

**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**

VERSION 2

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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 11<sup>TH</sup> 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 - 5.00pm	Weaving, WUDTJAMEEN (all day event), Betty Cuthbert Bar		

**11.30-12.30**

**Welcome Reception (all delegates)**

Ampitheatre	<b>MC Lose Fonua</b> Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony and Cultural Performance Djirri Djirri Talent Group		
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**12.30-1.30**

**Lunch (all delegates)**

<b>12.30-1.30pm</b>	First Nations Eye Health Alliance <b>Annual General Meeting</b> Olympic Room Closed Session (Invitation only)
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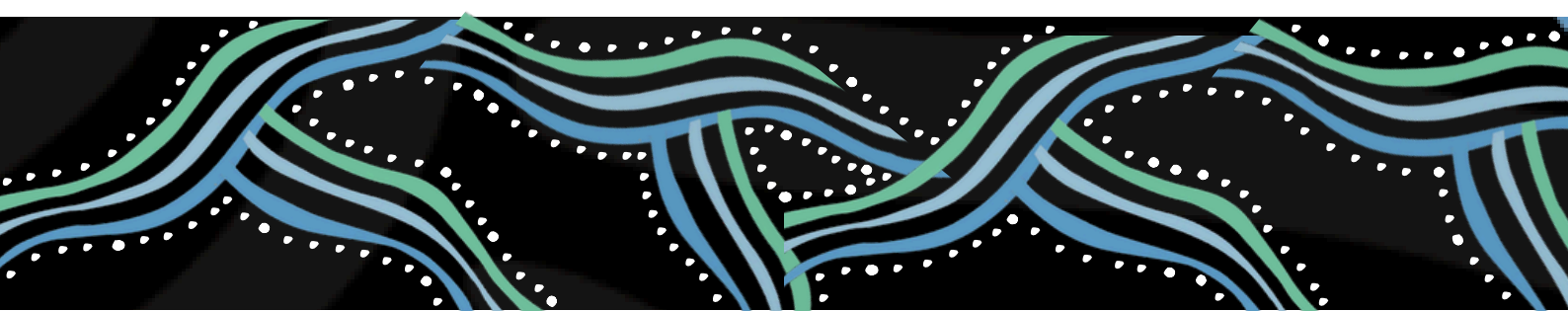
<b>2:00 - 3.30 pm</b>	First Nations Workshop, <b>FNEHA</b> Olympic Room National Plan Round Tables	<b>2:00 - 3:30pm</b>	Non-First Nations Workshop, <b>FNEHA</b> Banquet Hall National Plan Round Tables
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<b>2:00- 3.30</b>	Tino Rangatiratanga: A Māori Vision of Eye Health workshop - Māori delegates only Dillbabiik Room
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**3:30 - 4:00**

**Afternoon Tea (all delegates)**

4:00 - 5:00	First Nations Workshop Continued National Plan Round Tables	4:00-5:00	Non-First Nations Workshop continued National Plan Round Tables
4:00 - 5:00	Tino Rangatiratanga: A Māori Vision of Eye Health workshop - Māori delegates only <b>Renata Watene and Nicola Anstice</b> Dillbabiik Room		



## Conference Registration

- 8:30 - 9:00 Conference Registration  
9am - 5.00pm 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)**

## 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. Professor Nitin Verma, **International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness**  
3. Mr Kahurangi Fergusson-Tibble: **International Speaker** **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
4. Jaki Adams and Renata Watene, **International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, Indigenous Peoples Special Interest Group**

## 12.00 - 1 pm Lunch (all delegates)

- 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 **Michael Graham, 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

Long Room

**MC**

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

Concurrent Sessions | Stream 2: Empowering our people

Dillbabiik Room

**MC**

- 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 Room

**MC**

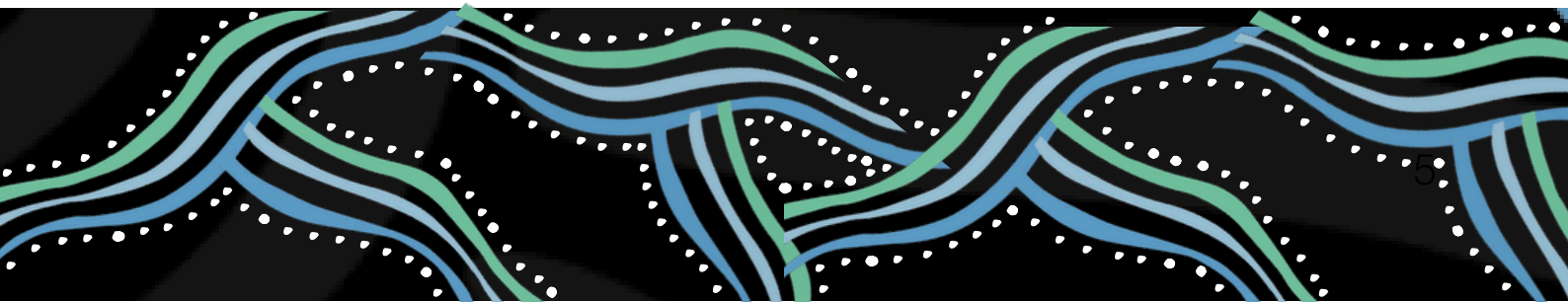
- 1 Implementation of the first Ninox Vision retinal screening service in Broome  
**Angus Turner and Soleil White**
- 2 Improving access to specialist eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples using telehealth  
**Kerry Woods, Jingyi Chen, Angus Turner**
- 3 Eye Hear You- The Western 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](tel:0246777012)  
FNEHA Contact email: [heyyoumob@fneha.com.au](mailto: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 - 9.30 **Speaker:** Aunty Eva Jo Edwards, *Mutti Mutti, Boonwurrung and Yorta Yorta woman and Survivor of the Stolen Generations*

**KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER**

9:35 -9.35 **Video:** Seeing Our Way: Life and Legacy, **First Nations Eye Health Alliance**

9:35 -9.45 **Speaker:** **Jilpia Nappaljari Jones Memorial Oration** Janet Richardson

**KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER**

10:00 - 10:30

Morning Tea

10:30 - 12:00

Workshops

- Long Room A practical introduction to Ophthalmology  
**A/Professor Kris Rallah-Baker, Dr Thomas Mylne, RANZCO**
- Olympic Room *AIDA Cultural Safety Workshop*  
**Dr Peter Malouf, CEO, AIDA**
- Dillbabiik Room Advocacy and Government Relations  
**Mia Linden and David Mitchell, Delta Advisory**
- Jim Stynes Grill *Eye Health Collaborative Round Table*  
**Lose Fonua and Monica McCabe NACCHO**

12:00 - 1:00

Lunch (all delegates)

- Olympic Room **MC Associate Professor Kris Rallah-Baker**  
1:05 - 1:25 **Keynote 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**

Ngaaminya: A First Nations led project mapping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community expectations of good eye health for children  
**Lose Fonua, Shaun Tatipata, Katrina Cox 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

Long Room

**MC**

*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**

Trachoma Eliminated as a Public Health Issue in South Australia

**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 Room **MC**

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**

The Indigenous and Remote Eye Health Service (IRIS) program

**Georgia Bennett and Sabrina Martin**

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**

3:05 -3.15

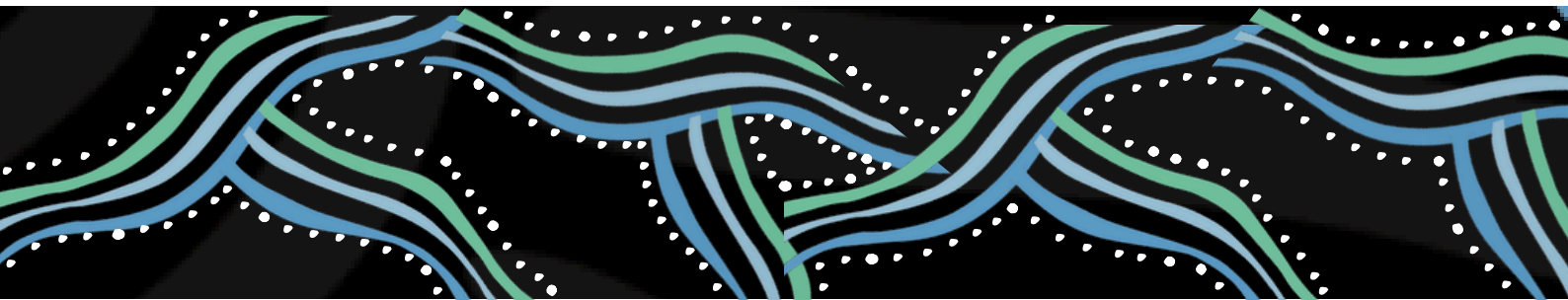
**Speaker:** Aunty Sandra Barber, **Stolen Generations Survivor**

3:20 -3.40

**Speaker:** NATSIHEC26 Reflections

3:45 -4.00

**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. Collaboration between stakeholders improves access to eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, *Shelley Hopkins and Chantelle Pooley*
3. VAHS Paediatric Eye Clinic: the undervalued role of the orthoptist in providing crucial subspecialty care, *Kylie Middleton and Susan Carden*
4. Committed to Delivering in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health, *Natalie Tieri*
5. Darwin Preschool Vision Screening Program, *Tamika Tonson*
6. A culturally safe and timely service model for access to aflibercept injections, *Tinu Abraham/ Barringunn Bulic*
7. Seeing our way, life after vision loss and the power of a referral, *Renee Rich & Ellie Hudson*
8. The Role of the Orthoptist in an ACCHO Eye Clinic, *Melissa Tchea, Kelli McGuinness*
9. Using the 715 Health Check to Support Strong Eyes, *Makkaillah Ridgeway, Shaun Tatipata, Lesley Martin*
10. Milpa's Six Steps to Stop Germs: From Hygiene to Healthy Housing and Homes, *Lesley Martin*
11. In pursuit of equitable, nationally consistent subsidised spectacle schemes in Australia, *Ms Madeline Baker, Dr Nicola Anstice*
12. Building workforce portals - the pathways in *Nikita Ridgeway*



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.**



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**FIRST NATIONS  
EYE HEALTH ALLIANCE**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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