

ACO's unique new service

Low vision clinic opens

Victorian patients with low vision have a new option for accessing services and primary care, with the ACO launching its Low Vision Clinic in partnership with Vision Australia. The Clinic is based with the ACO services in the Barry Cole Building in Carlton, and offers clinical optometry services as well as support, referrals, and a range of low vision aids.

Optometrists can refer any patient with low vision or vision impairment that may benefit from its range of services. There is no threshold clinical level for referral into to the service. Patients will first have an assessment from an optometrist, followed by an occupational therapy assessment. Patients will also have access to other services and facilities including; retinal and anterior segment imaging; automated and Goldmann visual fields; contact lenses; paediatric assessments; ocular disease monitoring; complex visual function assessments and more.

The clinic stocks a wide range of low vision aids, including optical magnifiers, telescopes, electronic/video magnifiers and adaptive technology devices from various suppliers including those from Vision Australia. Some of these products are subsidised for patients on pensions or low incomes. Patients can also be assessed for lighting options that can help improve their functional vision, and may purchase specialist lights through the clinic. Clinic staff can outline and demonstrate 'apps' for low



vision that can be used with devices including iPads, tablets and smartphones, all of which are increasingly important options for low or reduced vision patients.

The clinic has an experienced occupational therapist (OT), through Vision Australia, who can work with people to devise management strategies for patients to make the best of their functional vision. They may also be referred for other support services including the Vision Australia library, orientation and mobility, technology adaptation and support,

and employment and education training. The OT can also organise one-on-one home visit consultations to help patients with low vision set up a safe and effective home environment to retain their independence and mobility.

- The clinic is currently open on Tuesdays. All referrals will be triaged by the head of service.
- GENERAL ENQUIRIES AND APPOINTMENTS
(03) 9349 7400 or (03) 9349 7455
- MORE INFORMATION Iris Huang
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Working across the community

The Australian College of Optometry Chief Executive Officer, Maureen O'Keefe, has outlined a range of partnerships being established to further work in areas, including low vision, contact lens care, and Indigenous eye health.

Maureen addressed the OAA-Vic 2013 AGM, outlining new projects, including a collaboration with the Royal Flying Doctor Service to provide mobile eye care in Ouyen, in western

Victoria, a remote area with limited access to eye health services.

The College has been significantly boosting its Indigenous eye care capacity, receiving a boost in funds in 2013 from the Victorian government for the Aboriginal Spectacle Subsidy Scheme. The College has also employed its first Aboriginal Liaison Officer, hosted a work experience program to raise awareness for Indigenous students, and participated

in an Indigenous Cultural Audit Workshop. Other collaborations are with the RVEEH (to provide contact lens services).

The ACO has also signed a new Affiliation Agreement with the University of Melbourne, which recognises the long-term association between the university and the college in the provision of clinical training, teaching and research.

- MORE INFORMATION aco.org.au