Eyes on Call: Informed support for people who are blind or have low vision



Invest $5.04 million over 4 years to trial a just-in-time online or phone coaching service and develop online resources for disability and aged care workers and assessors

Many people who acquire permanent vision loss have very little knowledge of the supports and training available that could allow them to remain independent and continue in many of the same activities they previously enjoyed.

The assessors who identify what supports people need, and the care workers who most frequently interact with them, are ideally placed to assist them, either by encouraging them to seek treatment, or connecting them to expert service providers and peer support.

One of the keys to improving outcomes for people with vision loss is educating and supporting the care workforce, which was identified as a priority in Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031.

Alongside existing resources and workforce training strategies, Vision 2020 Australia proposes the establishment of a complementary, 'just-in-time' response. Eyes on Call is an innovative, on-call eye health and vision coaching and support service for disability and aged care workers and assessors. The service will provide staff with phone and/or video call-based information and connect them to existing resources and training across the eye health and vision sector, with information and advice tailored to the specifics of the worker's query or client.

Eyes on Call would span areas such as common eye conditions, signs and symptoms, and how to minimise their impact, as well as referral and management options and other training and development/resources that may help enhance the assessment and/or care. This would ensure the support provided is timely, informed and involves appropriate services and technology.

Under this proposal, Vision 2020 Australia would facilitate establishment of:

1. The Eyes on Call hotline that any aged care, disability support worker, or assessor could contact during standard business hours across Australia.
2. Referral of queries to eye sector organisations with specific expertise relevant to the worker's queries and/or location.
3. A follow up service for each call, to provide additional assistance and/or guidance and encourage skills enhancement in this important area.
4. Development and provision of information and other resources relevant to the worker (and if provided, their employer) regarding common eye conditions, key information relevant to the care context and contacts for sourcing local eye care services.
5. An evaluation project to quantify reach and impacts of the service.

VISION 2020 THE RIGHT TO SIGHT AUSTRALIA

SETTING AUSTRALIA'S SIGHTS