

IMPACT 2016 INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA PROGRAM



**The Fred Hollows
Foundation**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people are warned that this content may contain images and references to deceased persons

**Above all else,
Fred was a humanitarian.**

A message from Gabi

**Let's not beat around the bush –
blindness discriminates.**

Fred believed that it was the role of the doctor to serve and to help those in need. What he saw in remote Indigenous communities in Australia was a great need.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are six times more likely to go blind than other Australians. Australia is the only developed country to still have trachoma.

This sparked a great passion in Fred to improve the health outcomes of Indigenous Australians. He knew it was a basic human right for all people to have access to health care and good living conditions no matter where they lived.

From 1976-1978 Fred and I embarked on a journey around Australia, visiting 465 remote communities and assessing the state of Indigenous eye health. What we saw on the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program was truly shocking. As Fred commented, *"it was something out of the medical history books – eye diseases of a kind and degree that hadn't been seen in western society for generations."*

11%

**Vision loss among Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander adults
represents 11% of the health gap**



I was honoured, as a non-Indigenous white Australian to be involved in something so historic.

Halving avoidable blindness and formally recording the state of eye care in these remote communities over two years was a really significant step in the right direction.

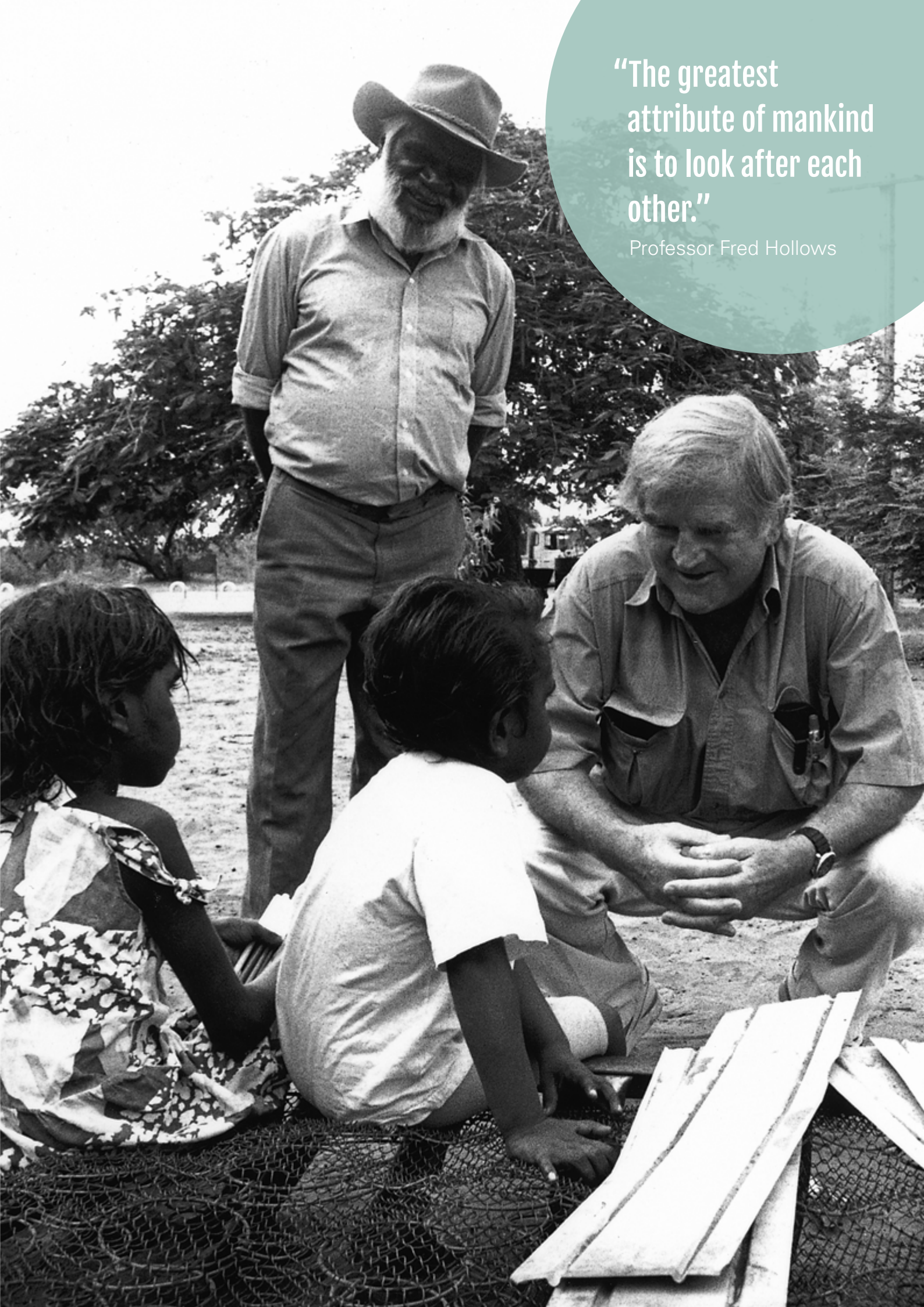
I know if Fred were here today he would be urging us to keep working for a world where Indigenous Australians enjoy better health and life expectancy.

Together we can make Fred's dream a reality.

Gabi Hollows.

Gabi Hollows AO
Founding Director





"The greatest
attribute of mankind
is to look after each
other."

Professor Fred Hollows



ISSUE

CATARACT

Cataract is 12 times more common among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and causes 59% of all blindness and low vision. Rates of cataract surgery are 7 times lower in comparison to the rest of Australia and waiting times are 88% longer.

TRACHOMA

Australia is the only developed country to still have trachoma. Trachoma remains a leading cause of blindness among Aboriginal people.

DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

Diabetic retinopathy is an increasing cause of vision loss and blindness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults. An estimated 37% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults have diabetes and 13% have already lost vision through diabetic retinopathy.

REFRACTIVE ERROR

Refractive error in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can be easily corrected through access to low-cost spectacles. This would address 54% of the vision loss and low vision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults.

6x

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are 6 times more likely than other Australians to go blind

94%

Four conditions - cataract, trachoma, diabetic retinopathy and refractive error - cause 94% of vision loss among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults

35%

35% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults have never had an eye exam

OUR PROGRAMS

TOP END OUTREACH

OPHTHALMOLOGY RESOURCES PROJECT

In a vast country with many rural and remote communities, accessibility to services is a geographic and economic barrier for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is particularly true in the terms of receiving health care.

The Top End Ophthalmology Resources Project aims to increase access to, and improve delivery of, outreach specialist eye care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote communities in the Top End of the Northern Territory.

In partnership with the Northern Territory Government and Top End health services, The Foundation has seen a dramatic increase in outreach ophthalmology activity thanks to increased coordination and liaison. For the first time in the Top End, outreach ophthalmology services have been scheduled according to population-based needs and coordinated with outreach optometry visits.

\$556,004

Required to complete the following project activities in the Top End:



Screen 1,000 people



Support 150 cataract operations and 50 other eye health procedures



Employ 3 eye health staff:
an Ophthalmology Fellow,
a Care Coordinator and an
Indigenous Liaison Officer



CASE STUDY:

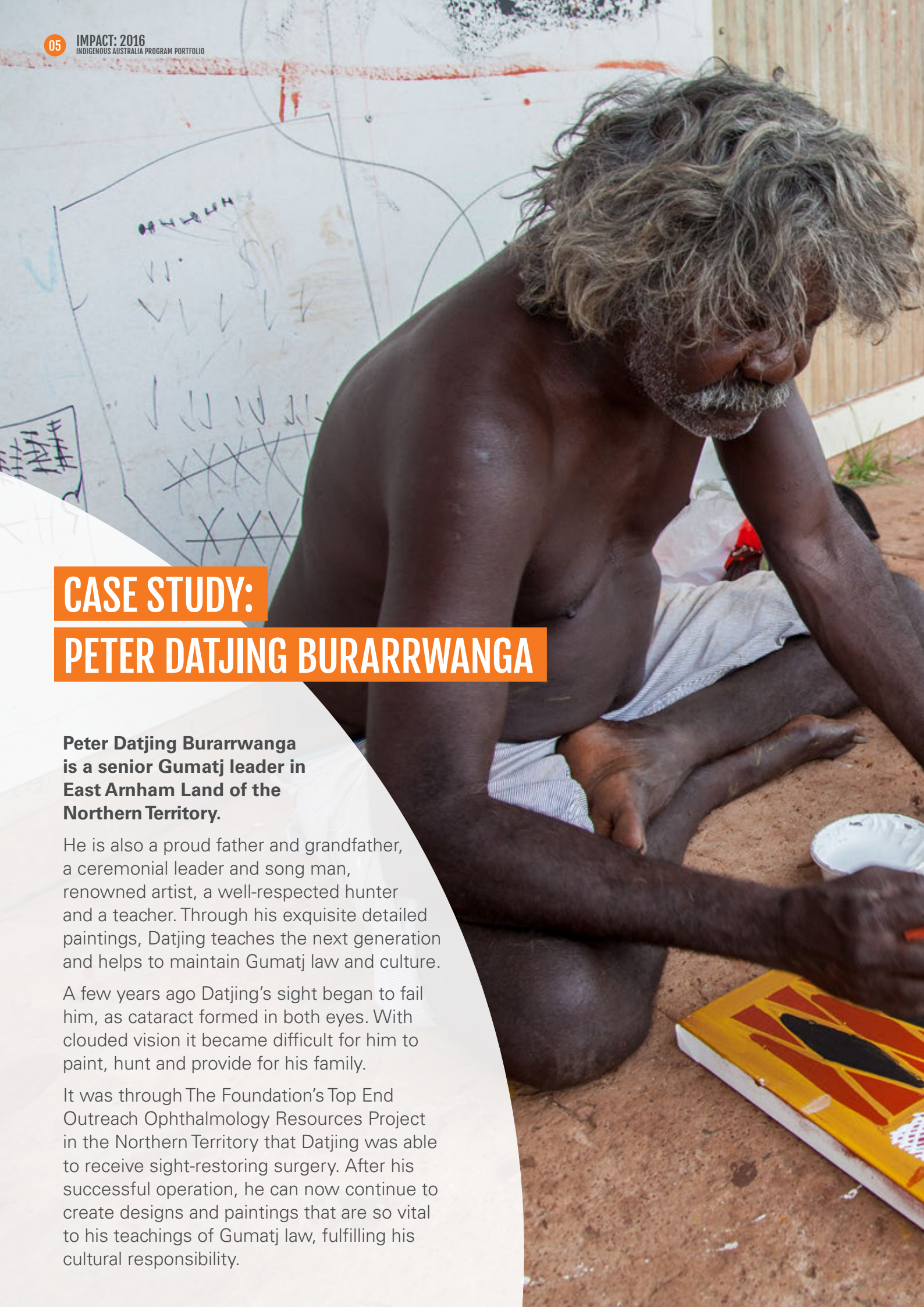
PETER DATJING BURARRWANGA

Peter Datjing Burarrwanga is a senior Gumatj leader in East Arnhem Land of the Northern Territory.

He is also a proud father and grandfather, a ceremonial leader and song man, renowned artist, a well-respected hunter and a teacher. Through his exquisite detailed paintings, Datjing teaches the next generation and helps to maintain Gumatj law and culture.

A few years ago Datjing's sight began to fail him, as cataract formed in both eyes. With clouded vision it became difficult for him to paint, hunt and provide for his family.

It was through The Foundation's Top End Outreach Ophthalmology Resources Project in the Northern Territory that Datjing was able to receive sight-restoring surgery. After his successful operation, he can now continue to create designs and paintings that are so vital to his teachings of Gumatj law, fulfilling his cultural responsibility.



“I am very lucky that you came here to change me and help me. I’m going to go back again and do my job, help my community, help the children, for their future.”

Peter Datjing Burarrwanga



OUTBACK EYE SERVICE

The Foundation has identified a high level of need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye care in Western New South Wales.

This region has the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in New South Wales and almost half of its population live in outer regional, remote or very remote areas. These residents experience significant social and economic disadvantage, particularly in regards to eye health.

Cataract surgery needs to be increased by 200 operations per year for the area's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents to reach the average national cataract surgery rates.

This service partners with the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and the Prince of Wales Hospital.

\$156,000

Required to complete the following project activities in Western New South Wales:



Build management and coordination capacity, increasing delivery of eye care services in Western NSW



Integrate eye health services with other key stakeholders



Employ a full-time Ophthalmic Nurse and part-time Orthoptist



“I like the Australian outback ... and I like the people of Bourke because it’s just sort of good honest eye work and the people of Bourke seem to like the service we give them.”

Fred Hollows

Through Fred’s extensive work in rural Australia, he developed a strong affinity with Indigenous communities, in particular the north-west New South Wales town of Bourke.

When Fred moved to Australia permanently in 1965, it wasn’t long before he found himself making regular trips to Bourke and nearby Enngonia. He discovered the inequity in the state of Aboriginal health and dedicated his life to improving the situation. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Fred was always demanding positive change.

Today, Bourke remains Fred’s final resting place, and the Outback Eye Service is carrying on Fred’s legacy by improving the health outcomes of Indigenous Australians.

It is a place where among the red dirt, the spirit of Fred is alive and well.



NGANAMPA HEALTH COUNCIL

— EYE HEALTH WORKFORCE AND COORDINATION PROJECT



Incorporating eye health with existing health programs is a priority for The Fred Hollows Foundation, elevating the profile of eye health as a serious health issue both here in Australia and overseas.

The Indigenous Australia program works to improve the coordination and integration of eye health, particularly with chronic disease and environmental health programs.

The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands are one of the largest, most remote and underserved areas in Australia. Stretching across three states and over 102,000 square kilometres, they are comprised of many communities and language groups, and face a range of issues relating to health care.

This project aims to increase access to eye health services for people living on the APY Lands of South Australia, by partnering with Nganampa Health Council which provides primary health care services to the region.

\$145,000

Required to complete the following project activities in the APY Lands:



Screen 450 people



Support 30 cataract operations and other eye health procedures



Distribute 100 spectacles to patients with refractive error



Provide additional equipment to improve eye health care in the region



Employ a full time eye health nurse to enhance the current eye health care systems in the region

CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN BARKLY INTEGRATED EYE HEALTH STRATEGY

The Foundation provides coordination and secretariat support to the Central Australian Barkly Integrated Eye Health Strategy to foster a collaborative approach to service provision.

The vast number of eye health services provided by a range of government, non-government and private providers has resulted in an often complex patient pathway, with a bewildering number of entry points to the eye health sector. Additionally the overlapping of services has the potential for duplication and gaps in service provision to form and remain unaddressed. This project allows various partners to come together to address these concerns.

In addition to the coordination of a number of stakeholders, this program supports the position of Ophthalmology Aboriginal Liaison Officer position at Alice Springs Hospital Eye Clinic. This position helps to create culturally appropriate services and can act as a bridge between the hospital and community members.



\$210,000

Required to complete the following project activities in the Central Australia and Barkly region:



Screen 240 people for eye health conditions



Support 140 cataract operations

BARKLY EYE HEALTH PROGRAM

Seen as a leading example of an effective eye care model in the Northern Territory, the Barkly Eye Health Program will continue to demonstrate improved coordination of eye health results.

Partnering with the Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation, this program looks to improve access to high quality eye health services by focusing on the quality, quantity and delivery of eye health services to the Barkly region.



\$60,004

Required to complete the following project activities in the Barkly region of the Northern Territory:



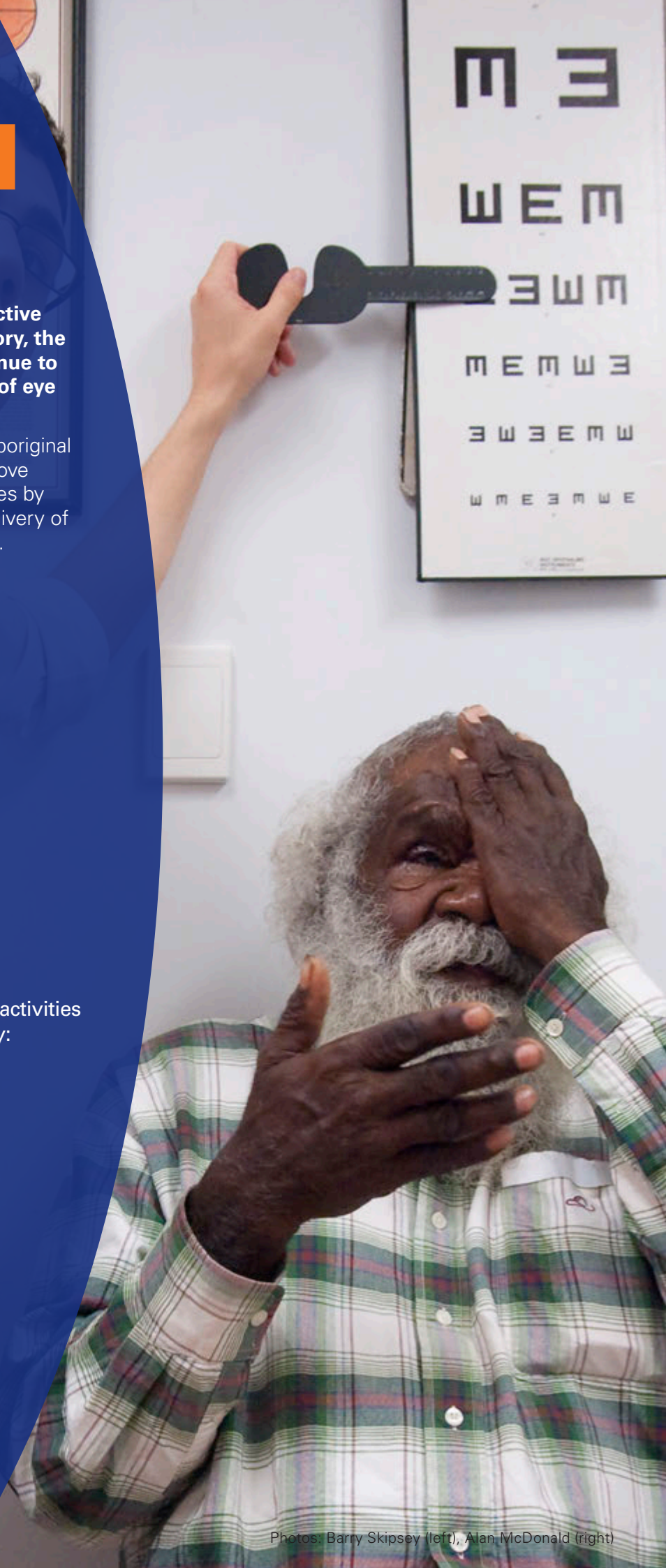
Increase number of people referred for eye health treatment, including diabetic retinopathy and cataract surgery



Increase number of school children screened and referred for appropriate follow up care and treatment



Employ an additional eye health assistant to deliver high quality eye health services to the remote Barkly Region





PILBARA DIABETIC RETINOPATHY EYE CARE INTEGRATION PROJECT



Internationally, diabetic retinopathy is already the highest cause of blindness among working age adults.

Medical experts say that by 2035 diabetes could become the leading cause of blindness, meaning up to 577 million people worldwide could be at risk of this disease. Many of these people will have poor access to eye health services.

What this means is that every second, 18 people living with diabetes will need their eyes screened for blindness. Urgent action is needed to help people avoid blindness from diabetic retinopathy through access to a sight-saving annual eye examinations and better control of their diabetes and blood pressure.

Expanding on a successful integrated diabetic eye screening program from the Kimberly region, this project aims to embed diabetic retinopathy screening into primary health care 'core business' and increase rates of early detection, treatment and management of eye disease.

The project will value-add to the existing, established optometry and ophthalmology services and increase screening and patient referrals to specialist eye care services.

\$302,500

Required to complete the following project activities in the Pilbara region of Western Australia:



Screen 500 people



Support 150 eye health procedures



Train 6 health personnel in eye health



Provide additional equipment to support eye health screening and treatment

THE FRED HOLLOWS FOUNDATION

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Since 2008, The Fred Hollows Foundation has offered 6 month rotating fellowships for final year registrars in conjunction with the Royal Australia and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists.

Students experience 12 weeks of intensive hands-on training at the Alice Springs Hospital in the Northern Territory, Australia. Their last 12 weeks can be completed in either the Pacific Eye Hospital in Fiji, Tilganga Institute for Ophthalmology in Nepal or The Honiara Central Referral Hospital in Solomon Islands.

\$227,151

Required to complete the following project activities:



Support 3 final year Ophthalmology students to complete their 6 month Fellowship.

The aim of the Fellowship is to engage young ophthalmologists in the work of The Foundation both in Australia and overseas. It looks to create an interest in, and passion for, international and Indigenous ophthalmology, and to build the pool of Australian ophthalmologists committed to eliminating avoidable blindness, especially in low-resource settings.

These future eye health leaders gain invaluable field experience, and in turn further The Foundation's work through their leadership, supervision and research.

This program represents a continuation of the commitment Fred Hollows made to teaching registrars and encouraging them to actively participate in ophthalmology outside of academic institutions. As Fred was known to say, there should always be three people present – *"one tradesman, one patient and one apprentice"*.





CASE STUDY: DR TERENCE TAN

Dr Terence Tan's enthusiasm for his work is infectious.

The Singapore-born 37-year-old describes his time working in and around Alice Springs as one of The Foundation's Ophthalmology Fellows.

"The Fred Hollows Fellowship attracts people who want to do something different, who want to understand the challenges in treating people from isolated communities and the developing world."

Dr Tan completed his medical degree at the University of New South Wales and then went on to train in Ophthalmology at Prince of Wales Hospital where he became familiar with Professor Hollows' legacy and had the opportunity to care for some of his patients. Through the Outback Eye Service, he worked in Bourke, Walgett and Lightning Ridge.

"Many of the New South Wales country towns' eye services are run by consultants who were Fred's registrars. In Bourke, there is still a room named the Fred Hollows Suite in a local motel."

Dr Tan's first placement as a Fellow was in the Alice Springs Ophthalmology Department.

"The predominant cause of preventable blindness here is cataract and diabetic retinopathy. A particular challenge is encouraging our Indigenous patients to seek medical attention early."

Each week Dr Tan would lead a team to remote communities to deliver eye care and assessments.

"The time spent in Alice Springs gave me an insight into the Aboriginal culture. It also provided opportunities to travel to remote communities to screen patients for surgery, arrange transfer for care, perform surgery and supervise their recovery and see the difference it made to their lives."

Dr Tan is currently working in a private practice in Sydney and is a Visiting Medical Officer at Broken Hill Base Hospital.



“Until Aboriginal people share the same basic conditions of hygiene, sound diet, insect-proof housing, sanitation and clean water... in rural parts of the country... [they] will continue to be afflicted with avoidable disease such as trachoma.”

Professor Fred Hollows

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