



**VICTA**

Visual Impairment  
Charitable Trust  
Aotearoa (NZ)

Contact: Dr Lynley Hood  
Trustee, VICTA  
PO Box 5862  
Moray Place  
Dunedin 9058  
ph: 03 487 7686/027 222 9279

## SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

### VISION LOSS IN NEW ZEALAND - A NOTE ON THE STATISTICS

The purpose of this supplementary submission is to elucidate an apparent discrepancy between two frequently quoted estimates of the extent of vision loss in New Zealand. One estimate (of over 93,000 New Zealanders with irreversible vision loss) is from the 2001 and 2006 Statistics NZ Post-Census Disability Survey Reports (to be updated when the 2013 Post Census Disability Survey Report becomes available in April 2014). The other estimate (of 124,000 New Zealanders with vision loss) is from the Blind Foundation/Vision 2020 report, *Clear Focus: The economic impact of vision loss in New Zealand in 2009*.

The two reports differ in their objectives, in the populations studied, in the definitions used and in the research methods applied. While the Clear Focus report makes useful estimates of the prevalence of different types of vision loss in New Zealand, VICTA relies on the Statistics NZ estimate for the following reasons:

- The Statistics NZ estimate is based on research conducted on New Zealanders. The Clear Focus estimate is extrapolated from research conducted on Australians.
- The Statistics NZ estimate is based on the effects that vision loss has on the lives of the people studied. The Clear Focus report is based on the results of eye tests.
- The Statistics NZ estimate is confined to New Zealanders with vision loss that **cannot** be corrected by glasses or contact lenses. This issue is VICTA's primary concern. The Clear Focus estimate includes New Zealanders whose vision loss **can** be corrected by glasses or contact lenses (this group accounts for 55% of the Clear Focus total).
- The Statistics NZ estimate covers New Zealanders of all ages. VICTA is concerned that, while the incidence of age-related vision loss is increasing rapidly, the needs of younger people with vision loss must not be overlooked. The Clear Focus estimate is limited to New Zealanders over the age of 40.

\*\*\*\*\*