



About Brien Holden Foundation

We believe that it is the right of everyone, everywhere to have the best possible vision. We are focused on the quality of vision people experience and equity in eye care access worldwide; whether it is to diagnose disease, deliver sustainable access to services or provide eye care education in the most marginalised and remote communities in the world. The public health division of the Foundation worldwide achieves success through research, education, service development and social enterprise.



Aboriginal Vision Program

The Aboriginal Vision Program of Brien Holden Foundation aims to improve access to optometry for Aboriginal communities, therefore contributing towards prevention of avoidable vision loss, which occurs at much higher rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The Foundation provides optometry services within Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs), government and community health centres in rural and remote regions across New South Wales (NSW) and the Northern Territory (NT), to a total of almost 200 locations. Depending on the size of the community, locations receive visiting optometry services anywhere between 1 – 100 days per year. Aboriginal eye health coordinators and/or workers and their associated ACCHS are the key link between the optometrists and the local community. They ensure the service is effective, culturally safe and adaptable to the needs of the local community.

Clinical services provided by optometrists within the Foundation's Aboriginal Vision program are numerous and can include:

- Bulk-billed comprehensive eye examinations
- Refraction and dispensing of spectacles
- Dilated diabetic retinal examinations
- Detection, diagnosis and treatment (where relevant) of ocular disease
- Referral to ophthalmology and other health professionals
- Raising awareness of eye health with patients and health services
- Upskilling health workers on eye health



Given the number of locations and outreach style of service provision, part of the program's work is provided by optometrists who are contracted by the Foundation. Through funding from the Australian Government Department of Health Visiting Optometrist Scheme, the Foundation coordinates a program of visiting optometry services in both NSW and NT, delivered in partnership with eye health coordinators and local ACCHSs. Sub-contracted optometrists working in this program are employed on locum rates, and receive comprehensive pre and post trip communication and support from Foundation optometrists and other local team members.

Essential skills required to work in the Aboriginal Vision Program are:

- Tertiary qualification in optometry
- Valid registration to practice optometry in Australia
- Minimum one year experience in clinical practice (experienced optometrists preferred)
- Demonstrated initiative, resourcefulness, integrity and cross-cultural skills
- Ability to develop good working relationships with Aboriginal people, health workers and others in Aboriginal communities
- Availability to travel extensively, including to rural and remote locations
- Current driver's licence

If you would like further information on getting involved in the Aboriginal Vision Program, please contact:

Elizabeth for NSW (e.louwdyk@bhvi.org) or Annie for NT (ntadmin@bhvi.org)

For updates please 'join' our Public Health Facebook group page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BrienHoldenPH/>