

Big boost for Aboriginal eye health



The Victorian Government has provided \$750,000 over the next four years to the Australian College of Optometry to continue the successful Victorian Aboriginal Spectacle Subsidy Scheme. The scheme builds on the Victorian EyeCare Service, a long-standing Victorian government initiative aimed at preventing visual loss among at-risk groups. The Victorian Aboriginal Spectacle Subsidy Scheme is delivered by the Australian College of Optometry in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations. There are about 37,000 persons of indigenous descent in Victoria. Dr Genevieve Napper is the lead optometrist at the Australian College of Optometry for its aboriginal eye-care services.

ACO opens its own low vision clinic

A very big step forward in low vision care in Australia was when the Association for the Blind, now Vision Australia, established its Kooyong Low Vision Clinic 40 years ago, in 1973. It did this in partnership with the Australian College of Optometry and the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Melbourne. The Kooyong Clinic became internationally renowned for its multi-disciplinary model of care that involved optometrists, ophthalmologists, occupational therapists, social workers and orientation and mobility specialists. For the past 40 years, the Australian College of Optometry provided the optometrists for the Kooyong Clinic, the first of whom was Ian Bailey, who was to become a pre-eminent world expert in low vision. The Kooyong Low Vision Clinic expanded to a network of low vision clinics throughout Victoria, which the Australian College of Optometry also staffed. The Optometry Clinic of the Australian College of Optometry did not have its own low vision clinic over the past 40 years, electing to refer its patients to Kooyong.

This has now changed. The College opened its own low vision clinic within its optometry clinic on 10 October 2013;

however, the new clinic is still a partnership with Vision Australia, which is providing the non-optometric staff.

Flinders University makes another high profile appointment



Leading authority on contact lenses, Tony Phillips, has been appointed Associate Professor and Head of contact teaching at Flinders University in Adelaide. Professor Phillips is well known as an author of the seminal text *Contact Lenses; A Textbook for Practitioner and Student* which was first published in 1972, with numerous subsequent editions. He holds senior clinical appointments at the Women's and Children's Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre as a contact lens specialist. He qualified in optometry at the City University in London, where he also completed a MPhil degree. He came to Australia some 30 years ago and is in private practice in Adelaide.

New Heads of School at Hong Kong and Melbourne universities



Professor Chi-ho To has been appointed Head of the School of Optometry at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He commenced on 1 August 2013. He succeeds Professor Carly Lam, who was head for the past six years. Professor To graduated in optometry at the Hong Kong Polytechnic in 1987 and obtained his PhD degree from the University of Wales, College of Optometry in Cardiff. He returned to The Hong Kong Polytechnic in 1993 and was promoted to Professor in 2005. He was appointed the Henry G Leong Endowed Professor in Elderly Vision Health in 2013. His research is in glaucoma and myopia.



Associate Professor Allison McKendrick has been appointed Head of the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences at the University of Melbourne commencing on April 1, 2014. She succeeds

Professor Algis Vingrys who has been Head for three years during the demanding years, while the University's Doctor of Optometry program was introduced. Professor McKendrick qualified in optometry at the University of Melbourne, where she also completed her PhD degree. Her post-doctoral appointment was at the University of Western Australia. Her research on migraine, glaucoma detection and sensory decline with ageing has been supported continuously by the Australian Research Council and the NHMRC for the past 15 years.

Research grant for amblyopia research at the University of Auckland

Dr Ben Thompson and Dr Joanna Black from the Department of Optometry and Vision Science in the University of Auckland have received NZ\$1.2 million from the Health Research Council of New Zealand to conduct a multi-site, randomised clinical trial of a binocular treatment for amblyopia. The treatment was developed in collaboration with Professor Robert Hess at McGill University in Canada and will be deployed as a modified version of the videogame Tetris running on an iPod touch device. The trial brings together an international team of vision scientists, optometrists and ophthalmologists and will have test sites in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

US grant awarded to QUT researchers for diabetes research

Dr Nicola Pritchard and Professor Nathan Efron from the School of Optometry and Vision Science at the Queensland University of Technology have received a grant of \$98,000 from DiaComp (Diabetes Complications Consortium), which is sponsored by the US National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases under the auspices of the US National Institutes of Health. The award is for a project entitled 'LANDMark BioBanks—a 5-year longitudinal bioresource'. It is noteworthy that of 33 awardees in the current round this is the only grant made to researchers outside the USA.