



Improving eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Adelaide region

Introduction

The rate of vision impairment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is three times that of other Australians, with most causes treatable or manageable with regular eye care. The 2016 National Eye Health Survey found that two-thirds of vision impairment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be improved with spectacles alone. It also revealed that less than 50% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had diabetes eye examinations within recommended national clinical guidelines. One of the most significant barriers to this is the lack of access to culturally safe and financially attainable eye care.

Watto Purrunna Aboriginal Primary Health Care Service

Watto Purrunna Aboriginal Primary Health Care Service (hereafter referred to as Watto Purrunna) provides a comprehensive program of culturally sensitive services across Adelaide's northern and central regions at no cost. Clinics are run by Aboriginal Health Practitioners and Aboriginal Clinical Health Workers in partnership with doctors, registered nurses, allied health professionals, wellbeing workers and visiting specialists. There is a strong emphasis on the early detection and prevention of chronic diseases.

Eye health services at Watto Purrunna Aboriginal Primary Health Care Service

To improve eye health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Northern Adelaide region, a partnership was established between the Australian College of Optometry (ACO), Flinders University Optometry School and Watto Purrunna to provide a regular eye care clinic within Watto Purrunna. From these discussions, optometry and ophthalmology clinics were established.

Optometry

The current visiting optometrists are Tristan Glover and Jose Estevez. The clinics operate fortnightly on a Monday afternoon and **do not require a referral**. Bookings can be made via contacting each Watto Purrunna site directly.

The Watto Purrunna sites available with optometry are:

Muna Paiendi

Optometrist – Tristan Glover

A: Corner of Mark Road and Oldham Road,
Elizabeth Vale, SA 5112

P: (08) 8182 9206

Maringga Turtpandi

Optometrist – Jose Estevez

A: 1 Gilles Crescent, Hillcrest, SA 5086

P: (08) 7425 8990

If these clinics are fully booked and the client needs access to urgent bulk-billed care, they can be seen by Tristan and Jose at one of the following sites.

Elizabeth Eye Care

Optometrist – Tristan Glover

A: 3/25 Philip Hwy, Elizabeth, SA 5112

P: (08) 7009 4294

Flinders Health2Go

Optometrist – Jose Estevez

A: Adjacent Car park 13

Sturt Dr, Bedford Park, SA 5042

P: (08) 7221 8700

Ophthalmology

The visiting ophthalmologist is Dr. Tim Gray. The clinics operate monthly on a Tuesday morning and **require a named referral***. At these clinics, patients can receive treatment for diabetic eye disease and other eye conditions, as well as fast-tracked referrals for eye surgery (occurs offsite). The Watto Purrunna site available with ophthalmology services is:

Maringga Turtpandi

Ophthalmologist – Dr. Tim Gray

A: 1 Gilles Crescent, Hillcrest, SA 5086

P: (08) 7425 8990

*Address all ophthalmology referrals to:

Dr Tim Gray
C/O Clinical Unit Support Officer
Watto Purrunga Aboriginal Primary Health Service
Health.NALHNAAboriginalHealthAdministration@sa.gov.au
Fax No: 08 7425 8905

Alternative Ophthalmology Pathway

Alternatively, there are some local ophthalmologists who bulk-bill Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients referred to their private rooms. Optometrists and general practitioners may refer patients to 2 private practice locations:

ELIZABETH VALE

Dr Sudha Cugati
(diabetic retinopathy treatment & cataract surgery)
OR
Dr Swati Sinkar (cataract surgery only)
c/- Northern Eye Specialists
43 John Rice Avenue, Elizabeth Vale, SA 5112
P: 08 8281 8271
F: 08 8281 0282
E: elizabethvale@northerneyespecialists.com

NORTH ADELAIDE

Dr Weng Onn Chan
OR
Dr David Sia
c/- Pennington Eye Clinic
79 Pennington Terrace, North Adelaide 5006
P: (08) 8267 1700
F: (08) 8239 1550
E: info@penningtoneyeclinic.com

How can you help?

Cultural Safety and 'Asking the question'

The identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People can assist in providing them with pathways to care, improve cultural safety and improve eye health outcomes. This can be done by 'asking the question' - **"Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?"** of all clients that access your service.

Further information and resources regarding 'asking the question' has been prepared by the Indigenous Eye Health Unit and is available at: <https://mspgh.unimelb.edu.au/centres-institutes/centre-for-health-equity/research-group/ieh/roadmap/asking-the-question>



Indigenous Eye Health, University of Melbourne has used with permission the existing wording and artwork from the 'Have you Asked the Question?' joint project by North East Healthy Communities (previously North East Primary Care Partnership) and Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS). Project artwork by Gary Saunders.

Please indicate the clients' Indigeneity on all referral letters to these services.

Reduction of cost barriers

GlassesSA scheme

GlassesSA is a government scheme that provides low-cost glasses or no cost contact lenses to 'Eligible Persons'. **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of South Australia can receive standard glasses through GlassesSA at no cost.** GlassesSA relies on the participation of providers of optometric services across South Australia, with optometrists entering into a service agreement with the Minister for Human Services.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be eligible for the scheme, they must:

- Live permanently in South Australia
- AND
- receive one of the following maximum rate Centrelink payments:
 - Aged Pension
 - Disability Support Pension
 - JobSeeker Payment
 - Parenting Payment (single or partnered)
 - Carer Payment

OR

- receive a maximum rate DVA pension
- OR
- be under the age of 18 years and are the dependant of a person receiving an eligible payment.

For further information, you can contact GlassesSA via email at GlassesSA@sa.gov.au or via phone [1300 762 577](tel:1300762577).