

Eye and Ear Surgical Support



Introduction

The Eye and Ear Surgical Support (EESS) program aims to reduce the instances of avoidable vision and hearing loss in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, through ensuring timely access to eye and ear surgical care, by strengthening patient pathways and support.

EESS services are prioritised to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in regional, rural, and remote locations across Queensland.

The EESS program is funded by the Australian Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and forms part of CheckUP's Outreach services.

Aims

The objectives of the EESS program are:

- to reduce surgical wait times for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients needing eye surgery or ear surgery for conditions resulting from diseases of the middle ear
- to identify and reduce barriers to accessing timely and affordable eye or ear surgery, at the nearest available location to the patient's home
- to work collaboratively with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services, allied health professionals, specialists, and hospitals, to strengthen culturally appropriate patient surgical pathways
- improved eye, and ear and hearing health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"The service is amazing. It makes such a big difference for families to be able to get the surgery when it's needed rather than spending three years on the wait list."

- EESS eye surgery patient

"The best thing about having the surgery is the opportunity to be able to see again! I've heard of others getting the surgery and it changing their lives, so I wanted it. Now finally we can get it and I can see again! I am telling everyone I know with eye problems to get it done."

- EESS eye surgery patient

Who is eligible for EESS support?

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requiring eye surgery (largely cataract) and/or ear surgery for conditions resulting from diseases of the middle ear (Otitis Media)
- Ear surgery support is prioritised to children and youths, aged 0-21 years.
- Surgery support is prioritised for people living in rural and remote Queensland (MM3 – MM7)

About CheckUP

CheckUP is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of people and communities in need, especially those in rural, regional, and remote areas.

How to support a patient through the EESS program

If you would like to know more about supporting eligible patients who would benefit from a timely and culturally safe surgical pathway alternative, please contact outreachservices@checkup.org.au or phone 07 3105 8300.

For privacy and security, please do not submit identifiable and confidential patient information.

This program is made possible through funding from the Australian Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

Use of the Eye and Ear surgery Cultural Safety PREM (November 2021 - December 2025)



The following data refers to patient feedback collected in locations where surgical teams and clinics participated in Cultural Safety Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREM) administration, including both Queensland and the Northern Territory.

8 regional and remote surgery locations



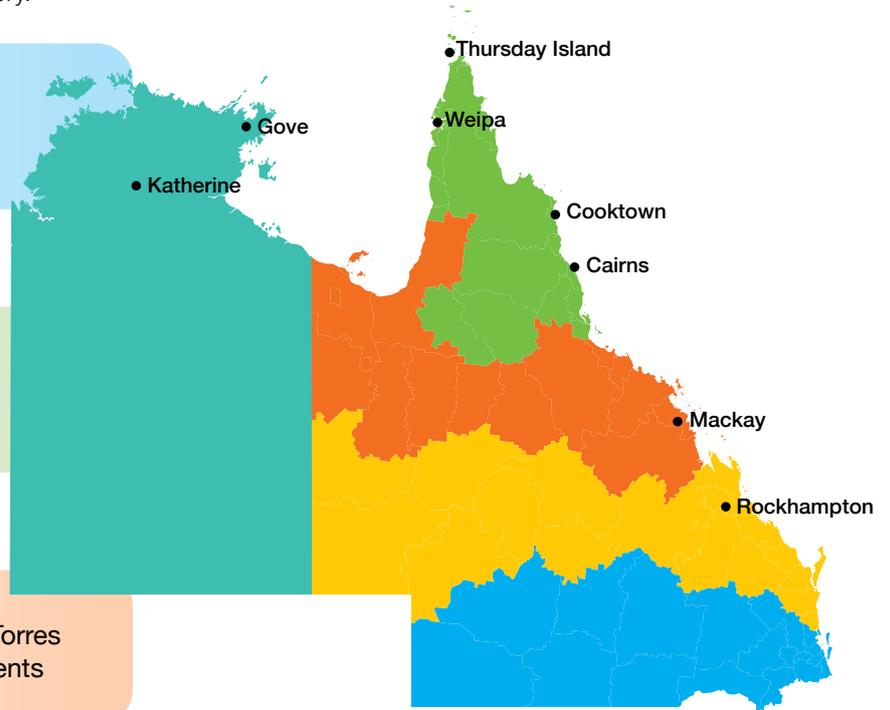
321 responses



37 surgeries
(21 Eye/ 16 Ear)



86% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients



Hospital visit support

- ▶ **92%** happy with arranged transport
- ▶ **88%** happy with arranged accommodation
- ▶ **94%** happy with how their physical needs were cared for
- ▶ **41%** received adequate support from an Indigenous Health Worker
- ▶ **14%** would have liked more support from an Indigenous Health Worker



Safety and Respect

- ▶ **97%** felt completely welcome at the hospital
- ▶ **98%** felt completely safe with the hospital and surgical staff
- ▶ **98%** felt completely respected by the hospital and surgical staff
- ▶ **92%** felt their emotional needs were completely cared for



Communication and Inclusion

- ▶ **95%** felt their treatment was properly explained
- ▶ **98%** felt completely included in treatment decision-making
- ▶ **96%** felt completely comfortable sharing their health information at the hospital

100% of patients would be likely to recommend this surgery pathway to their family/friends.

"I felt comfortable enough to ask questions that bother me, being anxious about the operation, and after the surgery I was looked after with great respect."

"I felt safe and well looked after afterwards."

"Yes, additional support (was) provided liaising with support person (daughter). A lot of information was provided about the surgery."

"Easier to see for working (now), easier to drive for work. Fishing will be easier and going sugarbagging."

"Treated with respect during both surgeries and checks after."