

Closing the Australian eye health gap may be in sight

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The roadmap is a whole-of-system approach to eliminating disparities in Indigenous eye health.

Three years after the launch of the roadmap to close the gap for vision, progress has been made but "much remains to be done", according to the authors of a Perspective published online today by the *Medical Journal of Australia*.

Dr Marian Abouzeid, Mitchell Anjou and Professor Hugh Taylor from the University of Melbourne, said that progress has been made to increase services, improve efficiencies and support better Indigenous [patient engagement](#) with the eye care system.

Launched in 2012, the roadmap comprises 42 recommendations spanning a whole-of-system approach to eliminating disparities in Indigenous eye health.

The recommendations aim to:

- increase accessibility and uptake of eye care services by Indigenous Australians
- improve coordination between eye care providers, primary care and hospital services
- improve awareness of eye health among

patients and clinicians; and

- ensure culturally appropriate [health services](#)

"Demonstrable gains are being made and there is growing momentum around the roadmap initiatives, but much remains to be done, and increased government support is required", the authors said.

The authors stated that up to 94% of vision loss in Indigenous adults is avoidable or amenable to treatment.

"Vision loss accounts for 11% of the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, so it follows that fixing the eye care system to address avoidable vision loss will help to close the broader health and social gaps and will have flow-on effects well beyond eye health," Professor Taylor said.

More engagement was needed from the public health and medical communities to drive progress.

The template used for eye care has high relevance for integrating care between primary health and essentially all visiting specialist services.

"With concerted multi-sectoral effort, political will and a commitment to establishing a sustainable [eye care](#) system, the gross disparities in [eye health](#) that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians can be eliminated."

Provided by University of Melbourne

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