

OPTOMETRIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Through strong partnerships with Aboriginal Medical Services and the AHMRC, ICEE now provides services throughout 95 locations in NSW. This has been made possible through collaboration and co-ordination with the Regional Aboriginal Eye Health Coordinators – who provide invaluable eye care service support for optometrists and patients.



In 2008 approximately 3000 pairs of spectacles were provided to Aboriginal people within Aboriginal community controlled facilities, in collaboration with VisionCare NSW. In June 2008, Salma Ismail joined the ICEE Aboriginal Vision Team. This has allowed for further expansion of the NSW programme. The establishment of new clinics and an increasing frequency of visits to many locations have kept Salma busy.

Furthermore, the National Indigenous Eye Health Survey has occurred during 2008. ICEE coordinated and conducted a survey at 8 sites across NSW and ACT. The survey aims to determine the prevalence and causes of vision impairment as a result of cataract, macular degeneration, refractive error and trachoma in Indigenous Australians and evaluating the access to, and utilization of, healthcare services in Indigenous communities.



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ABORIGINAL EYE HEALTH WORKER PROFILE
BARBARA GILLEN

Barbara Gillen is the newly appointed Aboriginal Eye Health Coordinator (AEHC) at the Riverina Medical and Dental Aboriginal Corporation in Wagga Wagga. She is a Wiradjuri woman born in Finley and has worked at the Riverina Aboriginal Corporation since July 2007 in administration. When the AEHC position became available Barbara expressed her interest and desire to further her skills in eye health and was offered the position.

In her new role as the AEHC Barbara will be travelling considerably throughout the area as required; "I cover towns such as: Hay, Hillston, Griffith, Murrinbridge, Temora, Tumut, Brungle, Gundagai, Junee, Lake Cargelligo, Leeton, Narrandera, Wagga and any small towns in between!" Barbara visits these locations providing vision screenings at locals schools, Land Council buildings and community health centres.

Barbara's "Interest and hobbies are family and kids with their day-to-day running of high sport achievements and in my spare time I enjoy painting (artwork)."

Barbara is keen and committed in her role and states; "I love my job and the day-to-day challenges that my position requires. I enjoy working with the people of my area and find it comforting to know that I am aiding in the vision for a better future".

ABORIGINAL EYECARE

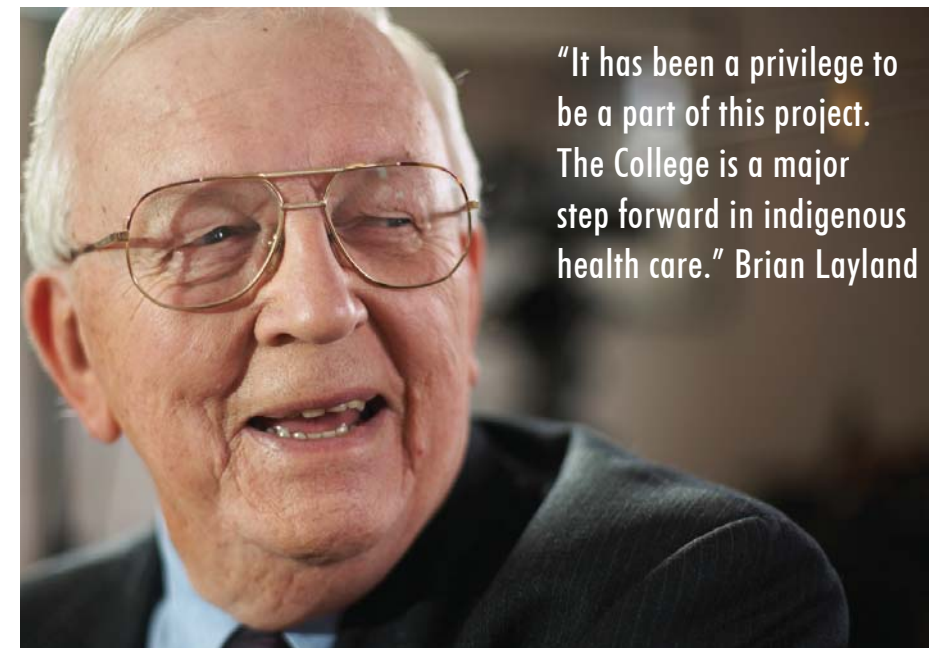
NSW NEWSLETTER



PROFESSOR LAYLAND HONOURED BY ABORIGINAL HEALTH COLLEGE

A major step forward towards "Closing the Gap" in health outcomes for Aboriginal people took place with the opening of the first purpose built Aboriginal Health College at Little Bay in Sydney, Australia.

The day held a unique honour for Professor Brian Layland OAM, Director of ICEE Aboriginal Programmes, a veteran optometrist who has dedicated his life in recent years to providing eye care to Aboriginal communities in New South Wales and the Northern Territory.



"It has been a privilege to be a part of this project. The College is a major step forward in indigenous health care." Brian Layland

In recognition of his efforts to establish and support health care and education for Aboriginal people and his unparalleled support for the establishment of the college, the Board of the Aboriginal Health College named its lecture theatre, "The Brian Layland Auditorium".

In response, Layland was noticeably shocked, "This is an enormous honour and I am humbled by it," he said.

"It has been a privilege to be a part of this project. The College is a major step forward in indigenous health care. It will have a significant effect on closing the 17 year gap that exists between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians by making health services more accessible to Aboriginal communities", he added.

The CEO of the ICEE, Professor Brien Holden, said Professor Layland had been an unceasing

supporter of the establishment of the College. "It's a fitting acknowledgement of Brian's efforts to improve eye care in indigenous communities through his work with ICEE. He has made a huge difference to Aboriginal eye care in New South Wales and the Northern Territory, not only by helping to establish 121 eye care clinics to get basic eye care to people in these regional and remote locations, but also providing education programmes to Aboriginal health care workers enabling them to deliver eye care to their own communities."

The College is a state-of-the-art teaching and training facility with a 150 seat auditorium, video conferencing facilities, two lecture rooms, two clinical practice rooms, library, research facilities and computer lab. The building design reflects the health focus of the College and utilises the unique environment of this special site at Little Bay.

Professor Holden said the opening of this dedicated health institution was a historic day for Aboriginal health and education. "It is not just that this is a most beautifully designed building in the most beautiful location in Australia – it is what Aboriginal leaders and educators will achieve inside it for the health and wellbeing in closing the tragic and unacceptable gap that occurs between Aboriginal health and that of non-Aboriginal Australians, that makes this such a wonderful day", he said.

Every patient needs to have their spectacles fitted when they come to collect them. It is very important that people's spectacles fit well. If they do not fit well, they will hurt the patient and they will not wear them.

Spectacles should only apply pressure to the bridge of the nose and on the sides of the head just above the ears. It should not apply pressure to anywhere else on the sides of the head. To adjust the frame to fit well there are five things you need to assess:

NB. Remember that plastic frames need to be heated before adjusting.

1. Bridge Fitting

- The whole surface of the pads must lie flat on the nose!
- If not, take the spectacles off the patient and bend the pad arms into the right position using the small pliers or your fingers

2. Spectacles need to be horizontal

- The frame must be fitting horizontal on the patient's head. (Use the eyes as points of reference.)
- If the frame is not horizontal bend the temple
- When the right side of the frame is too low on the face bend the right temple down.

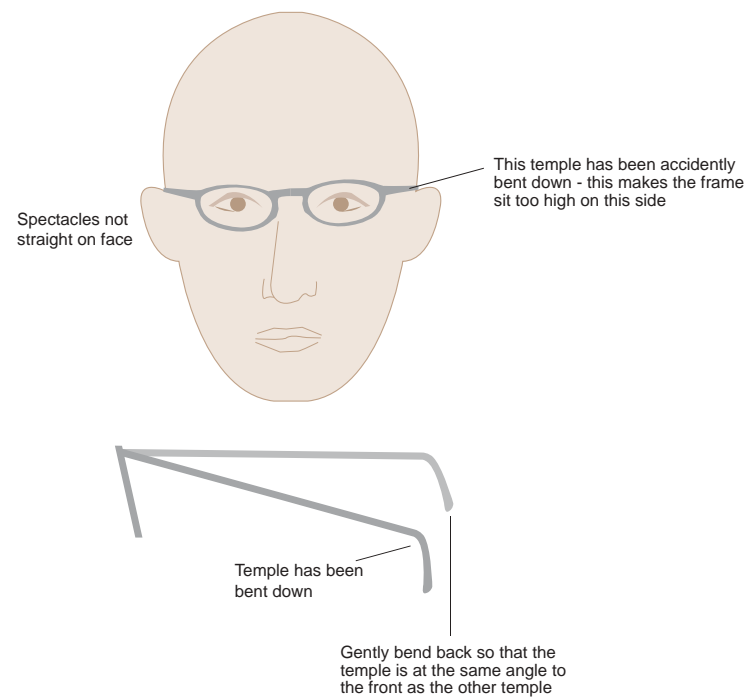


Figure 1: Lopsided fitting of spectacles

3. Facial Wrap

- The spectacles should curve slightly around the face
- Use your fingers to gently curve the spectacles.

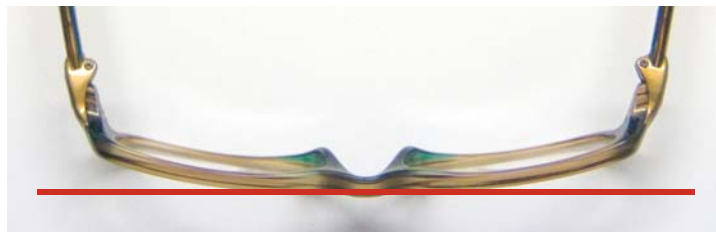


Figure 2: Correct curve

4. Temples

- The temples should not rub on the side of the head in front of the ears.
- Pliers are most effective for this adjustment with the round jaw fitting neatly in the right angle of the front and temple.
- Once the temples are opened out, they must be bowed in slightly to touch the top of the patient's ears
- This involves applying even pressure along the temple's length with the fingers.
- If the frame is plastic, you need to heat the temples before you adjust them
- If you don't have a frame heater then a hairdryer can be used.

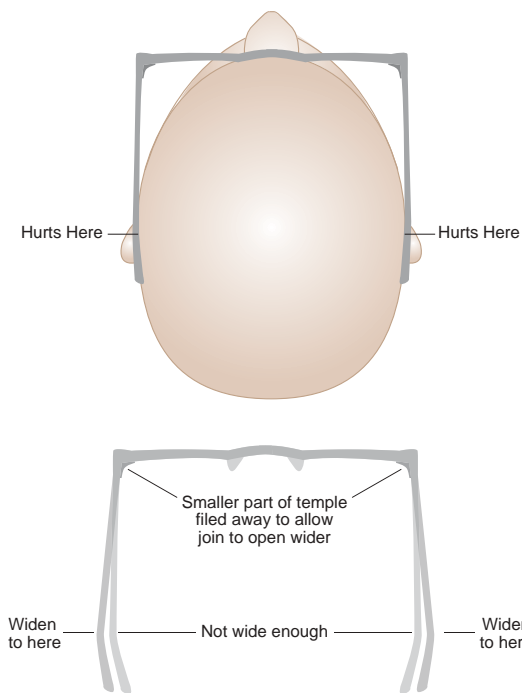


Figure 3: Adjusting the temples

5. Length to bend

- When a frame is first fitted to a person the length to bend may need to be adjusted.
- Bend the temple curve around to follow the back of the ear.
- Bending with your fingers is the best way to do this.
- If the frame is plastic, the temples will need to be heated

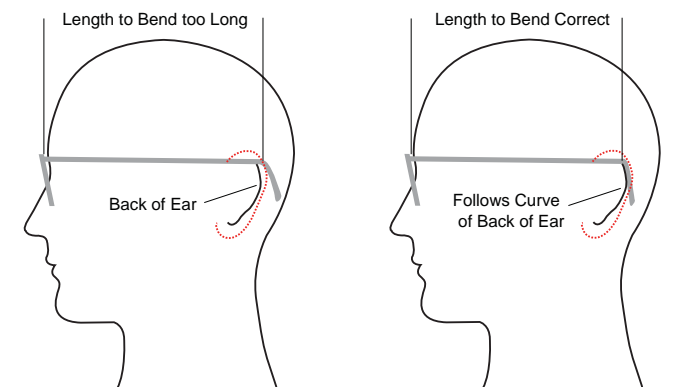


Figure 4: Length to bend

After you and the patient are happy with the fit of the spectacles, clean the spectacles, then get the patient to check their vision by looking in the distance or at a reading card.

Make sure that you know what the spectacles should be used for (single vision distance or reading, or bifocals)

Remember to tell the patient how to look after their spectacles.



Figure 5: Patient checking her new glasses sit correctly