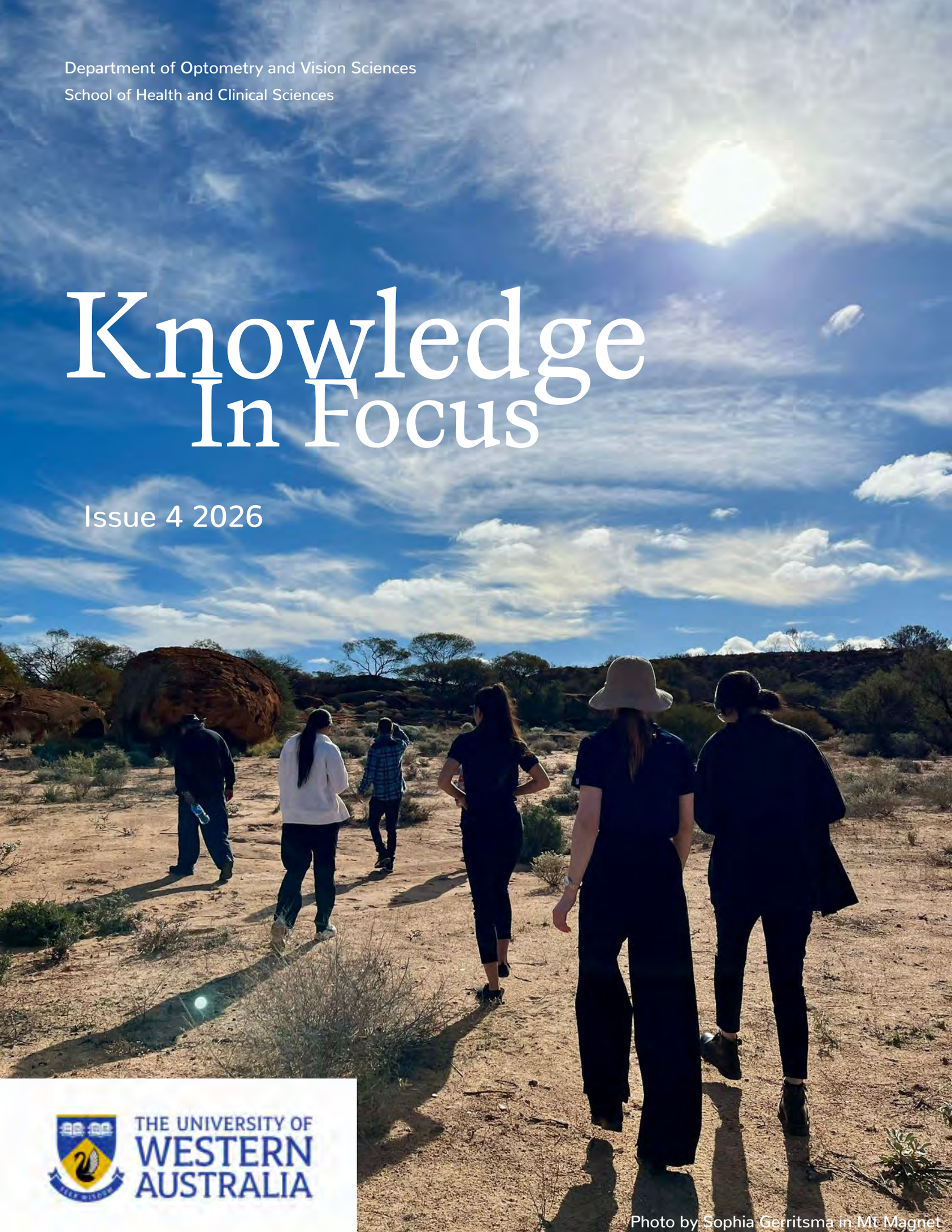
Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences
School of Health and Clinical Sciences

Knowledge In Focus

Issue 4 2026



THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Photo by Sophia Gerritsma in Mt Magnet

Welcome to Knowledge in Focus 2026

By Associate Professor Khyber Alam

Welcome to the first issue of Knowledge in Focus for 2026. It is an honour to connect with our Optometry & Vision Sciences community as we embark on a new year filled with promise, purpose, and shared intent. As we step into 2026, at UWA, we are guided by place, people, and purpose; foundational elements that shape who we are as a department, and the meaning behind the work we do. The places we study and serve including the waterways, skies, earth, and built environments that surround us are neutral backdrops and they carry deep cultural, environmental, and historical significance. Knowing and respecting the importance of these places enriches our sense of identity and reminds us why we are here: to learn from, care for, and contribute to the communities with whom we share this land.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Welcome continued...

This connection to place is part of a much older tradition. For tens of thousands of years, the lands and waters upon which UWA is situated have been places of knowledge, story, and belonging. This profound linkage invites us to appreciate our physical environment and the many cultural perspectives and experiences that give our community its strength and diversity. The people we work with and the stories of each person's lineage, thought, and lived experience add depth to our shared journey and enrich our collective impact.

Our sense of purpose is based on a commitment to making a difference in the world. At UWA, this purpose is reflected in the University's mission: to provide world-class education, research and community engagement for the advancement of the prosperity and welfare of our communities. This means our work extends beyond academic excellence, it is about creating wellbeing, fostering opportunity, and contributing positively to the lives of people locally, nationally and globally.

We are currently looking ahead to UWA's Health Strategy, now under development. This is a key moment for our department to align our vision with the University's broader strategic direction in health ensuring that our efforts in education, research, clinical care, and community engagement are both relevant and impactful. Our expanding international footprint, particularly UWA's growth into India, presents exciting opportunities to extend our purpose more broadly. Stronger partnerships with institutions in India will enhance PhD candidature, research collaborations, and educational opportunities, deepening intercultural exchange and broadening our collective reach.

I am also delighted to celebrate the establishment of the Albany Shared Public Eye Care Training (ASPECT) Centre in Albany, developed in collaboration with Dr Angus Turner and team. This initiative brings high-quality training and eye care to regional communities and exemplifies our commitment to service, partnership, and impact. Sincere thanks to the Frisken Vision Foundation for their generous support, and to the UWA Executive and School leadership for enabling this important work.

As you are well aware, vision as a sense and as a discipline sits at the heart of our mission. It is estimated that around 80% of what we learn comes through vision, highlighting both the human reliance on sight and the profound importance of our field in education, health, and everyday life. This insight highlights the impact of our research, teaching, and clinical endeavours on individuals and communities.

To all our PhD students, I wish you a year of progress, discovery, and fulfilment. To our clinical staff, thank you for the meaningful difference you make in people's lives every day. To our general teaching staff, your dedication continues to shape enriching and transformative educational experiences. And to our professional staff, your expertise and commitment are essential to the strength and success of our department.

Thank you for being part of this remarkable community. Let us continue to honour the places we inhabit, celebrate the people who enrich our work, and live our purpose by making a positive difference in the world.

Warm Regards,
Associate Professor Khyber Alam
Head of Department of Optometry and Vision Science

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

New Albany Clinic

ASPECT Centre, Albany

By Dr Lydia Thorne (Optometrist)

In collaboration with Dr Angus Turner, the Albany Shared Public Eye Care and Training Centre (ASPECT Centre) was established in response to a growing need for sustainable and accessible eye care services in the Great Southern region. With the retirement of a long-serving local ophthalmologist, many patients faced reduced access to specialist care and increased travel to the metropolitan centre. The clinic was developed to preserve continuity of care while addressing the broader challenges of regional service delivery.

By adopting a collaborative care model, the clinic integrates on-site optometry with visiting ophthalmology services and telehealth-supported consultations. This approach enables efficient triage, timely management and shared clinical decision-making to ensure patients receive appropriate care closer. Optometrists manage a broad scope of services including comprehensive eye examinations, chronic disease monitoring, diagnostic imaging and ongoing management of stable ocular conditions, while complex medical and surgical cases are co-managed or referred for specialist input.

Ophthalmologists and optometrists are working together to improve service efficiencyand better utilise specialist resources. The Albany Clinic reflects a proactive response to regional workforce constraints and increasing demand for eye health services. Its rationale is grounded in improving equity of access, reducing travel burden for patients and delivering a future-focused model of care for the Great Southern community. We are so grateful and appreciative of Frisken Vision Foundation and their support with purchasing state of the art diagnostic equipment. UWA Optometry students will be undertaking placements in the next month and will be able to learn in a modern, cutting-edge facility.

Top: ASPECT Centre building in Albany
Right (Left to right): Dr Angus Turner, Abbe Stewart (Reception), Lydia Thorne, George Liang (PhD Candidate/4th year medical student)

New EHCWA clinic

Neuro-Optometry at EHCWA

By Dr Jeremiah Lim and Dr Eden Kwok (Optometrist)

The neuro-optometry service at the Eye Health Centre of Western Australia is led by Jeremiah Lim, Eden Kwok and Liv Krygger, working closely with neurologists including Dr Jan Ho at Sir Charles Gairdner and Midland Public Hospitals. Since commencing in January 2025, the clinic has supported over 80 patients, providing assessment and co-management for papilloedema, stroke-related visual loss, traumatic brain injury and complex neuro-visual symptoms.

In November 2025 we partnered with WA Acquired Brain Injury and Rehabilitation (WAABIR) to create a framework helping clients return to driving after neurological injury. This model combines detailed visual testing, practical rehabilitation strategies and structured communication with rehabilitation physicians, occupational therapists and licensing authorities.

A recent case demonstrated how clear communication can be sight- and life-saving. A patient presented with minimal symptoms yet subtle ocular signs suggested markedly raised intracranial pressure. Immediate discussion between our clinicians and the on-call neurology team at SCGH enabled urgent imaging and lumbar puncture, confirming severe intracranial hypertension and allowing rapid treatment. The patient later described the Eye Clinic as an “essential lifeline,” highlighting how respectful dialogue between optometry, emergency and neurology services can transform outcomes.

Beyond patient care, the clinic provides rich clinical training for Doctor of Optometry students and is developing research in neuro-ophthalmic assessment and outcomes. As demand grows, our focus remains on strong relationships with hospital and community partners—because effective communication is the foundation of effective care.

"We welcome all optometry referrals for patients who may benefit from neuro-optometry and driving vision assessment at EHCWA"

Eye Health Centre of Western Australia

39 Fairway, Crawley WA 6009
info@ehcwa.com.au
(08) 6488 7429
Hours: Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
ehcwa.com.au

New Fremantle Clinic

St Patrick's Community Centre

By Associate Professor Khyber Alam

The newly established UWA teaching eye clinic in Fremantle, in collaboration with St Pat's Community Support Centre, is an exciting initiative providing eye care services at no-cost to patients experiencing homelessness. UWA Doctor of Optometry students will see patients at the clinic 2 days per week. This clinic fills a critical gap: people without secure housing often face multiple barriers to accessing routine and specialised healthcare, including eye care.

Globally, an estimated ~330 million people lack any form of stable shelter, reflecting a profound and persistent social challenge. In Australia, more than 122,000 people were recorded as experiencing homelessness at the 2021 Census, with diverse living situations from rough sleeping to severe overcrowding. In Western Australia alone, nearly 9,700 people were experiencing homelessness, with over 2,300 sleeping rough and these numbers have grown in recent years. Homelessness is closely linked with poorer health outcomes. Daily exposure to environmental stress, limited access to nutritious food, unaddressed chronic disease and barriers to preventive care contribute to higher rates of complicated chronic conditions. These factors also increase the likelihood of avoidable or advanced eye health problems, such as uncorrected refractive error, diabetic retinopathy and ocular infections.

Equal access to healthcare is a fundamental human right. As a leading university, UWA is proud to lead by example: delivering essential services to vulnerable populations and instilling in the next generation of eye care professionals the values of equity, compassion and community service.

This partnership with St Pat's highlights our commitment to health equity and reflects the power of educational institute and community collaboration to make meaningful, real-world impact. We acknowledge & appreciate the generous support of our key partner; the OneSight Foundation which aims to eliminate poor vision by creating sustainable access through an innovative approach to impact philanthropy, partnerships and raising awareness.

Left to Right: Neilsen De Souza, Sophia Gerritsma, Wilfred Tang, Tania Payne, Lisa Jansen, Khyber Alam

Indigenous eyecare

Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service

By Dr Liv Krygger (Optometrist) and Dr Tse-Ling Wong (Optometrist)

Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service (DYHS) provides culturally safe, holistic healthcare to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across metropolitan Perth. The establishment of a new eye clinic represents a significant step in addressing preventable vision loss and improving access to eye care for First Nations communities.

The clinic has been purposefully designed as a welcoming, culturally safe space and is integrated within DYHS's multidisciplinary model of care. Equipped with modern diagnostic and examination tools across three new rooms, it enables comprehensive eye assessments while prioritising patient comfort, privacy, and cultural appropriateness. Co-location with other primary care services enhances collaboration and care coordination.

We aim to improve timely access to high-quality eye care for communities disproportionately affected by preventable vision loss and eye disease. By delivering care in a trusted, community-controlled setting, barriers such as cost, transport, and previous experiences of culturally unsafe care are reduced. Early detection of conditions such as diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and uncorrected refractive error addresses both clinical and systemic gaps in eye healthcare.

First Nations perspectives on health recognise the interconnection of physical, social, emotional, and cultural wellbeing. DYHS eye care reflects this approach by respecting cultural identity and relationships, valuing lived experience, and prioritising trust and continuity. The involvement of Aboriginal Health Workers and the use of strength-based communication are central to upholding these core values.

Students have engaged positively, gaining experience with complex cases and contributing to pre-testing and diagnostics, and demonstrating high levels of professionalism. Feedback highlights the experience as valuable and beneficial for both current and future students. Staff experience has also been positive, driven by the meaningful impact of the service. Despite staffing challenges, strong communication supports ongoing collaboration going forward.

Looking ahead, the clinic aims to strengthen partnerships in Aboriginal healthcare, expand services through stakeholder collaboration, support the education of Aboriginal Health care staff, and explore future outreach to Derbarl satellite sites to meet broader community eye care needs.

DERBARL YERRIGAN HEALTH SERVICE

Liv Krygger and Tse-Ling Wong are Lecturers for the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences at UWA

SWAMS

By Dr Norman Brandon (Optometrist)

Reflecting on 2025, the collaboration between UWA, the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) South West, and the South West Aboriginal Medical Service (SWAMS) significantly strengthened regional eye care delivery. Across the year, four clinical rotations were delivered for more than 20 Doctor of Optometry students. Each six-week placement included three weeks in a “home branch” private practice, two weeks at SWAMS, and dedicated time within an ophthalmology practice.

Students participated in the SWAMS clinic under the direct supervision of Dr Norman Brandon. In addition to supervised clinical care, students engaged in a structured interprofessional learning environment, observing and working alongside nutritionists, dietitians, physiotherapists, nursing staff, and medical registrars. This learning was reciprocal, with medical registrars and nursing staff also sitting in at the optometry clinic, fostering shared learning and collaborative decision-making.

Being embedded within a broader medical practice enabled seamless patient care, with GPs and nurses escorting patients directly for urgent assessments such as diabetic eye reviews or suspected papilledema. An ophthalmology registrar also conducted a morning clinic every eight weeks, providing specialist diagnostics in a culturally safe, familiar setting for patients who might otherwise avoid private services.

The program addressed significant ocular pathology, often exacerbated by late presentation. At the Narrogin outreach clinic, a 12-year-old boy with −9.00 myopia received glasses after being effectively blind at distance. In Collie, a woman in her 60s with advanced cataracts regained the ability to see her grandchildren’s faces. In Bunbury, a routine examination identified life-threatening intracranial hypertension in a teenager.

Supported by Fred Hollows Foundation equipment and a new free spectacle service for members, the program closed critical service gaps while providing students with meaningful clinical, cultural, and interprofessional learning experiences, including a guided visit to the Yallingup caves.

Top (Left to Right): Emily Martin, Norman Brandon, Theresa Joji, Celine Hyland
Middle: Sarah Haynes
Bottom (Left to right):
Bottom right: SWAMS team

Norman Brandon is a Lecturer for the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences at UWA and the University Department of Rural Health South West

Indigenous eyecare

GRAMS

By Dr Sophia Gerritsma (Optometrist)

UWA Optometry is strengthening access to eye care across regional Western Australia through its partnership with Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS). The established optometry clinic in Geraldton continues to provide comprehensive, culturally responsive services to communities throughout the Midwest region, with strong patient engagement and growing demand.

Building on this success, services have now expanded to Carnarvon in the Gascoyne region. In Carnarvon, UWA Optometry and GRAMS have introduced full eye examinations alongside the supply of prescription spectacles, improving access to both diagnosis and treatment closer to home. This expansion supports earlier detection of vision problems and reduces the need for patients to travel long distances for care.

The clinics operate as student-led services delivered by final-year optometry students from The University of Western Australia, under the supervision of experienced clinical optometrists. This model provides students with valuable hands-on experience in regional and Aboriginal health care while ensuring patients receive high-quality, comprehensive eye care. By embedding clinical training within community services, UWA Optometry and GRAMS are strengthening a sustainable, community-based approach to vision care across the Midwest and Gascoyne.

Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service

Western Australian Centre for Rural Health

Moorditj Koort

By Dr Hannah Jackson (Optometrist and Lecturer, UWA)

Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Corporation (MKAC), in partnership with the University of Western Australia's Department of Optometry, is proud to celebrate the first anniversary of the MKAC Miyal Clinic. Operating weekly since November 2024, the clinic delivers optometry services every Tuesday and has quickly become a valued and trusted service for Indigenous Australian patients, grounded in culturally safe, community-focused care that responds directly to local needs.

Over the past year, the Miyal Clinic has continued to strengthen its impact, supporting patient access to essential eye care and facilitating 35 referrals to ophthalmology and other specialist services. The clinic also provides high-quality clinical learning opportunities for final-year Doctor of Optometry students, supporting the development of culturally safe practice alongside community care.

A significant milestone was achieved six months ago with the successful introduction of on-site glasses dispensing. The frames are designed and supplied by Deadly Enterprises, reflecting MKAC's commitment to Indigenous-led partnerships. MKAC and UWA extends its sincere thanks to Paul Clarke for establishing the service and for training Tanya Cox, Aboriginal Health Practitioner, who will continue to lead the dispensing service into 2026.

Looking ahead, the MKAC Miyal Clinic aims to continue growing its services while maintaining excellence in patient care and student learning.

Indigenous Vision Chart

By Dr Jingyi Chen (Optometrist and Lecturer, UWA)

An Indigenous led research project is underway at UWA Optometry with the development and validation of a new Indigenous vision chart. This project is co-led by Jessica Curnuck, a proud Martu woman and Lecturer at the University of Western Australia, Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Corporation, and Associate Professor Khyber Alam, Head of UWA Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences.

Designed as an alternative to standard English letter charts, this chart uses different optotypes with aims to create a more culturally safe experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Aboriginal communities around the country were consulted to select suitable optotypes for the vision chart. The final optotypes were designed through a collaborative creative process by Charlee Brahim, a proud Ngarluma woman from Kalgoorlie (Wongatha country) and local Perth (Boorloo) artist Sophia Tran.The project received ethics approval from the Western Australia Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee in 2025. Data collection will be conducted at both the Eye Health Centre of Western Australia (EHCWA) and Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Corporation. Lecturers Dr Hamed Niyazmand and Jingyi Chen are working alongside Jacinta Fazzalari and OD2 students Sumaya Northcott, Izzy Campbell, Ethan Tjoa, Adyan Al-Fahrany, Maydelene Razua Bawi, and Ivy Le. Findings from this project will be shared at the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Conference in Melbourne (Naarm) in May this year.

International Placements

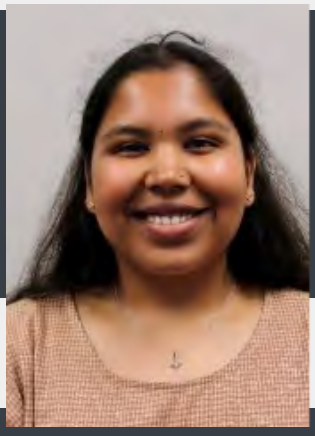
Mumbai

By Dr Harshitha Manunatha (Optometrist)

I am Harshitha Manjunatha, a third-year optometry student who had the opportunity to undertake a placement at Lotus Eye Hospital in Mumbai. This placement provided valuable insight into the scope of optometry in India, which differs significantly from Australian practice. During my placement, I encountered a wide range of ocular conditions, including dense cataracts, keratitis, ocular tuberculosis, strabismus, cranial nerve palsies, and complex oculoplastic cases. It was valuable to see how these conditions were effectively triaged and managed through collaborative practice between optometrists and ophthalmologists within the hospital setting. All patients were initially assessed by the optometrists, who primarily performed pre-testing and refraction, followed by comprehensive examination, diagnosis, and management by the ophthalmologists.

A key benefit of undertaking an international placement was exposure to a high-volume of patients, which highlighted the impact of socioeconomic factors on disease presentation and progression. At the hospital, it was evident that many patients presented with advanced or late-stage pathology due to delayed access to care, which often manifested at a younger age than typically observed in Australia. This pattern of presentation challenged me to further develop my diagnostic and clinical decision-making abilities.

Dr Harshitha Manjunatha (Optometrist)



Harshitha Manjunatha graduated at the end of 2025

Ho Chi Minh

By Dr Quynh Nguyen (Optometrist)

For our first clinical rotation, five fellow students and I completed an international optometry placement in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, at Hai Yen Eye Care. This busy clinic operates in a collaborative setting with optometrists and ophthalmologists, providing services including refraction, therapeutic management and refractive surgery. The clinic specialises in implantable collared lens procedures, reflecting the high prevalence and degree of myopia within the Vietnamese population

During the placement, we were exposed to a wide range of ocular conditions, including Posner-Schlossman Syndrome, severe posterior uveitis and optic neuritis - conditions many of us had previously only encountered theoretically. Woking in a high volume environment strengthened our clinical efficiency, diagnostic reasoning and confidence in recognising complex pathology

This experience highlighted the value of international placements in optometry training, particularly in understanding how management approaches may differ across health care systems. We observed more proactive use of oral antibiotics for ocular surface conditions and a lower reliance on contact lenses, influenced by cultural practices such as midday napping. Supportive supervisors were eager to explain their clinical decision making, encouraging critical thinking and patient centred care

Outside the clinic, we embraced Vietnamese culture through food and scenery, by exploring Ho Chi Minh City and travelling to the beautiful island of Phu Quoc . Some of us even participated in social activities recommended by our supervisors, including pickleball and pottery painting.

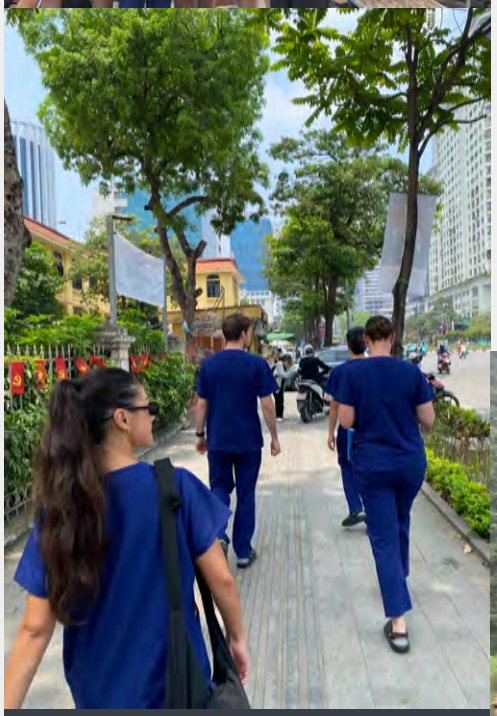
Together, the clinical placement and cultural experiences broadened our clinical knowledge and strengthened our ability to deliver adaptable, patient centred care across diverse cultural and health care settings.

Top (left to right): Lorraine Vu, Nui Panich, Soraya Siddiqi, Quynh Nguyen, Emily Ch'ng, Carina Tan
Bottom (Left to right): Soraya, Nui, Quynh
Right (left to right): Carina, Emily, Quynh, Soraya, Lorraine, Nui

Quynh, Lorraine, Soraya, Emily C, Carina and Nui successfully graduated at the end of 2025

Hanoi

By Dr Emily Martin(Optometrist)



In April 2025, five final-year UWA Doctor of Optometry students undertook a 6-week international clinical placement at Hanoi Eye Hospital 2 in Vietnam. This large hospital provides both optometric and ophthalmic care, giving us invaluable exposure to a broad spectrum of ocular disease in a high-volume clinical setting.

Under the supervision of experienced optometrists and ophthalmologists, we encountered patients with conditions rarely seen in Australia, including Acanthamoeba keratitis, fungal keratitis and Stevens-Johnson syndrome. We also observed advanced procedures such as LASIK surgery and YAG laser capsulotomy, which deepened our understanding of surgical co-management and postoperative care. Working in a more resource-limited environment encouraged us to think more critically about diagnosis, prioritisation and treatment planning, strengthening our clinical reasoning and adaptability.

This international placement was an important part of our optometry training, as it exposed us to different disease profiles, healthcare systems and management philosophies. For example, we observed a more proactive approach to chalazion treatment compared with Australian practice.

Beyond the clinic, we gained rich cultural insights through Vietnamese cuisine, local travel and daily interactions with patients and staff. These experienced enhanced our communication skills, cultural awareness and professional confidence, making the placement both personally and clinically transformative.

Top (Left to right): Emily Martin, Jarrod Watson, Keith Tenedero, Alex Fry, Celine Hyland
Bottom (Left to Right): Celine, Jarrod, Keith, Emily
Right (Left to Right): Celine, Emily, Keith, Jarrod, Alex

Emily, Jarrod, Keith and Celine successfully graduated at the end of 2025

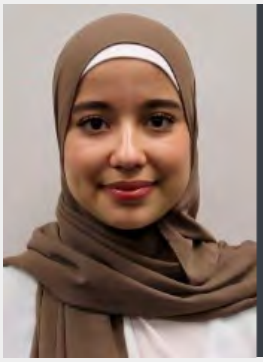
Refugee Optometry Clinic

By Dr Sarah Badaoui (Optometrist)

Refugee eye care matters because clear vision is fundamental to dignity, independence, and participation in daily life, yet refugees, asylum seekers, and detainees face disproportionate barriers to accessing even basic optometric services. Cost, limited health literacy, language barriers, transport difficulties, and ineligibility for Medicare mean that preventable and easily correctable vision problems often go undiagnosed, compounding existing disadvantage. What stood out to us most through this work was how profoundly simple interventions, such as providing a pair of glasses could transform someone's ability to read, engage in education, or feel more autonomous in their environment. Seeing how fear and unfamiliarity with the health system can deter people from seeking care fundamentally reshaped the way we view optometry, reinforcing that access and cultural safety are just as important as clinical skill.

These experiences challenged the traditional clinic-based model of care we had been trained in and highlighted the importance of outreach, accessibility, and delivering services within familiar community settings. Working alongside refugee and asylum seeker communities strengthened our confidence not only in clinical decision-making, but also in our ability to communicate clearly, adapt our approach to individual needs, and work collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams.

As final-year optometry students at the time, this experience reinforced the value of flexibility and cultural responsiveness in practice, particularly when caring for populations who may be unfamiliar with the Australian healthcare system. It has shaped our professional identity as optometrists who view eye care not solely as a clinical service, but as a means of reducing health inequities and supporting meaningful participation in education, employment, and daily life through patient-centred, socially responsive care.



Sarah successfully graduated at the end of 2025

Dr. Sarah Badaoui (Optometrist)

Clinical Awards

We are incredibly grateful to all of our dedicated clinical supervisors and educators who consistently go above and beyond to support, mentor and inspire our Doctor of Optometry students. We are thankful for the time, expertise, and care brought to this role. A special congratulations to our award recipients:

Dr. Sophia Gerritsma (Optometrist) - Best Clinical Supervisor

Dr. Sumindi Steyn (Optometrist) - Excellence in Clinical Teaching

Dr. Satvinder S. Bansal (Optometrist) - Inspiring Clinical Educator

Dr. Wilson Luu and Dr. Megan Tu (Optometrist) - Inspiring Clinical Educator

Right (Left to right): Chloe Fisher, Satvinder S. Bansal, Lisa Jansen
Below: Neilsen De Souza, Sophia Gerritsma
Below Centre: Wilson Luu, Megan Tu
Below Right: Chloe Fisher, Sumindi Steyn, Lisa Jansen

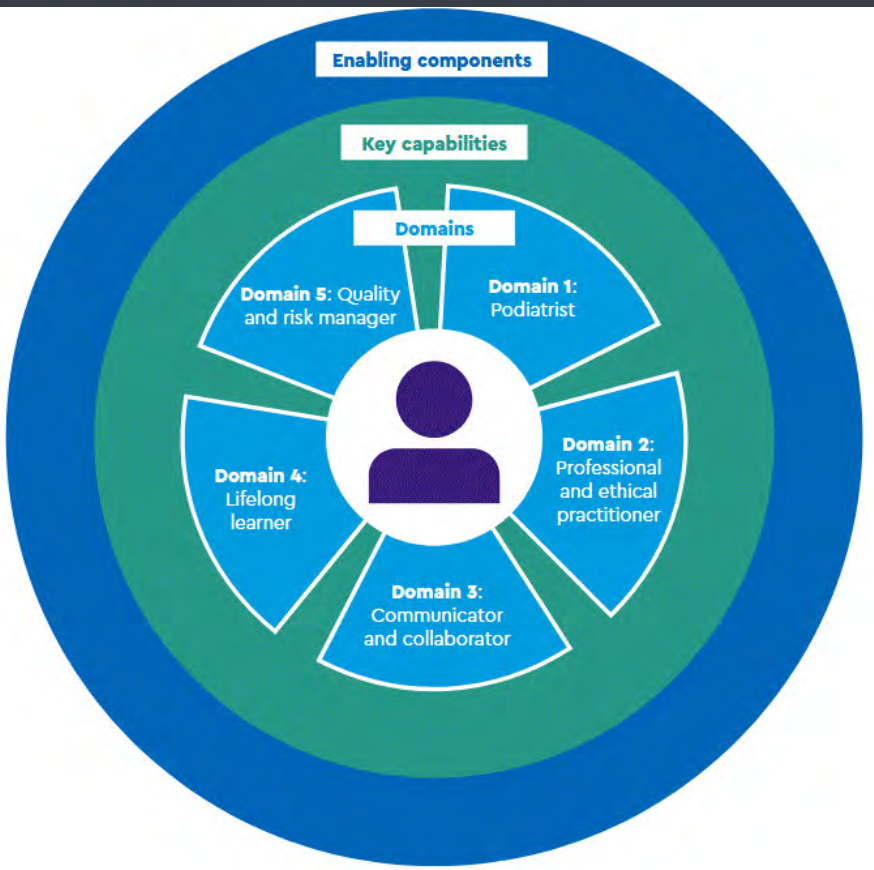
Assessment Benchmarking

By Dr Amy Lim(Optometrist) and Dr Lisa Jansen(Optometrist)

A recent benchmarking exercise was conducted between Optometry and Podiatry within the School of Health and Clinical Sciences. This provided an opportunity to examine how assessment standards are designed and applied across professional programs. The work focused on comparing assessment frameworks, grading practices and exploring alignment with learning outcomes and accreditation standards.

The Optometry and Podiatry programs share closely aligned professional domains. These include clinical care, ethical practice, communication, scholarship, and quality and risk management. However, using the same assessment formats, such as high stakes clinical examinations (OSCEs) and clinical portfolios, did not automatically ensure shared rubrics or structure. This benchmarking review helped clarify how performance expectations are defined and judged within each discipline, and how performance expectations evolved throughout the course.

FIgure 1: Safe and Effective Podiatry Practice
Podiatry Board of Australia. (2022). Professional capabilities for podiatrists. Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. https://www.ahpra.gov.au



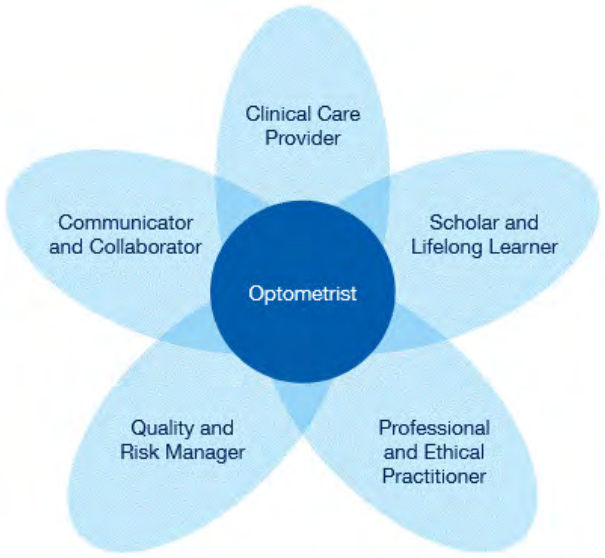


Figure 2. Holism diagram for Entry-Level Competency Standards for Optometry[1]

Figure 2: Optometry Australia. (2022). Entry-level competency standards for optometry. https://www.optometry.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Professional_support/Guidelines/Final_Entry-level-Competency-Standard-for-Optometry-2022.pdf

Several outcomes emerged from this work. Strong alignment was observed between both programs and national competency frameworks. Alignment with AQF requirements and university assessment policy was also evident. The exercise highlighted the importance of clear and consistent grading language to support examiner judgement and transparency for students. It also identified opportunities to improve consistency in grading language, strengthen examiner calibration processes, and better align rubric structures for comparable assessment tasks across programs.

Beyond the final report, the benchmarking process encouraged reflection and constructive cross disciplinary dialogue. It also supported a shared approach to assessment quality and continuous improvement.

Amy Lim is a Lecturer for the UWA Department of Optometry and Vision Science

1st Year Student Reflections

By Jess Loh

What made you choose Optometry at UWA?

UWA is not only the newest university to offer Optometry in Australia, but it also offers the latest technology and adopts a modern yet holistic approach to teaching that translate the in-class skills to real-world settings.

What surprised you most about starting Optometry?

How early hands-on learning started! It helped link theoretical concepts to practical skills, making the learning process much more engaging and relevant.

What have you enjoyed most so far?

Optics physics (my favourite, but not my best, unit), using new equipment, and making lifelong friends.

What has been challenging, and how have you adapted or grown as a result?

Time management; on top of all the workload, I was also working two jobs and also the student representative. Diary management, passion and resilience have been absolutely vital in managing everything effectively.

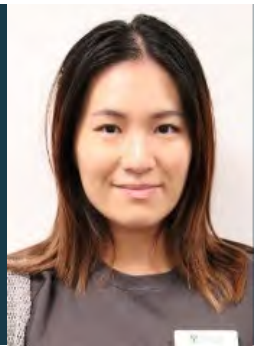
What advice would you give to someone starting Optometry next year?

Stay organised from the beginning, ask questions early, don't be afraid to seek support (especially from UWA staff and resources, they are wonderful!)

What are you most looking forward to in the coming years of the degree?

Gaining more hands-on experience, learning about how systematic diseases can manifest in the eye, and witnessing the scope of Optometry continue to expand.

Jess Loh - first year UWA Optometry student 2025



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2nd Year Student Reflections

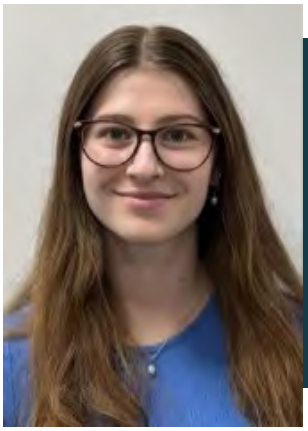
By Alex Murray and Maximillian Karelis

Going into the EHCWA clinic was a very new and both daunting and exciting experience. We had spent the last 18 months preparing and learning to start seeing patients ourselves. We were working alongside the EHCWA staff, so the clinic felt very professional, and patient care being the focus was apparent from the very first team huddle.

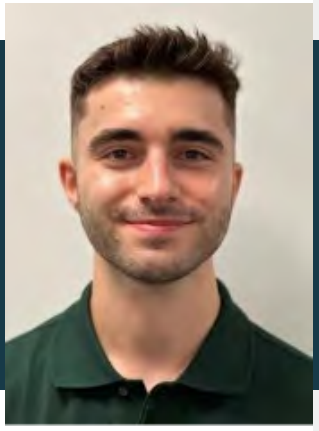
As we worked our way through our first consults and initial nerves, we started to find our feet as emerging clinicians while being well supported by the EHCWA teaching staff. The supervisors guided us while allowing us to lead the examination and encouraging us to think critically. The consult itself allowed us to practice and refine our clinical skills and grow accustomed to using the equipment. We would change rooms often, so we learnt different types of each equipment and got to practise different skills depending on the room we were in. After each patient we saw, the supervisors spent their time to sit down with us and give in depth, applicable feedback in a constructive manner – and their patience and learning points were always appreciated.

The more we got settled, the more we started to feel like clinicians! With each passing consult, our confidence grew in our skills, and ability to talk to and counsel patients. Seeing patients of all different ages was definitely a moment that felt like we were real clinicians: not just practicing on each other! Patients from all different backgrounds, languages and health literacies meant that the clinic was a safe space for us to learn while also pushing ourselves and gaining a deeper understanding of the impact we have on the community as future optometrists.

Overall, the clinic provided a wonderful learning environment where going into the 'deep end' helped us grow – refining our skills by seeing patients back-to-back, receiving guidance and advice and gaining a taste of what life looks like after graduation.



Alex Murray (Left) & Maximillian Karelis (Right) were second year Optometry students in 2025, and are now third year students in 2026



Research Output

At the department of Optometry and Vision Sciences we're committed to furthering our global impact with world class research, and we pride ourselves on the diversity and expertise of our researchers. This is a small selection of research published by our academics within the last 6 months

Alam, K., Chen, J., Ho, M., Gammoh, Y., Jansen, L., DeSouza, N., Lim, A., Fitzpatrick, G., & Neuville, J. (2025). Advancing optometry education through global frameworks and international collaborations. Clinical and Experimental Optometry, 108(3), 233-239. https://doi.org/10.1080/08164622.2024.2412254

Alam, K., Bentley, S. A., Connor, H., & Gentle, A. (2025). Access to low vision rehabilitation services in Australia: practitioner perspective. Clinical & experimental optometry : journal of the Australian Optometrical Association., 108(4), 504-510. https://doi.org/10.1080/08164622.2024.2360544

Xu, P., & Lim, J. K. H. (2026). Managing corneal foreign body injuries in a primary eye care setting. Clinical and Experimental Optometry, 109(1), 16-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/08164622.2025.2485237

Mikhail, E., Mohebbi, M., Azizoglu, S., Alam, K., Suphioglu, C., & Gokhale, M. (2026). Exploring Evidence-Based Approaches to Ocular Allergy Among Australian Health Practitioners. Journal of Clinical Medicine, 15(1), Article 15. https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm15010015

Charng, J., Alonso-Caneiro, D., Lamey, T. M., Thompson, J. A., Lim, J. K. H., Ong, E., McLaren, T. L., & Chen, F. K. (2026). Anatomy- versus Sensitivity-Based Loci Preselection in Detecting USH2A-Retinopathy Microperimetric Progression. Ophthalmology Science, 6(2), Article 101018. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xops.2025.101018

McKendrick, A. M., & Turpin, A. (2024). Understanding and identifying visual field progression. Clinical and Experimental Optometry, 107(2), 122-129. https://doi.org/10.1080/08164622.2024.2316002

Arshad, S., Rana, H., Truong, N. R., Pattamatta, U., Bertram, K. M., White, A., Chinnery, H. R., Carnt, N. A., & Cunningham, A. L. (2025). Herpes simplex virus type-1 infection and spread in a novel porcine corneal explant model is restricted to the epithelium. PLoS Pathogens, 21(5), Article e1013162. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.ppat.1013162

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