As announced in the 2008-09 Budget, the Australian Government will commence a significant new package of initiatives laying the foundation for implementing its long-term commitment to increase Australia’s international development assistance to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2015-16.

The Fighting Avoidable Blindness initiative aims to address eye health and vision care needs in Asia and the Pacific and develop a disability-inclusive development strategy to guide Australia’s aid program.

The Australian Government will invest $45 million over three years in the Fighting Avoidable Blindness Initiative. Activities under the initiative will include:

- Developing strategic partnerships with a range of non-government organisations and other organisations working in eye health and vision care, building on and expanding existing work;
- Strengthening existing eye care training institutions and the capacity of eye care workers;
- Piloting the Vision Centre approach as part of the delivery of eye health and vision care needs;
- Assessing eye health and vision care needs to inform future efforts to reduce avoidable blindness; and
- Developing a disability-inclusive development strategy to guide Australia’s aid program.

Implementation of the Fighting Avoidable Blindness initiative will be informed by the principles of the Government’s new disability-inclusive development strategy, Development for All, launched on 25 November 2008. The Fighting Avoidable Blindness initiative will work with regional and international agencies to support work on blindness and vision impairment, including with Vision2020: the right to sight global initiative for the elimination of avoidable blindness.