

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EYE HEALTH CONFERENCE 2026

SEEING OUR WAY

Innovation, Excellence & Healing

11 - 13 MAY 2026 | Naarm/Melbourne – Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Country

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

FINAL CONDENSED PROGRAM

CONTENTS



Pg 2. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Pg 3. **AGENDA DAY ONE**

Pg 4. **AGENDA DAY TWO**

Pg 6. **AGENDA DAY THREE**

Pg 8. **THE FIRST NATIONS EYE
HEALTH ALLIANCE LIMITED**

Pg 9. **THANK YOU TO OUR
SPONSORS**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies, and waterways throughout Australia. We acknowledge the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the land and affirm that sovereignty was never ceded.

We pay respects to our elder's past, present and emerging. We thank our elders for their guidance and commitment to the advancement of our communities. We stand in solidarity with the stolen generation and their families, calling for healing and justice for the atrocities suffered by individuals, families, and communities.

Finally, we acknowledge the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have or continue to work tirelessly in eye health and vision care, to close the gap in preventable vision loss in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities so they can be healthy and flourishing.

LOCATION

We gather on the beautiful lands of the Wurundjeri People at The Melbourne Cricket Ground, Brunton Ave, Richmond VIC 3002, Australia

DISCLAIMER

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this program and other Conference resources may contain images and voices of deceased persons.

Please know that the program elements and timing are subject to change. Please consult the NATSIEHC26 conference website for the most up-to-date version of the program.

DAY 1 - MONDAY 11TH MAY 2026

Conference Registration

8:20 - 8:50	Conference Registration	8:20 - 8:50	Conference Registration
9 - 11:30am	Fitzroy Walking Tour with Gavin Brown from Victorian Aboriginal Health Service		
9am - 4.00pm	Weaving, WUDTJAMEEN (all day event), Betty Cuthbert Bar		

11.30-12.30

Welcome Reception (all delegates)

Ampitheatre	MC Lose Fonua Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony and Cultural Performance Djirri Djirri Cultural Services
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12.30-1.30

Lunch (all delegates)

12.30-1.30pm	First Nations Eye Health Alliance Annual General Meeting
Olympic Room	Closed Session (Invitation only)

2:00 - 3.30 pm	First Nations Workshop, FNEHA
Jim Stynes A	National Plan Round Tables

2:00 - 3:30pm	Non-First Nations Workshop, FNEHA
Olympic room	National Plan Round Tables

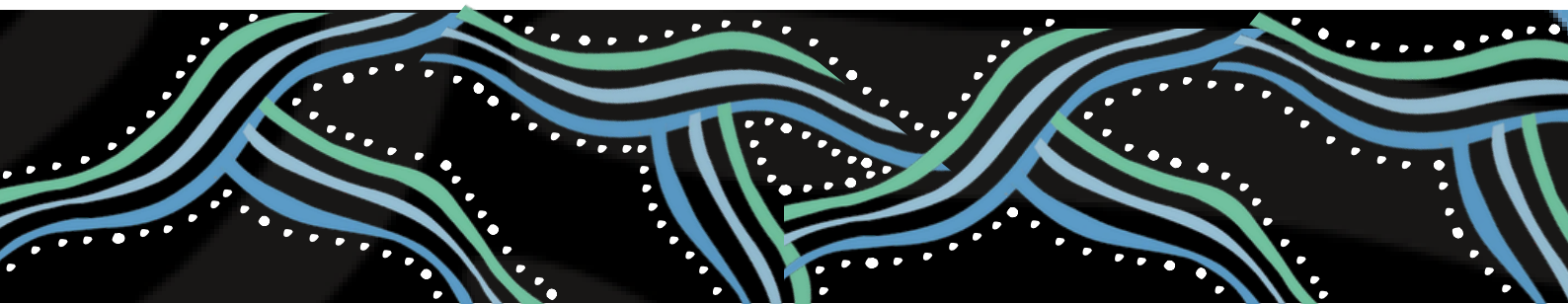
2:00- 3.30	Tino Rangatiratanga: A Māori Vision of Eye Health workshop - Māori delegates only
Dillbabiik Room	

3:30 - 4:00

Afternoon Tea (all delegates)

4:00 - 5:00	First Nations Workshop Continued	4:00-5:00	Non-First Nations Workshop continued
	National Plan Round Tables		National Plan Round Tables

4:00 - 5:00	Tino Rangatiratanga: A Māori Vision of Eye Health workshop - Māori delegates only Renata Watene and Nicola Anstice
Dillbabiik Room	



Conference Registration

- 8:30 - 9:00 Conference Registration
- 9am - 4.00pm Weaving, WUDTJAMEEN (all day event), Betty Cuthbert Bar

Opening Plenary | Theme: Transition - Reforming Systems and Creating Change

- Olympic Room **MC Lose Fonua**
- 9:00 - 10.00am
1. Conference Opening
 2. Monica McCabe, **National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation**
 3. Assistant Minister White, **Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health, Australian Labor Party**
 4. Christine Cousins, **Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples (Victoria)**
 5. Dr Olivia Bell, **Councillor, City of Melbourne**

10:00 - 10:30 Morning Tea

Plenary Two | Empowerment of our people: the criticality of community voice and action

- Olympic Room **MC Shaun Tatipata**
- 10.30-12.00pm
1. Professor John Kaldor, **University of New South Wales Kirby Institute**
 2. Mr Kahurangi Fergusson-Tibble: **International Speaker** **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**
 3. Jaki Adams and Renata Watene, **International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, Indigenous Peoples Special Interest Group**

12.00 - 1 pm Lunch (all delegates)

1:00 - 1.30 Plenary

- Olympic Room **MC Nick Wilson**
- 1:00-1.30pm **Keynote Presentation** Kim Whitley, **The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council (NATSIAACC)** **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**
- 1:35 - 1.50pm **Gavin Brown, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)**
- 1:50 - 3.00pm **Table Tops with Nick Wilson**

3:00 - 3:30PM Afternoon Tea (all delegates)

Plenary Three | Empowerment of our people the criticality of community voice and action (continued)

- Olympic Room **MC Telaide Cowdrey**
- 3:35-3.55pm **Keynote Presentation** Abe Ropitini, **The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)** **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**
- 4:00 - 5:00pm **Concurrent Sessions**

4.00-5.00pm Concurrent Sessions | Stream 1: Leadership and positioning for success

Jim Stynes A **MC Thomas Mylne**

- 1 Optometry A Collaboration between stakeholders improves access to eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. **Shelley Hopkins & Chantelle Pooley**
- 2 A Journey in Allyship, **Rachael Bowman and Kate Roberts**
- 3 Transition – what are we learning? **Shaun Tatipata, Mitchell Anjou**

Concurrent Sessions | Stream 2: Empowering our people

Dillbabiik Room **MC Stephen Corporal**

- 1 Understanding a decade of progress in preventing vision loss among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.
Lose Fonua and Khyber Alam
- 2 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Eye health measures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
Fadwa Al-Yaman
- 3 Mā te Wā - Good things take time: Māori health curriculum delivery in an Australian Optometry Program.
Renata Watene and Shelley Hopkins

Concurrent Sessions | Stream 3: Promoting Integrated Health Solutions

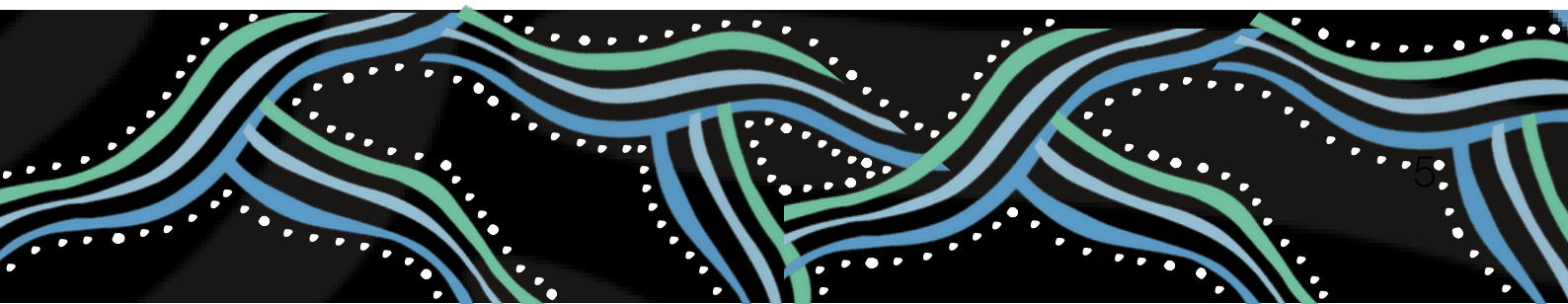
Jim Stynes B **MC Tanya Morris**

- 1 Implementation of the first Ninox Vision retinal screening service in Broome
Angus Turner and Soleil White
- 2 Improving access to specialist eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples using telehealth
Kerry Woods, Jingyi Chen, Angus Turner
- 3 Eye Hear You- The Western NSW Eye Health Partnership PREM Project
Jessica Rae & Tori Towney

6:30 - 10.00 pm Gala Dinner and Awards | MCG Members Room

Please note that this is a ticketed event. If you are unsure if your registration has a Gala dinner ticket, please get in touch with the FNEHA conference team.

Address: MCG Members Room, Melbourne Cricket Ground, Brunton Ave, Richmond, VIC 3002, Australia
FNEHA Telephone: (02) 4677 7012
FNEHA Contact email: heyyoumob@fneha.com.au



Conference Registration

8:30 - 9:00 Conference Registration
9am - 4.00pm Weaving, WUDTJAMEEN (all day event), Betty Cuthbert Bar

Plenary Four | Theme: Reconciliation: Bridging now to next

Olympic Room **MC Lauren Carr**

9:00 - 10.00 **Speaker:** Aunty Eva Jo Edwards, *Mutti Mutti, Boonwurrung and Yorta Yorta woman and Survivor of the Stolen Generations*
Video: Seeing Our Way: Life and Legacy, **First Nations Eye Health Alliance**
Speaker: Jilpia Nappaljari Jones **Memorial Oration** Janet Richardson

**KEYNOTE
SPEAKER**

**KEYNOTE
SPEAKER**

10:00 - 10:30

Morning Tea

10:30 - 12:00

Workshops

Jim Stynes A A practical introduction to Ophthalmology
A/Professor Kris Rallah-Baker, Dr Thomas Mylne, RANZCO

Olympic Room Cultural Education, Djirri Djirri Cultural Services
Dr. Mandy Nicholson

Jim Stynes B A population health approach to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye care services and systems
A/Professor Mitchell Anjou, Minum Barreng: Indigenous Eye Health Unit

Dillbabiik Room Advocacy and Government Relations
Mia Linden, Delta Advisory

MCG Bowl Eye Health Collaborative Round Table (Closed Meeting by invitation only)
Lose Fonua FNEHA and Monica McCabe NACCHO

12:00 - 1:00

Lunch (all delegates)

1:00 - 1.30

Plenary

Olympic Room **MC Associate Professor Kris Rallah-Baker**

Speaker Associate Professor Julian L Rait OAM, *The Australian Medical Association*

1:30 - 2:30

Concurrent Sessions | Stream 1: Leadership and Positioning for Success

Dillbabiik Room **MC Makkaliah Ridgeway**

Ngaaminy: A First Nations led project mapping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community expectations of good eye health for children
Lose Fonua, Stephen Corporal and Nicola Anstice

First Nations Visual Acuity Chart Design, an initiative of the "Sight and Smiles" project
Ms Jessica Curnuck and Associate Professor Khyber Alam

Optometry Australia's Commitment Statement: Supporting the Development of a Culturally Safe Optometry Profession
Nicola Anstice

1:30 - 2:30

Concurrent Sessions | Stream 2: Empowering Our People

Jim Stynes A

MC Shaun Tatipata

The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital - Committed to Delivering in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health

Brendon Gardner, Natalie Tieri, Renee Chmielewski, Rosie Dawkins

How South Australia Eliminated blinding Trachoma as a public health problem

Sharon Bilney & Carlos Hernandez

Improving Eye Health Outcomes on the Sunshine Coast Through Collaborative Partnerships

Candice Pearson & Coen Keyte

1:30 - 2:30

Concurrent Sessions | Stream 3: Promoting Integrated Health Solutions

Jim Stynes B

MC Sara Carrison

The Indigenous and Remote Eye Health Service (IRIS) program

Georgia Bennett and Sarina Martin

An update on the development and validation of the new Turtle visual acuity chart

Shelley Hopkins & Deb Duthie

Paediatric Physiotherapy Supporting Clients with Vision Impairments

Kristy Petrie

2:30 - 3:00

Afternoon Tea

3:00-4.00

Closing Session | Theme: Seeing our Way: Healing Now Then and Always

Olympic Room

MC Lose Fonua

Speaker: Aunty Sandra Barber, **Stolen Generations Survivor**

Speaker: NATSIHEC26 Reflections

Speaker: Telaine Cowdrey **First Nations Eye Health Alliance**

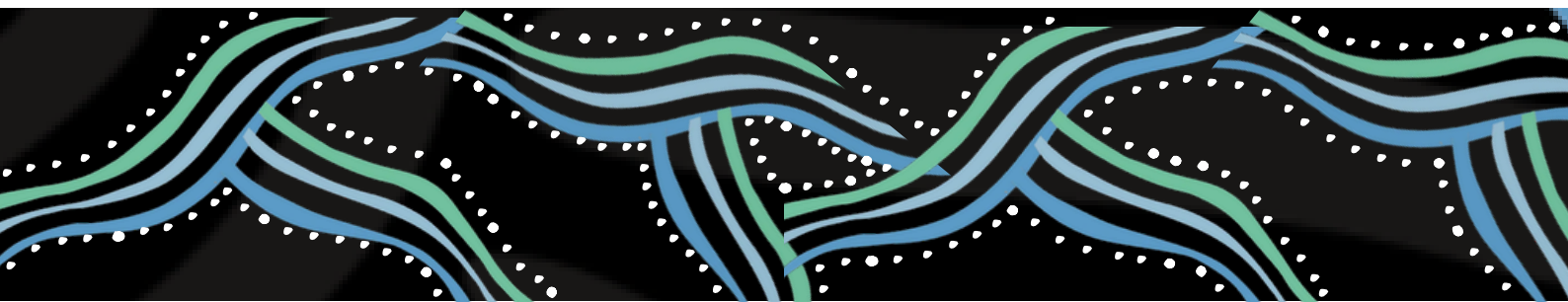


Table Tops

Olympic room

1. Seeing Our Way: Creating Pathways into Ophthalmology for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Students, *Dr Brodie Seymour*
2. VAHS Paediatric Eye Clinic: the undervalued role of the orthoptist in providing crucial subspecialty care, *Kylie Middleton and Susan Carden*
3. Darwin Preschool Vision Screening Program, *Tamika Tonson*
4. A culturally safe and timely service model for access to aflibercept injections, *Tinu Abraham and Barringunn Bulic*
5. Seeing our way, life after vision loss and the power of a referral, *Renee Rich & Ellie Hudson*
6. The Role of the Orthoptist in an ACCHO Eye Clinic, *Melissa Tchea, Kelli McGuinness*
7. Using the 715 Health Check to Support Strong Eyes, *Makkaillah Ridgeway, Shaun Tatipata, Lesley Martin*
8. Milpa's Six Steps to Stop Germs: From Hygiene to Healthy Housing and Homes, *Lesley Martin*
9. In pursuit of equitable, nationally consistent subsidised spectacle schemes in Australia, *Ms Madeline Baker, Dr Nicola Anstice*
10. Vision Science Innovation Alliance (VSIA), What Would Good Look Like? *Keely Bumsted O'Brien*

The First Nations Eye Health Alliance (FNEHA) is the principal voice and Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye care peak body. FNEHA is a registered charity that utilises traditional and contemporary knowledge/pathways to develop equitable health approaches that stop preventable vision loss and blindness in First Nations people. FNEHA carries the vision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to see the enactment of equitable improvements in eye health and vision care outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our work contributes to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, building towards a collective national approach to empower First Nations communities so that they are healthy and flourishing.

FNEHA was born out of key discussions at the 2022 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Conference (NASTIEHC) on Larrakia Country in Darwin, NT where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health professionals from across the country called for a dedicated body to lead the advancements needed to improve eye health and vision care outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

FNEHA provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in the eye care and vision sector along with their allies, a space to connect, learn and be supported. By becoming a member of The Alliance, you can help to strengthen First Nations leadership and voice within the eye health and vision care sector.



FNEHA Board & Secretariat 2024 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Conference



BECOME A MEMBER

The Alliance also provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in the eye care and vision sector along with their allies, a space to connect, learn and be supported. By becoming a member of the Alliance, you can help to strengthen First Nations leadership and voice within the eye health and vision care sector.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

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Guide Dogs.



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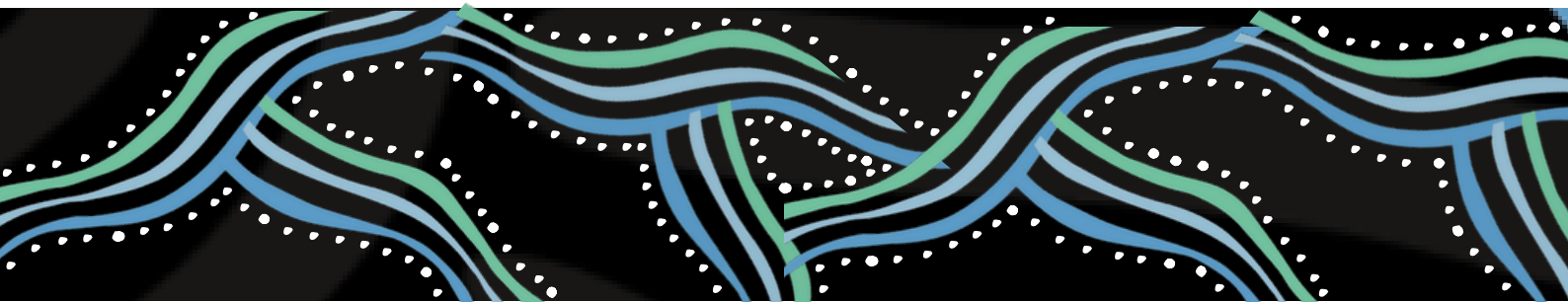
Bursaries are designed to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take part in this important annual gathering. The applications received come from health workers, emerging leaders, and community members with an interest in eye health and vision care, seeking this unique opportunity to connect, learn, and share.

This year, we have had the opportunity to provide over 20 bursaries to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend, and it is thanks to the generosity of these agencies.



On behalf of the First Nations Eye Health Alliance, we thank all our sponsors and speakers for their incredible generosity in time and funding support that have made this conference possible.

We look forward to continuing to walk with you all to achieve eye health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.





**FIRST NATIONS
EYE HEALTH ALLIANCE**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email
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www.fneha.com.au