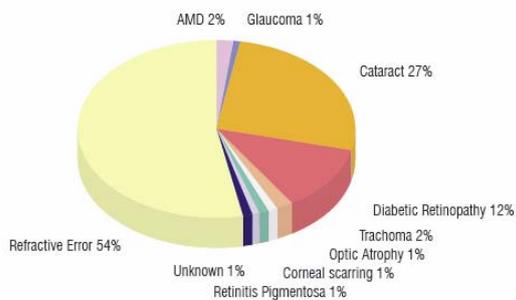


Indigenous eye health in Australia

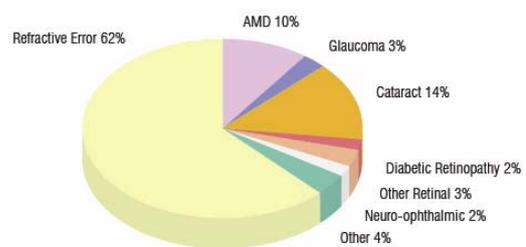
Key findings of the National Indigenous Eye Health Survey

Published by the Indigenous Eye Health Unit, Melbourne School of Population Health, The University of Melbourne in collaboration with the Centre for Eye Research Australia and the Vision CRC, September 2009.

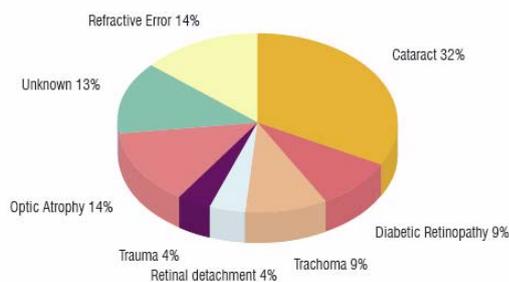
Vision Impairment in Indigenous Adults



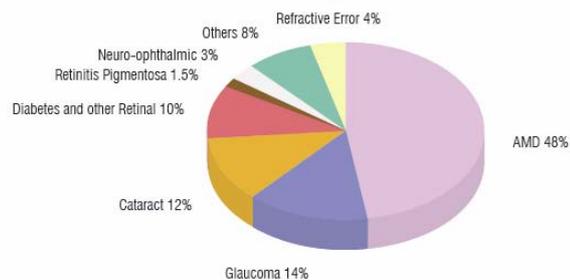
Vision Impairment in Non-Indigenous Adults⁴



Blindness in Indigenous Adults



Blindness in Non-Indigenous Adults⁴



- Approximately 75 per cent of blindness and vision impairment in Australia is preventable or treatable.
- This rises steeply to 95 per cent for the Indigenous population.
- Alarmingly blindness is 6.2 times higher and vision impairment 2.8 times higher for the Indigenous population in comparison to the general Australian community.
- Overall it is estimated that 3,300 Indigenous people are blind and 15,015 have low vision.
- The major causes of blindness in Indigenous adults are (in alphabetical order)
 - cataract - 32 per cent
 - diabetic retinopathy - nine per cent
 - optic atrophy - 14 per cent
 - refractive error - 14 per cent
 - trachoma - nine per cent.

Facts about Indigenous eye health in Australia

- Blinding cataract is 12 times more common for Indigenous adults.
- Thirty years ago only 0.03 per cent of Indigenous adults were known to suffer from diabetes, the *National Indigenous Eye Health Survey* reported that in 2009 this had increased to 37.4 per cent.
- Australia is the only developed country to still have trachoma.
- Trachoma disappeared from mainstream Australia 100 years ago, however trachoma still occurs in Indigenous communities and causes blindness.
- Thirty five per cent of Indigenous adults have never had an eye examination.
- Half of vision loss in both Indigenous adults and children is due to refractive error.
- Thirty nine per cent of Indigenous adults cannot see normal print.

**Overall, 94 per cent of vision loss is preventable or treatable,
but 35 per cent of adults have never had an eye examination**

For more information on Indigenous eye health visit the Indigenous Eye Health Unit, Melbourne School of Population Health, The University of Melbourne website www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au

To see the National Indigenous Eye Health Survey full report visit the Centre for Eye Research Australia website www.cera.org.au

For more information on eye health visit www.visioninitiative.org.au