



## MODULE 1

## KIWI ICON

### PROFESSOR FRED HOLLOWS AC (1929-1993)



*'The essence of a human being is our capacity to help others; it is what separates us from the animals. I studied medicine so I could help others - set a leg or whatever, and it's given me a great deal of satisfaction.'* - Fred Hollows

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#### BACKGROUND

Frederick Cossam Hollows was born on 9 April 1929 in Dunedin, and grew up in Palmerston North where he attended Palmerston North Boys' High School and played in the First XV rugby team.

He initially attended Bible College in Dunedin, with the idea of joining the clergy before settling on a career in medicine. He entered medical school at Otago University, New Zealand, after he discovered he wasn't cut out to be a clergyman and decided to become an 'eye doctor' - a profession he described as *"good work"*.

Fred always had a passion for mountain climbing and studying at Otago University enabled him to make use of the province's spectacular mountain landscape. He often spent time climbing with friends, including Sir Edmund Hillary, on and around Mt Cook/Aorangi, New Zealand's highest peak. For Fred the mountain *"put things into perspective - risks and skills, life and death, gives you the measure of problems and people."*

Fred left New Zealand in 1960 to study Ophthalmology in the UK. In 1965 he moved to Australia to become Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. He then went on to head up the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program in Australia in the late 1970s.

#### THE FRED HOLLOWES FOUNDATION NZ

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Fred was driven by a strong personal commitment to social and economic change. His dedication to eliminating avoidable blindness and disadvantage has changed the lives of millions of men, women and children around the world.

Fred Hollows saw a growing disparity between the "haves" and the "have nots" in eye health and decided to do something about it. Five months before he died of cancer in 1993, Fred and his wife, Gabi established The Fred Hollows Foundation.

The Fred Hollows Foundation in New Zealand was set up in 1992 to help make good Fred's dream that one day avoidable blindness would be eliminated around the world. From New Zealand, we implement sight saving programmes across the whole of the Pacific.

## FRED'S AWARDS

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During his life Fred received much recognition and many awards:

- 1981** Advance Australia Award for Aboriginal eye care
- 1990** Human Rights Medal  
Named Australian of the Year  
Advance Australia Award for Medicine and Overseas Aid
- 1991** Humanist of the Year  
Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow  
Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa, UNSW  
Companion, General Division of the Order of Australia (AC)  
Degree of Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa, Macquarie University  
Doctor of Medicine Honoris Causa, UNSW  
Named Eritrea's first honorary citizen
- 1992** Honorary Doctorate from Queensland University of Technology  
Established The Fred Hollows Foundation
- 1993** Albert Schweitzer Award of Distinction Chapman University, USA  
Rotary Award for World Understanding Rotary International's highest honour.. (Other recipients include Pope John-Paul II, Perez de Cuellar, Vaclav Havel and the International Red Cross.)  
The evening before he died, Fred was presented with The Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists Medal for his years of distinguished meritorious and selfless service.  
Lions Clubs International Melvin Jones Fellow (posthumously).
- 2004** Entered into the 'Hall of Fame' in the inaugural NSW Aboriginal Health Awards in recognition of Fred's 'outstanding contribution and achievement' to Indigenous health in Australia. Gabi Hollows received the award on his behalf.
- 2005** Canberra Eye Hospital, ACT, Australia, named an operating theatre after him.
- 2006** Included in The Bulletin Magazine's list of 100 most influential Australians.  
Included in Prime TV's "New Zealand's Top 100 History Makers"  
Link : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6hxGWKNRtM>

## FRED'S LEGACY : THE INTRAOCULAR LENS

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**The intraocular lens – note the haptics on the side which hold the lens in place**

Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in the world and occurs when the natural lens of the eye becomes cloudy, causing gradual loss of vision and ultimately blindness.

In the early days, most cataract operations in developing countries involved removing the whole lens from the eye, including the thin capsule which contained it. (In the very early days, this was called 'couching' and was often done by pushing the lens to the back of eye with a curved needle.). Because the natural lens of the eye had been removed, the patient was left with no focusing mechanism and needed thick 'coke bottle' glasses. This solution provided poor quality vision and was often temporary.

The plastic **Intraocular Lens** (IOL) was first developed in 1949 to enable the eye to focus. However, the cost of IOLs meant that for millions of people in developing countries, effective cataract surgery was out of reach. Fred's greatest legacy was his determination to produce these lenses at a price which could be afforded in developing countries. He tried to negotiate better prices with existing IOL suppliers and when they refused to lower their prices, he set up two IOL laboratories from scratch (one in Nepal and one in Eritrea) to produce lenses at an affordable price. These two laboratories export quality lenses costing less than \$12 each to more than 50 countries and so far have produced over 3 million sight-saving lenses.

In keeping with Fred's philosophy of giving a "hand up" not a "hand out", the laboratories he established are now fully independent and commercially successful businesses, generating local employment opportunities as well as earning export income.

Through Fred's vision, the factories are helping to reduce poverty for people in Nepal and Eritrea, as well as countless numbers of people throughout the world.

**Some quotes from Fred:**

*"Don't ever "half do" a job – don't ever compromise – slog away until you get the job done!"*

*"I believe that the basic attribute of mankind is to look after each other"*

*"Leave the world a better place"*

**Fred didn't just talk about problems; he set about trying to solve them**



## MODULE 1 QUIZ : KIWI ICON

### PROFESSOR FRED HOLLOWS AC (1929-1993)

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1. Where was Frederick Cossom Hollows born?
2. What profession did he describe as “good work”?
3. What was Fred’s recreational passion and why?
4. Describe what it is like to have a cataract.
5. How were cataracts removed in older times?
6. Where is Eritrea? What is the capital city?
6. Name one other New Zealand hero associated with Fred Hollows. What was the link?
7. Who invented the IOL? What inspired him?