

## News

FRRR Announcements

Newsletters

Podcasts

## Ouyen locals 'see' the benefits

In late 2013 the ACO established a new public health eye clinic at Ouyen in partnership with the Victorian branch of the Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) and Mallee Track Health and Community Service (MTC&HS) to address the eye care needs of this remote rural community with an ageing population, and to reduce existing barriers to good eye health.

Demographic data shows the average age of Ouyen and Mallee residents to be older than the Australian average and the need for regular optometry intervention increases as you age; combine this with the remoteness of the area and this relatively new eye care service is already in high demand.

The Australian College of Optometry (ACO) received a CARA grant for \$8,196, funded by the Ian Rollo Currie Estate Foundation, to purchase a slit lamp to enhance the level of eye care to patients in Ouyen, Victoria.

A slit lamp allows a thorough examination of the eye under magnification and it can detect and support the ongoing management of a range of eye diseases – such as cataract, trachoma, diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma and more. These eye conditions are major causes of vision loss and blindness.

This dedicated slit lamp is a great asset to the Ouyen public eye clinic – patients are able to receive early intervention and can now be treated locally rather than having to travel 100 km to Mildura for specialist appointments.

The ACO aims to seek further funding in the future to purchase more dedicated equipment for the Ouyen clinic and continue to expand the level of care provided to the local community members.

These services make a huge difference to our rural, regional and remote elderly residents and this was a fantastic project for FRRR to support!

*Photo: Royal Flying Doctors' Service*



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