



ABORIGINAL EYECARE

NEWSLETTER

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Welcome Back

Eye Health Co-ordinator - Anita Dwyer

Once Is Not Enough

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WELCOME BACK!



Welcome to our second newsletter! A big thank you to all those who attended and participated in the ICEE (International Centre for Eyecare Education) Aboriginal eye health co-ordinators education program in Sydney last October. It was a great week, well received by all. Apart from advancing eyecare education, the program proved to be a wonderful way for eye health workers from around the State to finally meet and to develop close, friendly relationships that will no doubt be invaluable to future working needs.

close and relatively "tight-knit" communities, they have an incredible ability to identify and encourage all those with eye problems to attend the clinic. They are able to identify and cater for individuals needs e.g. transport problems to ensure that services are sought and followed through in a way that we would not be able to.

Nina Tahhan

ICEE Optometrist

The program was made possible through funding from the Department of Health and Ageing's OATSIH.

Working with some of the eye health co-ordinators in regional NSW over the past year, I have come to witness how important their role in eyecare in their communities really is.

Aboriginal people seem less likely to self-present for health problems and this is where the eye health workers ability is most crucial. Given their unique relationship with their



Professor Brian Layland presenting certificate to Phyllis Tighe



Group photo of participants from the ICEE Aboriginal eye health co-ordinators education program

EYE HEALTH CO-ORDINATOR ANITA DWYER



Anita Dwyer is one of seven Aboriginal Eye health co-ordinators located in NSW who has been dedicated to her eye health co-ordinators role for over 3 years. Anita is based at the Wellington Aboriginal Corporation in Western NSW and her responsibility extends from Bathurst in the East, to Hillston in the West, Cobar and Nyngan in the north, and Forbes in the South. Anita (not unlike the other eye health workers) therefore, travels quite extensively and often flies with the Royal Flying Doctors service and the NSW Government Rural Aerial Health Service in order to reach the eye clinics. Once a year Anita also screens Aboriginal children at preschools and primary schools in

her area. Children failing the screening are referred to an optometrist at one of her clinics.

At ICEE's education program in October, Anita gave a very insightful presentation about her experiences over the years to the other eye health co-ordinators around the country. This session was possibly the most interactive of the sessions and gave all the health workers an opportunity to share their experiences and compare their working methods and strategies.

Thank you Anita!



ONCE IS NOT ENOUGH!

Having your eyes examined once is only the start! Eyecare requires that you see the optometrist regularly throughout your life as eyes and vision change; sometimes rapidly, sometimes slowly.

The question is, how regularly?

The answer to that is up to the examining optometrist who makes an assessment of the condition of the eyes and determines when it will be necessary for the patient to return.

Whenever a patient is examined by the AMS optometrist it should be recorded on the record card, when the patient should return.

EHCs need to make sure that they do return.

This requires the introduction of a simple, efficient and effective recall system.

Because most of the AMS Eye Clinics do not have a high volume of patients it is possible to use a visible system; one that enables you to see when the patient is due and whether they actually do come back.

ICEE has such a system available at no cost; if you would like to receive a starter kit contact us on 9385 7413 or 9385 7481.

Even with a well organized recall system it is likely that you will be lucky to get 75% of patients return.