



Minum Barreng in Garramilla 2025 – saltwater ceremony with Uncle Dr Richie Figo

Minum Barreng: A Legacy of Leadership, Partnership and Lasting Change

The Close the Gap Campaign acknowledges Minum Barreng: Indigenous Eye Health Unit at The University of Melbourne as it prepares to conclude its activities by the end of 2026, and recognises the Unit's significant leadership, contribution and allyship in advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health and vision care.

Over many years, Minum Barreng has played an important role in supporting systems improvement, health promotion, research and reform across the eye health sector. Through this work, the Unit has demonstrated what genuine allyship can look like in practice: working alongside communities, supporting First Peoples-led priorities, building strong partnerships, and using its platform to help drive practical change.

"When Minum Barreng began this work in 2008, our goal was to help change Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health outcomes. Nearly two decades later, we can see not only significant improvements in eye health, but a much stronger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health sector. For us, success was never about Minum Barreng continuing forever. It is about the work, resources and leadership increasingly sitting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, where they belong." – Mitchell Anjou AM

The planned transition of Minum Barreng's programs, activities and resources to First Peoples leadership and organisations is an important and positive step. It reflects the strength, capability and sustainability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations across the eye health sector and aligns with the Campaign's ongoing call for community-controlled, rights-based and self-determined approaches to health equity.

The Campaign acknowledges the leadership of Minum Barreng in its space and the trust, respect and collaboration that have underpinned its work with communities, partners and organisations across Australia. As the Unit moves through this transition, we recognise both the legacy of what has been achieved and the importance of ensuring its resources, relationships and learnings continue to support First Peoples leadership into the future.

"Minum Barreng's legacy is bigger than the work it has delivered. It's the relationships that have been built, the opportunities that have been created and the strength of the First Nations leadership we now have across eye health. I've had the privilege of working alongside Minum Barreng and I've seen what genuine allyship can look like when people listen, share knowledge, create opportunities and back our leadership. The work doesn't stop when Minum Barreng finishes. It continues through our people, our organisations and our leadership, and that's something we should all be proud of". - Shaun Tatipata, Director, Aboriginal Health Practitioner

We thank Minum Barreng for its contribution to the broader movement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equity, and for walking alongside communities and the sector as an ally committed to practical action. The Campaign looks forward to seeing this important work continue through First Peoples-led organisations and leadership beyond 2026.

Minum Barreng team at NATSIEHC26 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Conference 2026 – held in Narm in May 2026. Minum Barreng won the 'exemplary allyship' award presented by the First Nations Eye Health Alliance (FNEHA)

