

Media Release

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Indigenous Eye Health on track to close the gap

The effort to close the gap in Indigenous Eye Health is well on track according to a report launched today.

Speaking at the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) Annual Scientific Congress in Brisbane, Melbourne Laureate Professor Hugh R Taylor AC, Harold Mitchell Chair of Indigenous Eye Health at the University of Melbourne said that progress is being made on every single recommendation in the *Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision*. Five of the recommendations have been fully implemented.

“Rates of trachoma are now below four percent having fallen from 14 percent in 2009,” he said.

“*The Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision* developed by the Indigenous Eye Health Group at the University of Melbourne contains 42 interlocked policy recommendations.”

“In terms of regional implementation of the Roadmap, there has been positive engagement. We are working with 12 regions across the country covering over one third of the nation’s Indigenous population,” Professor Taylor said.

The 2014 Annual Update on the Implementation of the *Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision* was launched by the Hon. Quentin Bryce AD CVO and Matthew Cooke, newly appointed Chair of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

Professor Taylor said there was excellent commitment and engagement with the Commonwealth Government that funded several initiatives in the *Roadmap* and work is also being undertaken with good support from the states and the Northern Territory.

“I am thrilled that we are making significant progress, however we do need to continue the effort until we close the gap and provide equity in eye care and eliminate trachoma,” Professor Taylor said.

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