



Media Statement

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Lions Outback Vision Van delivering on mission to close eye health gap in Western Australia

The Lions Outback Vision Van has run 75 clinics and treated almost 1500 patients since its launch six months ago – delivering on a mission to bring comprehensive eye care to some of the most isolated people in Western Australia.

McCusker Director Lions Outback Vision, Associate Professor Angus Turner, said the Van had visited 16 different communities stretching from Albany to Kununurra. Of the patients seen, 661 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

The release of the figures coincides with **World Sight Day** today, which focuses global attention on blindness and vision impairment.

“While most vision loss can be corrected overnight, 35 per cent of Indigenous adults have never had an eye examination,” Associate Professor Turner said. “The Vision Van is a unique new service model that delivers ophthalmology clinic-based care for all major eye conditions close to where people live.”

Each year, thousands of Western Australians suffer visual loss and blindness. Vision disorders are a common and growing problem in Western Australia, resulting in significant economic, social and quality of life impacts.

In remote Western Australia, specialist coverage is up to 19 times lower than in urban Australia and rural residents are three times less likely to have seen an ophthalmologist.

Lions Outback Vision is an outreach service of the Lions Eye Institute (LEI). The Van is fitted with state-of-the art ocular imaging and laser equipment.

Professional patient care is provided by specialist staff experienced in rural and remote health care. The Van has been made possible through supporters, including the WA Department of Health, McCusker Foundation and Lotterywest.

“The Van and its team have provided care using equipment that exceeds some tertiary hospital facilities and has prevented patients having to travel to the city for the gold standard care,” Associate Professor Turner said.

“It has worked closely with Aboriginal Medical Service sites and integrated with existing health facilities where larger surgery procedures have been required.

“While it is early days, the LOV Van model appears to be delivering on its goal and leading to greater equity of access to specialist eye health services for regional and remote Western Australians,” Associate Professor Turner said.

“We can say with confidence the Van is making a real difference in protecting the eye health of some of our most vulnerable citizens and is a strong contributor to the improved eye health outcomes for regional Western Australians - as revealed in the National Eye Health Survey ([nationaleyeh-health-survey_summary-report_final](#)).”

Lions Outback Vision is part of the LEI and delivers a range of eye care services to regional and remote Western Australia. The LEI is an internationally renowned non-profit medical research institute.

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Photographs of Associate Professor Angus Turner and the Lions Outback Vision Van available on request