

My Eye Health Program Launch

This is a most unique initiative formed from a collaborative partnership between four leading organizations namely-

- The Royal Society for the Blind(RSB),
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmology-South Australia (RANZCO)
- The Sight for All Foundation (SFAF) and
- The Freemasons Foundation(Foundation),

The initiative called the **My Eye Health Program** is a community education program which has been developed to address the issues of eye health, intervention and rehabilitation.

The strength of this program is in the shared view of these four Partners on the need to educate the community with regard to the issues of eye health, intervention and rehabilitation, in order to enhance the quality of life of people living in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

The aim of the My Eye Health Program is to educate and create awareness of:

- Eye Health and prevention of vision loss,
- Eye Care Services available,
- Referral protocols,
- Skills transfer to the Allied health sector and local Government, and
- Management and Rehabilitation strategies for chronic vision loss

The My Eye Health Program will increase awareness and provide information which will enable and encourage individuals to be proactive in managing their eye health.

Each Partner in this Program, brings a unique set of skills and resources which they have committed jointly to ensure its success. For example-

- The Freemason's Foundation through its individual Masonic Lodges will utilise local networks in the community to publicise the Program, and assist with implementation at the local level
- RANZCO in conjunction with other relevant stakeholders will utilise their specific skills and knowledge to advise on the preparation and content of all training materials and training of the community educators.
- Sight for all Foundation (SFAF) will assist through its unique arrangement with primary Aboriginal Health care services in introducing, advising and assisting in the training of the community educators.
- The RSB as the primary provider of the full range of rehabilitation services to people who are blind or vision impaired in South Australia will implement the Program through its community educators.

By utilising the unique set of skills and knowledge of these organizations and leveraging off local resources this Program will create substantial and enduring awareness of eye health within both the allied health sector and the general community.

With over 7.6% of South Australians either blind or vision impaired, eye health is a significant community issue.

The primary causes of eye disease, excluding incorrect refraction and cataracts are:

- Macular Degeneration
- Glaucoma
- Retinitis Pigmentation
- Diabetic Retinopathy

As a result of the ageing population and a range of other health and life style issues the incidence of these diseases are expected to significantly increase over the next 10-15 years.

However, the impact of these eye diseases can be mitigated through:

- Early detection and management,
- Lifestyle modification,
- Rehabilitation and

- Community Education

The Program presents a significant opportunity to positively impact on eye health within the community by ensuring people have all the information and tools they need to manage their own eye health.

With Partners such as the Freemasons the positive impact of the My Eye Health program will be far reaching in the community, which is where the important messages of this Program need to be. The Masonic community works quietly within the community, often sight unseen. Through the My Eye Health Program, there will be an opportunity for recognition within the community of the good works and goodwill of the Fraternity.