



Media release

The Hon David Davis MLC

Minister for Health
Minister for Ageing

Wednesday 17 July 2013

Coalition delivers funding boost for Aboriginal eye health

The Victorian Coalition Government has announced a \$750,000 boost to deliver the Victorian Aboriginal Spectacle Subsidy Scheme.

Visiting the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service eye clinic in Fitzroy yesterday with CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Jill Gallagher AO, Minister for Health David Davis announced new funding for the scheme that has provided more than 4,000 spectacles to Aboriginal Victorians since July 2010.

“The Coalition Government is committed to closing the gap and improving health outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians,” Mr Davis said.

“That is why we are providing \$750,000 over four years to the Australian College of Optometry to continue the successful Victorian Aboriginal Spectacle Subsidy Scheme.”

Mr Davis said the scheme provides affordable, high-quality glasses to Aboriginal Victorians for just \$10.

“The designs of the glasses are community approved so they better reflect what people, particularly young people, want to wear,” Mr Davis said.

“By removing cost barriers the scheme improves access to eye checks, allowing for earlier detection of eye health conditions and referral to appropriate specialist treatment.

“Aboriginal Australians are significantly more likely to be blind or experience significant vision loss – up to six times more likely nationally,” Mr Davis said.

Ms Gallagher said regular eye-testing can help prevent vision loss and numbers show that Aboriginal people are less likely to get their eyes checked.

“Restored vision helps people engage in countless activities that they would have previously struggled with – from writing to shopping, driving a car, studying or working,” Ms Gallagher said.

“This program is changing lives by helping people enjoy the activities they used to, before their vision was impacted.”

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Mr Davis said this funding was part of a record \$61.7 million investment by the Victorian Coalition Government to help Close the Gap on Aboriginal health outcomes.

The scheme builds on the Victorian Government's Vision 2020 initiative – a \$2.55 million initiative over three years aimed at preventing vision loss among at-risk groups.

The scheme is delivered by the Australian College of Optometry in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and a network of optometrists in regional Victoria.

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