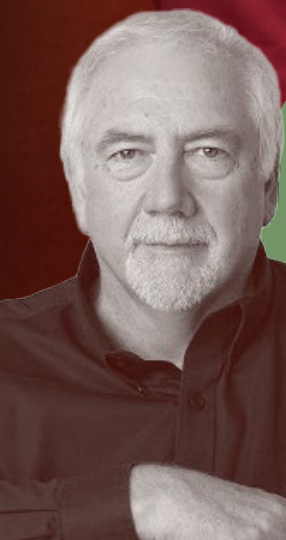


Annual Review 2025



In 2012, Professor Brien Holden described "an eye examination and a pair of glasses" as a life essential. That's our core philosophy.



**Brien Holden
FOUNDATION**

Brien Holden Foundation (BHF) is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and an accredited Australian NGO with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Government of Australia.

DFAT is the Australian Government agency responsible for managing the country's overseas aid program, which aims to promote Australia's national interests by supporting international development and poverty reduction.

In 2025, the Australian Government provided funding for BHF's programs in Pakistan, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea and Tanzania through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). BHF also received funding from Optometry Giving Sight, CBM (Christian Blind Mission), and the L'Occitane Foundation to carry out projects in Vietnam, Malaysia, and Pakistan. We also thank Mr Robert Weiss, Dr Robert Molter and Dr Kim Molter for their generous financial support, which has helped us carry out our projects in Vietnam.

In Australia, the federally funded Visiting Optometrists Scheme provides vision care services to First Nations peoples in remote, regional and urban communities in NSW (administered by NSW Rural Doctors Network), Northern Territory (administered by NT Health) and to Refugees. The Australia Program's work is supported by the NSW Government Spectacle Scheme (administered by Vision Australia), HCA Healthcare Australia, BUPA Foundation and the Fred Hollows Foundation. We also acknowledge the receipt of Medicare funding.

BHF is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and a committed signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct – a voluntary, self-regulatory code that sets high standards for good governance, transparency, and financial accountability within the international development sector.

Brien Holden Foundation. ABN 86 081 872 586

This publication may contain images of persons who have passed away. The Brien Holden Foundation would like to acknowledge these persons and pay our respects to them and their families.



Australian Aid

About Us

WHO WE ARE:

BHF is committed to building strong culturally integrated, and people-centred partnerships that ensure effective service delivery and enable referral pathways to specialist care. Our International Programs aim to establish, strengthen and sustain eye health care systems in partner countries by working with government, non-government, public and private partners and civil society including research, education and training programs. In Australia, we work in close partnership with First Nations and Refugee communities to deliver locally led eye health services tailored to meet their community needs.

OUR VISION:

Vision for everyone, everywhere. 90% of vision loss is preventable or treatable.

OUR VALUES:

Social Inclusion: We stand for culturally safe, gender responsive and equitable care for all peoples.

Collaboration: We are collaborative and inclusive. We respect community and support locally led service development and service delivery. We build long term partnerships with aligned partners and groups. We meet the needs determined by communities.

Accountability: We meet our commitments. We take responsibility for our actions. We are transparent in our decisions. We deliver sustainable eye health care, empowering local communities.

Integrity: We value local knowledge. We respect the cultural autonomy of the communities we support, taking into account Australia's First Nations people

Empowerment: We actively involve communities in the design and implementation of our work. We listen to all voices. We respect differing opinions. We enable locally led solutions.

Financially responsible: We meet our financial commitments.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Professor Serge Resnikoff

Professor Serge Resnikoff MD, PhD is the Foundation's Chair.

An international expert and consultant in global public health, ophthalmology, and eye health, Professor Resnikoff teaches in Paris and London and is Chair of the International Myopia Institute board and the President and Chair of Organisation pour la Prévention de la Cécité (OPC), an organisation developing eye care in francophone Africa. In addition, Professor Resnikoff holds several positions including as visiting Professor with the University of New South Wales School of Optometry and Vision Science. He joined the Board on 1 May 2020.

Professor Fiona Stapleton AO

Professor Fiona Stapleton is Scientia Professor, Clinic Director and Head, Eye Research Group, School of Optometry and Vision Science, UNSW Sydney

She previously held the roles of Academic Lead, Athena Swan Program leading the academic gender equity agenda at UNSW, Head of School and Associate Dean, Enterprise. She holds multiple executive roles and affiliations with scientific and professional organisations. She was awarded Fellowship of the Australian Academy of Science and Technology in 2018 and Order of Australia in 2023. She joined the Board on 26 March 2019.

Yvette Waddell

Yvette Waddell MBA is the CEO of the Foundation and of BHVI. Yvette has worked in the Brien Holden Group for more than 25 years and has expert knowledge in corporate business management, translational research leadership and scientific innovation. She is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She joined the Board on 26 March 2019.

Professor Reuben Bolt

Professor Bolt (PhD; MBA; MMAP; BHS hon) is Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) at the University of Sydney. Previously, he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership at Charles Darwin University, and he continues to advocate and dedicate his career to improving outcomes in Indigenous communities.

As the first Indigenous person to be appointed to the National Science and Technology Council, he leads the rollout of the National Science and Research Priority 'Elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Systems', and provides advice directly to the Prime Minister, and to the Minister for Industry and Science. He joined the Board on 3 September 2019.

Willi Friderich

Willi Friderich is CEO of Plumbers Supplies Co-Operative Limited, trading as Plumbers Co-op.

He is former Managing Director Finance and Administration and Company Secretary of ALDI Stores Australia, having worked with the ALDI group for over 16 years. He is a CPA and Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He holds several board roles including Independent Director and Chair Audit and Risk Committee Go Vita Group Limited, Company Secretary for the Bread & Butter Project and Director The Joseph Varga School. Willi leads with a strong focus on building collaborative environments while empowering healthy discussion and change. He joined the Board on 20 November 2020

Frank Back

Frank Back graduated from the University of Sydney in 1978 and was admitted to practise as a lawyer in New South Wales in June 1979. Frank has practised continually as a lawyer since that time primarily in the property and commercial area. Frank has been Managing Director- Group Oversight for both the BHVI and the Foundation since 2023 and was a director of BHVI from 2009 to October 2023 being the Chair of BHVI from 2018 to October 2023 when he retired from that Board. Frank has been on the Board of VisionCare NSW since its inception and is currently the Chair of that Board. He joined the Board on 14 February 2025.

CONTENTS

A message from the CEO.....	2	Pakistan	18
Delivering our Strategic Plan 2023-2027	3	Vietnam	20
Aligning our work to our goals		Malaysia	24
Goal 1	4	Haiti	26
Goal 2	6	Papua New Guinea	27
Goal 3	8	Tanzania	28
Goal 4	10	Optometry Faculty Development Initiative (OFDI)	29
Global Results	12	Governance	30
Country Spotlight		Key Donors & Implementing Partners.....	31
Australia	14	Financial Summary.....	32

A Message from the CEO

Brien Holden Foundation delivers financially sustainable vision care services, education and capacity building to urban, remote and regional communities in seven countries. During 2024-25, we strengthened relationships with our public and private funders, prioritised good corporate governance and remained tightly focused on delivering against our Strategic Plan. In particular:

- We provided vision care services. Across our programs, we were responsible for the vision screening of more than 120,000 people and the provision of eye examinations to more than 32,000 patients, and we distributed nearly 200,000 spectacles.
- We built capacity. In Vietnam, our partner universities HMU and UPNT successfully retained 24 qualified local faculty who trained 379 students, contributing to a growing national workforce of nearly 500 optometrists. In 2024-25, 71 new optometrists graduated, of whom 54 are female.
- We measured impact and outcomes. In 2024-25, across both NSW and NT programs, data showed increased access to services and affordable eye care, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, refugees, and low socio-economic community members.
- We supported inclusion and social development. In 2024-25, BHF's services in New South Wales and the Northern Territory were delivered in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Community Health Services, Local Aboriginal Lands Councils and Schools, with a focus on reaching First Nations and Refugee communities.

The achievements featured in this Annual Review would not have been possible without the trust and commitment of our funders, partners and supporters and the dedication of our staff. A sincere thank you to all.

Yvette Waddell
Chief Executive Officer MBA, GAICD
Brien Holden Foundation



Delivering our Strategic Plan 2023-2027

BHF's five-year Strategic Plan (2023-2027) seeks to tackle the growing burden of avoidable blindness and vision impairment. BHF's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan centres on strengthening health systems and building local capacity through four key goals:

Creating Access to Services

Goal 1: Develop, establish and strengthen integrated people-centred eye health care services.

Workforce Development

Goal 2: Build a sustainable eye health care workforce through education and training initiatives.

Development Effectiveness and Impact

Goal 3: Measure effective outcomes and impact through frameworks, monitoring and evaluation.

Social Development and Inclusion

Goal 4: Support inclusion and social development through integrated and strengthened health systems.

Provision of eye care can transform lives. Improved eye health leads to better educational outcomes, increased employment opportunities, and stronger social inclusion. By focusing on sustainable approaches, BHF develops and sustain the eye health care but also supports lasting improvements in quality of life and economic wellbeing for individuals and communities in developing countries and Australia.

Aligning our work to our Goals

GOAL 1:

DEVELOP, ESTABLISH AND STRENGTHEN INTEGRATED PEOPLE-CENTRED EYE HEALTH CARE SERVICES.

The Brien Holden Foundation's Australia and International programs align closely with the World Health Organization's People-Centred Eye Care framework by ensuring services are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to community needs. This commitment is reflected in BHF's collaborative approach—working with local partners, governments, and health systems to embed eye care within broader health services. By involving stakeholders in program design, training local health workers and educators, and focusing on early detection, prevention, and treatment, BHF strengthens the foundations of sustainable and culturally appropriate care—particularly for children, women, Australia's First Nations people, refugees, and other underserved groups.

By way of representative example: through the Visiting Optometrist Scheme (VOS) in NSW, BHF delivers essential eye health services while supporting local workforce development. During clinic visits, local primary health care workers are provided opportunities for on-the-job training, mentoring, and shared clinical experiences—helping to strengthen local skills, improve continuity of care, and support long-term, sustainable eye health outcomes.



GOAL 2:

BUILD A SUSTAINABLE EYE HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING INITIATIVES.

By way of examples:

- In Western NSW, our Dubbo Aboriginal Optometry Coordinator has continued to grow the Dubbo Outreach Program. Her deep community connections and passion for eye health have been key drivers of the program's steady growth over the past five years. Staff from the NSW Program also took part in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Conference (NATSIEHC25), engaging with sector leaders to share insights and help shape the future of program delivery. In partnership with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC), BHF NSW delivered targeted eye health training to Certificate IV Aboriginal Health Practitioners, helping to build workforce capability within Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.
- In the NT, two First Nations team members were recruited, contributing vital cultural knowledge and language skills to enhance service delivery and community trust. Their involvement, alongside professional development and mentoring pathways, is already strengthening relationships or partnerships and improving care sustainability. Collectively, these actions demonstrate BHF's commitment to building a culturally responsive workforce and embedding local leadership in the delivery of eye care.
- The BHF's Vietnam program demonstrates how investment in education and local leadership can build a sustainable eye health workforce. When BHF began working in Vietnam in 2009, the country had only three optometrists, all trained overseas, and no local university offering an optometry degree. Recognising the urgent need, BHF partnered with national eye hospitals and universities to establish Vietnam's first optometry program in 2011. The first students graduated from Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine in 2014 and Hanoi Medical University in 2015. Since then, more than 500 optometrists have entered the workforce, and in 2021, the Vietnamese government formally recognised optometry as a profession within the national health system. This milestone reflects years of collaboration supported by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia and Optometry Giving Sight, Mr Robert Weiss and government alignment, with local partners now leading training, establishing academic vision centres, and shaping national policy – ensuring Vietnam's eye health workforce continues to grow sustainably.



GOAL 3:

MEASURE EFFECTIVE OUTCOMES AND IMPACT THROUGH FRAMEWORKS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

BHF applies a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement across all programs. The system operates at both Foundation and partner levels, using routine data collection, site visits, and regular communication to track progress against agreed objectives. At the country level, BHF teams conduct quarterly monitoring visits and review meetings with partners including the government departments, universities, and non-government organisations. These meetings assess achievements against project work plans, monitor training and capacity-building activities, and provide technical support to strengthen local implementation. Partners submit regular narrative and financial reports, which are verified through on-site monitoring and analysis. Data are disaggregated by gender and age to capture equitable outcomes, and findings are used to refine future programming. Quality assurance measures include technical inspections of spectacles, checks on stock and financial management, and periodic reviews to ensure efficiency and compliance with standards.

By way of example:

- In 2024-2025, the Vietnam optometry education program was reviewed and evaluated to measure the effectiveness of the program, getting the recommendation from stakeholders and beneficiaries for further improvements and strategic planning.
- In 2024-25, across both NSW and NT programs, data showed increased access to services and affordable eye care, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, refugees, and low socio-economic community members. In NSW, improved reach across urban, rural, and remote areas resulted in school children having access to glasses some for the first time, workforce participation, and independence for older adults. The NT program reported high rates of Aboriginal engagement, delivery of prescription glasses, and effective specialist referrals. Close collaboration with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Community Health Services and School in both states ensured culturally safe, needs-based service delivery. Together, these achievements reflect BHF's commitment to delivering measurable health outcomes and driving equitable, long-term change through evidence-based practice.



GOAL 4:

SUPPORT INCLUSION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTEGRATED AND STRENGTHENED HEALTH SYSTEMS.

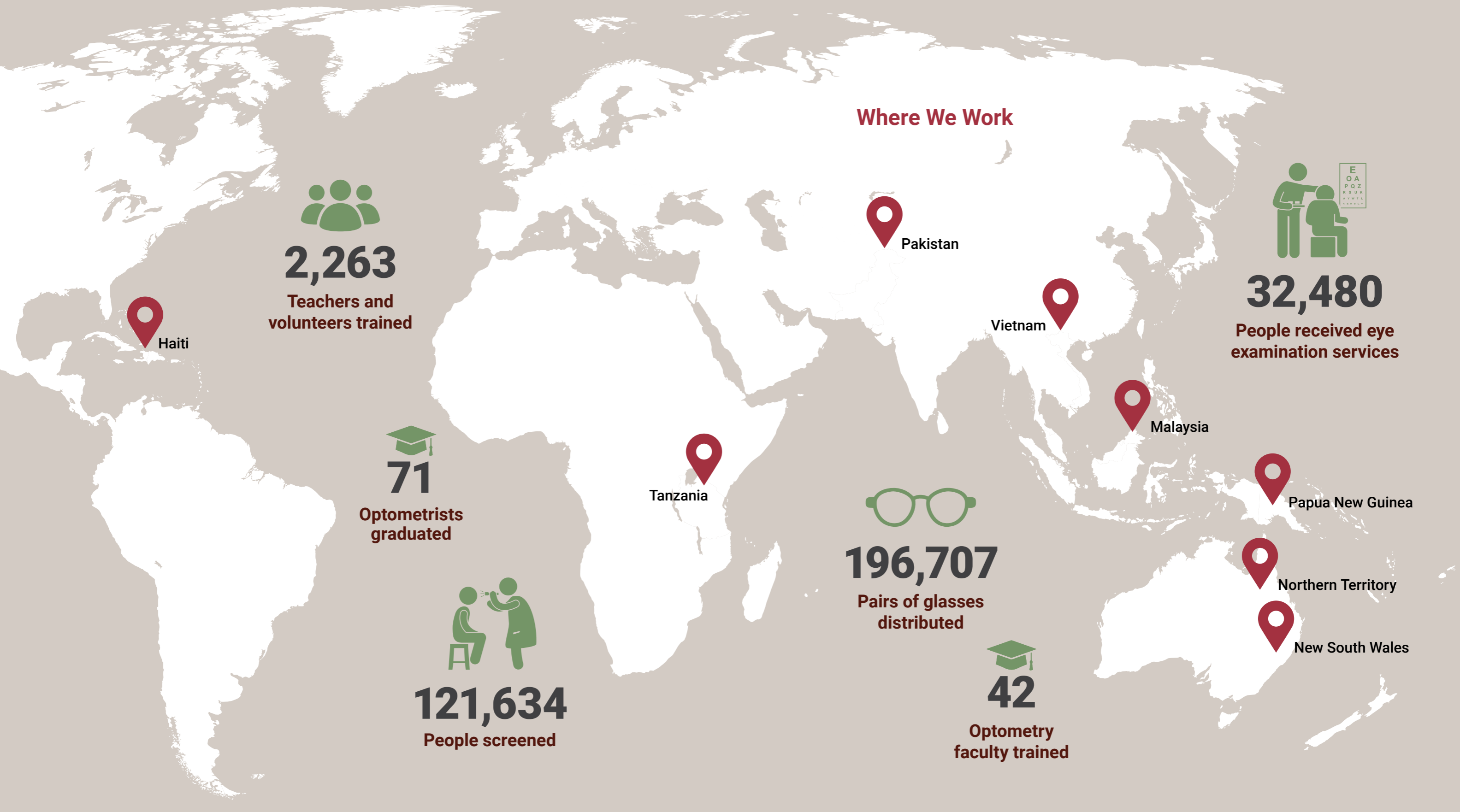
Brien Holden Foundation promotes social development by contributing to the creation of inclusive and equitable public health systems. Its approach is grounded in partnership, locally led development, transparency, value for money, and shared learning. All international development projects are implemented in close collaboration with governments and local NGOs and are designed through joint consultation to ensure community relevance and ownership. Through these partnerships, BHF provides technical expertise in eye health and project management, while remaining flexible and responsive to local needs. Transparency is maintained through open reporting of achievements, challenges, and lessons learned, supporting continuous improvement. Safeguarding is central to all activities, with strong policies in place to protect children and prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH), ensuring the safety of staff, partners, and community members.

By way of examples:

- In 2024–25, BHF's programs in New South Wales and the Northern Territory actively supported inclusion and social development by strengthening culturally safe, community-led eye health services. Services were delivered in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Community Health Services, Local Aboriginal Lands Councils and Schools, with a focus on reaching First Nations and Refugee communities. Multilingual staff improved access for people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Services were planned in line with community requests and cultural calendars, ensuring they were respectful and responsive. The employment of First Nations staff fostered trust and cultural safety. These efforts reflect BHF's commitment to building health systems that are inclusive, people-centred, and driven by the communities they serve.
- The NSW Program is a founding member of the Western NSW Eye Health Partnership (WNSWEHP)—an Aboriginal-led, co-designed initiative. The Partnership brings together more than 20 organisations, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, NSW Government Local Health District and Primary Health Networks, NGOs and other stakeholders, to strengthen eye health outcomes for First Nations communities across Western NSW. In 2024, the Partnership developed a Strategic Outcomes Roadmap to guide direction and measure impact through clear, evidence-based goals. This process highlighted the importance of coordinated, culturally responsive, and sustainable eye care. The Roadmap aims to shift service delivery from reactive to proactive models, ensuring lasting improvement and adaptability to community needs over time.



2025 Global Results



COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT:

AUSTRALIA

Eye health problems are a significant concern for both First Nations and refugee populations in Australia. As per the recent Australian Eye and Ear Health Survey the prevalence of vision impairment still remains 3 times higher in Indigenous Australians compared to non-Indigenous Australians. For those aged 40+ the leading cause of vision loss is uncorrected refractive error, followed by cataract and diabetic retinopathy.

Refugee populations in Australia experience a high prevalence of uncorrected refractive error (URE) and other preventable vision problems due to limited access to eye health care before arrival and during settlement. Studies have shown that uncorrected refractive error is the most common cause of visual impairment among refugees, often affecting their ability to study, work, and integrate into the community. Many refugees also present with untreated ocular conditions such as cataract, allergic conjunctivitis, and pterygium, reflecting the impact of prolonged exposure to harsh environmental conditions and inadequate access to primary health services prior to resettlement.

These figures highlight that both populations experience a high burden of vision impairment, much of which is preventable or treatable through refractive services and timely access to care.

The NSW Aboriginal Vision Program has proudly partnered with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW (AH&MRC) since its inception in 1999. This long-standing collaboration continues today, ensuring the delivery of culturally safe and accessible eye health services through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services across NSW. The Brien Holden Foundation's 2023–2027 Strategic Plan also recognises and supports the First Nations Eye Health Alliance Strategic Plan 2024–2028, *Our Vision, Our Way*, reinforcing our shared commitment to community-led eye health.

The *NSW Visiting Optometrists Scheme* delivered 937 clinic days across 108 locations, providing 7,424 comprehensive eye examinations and dispensing 6,692 pairs of spectacles. 3,280 were male and 4,144 female, with 1,566 diabetic patients reviewed and 258 referred for cataract-

related care. 88% percent of patients identified as First Nations people, highlighting the program's strong reach across urban, rural and remote NSW communities.

The *NSW Refugee Program* operated 58 clinic days across seven sites, delivering 559 eye examinations and 413 pairs of glasses. Among these, 198 were children, 51 diabetic patients, and 12 cataract referrals. The gender distribution was 311 male and 248 female.

Collectively, NSW VOS and NSW Refugee Program saw 887 more patients than in the previous financial year.



BUPA and BHF partner to provide Myopia management lenses for First Nations children

The BUPA Foundation has partnered with BHF to improve access to optometry services for First Nations school-aged children, with a focus on addressing myopia—a common vision condition in children that can be effectively managed with glasses. Through this partnership, First Nations children diagnosed with myopia receive two pairs of myopia management glasses, ensuring continuity of treatment and giving them the best opportunity to maintain healthy vision. BHF is proud to partner with the BUPA Foundation in this important initiative and greatly values their commitment to supporting the eye health of First Nations communities.

Please visit our website to see our Narromine Public School community video: <https://brienholdenfoundation.org/australia-program/#avp>

Photos at Narromine Public School – BHF optometrist Marea Sarks providing comprehensive eye examinations for students. BHF has been visiting Narromine Public School for 10 years providing comprehensive eye examinations to approximately 723 students with 241 receiving glasses through the NSW program.

The NT Visiting Optometrists Scheme delivered 300 clinic days across 60 locations across 10 months, providing 2952 comprehensive eye examinations and dispensing 2205 pairs of spectacles (including ready-made). 1121 were male and 1831 female, with 1408 diabetic patients reviewed and 410 referred for cataract-related care. 86 percent of patients identified as First Nations people.

The program works closely with communities to engage and encourage people living with diabetes to attend for regular, preventative eye care before complications arise. In 2025, a total of 3,025 diabetic patients were examined—representing nearly 28% of all individuals screened.

Cataract surgery referrals totalled 680, ensuring timely access to specialist care. These referrals were made following comprehensive eye examinations identifying patients with vision impairment due to cataract. Each referral was supported with appropriate clinical documentation and coordination with local health services to ensure access to specialist care. This continued focus on identifying and referring patients for cataract surgery plays a vital role in preventing avoidable vision loss and improving quality of life, particularly for First Nations and Refugee communities with limited access to bulk billed specialist eye care.

Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities was strong, with 9,063 individuals identifying as Aboriginal, representing over 83% of the total patients seen in NSW and NT programs. These figures reflect the BHF's

continued commitment to culturally safe, inclusive, and accessible eye care for priority populations.

Gender data from the NSW programs showed - higher service uptake among women, with 4,392 female and 3,591 male patients, reflecting efforts to reduce gender-based barriers in accessing care.

Brien Holden Foundation is benefiting so many students at Lightning Ridge Central School

The students at Lightning Ridge Central School would like to thank the Brien Holden Foundation for organising an optometrist to visit our school. We have been lucky enough to have an optometrist be present over 4 days on 2 different occasions to check the eyesight of many students. 74 students have had their eyes tested and this has resulted in 31 students receiving glasses. Handing out the glasses to the students and hearing their response to putting on their glasses and being able to see clearer has been astronomical. It is an amazing program to be involved in, and to hear the students say "OMG the board is so clear", "I can actually see now" and "Miss my glasses are making such a difference, I love them", has been very touching. We look forward to the continued support of the Brien Holden Foundation and their next visit in Term 2.

Key Performance Indicators

	NSW-Aboriginal	NSW-Refugees	NT	Total
People received eye examination services	7424	559	2,952	10,935
Pairs of glasses distributed	6692	413	2,205	9,310
Clinic days	937	58	300	1295
Diabetic patients seen	1566	51	1408	3,025
Referred for cataract surgery	258	12	410	680
First Nations patients	6521		2,542	9,063



COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT:

PAKISTAN

According to the World Health Organisation (2023), about 67.5% of people in Pakistan cannot afford assistive devices, and nearly 25% are unaware that such devices exist. Spectacles remain the most common unmet need. The National Blindness Survey (2023) found that 82% of people who need glasses for distance vision and 66.7% who need reading glasses do not have them. To help address these challenges, the Brien Holden Foundation has launched one of the country's largest nationwide spectacles dispensing programs that provides around 150,000 pairs of glasses each year. In addition, BHF works with public and private organisations to improve and expand access to eye care, especially for the children in rural and disadvantaged communities, people with disabilities, and indigenous groups. The program supports the Government of Pakistan's National Integrated People-Centred Eye Care Plan (2020–2025).

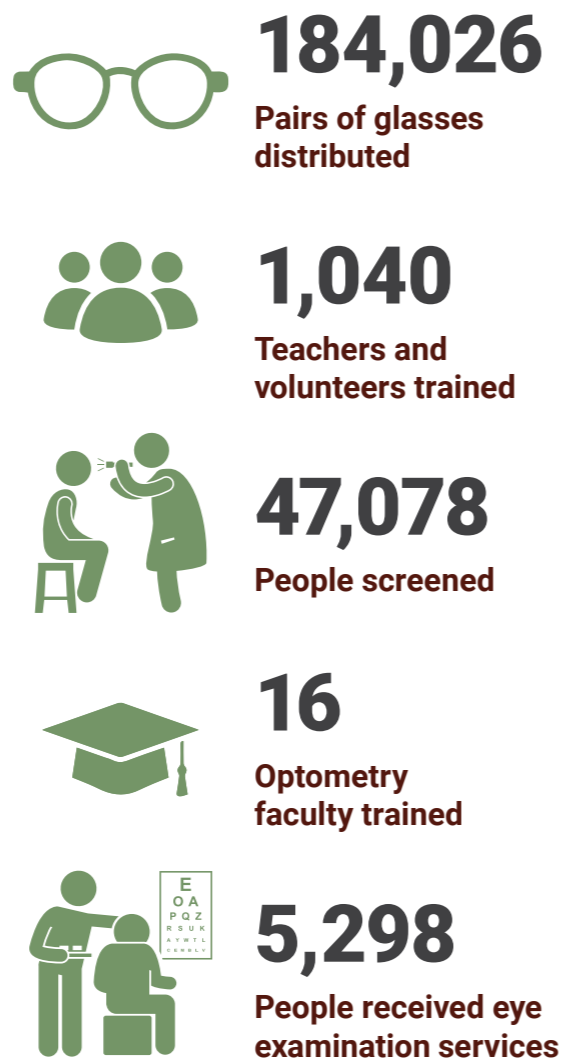
Under the DFAT-funded project *Reducing Childhood Blindness and Vision Impairment for Disadvantaged Children in Pakistan*, a total of 44,947 individuals were reached, including 26,380 boys and 16,442 girls. The project prioritised school-based eye health services, particularly for children in disadvantaged areas. A significant component involved training 669 male and 371 female teachers through 44 workshops on child eye health and vision screening. Each trained teacher received a vision screening kit, with 1,000 kits distributed in total. Pre- and post-training surveys revealed a marked improvement in teachers' knowledge, demonstrating the effectiveness of the capacity-building approach.

To further promote eye health awareness, co-curricular activities were also conducted. Drawing competitions were held in 10 schools (5 boys' and 5 girls'), engaging 165 students—110 boys and 55 girls. Additionally, 12 awareness sessions were organised in 10 boys' and 2 girls' schools, reaching 272 students, including 220 boys and 52 girls. These activities played a key role in reinforcing the importance of eye care among schoolchildren.

The *Social Enterprise Optical Shops* project, implemented in partnership with LRBT as a

self-sustained initiative, provided optical services to a total of 159,721 individuals. This included 70,276 men, 73,472 women, 6,389 boys and 9,584 girls. The project demonstrates strong community uptake across all age groups and genders, supporting access to affordable vision care through a sustainable service model.

The CBM-funded project titled *Enhancing Access of Local Communities to Good Quality Optical Services* served a total of 15,753 individuals. This included 6,929 men, 7,247 women, 631 boys, and 946 girls. The project focused on delivering equitable and quality optical services to communities, ensuring access across different age groups and genders.



Ganhwar Mai, a 75-year-old widow from Pakistan, lives alone with no steady income and depends on the kindness of her neighbours. Her poor eyesight had long gone untreated due to financial hardship and lack of access to affordable care. One day, while carrying a pot of boiling milk, she lost her balance and fell, suffering painful burns caused by her weak vision. On the advice of a local well-wisher, she visited Community Optical Layyah, a social enterprise providing affordable eye care to underserved communities. The team assessed her needs and provided her with a pair of prescription glasses free of cost. This simple intervention transformed her daily life – improving her safety, independence, and confidence, while restoring her sense of dignity and hope.

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT:

VIETNAM

In Vietnam, around two million people live with vision loss, mainly due to untreated cataract and uncorrected refractive error (IAPB & WHO, 2015). Refractive error accounts for over 90% of vision impairment among school children, affecting 15–20% nationwide (OAMJMS, 2022). A shortage of trained eye care professionals, particularly in rural areas, continues to limit access to quality services (Ophthalmology Times, 2023), highlighting the need for investment in optometry education and integration into national health systems for sustainable eye care development.

To help addressing these challenges, the Brien Holden Foundation launched its national eye health program in 2008. During the 2024-25 reporting period, a total of 32,832 individuals received eye screenings, with 14,401 undergoing comprehensive eye examinations. In addition, several advocacy and awareness activities were carried out, including meetings with government and NGO stakeholders, presenting at the key national and regional conferences in strategic eye health plan development, optometric services and child eye health development, efforts to integrate eye health into school health programs, and awareness sessions for students and street children in Hanoi and Ba Ria Vung Tau – Ho Chi Minh City. BHF also

worked with partners to strengthen safeguarding practices through consultations, new training sessions, and the distribution of primary eye care materials to schools.

In 2024–2025, the Optometry Development Project in Vietnam (DFAT funded) achieved significant progress across education, policy, and service delivery. Partner universities HMU and UPNT successfully retained 24 qualified local faculty who trained 379 students, contributing to a growing national workforce of nearly 500 optometrists, including 71 new graduates (54 female) in 2025. The optometry programs were formally accredited by Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training, with UPNT and HMU scoring 92% and 96% respectively, marking a milestone in the formal recognition of the profession. Academic Vision Centres at both universities provided practical training and eye care services to 10,900 patients, while community outreach initiatives screened 2,750 school children and trained 112 teachers and health workers in basic eye care. The program demonstrated a strong commitment to gender equity, inclusion, and professional advocacy, with BHF and partners participating in five national conferences and stakeholder meetings to support policy advancement and strengthen future planning.



The Paediatric Refractive Errors Training Centre (PRETC), funded by Optometry Giving Sight: Mr Robert Weiss, achieved key milestones in clinical education, service delivery, and local capacity building. Hanoi Medical University's optometry department received essential pre-clinical and clinical training equipment, enhancing practical learning for students. The PRETC in Hanoi provided eye care services to 3,501 patients, including 1,848 children and 1,802 women and girls, while an additional 4,351 community members received eye exams through outreach activities. Clinical training continued monthly for 15–20 third- and fourth-year students, 80% of whom were female. Junior faculty development was supported through distance and in-person mentoring focused on research and academic English for 24 teachers. In Ho Chi Minh City, UPNT conducted vision screening for 1,724 schoolchildren, distributed 45 free spectacles, trained 34 teachers in primary eye care, and provided 20 screening kits to schools.

From July 2024 to June 2025, crossing 2 years of L'Occitane-funded project aimed at reducing

childhood blindness and vision impairment in Vietnam, significant progress was made. Hanoi Medical University and Ba Ria Vung Tau Eye Hospital conducted vision screening for 11,584 schoolchildren in rural areas, including 4,314 girls, 916 out of school children (489 girls) in Hanoi and Ba Ria-Vung Tau – Ho Chi Minh City, identifying children in need of care and providing 351 pairs of spectacles to those with refractive errors. To support ongoing awareness and prevention, 200 screening kits and 1,000 eye health brochures were distributed to participating schools, while 831 teachers and health workers were trained in primary eye care and screening techniques. Four large-scale awareness sessions were also held, engaging thousands of students in discussions on eye health. In October, the project marked World Sight Day with a major public event in Ba Ria Vung Tau – Ho Chi Minh City, where eye health materials were shared widely, talks about eye care were aired in local TV and newspapers to raise community awareness and promote early intervention in child eye care.



32,832
People screened



977
Teachers and
volunteers trained



14,401
People received eye
examination services



71
Optometrists
graduated



2,492
Pairs of glasses
distributed



24
Optometry
faculty trained



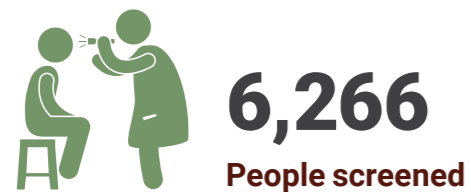
COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT:

MALAYSIA

National and regional surveys in Malaysia report that the prevalence of blindness among adults aged 50 years and above ranges between 0.29% and 0.8% (Salowi et al., 2024). Refractive error remains the leading cause of visual impairment across all age groups. Among school-aged children, studies indicate significant variation in prevalence—from 11.9% in remote island communities to as high as 47.8% in urban areas such as Kuala Lumpur, where myopia is most common (Ismail & Sukumaran, 2022; Yusoff et al., 2024).

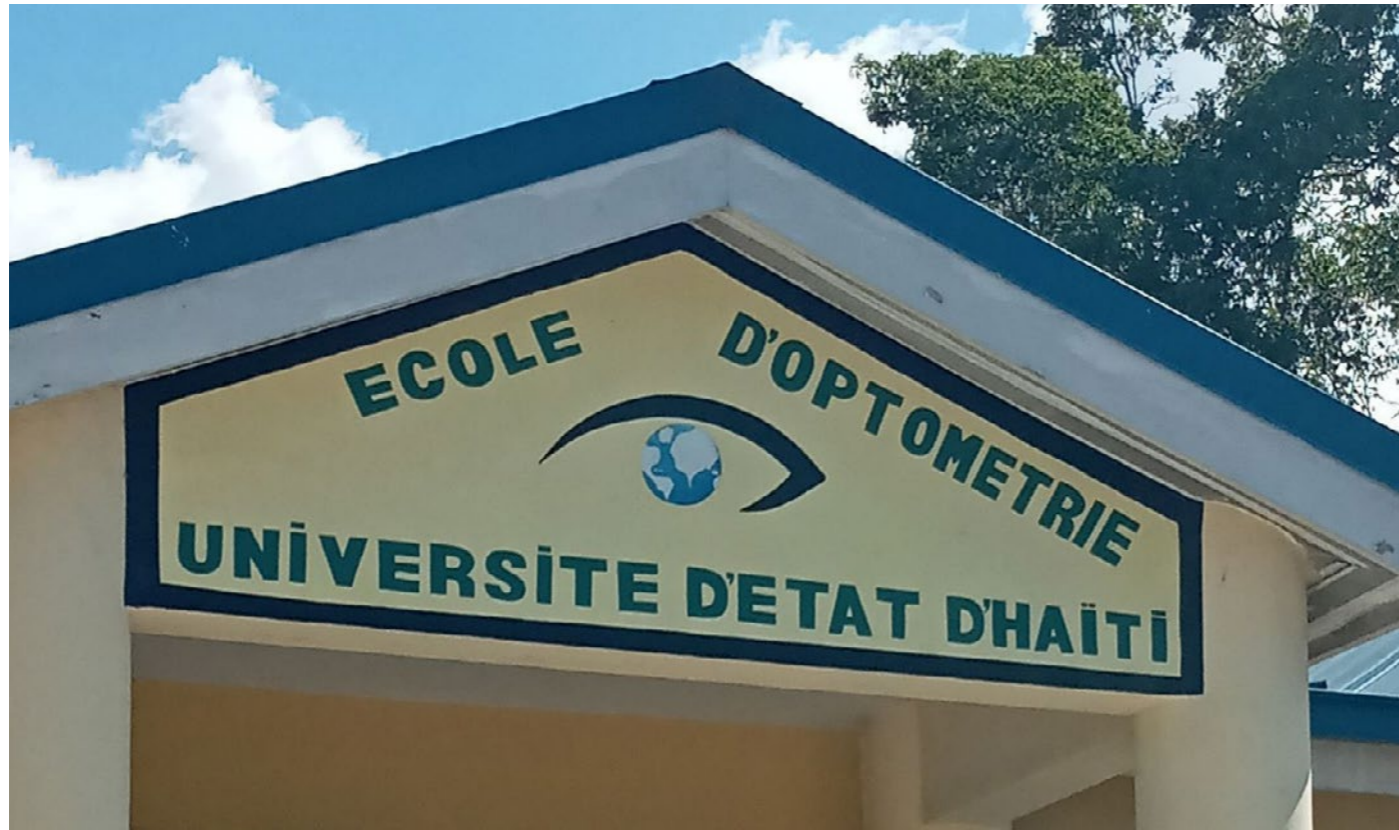
To contribute to addressing these challenges, and with the generous support of the L’Occitane Foundation, the Brien Holden Foundation launched a three year project in Malaysia to reduce childhood blindness and vision impairment among disadvantaged children, with a particular focus on refugee children and the urban poor. The project has significantly improved children’s access to quality eye care. To make this possible, BHF and its partners have built strong collaborations with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Malaysia, the OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation, various NGOs, and public and private hospitals in both Malaysia and Vietnam.

During one of the optometry examinations conducted under the project “Reducing Childhood Blindness and Vision Impairment for Disadvantaged Children in Malaysia” (VisionRDC), a 15-year-old refugee girl from Syria became emotional during the refraction test when she was finally able to see the letters clearly on the vision chart. Her examination revealed a refractive error of -3.00/-0.75x180 in the right eye and -3.50/-0.50x180 in the left, indicating moderate myopia with mild astigmatism, while the rest of her ocular health appeared normal. She explained that she had long known about her poor eyesight but avoided seeking help, fearing the cost of an eye examination and spectacles would burden her parents. Her vision difficulties had affected her confidence and participation in class, often leaving her feeling inadequate. The optometrist reassured her that her eye care and spectacles would be provided free of charge through the VisionRDC project, funded by the L’Occitane Foundation. The encounter was deeply moving for everyone present, illustrating how access to vision care can restore not only sight but also dignity, confidence, and hope.



COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT:

HAITI



Haiti's eye health workforce remains under-resourced, with only three optometrists and 58 ophthalmologists (just six in the public sector) serving a population of 10 million, most based in the capital where only 30% of the population resides (IAPB, 2017). This limited access leaves the majority of Haitians without primary eye care, despite a high prevalence of vision impairment, with blindness among those aged 50 and above estimated at 4.8% (Leasher et al., 2014). To help addressing this, the Brien Holden Foundation, in partnership with the University of Montreal, Université d'État d'Haïti (UEH), and Optometry Giving Sight is aiming to establish Haiti's first optometry school to build local capacity and create a sustainable eye care system.

During the year, progress was achieved through the School of Optometry in UEH, with three students from the current cohort and five from the next completing internships at two eye health clinics. Thirteen students are now completing the

program, while two externs received advanced training in Montreal and contributed to course delivery. The two BHF lecturers continued teaching and mentoring both students and externs, while UEH identified new graduates and residents to train as future lecturers.



COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT:

PAPUA NEW GUINEA



According to the most recent national survey, the prevalence of blindness among adults aged 50 years and above in Papua New Guinea is estimated at 5.6%, with an additional 13.8% experiencing moderate to severe vision impairment (Papua New Guinea National RAAB Survey, 2017; Burton et al., 2018). Uncorrected refractive error remains one of the leading causes of vision loss, particularly in older adults (IAPB, 2020). To contribute to addressing this challenge, BHF works with PNG Eye Care, a national NGO. During the year, BHF contributed to important national initiatives, including planning the country's first School of Optometry, supporting the development of a Centre of Excellence, and providing technical input for the National Eye Health Strategic Plan 2025–2029, which was endorsed by the Ministry of Health. Capacity building remained a focus through a national training workshop on research methods and scientific writing, while 350 people received spectacles under the National Spectacle Scheme.



350

Pairs of glasses distributed



20

Teachers and volunteers trained

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT:

TANZANIA

In Tanzania, childhood blindness remains a public health concern, with an estimated 1.2 cases per 1,000 children—mainly caused by preventable and treatable conditions such as refractive error, cataract, and corneal scarring (IAPB, 2021). To help address this challenge, the Brien Holden Foundation implemented a child eye health program in Tanzania funded by Optometry Giving Sight.

The project strengthened local eye health services by providing essential eye care equipment to three vision centres in Simiyu, Kwimba, and Nyambiti, with formal handovers ensuring accountability. The vision centres were named in honour of Rashanali Nasser. This investment enhanced the capacity of hospitals and clinics to deliver sustainable, quality eye care to underserved communities.

Using a locally led approach, the project team trained 70 teachers in primary eye care and vision screening, equipping them with screening kits to assess students in their schools. As a result, 34,642 children were screened—exceeding project targets—and 4,095 were referred for further examination. In addition, 816 community members, mostly parents, were screened, and awareness sessions were held to promote better understanding of eye health and preventive practices. BHF officially concluded the eye health services development project during the year, having completed its planned activities and met its objectives. All operations, reporting, and partner engagements related to the project were finalised as part of its formal closure process.



35,458

People screened



70

Teachers and volunteers trained



OPTOMETRY FACULTY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (OFDI)

Faculty development plays a vital role in strengthening the educational capacity of institutions by equipping academic staff with the skills needed to promote effective teaching and institutional excellence. In 2024–25, the Brien Holden Foundation continued the Optometry Faculty Development Initiative (OFDI) to support faculty from emerging optometry schools in Pakistan, Vietnam, and Tanzania.

The OFDI is designed to enhance teaching quality by supporting curriculum development, strengthening teaching practices, and providing up-to-date training in myopia management and social responsibility in optometry. A key objective of the initiative is to build a network of faculty members across countries, fostering a collaborative learning environment where

participants can exchange ideas and address shared challenges in early-stage optometry programs.

The initiative includes several components: the EyeTeach program—an online, interactive teaching development course; a continuing education course in Managing Myopia; and access to self-paced learning modules and resources on social responsibility in optometry.

During the reporting period, 43 faculty members from eight institutions in Pakistan and Vietnam enrolled in the OFDI. Of these, 16 participants (60% women) continued the program through the year. Additionally, in Vietnam, 216 students (63% women) continued using the Virtual Refractor training tool. For the upcoming academic year (FY 2025–26), 23 faculty members from seven institutions in Tanzania were enrolled to begin the OFDI.

Governance

The Brien Holden Foundation is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and overseen by a voluntary board of directors. According to its Constitution, the board must have at least three and no more than seven directors. As of 30 November 2025, the board comprised six directors.

The Board is entrusted with upholding the public trust and ensuring that the Brien Holden Foundation remains true to its founding vision and mission. It is responsible for the organisation's governance and operates in line with the principles and practices outlined in its Constitution, available at [this link](#). The Board meets at least quarterly to set BHF's strategic direction and policies, approves and monitors the budget and project/program performance, and ensure financial and risk management through its two separate committees (Audit & Compliance and Risk). It also safeguards the organisation's resources, ensures compliance with relevant standards and regulations, and maintains accountability to funders and stakeholders. Additionally, the Board appoints, supports, and monitors the performance of the CEO, who is responsible for the executive management of BHF.

AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

The Board has established an Audit and Compliance Committee that reports directly to it. The committee's role is to assist and advise the Board on key matters related to finance, auditing, financial systems and compliance.

RISK COMMITTEE

BHF's Risk Committee continuously evaluates organisational risk, using a model made available by the ANCP. The Committee gives quarterly updates to the Board about changes in the risk environment and the corresponding mitigation measures / responses.

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

As of November 2025, BHF employed 13 staff, with 10 based in Australia and three working overseas. Four consultants assisted us with our international program work and a locum optometry pool assisted the NSW and NT programs.

During the year, BHVI provided significant in-kind contributions to Brien Holden Foundation. This included staff in-kind and premises and associated costs as well as corporate services support for finance, IT and HR/payroll.

The executive leadership team consisted of Yvette Waddell, Chief Executive Officer, and Puneet Sahai, Chief Financial Officer, Tony Thomas (pro bono legal counsel) and supported by senior managers Colina Waddell, Head of New South Wales Program and Strategic Projects and Dr Khalid Saifullah, Head of International Programs.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

BHF conducts quarterly and annual performance review of all its country programs to assess progress against the project and strategic objectives. The international team works closely together, and shares experiences and lessons learned with the Australian team during review meetings. Wherever possible, BHF also involves its partners and external consultants in monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities to strengthen collaboration and improve program outcomes.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In many developing countries where BHF operates, the risk of climate-related disasters—such as floods, cyclones, heatwaves, and unpredictable heavy rainfall—is increasing in project areas. Recognising the potential impact of these environmental changes on people's eye health, BHF conducts environmental impact assessments before starting new projects to understand and manage these effects. To promote awareness, BHF's partners organised school orientation sessions where children were taught how to protect their eyes from strong sunlight, for example by wearing sunglasses or caps.

ALLIANCES: INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

1. International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness
2. WHO SPECS 2030
3. Vision 2020 Australia
4. National Committee for Eye Health, Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, Government of Pakistan
5. National Prevention of Blindness Committee, PNG
6. Vietnam National Ophthalmology Association
7. Vietnam National Prevention of Blindness Committee, Ministry of Health Vietnam
8. Vietnam Optometry Society
9. Vietnam Eye Care Working Group

KEY DONORS



THANK YOU IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



Financial Summary

BRIEN HOLDEN VISION INSTITUTE FOUNDATION
A.B.N. 86 081 872 586
Information required under the ACFID Code of Conduct

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

BRIEN HOLDEN VISION INSTITUTE FOUNDATION
A.B.N. 86 081 872 586
Information required under the ACFID Code of Conduct

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
REVENUE		
Donations and gifts		
* Monetary	-	-
Grants		
* Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	338,797	333,102
* Other Australian Grants	2,893,390	2,893,386
* Overseas Grants	933,720	1,052,683
Investment income	1,928	13,784
Non Monetary Income	1,042,568	1,082,695
TOTAL REVENUE	5,210,403	5,375,650
EXPENDITURE		
International Aid and Development Programs Expenditure		
International programs		
* Funds to international programs	931,251	847,860
* Program support costs	238,612	457,761
Community education	124	59,238
Accountability and Administration	50,960	66,010
Non-Monetary Expenditure	1,042,568	1,082,695
Total International Aid and Development Programs Expenditure	2,263,515	2,513,564
Domestic Programs Expenditure	2,999,407	2,929,279
Other Expenditure	27,672	(15,797)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	5,290,594	5,427,046
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(80,191)	(51,396)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	(80,191)	(51,396)

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,237,894	1,460,726
Trade and other receivables	70,605	75,646
Other financial assets-current	152,491	325,666
Total Current Assets	1,460,990	1,862,038
Non Current Assets		
Property, plant, and equipment	26,768	39,120
Right of Use assets non current (Leases)	-	16,454
Total Non Current Assets	26,768	55,574
TOTAL ASSETS	1,487,758	1,917,612
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	475,377	685,941
Lease liability - current	-	18,277
Provisions - current	236,590	347,057
Total Current Liabilities	711,967	1,051,275
Non Current Liabilities		
Provisions - non current	10,802	21,157
Total Non Current Liabilities	10,802	21,157
TOTAL LIABILITIES	722,769	1,072,432
NET ASSETS	764,989	845,180
EQUITY		
Retained Earnings	764,989	845,180
TOTAL EQUITY	764,989	845,180

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF
BRIEN HOLDEN VISION INSTITUTE FOUNDATION**

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation (the company), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of material accounting policies and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the financial report of Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation is in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

(i) giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2025 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and

(ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures (including Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the *Corporations Act 2001*, which has been given to the directors of the company, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of this auditor's report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF
BRIEN HOLDEN VISION INSTITUTE FOUNDATION
(continued)**

Key Audit Matters

Key audit matters are those matters that, in our professional judgement, were of most significance in our audit of the financial report of the current period. These matters were addressed in the context of our audit of the financial report as a whole, and in forming our opinion thereon, and we do not provide a separate opinion on these matters.

Going concern assessment

In forming our opinion on the financial report, which is not modified, we have considered the adequacy concerning the company's ability to continue as a going concern. The company recorded an operating loss and negative operating cashflows as at financial year end.

Our audit work included, but was not restricted to, the following:

- An evaluation of the directors' assessment of the company's ability to continue as a going concern. In particular, we reviewed forecasts for the next 12 months;
- An evaluation of the directors' plans for future actions in relation to its going concern assessment, taking into account any relevant events subsequent to the year-end through discussions with those charged with governance; and
- Obtained a letter of financial support from the Brien Holden Vision Institute Limited.

Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of the company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal controls as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF
BRIEN HOLDEN VISION INSTITUTE FOUNDATION
(continued)**

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Compliance with the ACFID Code of Conduct

We have audited the accompanying Code of Conduct Summary Financial Reports of Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation, which comprises the Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2025, the income statement, the statement of changes in equity and the table of cash movements for designated purposes for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Audit Opinion Pursuant to the ACFID Code of Conduct

In our opinion, the information reported in the Code of Conduct Summary Financial Reports set out in the following pages are in accordance with the ACFID Code of Conduct and is consistent with the annual statutory financial report.

Calibre Partners

Calibre Partners Pty Limited

R. Wong

Roger Wong
Partner

Dated this 20th day of November 2025.



Feedback

We value your feedback. If you would like to provide us with feedback or would like to lodge a complaint please contact us and your message will be directed to the appropriate staff for resolution.

Contact

Email: info@brienholdenfoundation.org
Phone: +61 2 9065 0700
Write: Brien Holden Foundation
PO Box 6328 UNSW
Sydney NSW 1466

Head Office

Level 4 North Wing, Rupert Myers Building
Gate 14 Barker Street, University of New South
Wales. Sydney NSW 2052 Australia



