



**Media Release June 22, 2018**

**Lions Outback Vision Outreach Eye Health program in the Pilbara proudly supported into its second year by Quadrant Energy and Santos, Joint Venture Partners in the Devil Creek Gas Plant.**

Quadrant Energy and Santos, Joint Venture Partners in the Devil Creek Gas Plant, are proudly supporting Lions Outback Vision to provide eye health services in the Pilbara region for a second year. In 2017, the JV partners supported the Lions Outback Vision program with a focus on diabetic eye health education.

This year, the support will assist with the broad range of eye health services Lions Outback Vision provides across the Pilbara; including the Lions Outback Vision Van, Visiting Optometry and Outreach surgeries and Diabetic Retinopathy Screening support.

McCusker Director of Lions Outback Vision, Associate Professor Angus Turner, said: “Many Pilbara residents may have seen the big orange Vision Van passing through their town but we also have quite an extensive service supporting optometry and eye health issues across many remote Pilbara communities as well as Karratha, Port Hedland, Roebourne and Onslow.”

Lions Outback Vision Manager Christine Stott said: “It is important that we are able to take specialist eye health care to the regions so residents in those areas have the same access to services as those in the metropolitan area. People don’t need the added burden of travel and being away from family when they need specialist treatment. We are most grateful to the Devil Creek Gas Plant Joint Venture Partners for enabling us to continue our work in the places where it is most needed.”

Quadrant Energy CEO, Brett Darley, said Lions Outback Vision provided a critical service to people living in regional and remote areas.

“We are pleased to continue our support for Lions Outback Vision programs to help improve eye health in the Pilbara,” Mr Darley said.

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### **Contact information**

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**Image: Karratha Mayor Peter Long and Deputy Mayor John Lally with Dr Angus Turner on the Vision Van in Karratha**

## **Background Information**

### **Devil Creek Gas Plant**

Named after the creek which runs adjacent to the onshore facilities, the Devil Creek Gas Plant is located on the Mardie Station pastoral lease, approximately 45kms southwest of Dampier in Western Australia's northwest.

Gas to supply the Devil Creek facility is extracted from the Quadrant Energy operated Reindeer field approximately 80km northwest of Dampier on the Northwest Shelf. Gas is brought to the mainland via the unmanned Reindeer Wellhead gas production platform and a 105km offshore and onshore raw gas supply pipeline.

The Devil Creek gas plant and Reindeer gas field are a joint venture between Quadrant Energy and Santos. Production began in December 2011 and today provides a reliable and independent supply of gas for Western Australia through the Dampier to Bunbury Natural Gas Pipeline. All of the plant's produced gas feeds WA's domestic gas market and underpins the resources sector and associated industries.

### **Lions Outback Vision**

Lions Outback Vision builds on a long history of outreach eye health services by the Lions Eye Institute that began in the 1960s with the first mass screening programs for glaucoma in Western Australia.

Lions Outback Vision offers services such as Visiting Optometry Services, Outreach Ophthalmology Visits, a mobile clinic through the Lions Outback Vision Van, Tele-ophthalmology Services and Diabetic Retinal Screening Support.

Meeting higher demands for services can be supported by building capacity with local health providers and educating patients to better manage their conditions.

The focus of Lions Outback Vision is a service delivery model that genuinely integrates collaboration between public/private enterprises, clinicians and health service professionals to increase productivity and efficiency. Outback Vision is committed to working with local communities in a way that builds local capacity where and when needed in a culturally appropriate way.

### **McCusker Director Lions Outback Vision, Dr Angus Turner**

Dr Turner completed medical training at The University of Western Australia before studying at Oxford University and completing a Masters of Evidence Based Medicine. He underwent ophthalmology training in Melbourne. He is an Associate Professor at UWA, a consultant at Fremantle Hospital and an ophthalmology lecturer for the Rural Clinical School WA.

In 2009, he assisted in the establishment of a comprehensive eye care service at Zithulele hospital in South Africa. He has made a number of return visits to Zithulele to train health workers in surgical procedures and fundraises prior to his visits so that he can take equipment and medicines with him.

In 2010, he established Lions Outback Vision to integrate three streams of eye health: retinal screening, optometry and ophthalmology. The unit aims to eliminate blindness by improving access to eye health services in regional and remote areas.

Dr Turner established a daily telehealth service at LEI connecting an ophthalmologist with GPs and optometrists in regional and remote areas. He was able to secure funding from the WA Country Health Service for a State-wide telehealth coordinator, a fellowship position in outreach ophthalmology and an optometrist to coordinate outreach services.

### **Australian Eye Health**

Australia is a vast continent with more than one third of the population (34.1 per cent) living outside its major cities. Of this non-metropolitan population, almost 20 per cent is dispersed across more than 1500 rural and remote communities with fewer than 5000 residents.

These communities are often too small to support traditional models of health care delivery. As a result, rural and remote residents often travel significant distances in order to access appropriate care from larger regional and urban centres. This involves the inconvenience of time away from family and employment, which is often associated with further emotional and financial impacts.

Outreach services aim to address some of these unique issues by providing more equitable access to quality health care services within the local setting. It is generally accepted that outreach programs represent an important part of delivering efficient, effective, and sustainable health care to rural and remote communities.

### **Key facts**

- Indigenous Australians suffer from three times the level of blindness, are 12 times more likely to have cataract-related blindness and 14 times more likely to have diabetes-related blindness (compared with the general population).
- In remote WA, 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.
- While most vision loss can be corrected overnight, 35 per cent of indigenous adults have never had an eye examination.
- Vision disorders cost Australia an estimated A\$9.85 billion in 2004.
- A\$4.8 billion is the loss of well-being (years of life lost as a result of disability and premature mortality).
- Vision disorders rank seventh and account for 2.7 per cent of the national loss of wellbeing.
- Direct health costs total A\$1.8 billion.

- Direct health costs have increased by A\$1 billion over the last 10 years and will increase a further A\$1-2 billion in the next 10 years.
- Cataract, the largest direct cost, takes 18 per cent of expenditure.
- The health system costs place vision disorders seventh, ahead of coronary heart disease, diabetes, depression and stroke.
- Indirect costs, A\$3.2 billion, include carers' costs, low vision aids, lost earnings and other welfare payments and taxes.
- Five conditions – age related macular degeneration, cataract, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and under-corrected refractive error cause over 80 per cent of vision impairment and 78 per cent of blindness.