

This is LEHP



The Lions Eye Health Program - Australia

LEHP aims to reduce the incidence and impact of vision loss in Australia through education and awareness activities, promoting eye examinations, distributing informational publications and conducting Children's Vision Screenings.

Initially funded by LCIF, since 2006 LEHP has been a Category B project and is managed and funded by Lions Clubs in all States, who contribute \$4.00 per member per annum from their activities account, and additional donations from clubs and other sources.

Over 575,000 Australians are vision impaired in both eyes, to the extent that they can no longer legally drive and this number is expected to continually rise. 90% of vision loss in Australia is avoidable or treatable so too many Australians are losing their sight when it didn't have to be the case.

Apart from the cost of treating vision related problems, people with vision loss are at an increased risk of falls, hip fractures, depression, social dependence and early admission into nursing homes. Vision problems have a profound effect on a child's development, athletically, academically and socially.



The Lions Eye Health Program is partnered with the **Centre for Eye Health**, a state of the art eye imaging and diagnostic centre associated with the University of NSW, which provides technical expertise to the program.

Working closely with the Centre for Eye Health, a range of community education resources, focused on and covering Avoidable Vision Loss and Children's Eye Health, has been developed, along with a comprehensive Vision Screening process.

These resources include brochures, posters, stickers, colouring and activity sheets, simulation glasses, voice-over presentations, information sheets in eight languages, book marks, portable eye charts, drink coasters, informational videos and more.

LEHP also provides Dr Bob Coulthard and PDG Roley McAttee OAM Recognition Awards that can be presented to Lions or community members for outstanding service or establishing visionary projects.

Avoidable Vision Loss

LEHP primarily focuses on three different eye conditions where, once vision is lost, it cannot be brought back.

Regular eye examinations are essential for detecting these treatable conditions.

Glaucoma

This condition, where the nerve cells that transmit information from the eye to the brain become damaged, takes over an individual's peripheral vision.

Functional implications of Glaucoma include:

- Experiencing occasional blurred vision
- Seeing a halo around lights
- Being particularly sensitive to glare and light
- Having difficulty identifying the edge of steps
- Being unable to differentiate between footpath and road
- Tripping over or bumping into objects

Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetes sufferers are at risk of developing small blood vessel complications which can lead to blurred and patchy vision or even vision loss and blindness.

Implications of Diabetic Retinopathy include:

- Having difficulty with fine details and outdoor travel
- Experiencing visual fluctuations like hazy or double vision and seeing images as rippled, bent or blurred
- Losing some field of vision and having difficulty seeing at night or in low light
- Being particularly sensitive to glare and light and having difficulty focusing

Age-related Macular Degeneration

AMD affects the macular, part of the retina, situated at the back of the eye and removes central vision.

Functional implications of Age-related Macular Degeneration include:

- Having difficulty identifying the edge of steps if there is no colour contrast
- Being unable to determine traffic-light changes and differentiate between the footpath and roadway
- Misjudging the speed and distance of oncoming traffic when crossing the road
- Having difficulty with close work like watching TV or reading, where words are blurred and letter run together
- Having sensitivity to glare and light and adjusting to lighting changes, especially in areas with low light
- Perceiving straight lines as distorted or curved and having difficulty distinguishing people's faces
- Having difficulty distinguishing between objects of a similar colour, due to dimming colour vision

Children's Eye Health

Along with allergies and asthma, eye disorders are the most common long-term health problems suffered by children. In fact, 1 in 5 has an undetected condition. Considering as much as 80% of a child's learning is through their eyes, it is so important to pick up any problems as soon as possible.

Most children will accept vision problems and adapt to their poor vision. They rarely complain as they believe everyone sees the world like they do. All children should have a full eye examination before starting school and then regularly as they progress through primary and secondary years.



LEHP Children's Vision Screening Program

To help screen for undetected vision conditions in children, LEHP has purchased vision screening aids and screening cameras that can identify issues through a simple on-site photograph. With the help of a matching LCIF grant these cameras and screening aids are available in every Lions District in Australia.

A handbook on conducting vision screenings and how to use the camera and other vision screening equipment, as well as online and face-to-face training courses, are provided to Lions and Clubs wishing to be accredited to conduct screenings, especially at Pre-schools, Kindergartens or Primary Schools.

Screenings have been conducted for over 10,000 children across many Lions Districts and Qualified Vision Screeners and Facilitators are available to assist with conducting screenings in most areas.

Although some State governments and other organisations conduct vision screening for children, some of these programs only target particular age groups or may not be as comprehensive as the LEHP screening.

This is an Australian Lions program that has been created by Lions in consultation with its' technical partner, the **Centre for Eye Health** in Sydney. It can be conducted by Lions and Community Volunteers, who undertake the required training, have a Working with Children clearance, use the materials provided and follow processes and methods approved by LEHP, through their local Lions Club.

In order to conduct screenings and access the Lions Eye Health Program screening equipment, documentation and training a Lions Club must be a LEHP Participating Club.

Because of the nature and distance covered by the LEHP Vision Screening Program, to ensure its successful implementation and progress, all involved need to follow the specified training and administrative procedures.

It is important that the program is managed carefully and that we don't have screening sessions being conducted by screeners and facilitators that are not fully prepared or not covered by Lions Insurances.

Screenings

The Spot Vision Screening Camera analyses whether there are any abnormalities with the child's eyes and produces a printout that details findings and recommends whether an optometrist should be consulted.

The LEHP Children's Screening Program also tests a child's visual acuity, using a Lea Vision Chart, to see how sharp their vision is at longer distances.

Special charts are used to test colour perception, to ensure that colours are being perceived normally.

Depth Perception is observed using a 3D image device that checks that a child's stereo vision is suitable for conducting tasks at close range.

A LEHP representative can visit Lions Clubs interested in the vision screening program to explain what is involved or the video **An Introduction to the LEHP Children's Vision Screening Program** can be shown to groups that wish to know more about the LEHP Children's Vision Screening Program. This video and the document **Guide to Conducting a LEHP Screening**, which contains details about the preparations and training for conducting vision screenings, are available on the LEHP website.

LEHP appreciates the funding received from Lions Clubs to cover the costs of club visits, meetings and seminars and developing and distributing materials, often at no charge, to Lions Clubs. But the main work clubs can help with is distributing resources within their local communities. A full list of resources and how Lions Clubs can distribute them is available on our website or from the LEHP National Office.

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