



**Vision
Initiative**

A partnership promoting eye health and vision care

National Centre for farmers health conference Hamilton 2010

Eye health and vision care in rural Australia

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Robyn Wallace

Orthoptist

Program coordinator

Vision Initiative

Outline

- Vision 2020 Australia
- the Vision Initiative
- strategies for eye health promotion
- eye health in Australia
- rural issues related to eye health
- preventing sight loss in rural Australia
- common eye conditions, risk factors
- eye health workforce referral pathways

Vision 2020 Australia

- Vision 2020 Australia was established in 2000, as part of Vision 2020 the ‘Right To Sight’ World Health Assembly resolution WHA56.26 to elimination of avoidable blindness in member countries
- the *National Framework for Action to Promote Eye Health and Prevent Avoidable Blindness and Vision Loss* is the national response, endorsed by all State and Territory health ministers
- Vision 2020 Australia is the national peak body eye health
- represents 60 member organisations.

The Vision Initiative

- Victorian Department of Health's public health response to the *National Framework*.
- A health promotion program aimed at raising awareness of eye health and vision care to the general community and to health care professionals, and undertakes advocacy for the sector

The Vision Initiative

- The key message of the program is *Save your Sight -Get Tested*

Visit an optometrist or Ophthalmologist especially for clients who have:

- a family history of eye disease
- age over 40
- diabetes
- noted changes in vision
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

Additional message are:

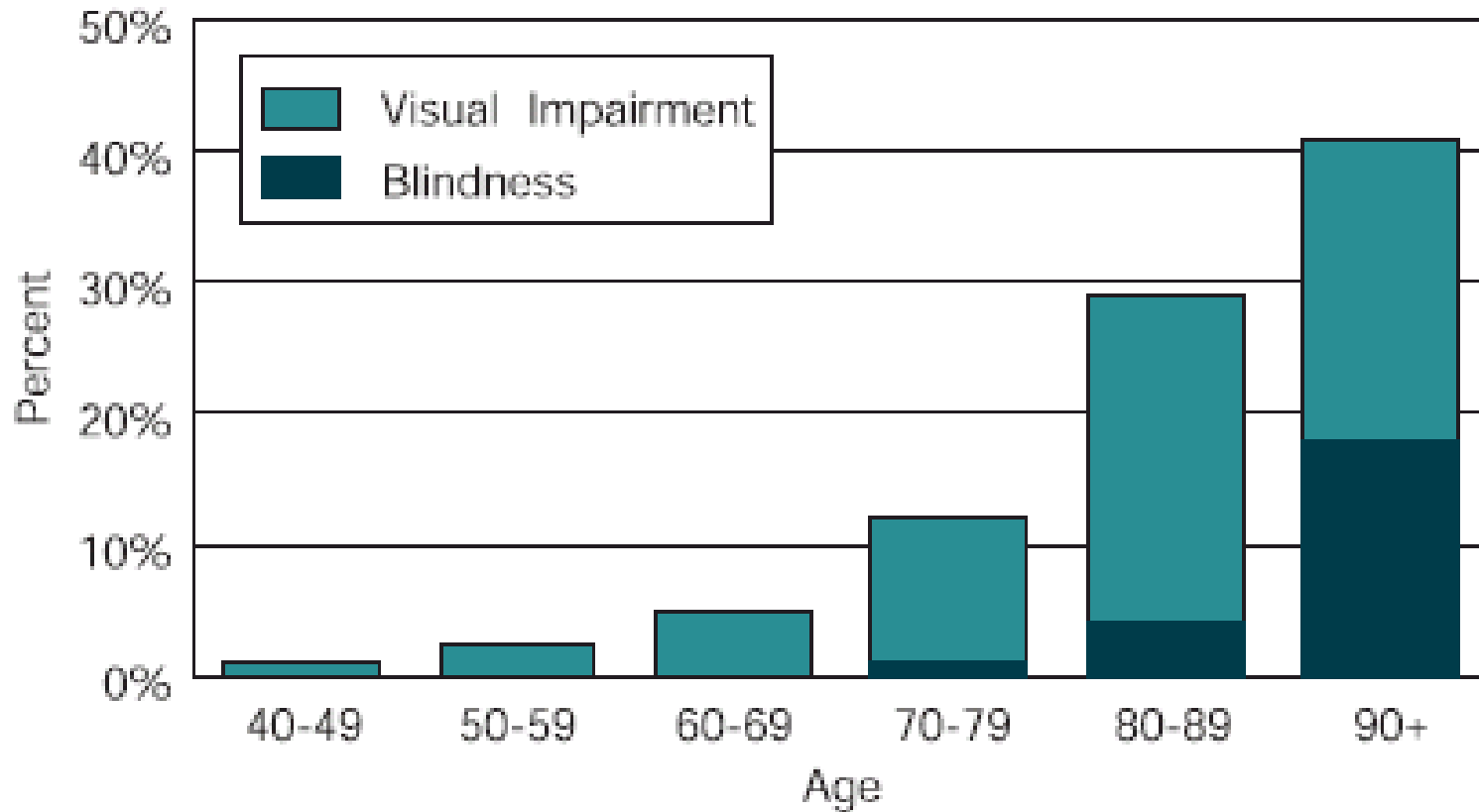
- protect the eyes from sun damage by wearing hats and sunglasses
- protect the eyes from injury by using safety glasses.

Eye health in Australia

- In 2009 almost 575,000 people in Australia had vision loss
- by year 2020, this figure is expected to rise to 801,000
- 80 per cent of vision loss caused by five conditions
- in Indigenous communities prevalence of eye disease is up to 6.2 times higher than mainstream
- in 2009, the annual economic impact was estimated at \$16.6 billion

The good news is - 75 per cent of vision loss is avoidable or treatable

Vision loss and ageing in Australia(2004)



Impact of vision loss

People with vision loss are at a greater risk of suffering from secondary conditions:

- falls - twice as many falls
- depression - three times the risk of depression
- early special accommodation
- increased risk of hip fracture - eight fold increase
- increased early mortality
- social isolation

Rural population trends Australia

- inland rural Australian population is shrinking
- over the last 100 years, the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over has risen from four to twelve per cent in Australia
- in 2000, rural populations were older than metropolitan regions overall
- Insufficient health services and health professionals in rural areas

Rural health challenges

The rural population has:

- 20 per cent higher rates of injury and disability
- Hospital admission- eye injury 3 times the rate
- 10 per cent higher mortality rates
- 20-40 per cent higher rates of smoking
- reduced access to services and health professionals
- 30 per cent higher rates of diabetes in women
- 20-40 per cent more sedentary behaviour (males)
- 10 per cent higher rates of overweight and obesity
- earlier mortality rates

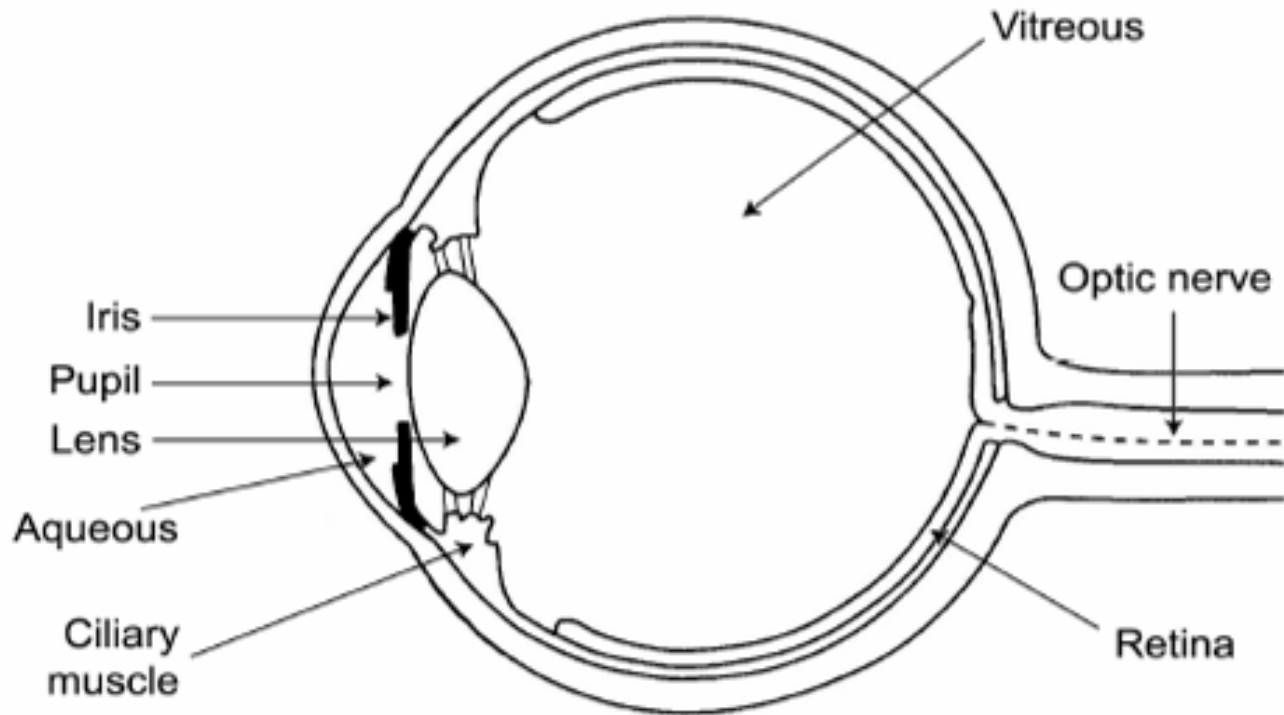
Prevention of chronic disease - improve eye health

The risk of developing many of the main causes of vision loss in rural Australia can be reduced by action to reduce chronic disease, this includes initiatives to reduce rates of:

- diabetes
- cardiovascular disease
- obesity

The rural health status across all these elements is higher than that in the major cities

The Eye



Common eye conditions

80 per cent of vision impairment and blindness is caused by five conditions (listed alphabetically):

- Age-related Macular Degeneration(AMD) - 10 per cent
- cataract - 14 per cent
- diabetic retinopathy- 2 per cent
- glaucoma - 3 per cent
- uncorrected refractive error - 62 per cent

75 per cent of vision loss is avoidable or treatable

Age-related macular degeneration - how vision is affected



Cataract- how vision is affected



Diabetic retinopathy- how is vision affected



Diabetic Eye Disease



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Glaucoma- how vision is affected



Refractive error - how vision is affected



Vision Initiative - health promotion strategies

- Integrate eye health and vision care education into health related programs or include with the work of other organisations
- emphasis on the development of sustainable activities
- identifying target groups who are not having regular eye test, through evidence based data e.g VPHS, AIHW reports, research member groups
- developing strategic and operational plan with partner organisations, planning, doing and evaluating specific activities

Vision Initiative - health promotion strategies

- Development of accredited online eye health training modules for specific professions such as, nurses by working with APNA and ANF, and GP's.
- certificate 1V elective for AHW with VACCHO
- public Housing integrating information through, intranet, newsletters and small grants for community eye health action
- social marketing, magazines, conferences

Victoria Government - Falls Prevention

Making a Move, a falls prevention program of the Victorian Government Department of Health.

15 week centre or home based exercise program for over 65's at risk of falling.

Recognises the relationship between vision and falls.

Vision Initiative partners developed for the program:

- on line resources for coordinators to use
- speaker coordination
- train the trainer to build capacity
- fact sheets, assessment tool and presentations

Sun Smart and the Vision Initiative

- outdoor workers are at greater risk of developing eye conditions related to sun exposure
 - cataract
 - pterygium (non cancerous growth on the eye)
- awareness raising and preventative behavior is needed
- promote wearing hats and sunglasses as a SunSmart message
- development of a collaborative fact sheet

Vision Initiative - Diabetes Australia (Vic)

In partnership with Diabetes Australia (Vic)

examples of partnering activities:

- development of eye health fact sheet
- publication of messages in newsletters
- providing information at Community Network Conferences
- providing eye health information for 'Feltman' Aboriginal Health workers education tool
- training CALD speakers on eye health.

Eye health workforce- Ophthalmologist

- ophthalmologists are secondary and tertiary eye health providers
- Specialist doctors providing surgical and medical treatment of eye disease
- referral required in order to obtain the Medicare rebate, (GP or optometrist)
- waiting time for appointments can vary according to the condition
- challenges to meet demands rural areas

Eye health workforce - Optometrist

- an optometrist is a primary eye care provider (as is a GP)
- Medicare provides a full rebate on most optometry consultations
- Victorian Eyecare Scheme - low cost glasses
- clients do not need a referral to see an optometrist, normally no waiting time
- will fast-track referrals to ophthalmologists if and when necessary
- many more in workforce, with better geographical spread
- many optometrists have therapeutic endorsement shared care provided with Ophthalmologist.

Low vision services and vision support groups

- 66,500 Australians are blind
- the number of people who are blind or vision impaired is expected to increase to approximately 102,000 by 2020
- low vision services and vision loss support groups assist people with vision loss to maintain independence
- Vision Initiative provides central portal with contact details through its website for public and professional access to services.

Thank you

For more information please contact:

Robyn Wallace

Vision 2020 Australia

(03) 9656 2026

rwallace@vision2020australia.org.au

Or visit www.visioninitiative.org.au



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