinics in metropolitan Melbourne, visiting services, and in partnership with a network of participating Victorian Eyecare Service (VES) private optometry practices in rural Victoria. The ACO is funded partly by the Department of Health Victoria, Medicare and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing – Visiting Optometrists Scheme (VOS).

Optometrists are primary eye care practitioners registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and many have endorsement as Ophthalmic Medicines Prescribers.

Partnerships

The Australian College of Optometry is a member of the Victorian Advisory Council on Koori Health (VACKH) Eye Health Subcommittee that also includes representatives from VACCHO, the Department of Health Victoria, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, Indigenous Eye Health Unit (IEHU) University of Melbourne, Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (RVEEH), Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), Vision Australia, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO), Vision 2020 Australia/Vision Initiative. The ACO also participates in the Vision 2020 Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee, and the Optometrists Association Australia (OAA) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Working Group. We also collaborate with the Brien Holden Vision Institute (BHVI) that coordinates eye care programs in NT and NSW.

For more information regarding eye care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities please contact:

Genevieve Napper Manager Aboriginal Services
gnapper@aco.org.au

or Cheryl Vickery Aboriginal Liaison Officer
cvickery@aco.org.au

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