

# Vision screening to help indigenous eye health

QUEENSLAND'S Indigenous Diabetes Eyes and Screening van has teamed up with the charity Essilor Vision Foundation in a unique collaboration aimed at improving the vision of regional indigenous people.

The IDEAS van initiative closes the health gap for indigenous and remote communities by providing a visiting service that gives access to first-class specialist services, improving compliance and health outcomes.

The initiative builds a working partnership with all participants involved in the delivery of health services to indigenous people.

Essilor Vision Foundation has operated in many countries around the world for more than one decade and in Australia since mid-2016.

The foundation reaches out to indigenous citizens, refugees and migrants, people with mental illness and school children.

Using the services of volunteer optometrists, optometry students, dispensers and practice staff it screens large groups of clients, refers on for comprehensive optometric



**NEW VISION: Queensland's Indigenous Diabetes Eyes and Screening van has teamed up with the charity Essilor Vision Foundation to improve the vision of the state's regional indigenous people.**

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

examination and provides free prescription spectacles.

IDEAS van chief executive Lyndall De Marco said the collaboration was the perfect union of two organisations.

"While our ophthalmologists and optometrists identify and treat a range of ocular conditions and diseases it is a fact that many of our patients will simply require

a basic pair of prescription spectacles to remedy poor vision," she said.

"That's where the foundation's support will be invaluable."

Essilor Vision Foundation CEO Greg Johnson said he was over the moon with the announcement.

"Much of our work is in large scale screenings where considerable human

resources are required," he said. "Working with the IDEAS van means we can still undertake our projects while adding value the van's diagnostic and referral.

"It will happen through free spectacles for patients and by encouraging more eye health professionals to assist the van as it moves across regional and remote Queensland."