

2015 Australian Trachoma Surveillance Preliminary report

Prepared for the 20th Annual Meeting of the WHO Alliance for the Global Elimination of Trachoma by 2020 and National stakeholders workshop, Sydney April 2016

Australia is the only high-income country in which trachoma is endemic. The disease occurs primarily in remote and very remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory (NT), South Australia (SA) and Western Australia (WA). Trachoma control activities are conducted in at-risk communities within twelve regions of these three jurisdictions. The Australian Government has invested in the elimination of trachoma by 2020 through the *Indigenous Australians' Health Programme* which provides funding to jurisdictions in which trachoma is endemic, for surveillance and control activities. The program also supports the National Trachoma Surveillance and Reporting Unit, based at The Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia, to undertake the monitoring of trachoma prevalence and control activities.

The management and surveillance of trachoma in 2015 in all jurisdictions were guided by the Communicable Disease Network Australia (CDNA) *2014 Guidelines for the public health management of trachoma in Australia*¹ and the *2006 Guidelines for the public health management of trachoma in Australia*² applied in prior years. The guidelines adapt the WHO SAFE strategy for trachoma elimination in the Australian context. The guideline's primary differences from the WHO guidelines are in regard to the focus of screening activities to the 5-9-year age group; prevalence cut-off for treatment strategies; and the options provided for community or household targeted drug administration.

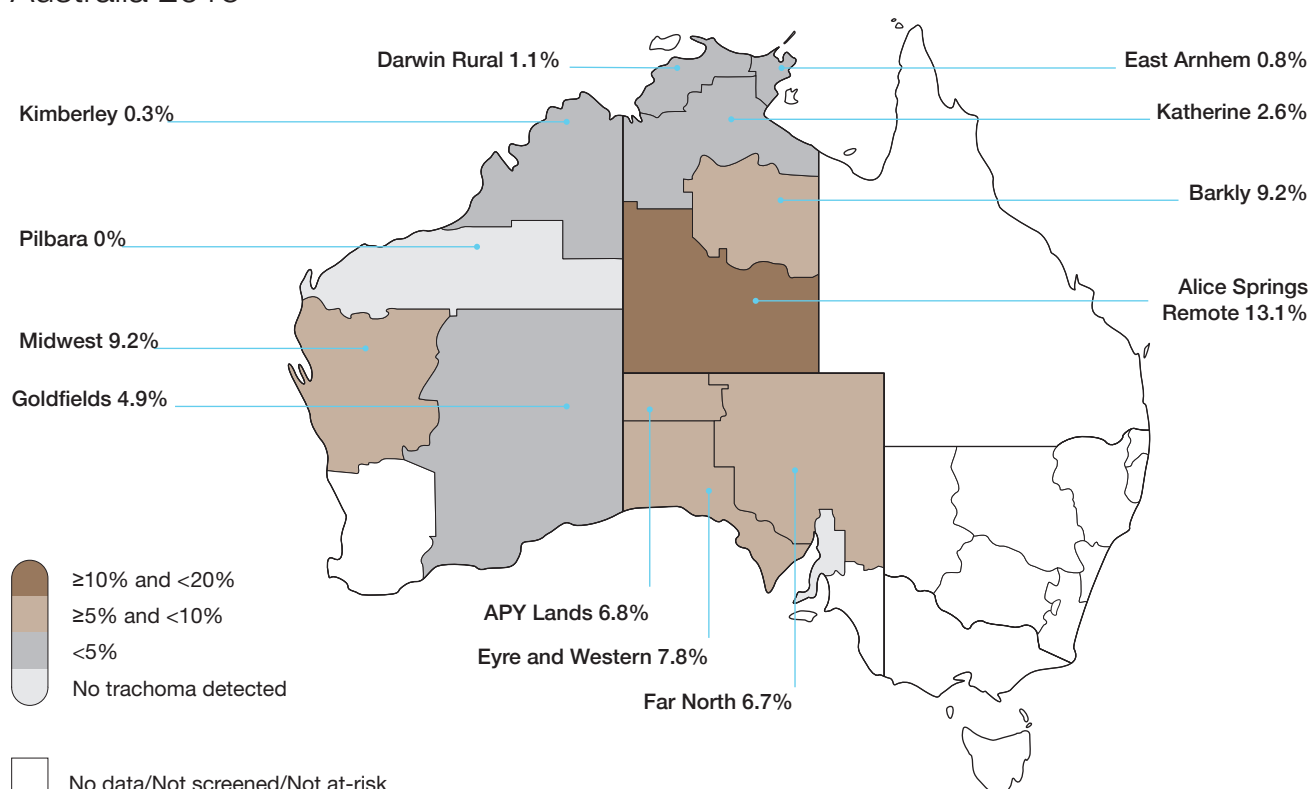
The WHO trachoma grading criteria were used to diagnose and classify individual cases of trachoma in all jurisdictions. Data collected at the community level for each calendar year included:

- Number of Aboriginal children screened for clean faces and the number with clean faces, by age group
- Number of Aboriginal children screened for trachoma and the number with trachoma, by age group
- Number of episodes of treatment for active trachoma, household contacts and other community members, by age group
- Number of Aboriginal adults screened for trichiasis, number with trichiasis, and the number who had surgery for trichiasis
- Community-level implementation of the WHO SAFE strategy.

While the primary focus for data collection in all regions was the 5-9-year age group, intervention strategies were delivered to children aged 0-14 years and their households.

For reporting purposes, the most recent prevalence data have been carried forward for those communities that did not screen in the 2015 calendar year. This principle applies to all tables and figures relating to trachoma prevalence data.

Trachoma prevalence in children aged 5-9 years in at-risk communities by region, Australia 2015



Summary of findings

- Estimated trachoma prevalence in 5-9-year age group in at-risk regions in 2015 was 4.6%
- Of the 12 at-risk regions, six had estimated trachoma prevalence below 5%, five were between 5%-10%, and one was over 10%
- A total of 8881 people received azithromycin for trachoma control in 51 communities in 2015
- While Australia is on track to eliminate trachoma by 2020 there are still 'hot spots' with endemic levels of trachoma (over 5% prevalence rate for three consecutive years) that will require continued focused efforts, including antibiotic distribution, health promotion and environmental improvements to facilitate facial cleanliness.

Trachoma screening coverage, trachoma prevalence and clean face prevalence in Australia in 2015

	Northern Territory	South Australia	Western Australia	Total
Number of communities				
At risk	75	11	47	133
Screened	38	11	14	63
Treated only	16	0	3	19
Screened and treated	18 [‡]	7 [‡]	7 [‡]	32 [‡]
Required neither screening or treatment	11	0	29	40
Children aged 5-9 years				
Resident in at-risk communities*	4145	803	1848	6796
Resident in screened communities [†]	2232	803	433	3468
Examined for clean face	2565	729	387	3681
With clean face	2197	528	277	3002
Clean face prevalence (%)	86	72	72	82
Screened for trachoma	1992	729	387	3108
Trachoma screening coverage (%)	89	91	89	90
With active trachoma	52	51	17	118
Active trachoma prevalence (%)	2.6	7.0	4.4	3.8
Active trachoma prevalence using most recent data carried forward (%)	4.9	7.0	2.6	4.6
Population treated with azithromycin	6674	463	1744	8881

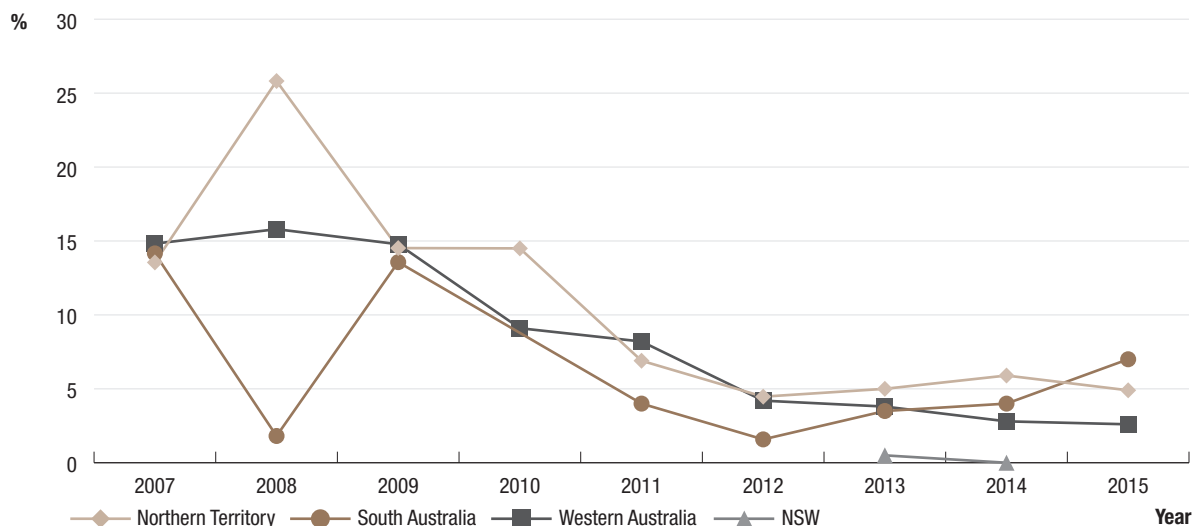
* Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimate

[†] Jurisdictional estimate used in communities screened for trachoma

[‡] Other screened communities did not require treatment

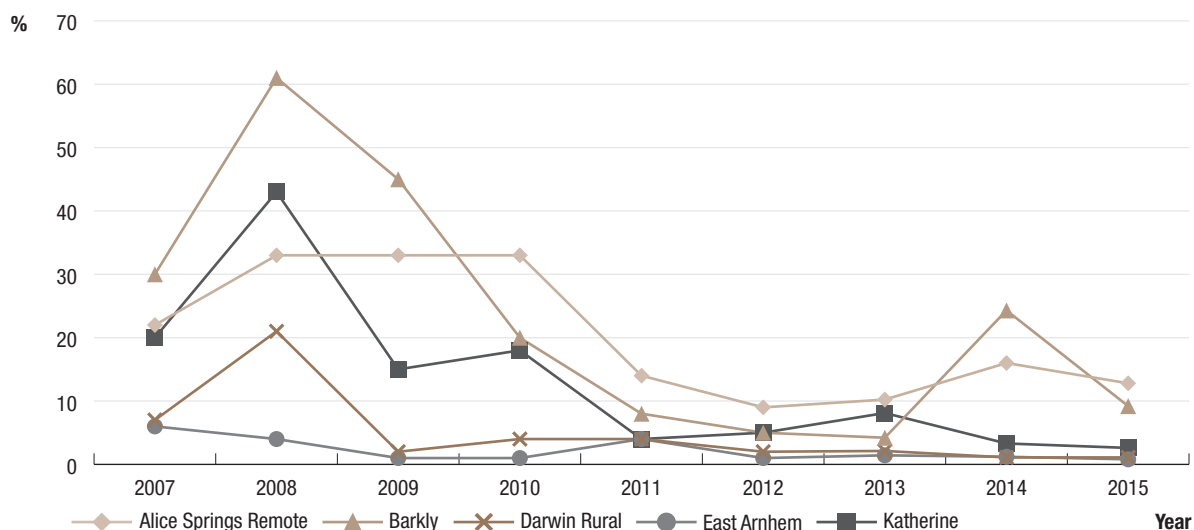
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Trachoma prevalence among children aged 5-9 years by jurisdiction, Australia 2007 – 2015*



* Most recent estimates carried forward in communities that did not screen in 2015.

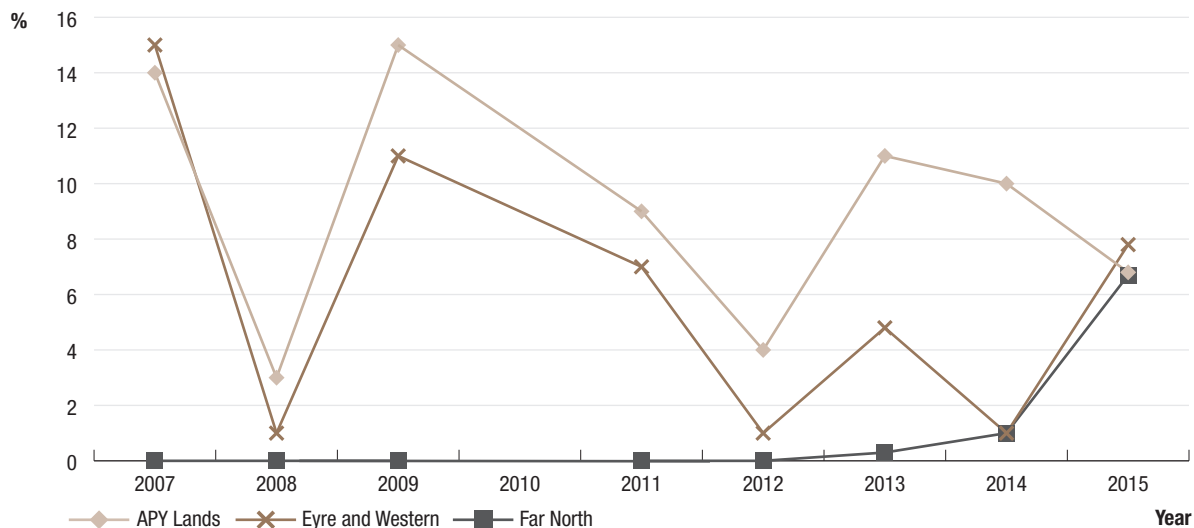
Trachoma prevalence among children aged 5-9 years by region, Northern Territory 2007 – 2015*



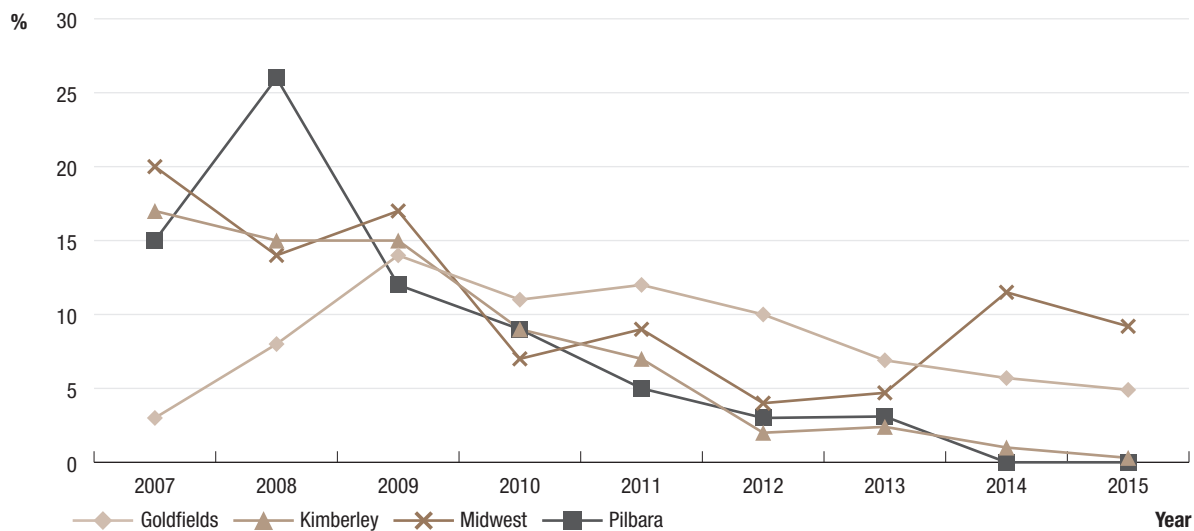
* Most recent estimates carried forward in communities that did not screen in 2015.

1. Communicable Diseases Network Australia. National guidelines for the public health management of trachoma in Australia. January 2014. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia; 2014. Available at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-trachoma.htm>
2. Communicable Diseases Network Australia. Guidelines for the public health management of trachoma in Australia. March 2006. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia; 2006.

Trachoma prevalence among children aged 5-9 years by region, South Australia 2007 – 2015



Trachoma prevalence among children aged 5-9 years by region, Western Australia 2007 – 2015*



* Most recent estimates carried forward in communities that did not screen in 2015.

Number of doses of azithromycin administered for the treatment of trachoma by jurisdiction, Australia 2007 – 2015

