

Indigenous Eye Health Newsletter June 2018



Welcome to the June 2018 edition of the [Indigenous Eye Health \(IEH\) Newsletter](#). There's been a lot of activity over the past 6 months in the effort to close the gap for vision by 2020. We hope you enjoy reading about the work of IEH.

Close the Gap for Vision by 2020 National Conference



Close the Gap for Vision by 2020 2018 National Conference attendees outside the Melbourne Arts Centre

Over two days, more than 170 delegates and over 40 speakers from all state and territories and including representation from community, local and regional services, state organisations, national peak agencies and government came together to share and exchange. The [Conference Report](#) has been released and is available on the IEH website.



Professor Hugh Taylor with award winners Colina Waddell, Faye Clarke, Ann-Marie Banfield (representing the Great South Coast Eye Health Project) and Associate Professor Angus Turner.

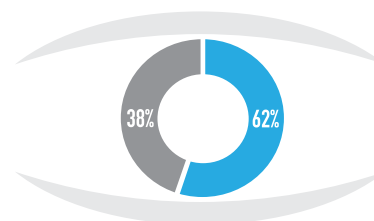
The inaugural [Leaky Pipe Awards](#) were presented at the conference and provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate achievements of individuals and groups in progressing activities to close the gap for vision. IEH congratulates the winners of Leaky Pipe Awards; the Community Leadership award went to Faye Clarke (Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative, Victoria), the Service Delivery award went to Associate Professor Angus Turner (Lions Outback Vision, Western Australia), the Regional Engagement award went to Great South Coast Eye Health Project (represented by Anne-Marie Banfield Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation, Victoria) and the Unsung Hero award went to Colina Waddell (Brien Holden Vision Institute, New South Wales).

Professor Hugh Taylor and IEH would like to thank everyone who was involved in making the 2018 National Conference a success. The 2019 conference is planned for March next year.

AIHW Indigenous Eye Health Measures

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has released Indigenous eye health measures 2017 as an online presentation of the latest Indigenous eye health data. The report compiles data from a range of sources to provide a comprehensive picture of Indigenous eye health.

Eye Exams for Indigenous People



Source: AIHW

Eye exams are occurring for 62% of the population based need. This means up to 38% of the Indigenous population are not receiving the required exams.

The web report includes data on prevalence and causes of vision loss and blindness, detection and screening services, treatment services and workforce and outreach programs. It presents data for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, trends, by age and sex, and by state/territory, remoteness area and Primary Health Network (PHN). The full report is available on the [AIHW website](#).

Trachoma Elimination Interactive Water Trailer

The Rotary Club of Melbourne approached IEH in 2015 to seek practical ways the Club could offer support towards the elimination of trachoma in Australia by 2020 to coincide with the Centenary Year of Rotary in 2021. In 2016 Rotary brought together technical experts and MITI candidates from Monash University Industry Team Initiative (Faculty of Engineering & Faculty of IT), Telstra and Indigenous Eye Health University of Melbourne to create and design portable (or fixed) wash stations and to build a prototype to support community trachoma education. The Trachoma Face Washing Trailer prototype has interactive games, sounds, lights and 1,000L of water for trachoma health promotion and face and hand washing at community events and is on its way to the APY Lands.



Professor Hugh Taylor, IEH staff, Rotary Club of Melbourne representatives and other stakeholders with the interactive water trailer during a preview demonstration.



Roadmap Implementation

Integrated Team Care and PHNs



Anna Feiss from Murray PHN talks to attendees at the Close the Gap for Vision by 2020 conference about Murray PHNs work to increase uptake of 715 Health Checks in their region. At the table is Mitchell Anjou from IEH and ITC team members Marc Hicks (Hobart) and Nicole Monti (Bendigo) and Gippsland PHN Aboriginal Health program lead Cass Morrell.

Members of the [Roadmap](#) Team have been engaging with Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and their Integrated Team Care (ITC) program staff around the country over the past 6 months.



Colin Mitchell from Diabetes Victoria talks to attendees at the Close the Gap for Vision by 2020 conference about Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander diabetes resource, Feltman.

Key areas where PHNs and the ITC program can help close the gap for vision by 2020 include increasing uptake of MBS 715 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments, ensuring that Aboriginal patients with diabetes have an annual retinal examination, promoting eye health messages, improving cultural safety within 'mainstream' health services (including within eye health services) and supporting self-identification so that Indigenous patients are able to access specific pathways of care, resources and supports.

Tasmanian Rural Health Conference



The Tasmanian Rural Health Conference was held in Launceston on 24- 25 March. The conference theme was 'Resilience in Rural Communities'. Rosamond Gilden and Tessa Saunders from IEH presented on Aboriginal eye health issues and ran a workshop on visual acuity measurement and retinal photography grading.

Mallee (VIC) Stakeholder Meeting



Nick Schubert from IEH and James (Jock) Peterson from MDAS with the Mallee Indigenous Eye Health Stakeholder Forum in Swan Hill.

Nick Schubert from the IEH regional implementation team attended the Mallee Indigenous Eye Health Stakeholder Forum in Swan Hill on the 29th of January. Other participants also included staff from the Mallee District Aboriginal Services and Vision Australia. The forum continued to map the regional eye health patient pathway and develop priorities for 2018 to support improved local services.

Longreach (QLD) Stakeholder Meeting



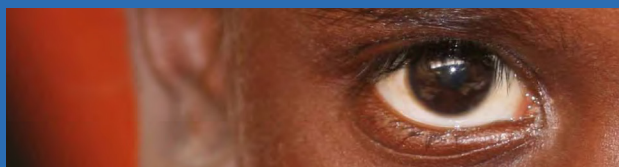
Nick Schubert and Tessa Saunders from IEH were delighted to work with CheckUP and the Central West Queensland stakeholder group in Longreach during March to discuss eye health pathways, coordination and data.

In the News

'Eyes open to a treatable disease'
Centralian Advocate
Published on 23 February 2018



'Melbourne's fight against eye health crisis'
The Victorian Connection
Published on May 23 2018



Welcome New Trachoma Team Members

IEH welcomes new staff members Angee Ross and Yash Srivasata based in Alice Springs. Angee is working in Trachoma Education and Engagement after a career in teaching in the Territory. Yash is an architect and is working in the environmental health space as the Trachoma Environmental Improvements Manager.



An Update from South Australia



In South Australia, the Trachoma Elimination Program is coordinated by Country Health SA Local Health Network in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in at-risk communities. The first 4 months of the year have been busy as we engage with communities to develop localised programs. Nganampa Health Council commenced trachoma and trichiasis screening on the APY Lands in March, assisted by Aboriginal Community Services with the roll out of their environmental and health promotion activities. To read more about what's happening in South Australia, view the [full update](#).

Environment Health Improvements Workshop



On the 28 February, IEH in partnership with Prime Minister & Cabinet (PM&C) and the Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) held an [Environmental Health Improvement Workshop](#) in Alice Springs to bring together various stakeholders from across the Northern Territory to discuss environmental health aspects of the SAFE Strategy.

Community Visits with MFC

IEH, AFLW players from The Melbourne Football Club (MFC), the CDC and AFL NT visited Ti Tree, Ntaria, Santa Teresa, Nyirripi & Titjikala during February to talk about trachoma, run footy clinics and support the 'Read like a Demon' literacy program. IEH visited Papunya with MFC in May when the AFL men played Adelaide Crows in the opening game of the Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round.



Trachoma Education, Art and Dance

IEH visited Alekarenge School in Ali Curung and Aputula (Finke) in May to talk about trachoma elimination and to spread the 'Clean Faces, Strong Eyes' message. We worked with our good friends Indigenous Hip Hop Projects (IHHP) to create art murals and run dance workshops. The Alekarenge School murals portray the traditional Dog Dreaming of the region and the second features Milpa and the 'Clean Faces, Strong Eyes' message.



The Aputula (Finke) mural depicts the Dingo Dreaming story. Thank you to Arlpwe Art & Culture Centre and Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation in Ali Curung and thank you to Richard Doolan, Andrew Bourke, Axle, Macdonnell Regional Council and the community for their help in Aputula (Finke). Check out the ['Clean Faces, Strong Eyes' Facebook Page](#) to see more trachoma health promotion activities.

Western Australian NG Lands Health Promotion Visits

IEH, WA Environmental Health and WA Country Health Service trachoma program travelled to 8 communities in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in May. The multi-disciplinary approach was successful and during the trip the group met with Ngaanyatjarra Health Service Environmental Health Practitioner EJ in Irrunytju (Wingellina) near the WA/SA border.



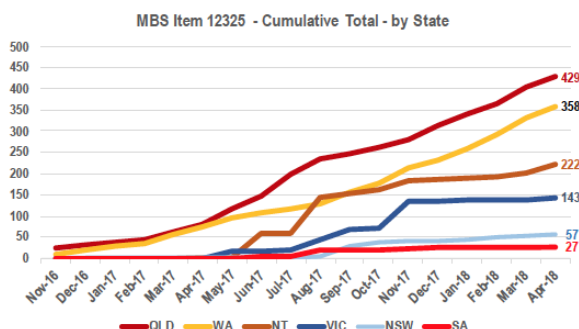
Niyirripi community members and Milpa the trachoma goanna at the opening game of the AFL Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round in Alice Springs



Diabetes Eye Care

MBS Item 12325 Update

The latest data on usage of the Medicare Item number (MBS 12325) for retinal photography screening shows growth in usage in most states and territories across Australia, especially in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. IEH has developed a range of resources to promote retinal photography screening as part of the 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' campaign, which can be found on the [IEH website](#). A full analysis of the data is available [here](#).



QAAMS Annual Conference



IEH was privileged to attend the Quality Assurance Aboriginal Medical Services (QAAMS) annual conference in Brisbane in March. IEH provided a workshop on how to provide a visual acuity assessment (as included in the MBS Items 715 and 12325) and showcased the range of resources available to support the 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' message on diabetes eye care. For more information visit the [QAAMS website](#).



50 New Retinal Cameras

The 2017-18 Federal Budget announced an expansion of the retinal camera project. Originally 105 cameras and associated training were to be rolled out over 2017 – 2019. The overarching aim of the program is to increase the rates of diabetic retinopathy screening by Indigenous primary health care services and supporting referral pathways for comprehensive eye examinations. The program has now been extended to deliver an additional 50 cameras and training up to June 2020. Read more about the project [here](#).

Staff Update

IEH farewells Jasmin Boys and Georgina Phillips and thank them both for their contributions to the IEH. We welcome Nick Wilson to the IEH who is based in the Melbourne office in the role of Research Project Coordinator / Marketing & Communications Officer.

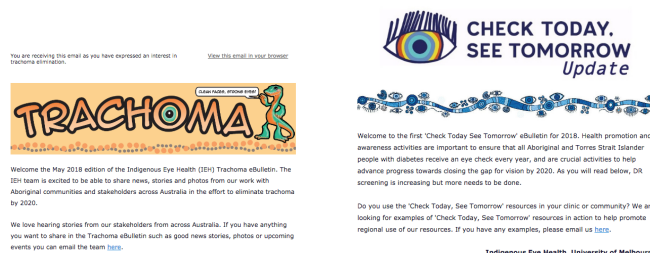
Upcoming Conferences

IEH will be attending and presenting at the following upcoming conferences:

- NAIDOC Women's Conference in Sydney on 11 & 12 July
- OZMOZ18 in Darwin on 14 August
- Australian Health Promotion Conference in Canberra on 23 & 24 August
- Tasmanian Lifestyle Conference in Hobart on 24-26 August
- My PHN Conference in Mackay on 1 & 2 September

eBulletins

eBulletins are released every quarter for both the 'Clean Faces, Strong Eyes' and 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' campaigns. Click [here](#) to access the latest version of the 'Clean Faces, Strong Eyes' eBulletin. Click [here](#) for the latest version of the 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' eBulletin.



Thank you

IEH would like to take this opportunity to thank the many community members, colleagues and stakeholders who are a part of and who support work to close the gap for vision. We would like to acknowledge our generous donors and funders including: The Minderoo Foundation, The Paul Ramsay Foundation, The BB & A Miller Foundation, CBM Australia, The Cybec Foundation, The Aspen Foundation, MML, The Australian Government Department of Health and private donors. We would also like to thank our Advisory Board and the University of Melbourne for their leadership and guidance.

Social Media

Keep up to date with the work of IEH by visiting our website:

 www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au

And our social media channels:

 [IEH Facebook Page](#)

 [IEH Twitter](#)

 ['Clean Faces, Strong Eyes' Facebook Page](#)

 ['Clean Faces, Strong Eyes' Instagram](#)

 ['Check Today, See Tomorrow' Facebook Page](#)