

CULTURAL SAFETY FOCUS OF NEW EYE HEALTH CLINIC IN GERALDTON

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia's Mid-West will soon be able to access eye screening and treatment with a new vision clinic to open at Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Services (GRAMS) tomorrow.

The clinic has been established by The University of Western Australia's Eye Health Centre of WA with the support of The Fred Hollows Foundation, WA Centre for Rural Health, and GRAMS

UWA Head of Optometry Professor Garry Fitzpatrick said the state-of-the-art clinic will deliver culturally-safe eye care services.

"Affordable and accessible primary eye care services will be available for people of all ages who are experiencing eye health issues like blurred vision, dry eyes, low vision or who need glasses or lenses and who will be able to access services without a referral," Professor Fitzpatrick said.

The clinic will also serve as a research, teaching and learning facility to support and contribute to a strong and sustainable eye health sector in the region.

Professor Fitzpatrick said the clinic was actively recruiting an optometrist to join the team.

"This is a key position at the clinic and a great opportunity for someone to be engaged with the local community and to draw on the expertise and support of the Geraldton Aboriginal Medical Service, UWA's optometry team and The Fred Hollows Foundation," he said.

"The wide-ranging role will involve clinical practice, organising student placements, supervising students, delivering outreach programs and conducting school screenings."

The Fred Hollows Foundation Indigenous Australia Program Director Jason Ware said the new clinic would make a difference in improving eye health outcomes for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"The clinic is strongly aligned with The Fred Hollows Foundation's eye health strategy, in particular our efforts to build a stronger eye health workforce," Mr Ware said.

"The Fred Hollows Foundation is committed to supporting Aboriginal community-controlled models of eye care."

GRAMS Chief Executive Officer Deborah Woods said GRAMS is an organisation of Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people, controlled by Aboriginal people.

"We would like to acknowledge the partnerships of The Fred Hollow Foundation and the University of Western Australia (UWA). GRAMS is extremely excited to be able to deliver next level eye health service to our clients all under one roof".

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