

## Key messages



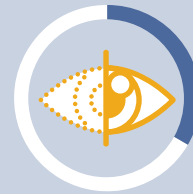
The leading causes of bilateral vision impairment (when vision impairment occurs in both eyes) among Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander adults are uncorrected refractive error, cataract and diabetic eye disease. However, about **90% of vision impairment and blindness from these causes is preventable or treatable**<sup>[1]</sup>.



**Bilateral vision impairment and blindness**

**are 3 times more common** among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults than among non-Indigenous adults<sup>[1]</sup>.



In national surveys, **one third (33%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants have reported eye and vision problems**<sup>[2]</sup>.

## How common is vision loss and blindness?

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults (40 years or older) who had their **eyes examined in a national survey** in 2016<sup>[1]</sup>:



**11% had bilateral vision impairment**



**0.3% had bilateral blindness** (based on 5 identified cases)



bilateral vision impairment was **most common in outer regional areas**



bilateral vision impairment was about **twice as high** among adults **in outer regional areas and very remote areas** than among adults in other areas.

## Main causes of bilateral vision impairment

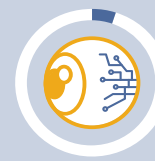
Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults with bilateral vision impairment it is estimated that<sup>[1]</sup>:



almost **two-thirds (63%) is due to uncorrected refractive error**, making it the main cause of bilateral vision impairment



**one-fifth (20%) is due to cataracts**, making this eye problem the second leading cause of bilateral vision impairment



**5% is due to diabetic retinopathy**, making it the third leading cause of bilateral vision impairment.

## Trachoma and trichiasis

**Trachoma** among Aboriginal children<sup>[3]</sup>:



is found in some 'at-risk' **remote communities in WA, SA and the NT**



affects **4% of those aged between 5-9 years** and living in communities that were screened for trachoma.

Aboriginal adults with **trichiasis** are believed to live in all states and territories<sup>[3]</sup>. Trichiasis has been found to affect **0.3% of screened adults aged 15 years and older** that live in 'at-risk' communities in WA, SA and the NT.



## Summary

Despite these statistics, there is **good news**. National surveys have found that among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people<sup>[1,4]</sup>:



**children**, particularly those in remote areas, frequently **have better vision** than non-Indigenous children



**blindness among adults** may have **decreased**.

It is important that **data continue to be collected** to measure progress and guide policy and practice<sup>[5,6]</sup>.

## References

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