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A message from Carmel Williams

Executive Director



There is a song called "From little things, big things grow". Looking back at the seven years that The Fred Hollows Foundation New Zealand has been working in the Pacific, I think this would make a good theme song for our organisation.

From our small training experiences grew the concept of establishing Pacific academic institutions that could formally train ophthalmologists and eye nurses, and then assist those eye health professionals to deliver quality eye care in the region.

From effective use of our first small grant from NZAID in 2002 has now come a significant contract with both the New Zealand and Australian Governments to expand the training and workforce support aspects of our program, and to build a new surgical and training facility.

Every doctor studying at the Pacific Eye Institute does at least 100 cataract operations during training. Then, from this small start, the doctor returns home and continues to perform hundreds of sight-restoring operations every year, for the rest of his or her career. The impact of the training just keeps growing, year after year.

Likewise, your support: every small donation adds up to a pool of funding from which our organization achieves big things. And each small intra-ocular lens restores a big picture.

Right now, our government funding means we can train and support more doctors and nurses. However, for every dollar we receive from the government, we need another dollar to continue to meet our own core obligations. We still need your support to keep our programs running, to fund our outreaches, and equip our students and clinics. In other words, to provide the very many small things without which we would not be able to make big things grow.

Once again, I want to thank you for continuing your support to help Pacific people see the big picture.

Carmel Williams

Profile: Sara Pereira, Timor-Leste

Sara Pereira is the Service Delivery Project Manager at The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ in Timor-Leste.

After studying in Australia (gaining a Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Arts at the University of Newcastle), Sara returned home to Dili to teach English at St Joseph's senior high school, before joining Hollows NZ in August 2007.

Describe a typical working week

In a typical week, I liaise regularly with key people at the Ministry of Health, Fo Naroman Timor-Leste (Give Sight Timor-Leste/FNTL, our principal partner in Timor), the Institute of Health Science (ICS) and the Hospital National Guido Valadares (HNGV).

I often plan, implement and evaluate vision screening outreaches to remote districts of the country. I also support the health promotion team and recently trained teachers and health promotion staff to deliver Healthy Eyes lessons at primary schools in Aileu district (see article, page 3). I also help with the Diploma of Eye Care for eye nurses at ICS. With our new eye surgical service launching in June, I have been busy this year in the recruitment and training of the surgical support team.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

My role in helping make quality eye care services available to everyone in Timor-Leste.

What initiatives are you excited about this year?

Three things: taking my surgical service team to Tilganga Eye Centre in Nepal for training (it's been hugely inspiring and encouraging to see



Sara Pereira, Service Delivery Project Manager, Timor-Leste | Photo courtesy: Lucy Lee/FHFNZ

that, with dedication and willingness, the dream of quality care for all can become a reality); building a dedicated eye clinical and surgical facility in Timor-Leste; finally, the eye surgical service delivery project and the recruitment of a dedicated team in Timor-Leste.

How has Hollows NZ made a difference to eye health in Timor-Leste?

Our program in Timor-Leste has been comprehensive. With our help, the National Eye Health Strategy was established at the Ministry. We worked with ICS to develop and deliver a one-year Diploma in Eye Care training (six eye care nurse graduates are now working at a district-level across the country, providing services where previously there were none). We also worked with the Ministry and FNTL to develop a sustainable national spectacle dispensing program (around 6000 spectacles were dispensed last year). We also offer a broad range of eye health-related services including health promotion, school screenings and outreaches, as well as surgical support.

A new wave of eye nurses for PNG

In March, the first thirteen eye nurses celebrated their graduation from the Fred Hollows Foundation NZ training program in Papua New Guinea.

The nurses also attended a five day workshop to refresh their knowledge of a range of topics they requested, receive training on new approaches and discuss clinical experiences. The nurses work in diverse clinics around the country – some urban, others rural, some with eye doctors and others alone – so the chance to learn from each others' experiences was both helpful and supportive.

The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ coordinates a large, multi-year eye health program with its partners in PNG, focusing on training eye care workers and equipping eye clinics to prevent and treat blindness. PNG is one of the region's poorest countries. It is estimated that there are 58,000 blind people in PNG, and this figure grows by approximately 10,000 cases each year. At least 70% of that blindness is treatable.



Photo courtesy: Brenda Jolliffe/FHFNZ

The World Health Organisation recommends that a population of almost 6 million people should have at least 240 eye nurses to provide accessible, equitable, quality eye care. At present there are just 47. A key strategy of Hollows NZ's program in PNG is to train, equip and support eye nurses to improve access to eye care for all.

Read more about the challenges of restoring sight in Papua New Guinea at www.hollows.org.nz

School children learn about healthy eyes in Timor-Leste

All photos courtesy Lucy Lee/FHFNZ

In February this year, The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ launched a pilot Healthy Eyes program promoting simple steps to improve eye health at eight schools in Aileu, a mountainous region in the centre of Timor-Leste.

Working with local partner Fo Naroman Timor-Leste (Give Sight Timor-Leste) and the Timorese Ministries of Health and Education, Hollows NZ has developed nine key eye health messages spanning four subject areas: understanding the importance of healthy eyes; hygiene; nutrition; and reducing the social stigma attached to blindness and spectacle-wearing.

Teachers in the participating schools have been trained to use specially designed activity books and promotional materials such as stickers and posters to reinforce these key messages.

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) is also supporting the project and helping schools establish nutrition gardens. Immaculada Gusmao, Hollows NZ's Healthy Eyes in Schools Project Officer notes "Children often learn by doing, and through this project they are learning techniques they can share with their families on how to grow vegetables that are good for

their eyes. The children are enthusiastic, and the wider community has become involved in planting seeds and tending to the garden."

The Healthy Eyes project is an important step for Hollows NZ, says Karen Hobday, The Foundation's Community Health Project Manager in Timor-Leste. "It moves beyond delivering high quality eye services to the population to actually teaching communities how to prevent and identify potential eye problems, and how to seek treatment should they need it."

The pilot, which includes vision screening at participating schools, as well as activities within the school community, will conclude in September. The Ministry of Education has expressed an interest in incorporating elements of the pilot program into the national curriculum.



1. Hollows NZ's Timor-Leste Country Program Director, Jacqui Ramke, receives a traditional Timorese woven textile, a tais, at the official launch of the Healthy Eyes project at Cotalau Primary School, Aileu district.



3. A Cotalau schoolgirl has her vision tested by Hollows NZ operating theatre technician Adao Illi-doli.

"Children often learn by doing, and through this project they are learning techniques they can share ..."



2. Hollows NZ operating theatre technician Belmerio Jeronimo tests a pupil's vision during a screening at Cotalau Primary School.



4. Hollows NZ consultant Renée du Toit examines the eye health of a pupil at Cotalau Primary School.



5. Children at Maurusa School learn about preparing the soil for their nutrition garden.

Create a miracle every month!

We call it the Miracle Club because it helps us restore the miracle of sight to people living with blindness.

When you sign up to the Miracle Club, you make a powerful commitment that will change lives – empowering communities in developing countries to be self sufficient and independent.

The Miracle Club is the easiest way for you to donate to The Fred Hollows Foundation New Zealand. It's tax efficient and keeps our administrative costs to an absolute minimum.

Big or small, your regular donation will make a real difference, helping us restore sight and prevent blindness in even more communities.

"We have been Miracle Club members for a year now. We joined because we believed in the work of the Foundation and wanted to make a long-term commitment. We chose a monthly donation by credit card – it's easy and saves time. We receive only one receipt at the end of the year, which saves on administration cost and ensures more of our donation goes directly towards restoring sight. We highly recommend that you consider becoming a Miracle Club member – it's easy, effective and personally rewarding."

Anne and Bill Luther, Auckland



Photo courtesy: Kristian Ffries

Becoming a Miracle Club member is easy. Simply tick the box on the coupon enclosed and send it back to us. We'll send you full information.

You can also call 0800 227 229, email us at info@hollows.org.nz or log onto www.hollows.org.nz

Walking to restore sight

People fundraise for The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ in many different ways. Some hold an event, others gather together friends and family and others undertake something unique or groundbreaking.

Lauren Hollister, a year 13 student at Kristin School in Auckland, set herself the challenge of walking all nine great walks of New Zealand, recording her experiences as she went. Accompanied by her father Chris, her walks have taken her from Stewart Island in the south to Lake Waikaremoana in the north, through some of New Zealand's most dramatic scenery.

Chris Hollister says, "As part of her international baccalaureate studies, Lauren decided to fundraise for The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ. She was inspired by The Foundation's work restoring sight to the needlessly blind and wanted to contribute in a meaningful way that also allowed us as a family to experience something truly unique."

Chris and Lauren will complete their travels in September and will be releasing a DVD of their adventures on The Foundation's website. All proceeds will support The Foundation's blindness prevention programs in Papua New Guinea.



Chris Hollister and his daughter Lauren on the Milford Track | Photo courtesy Chris Hollister

Regional workshop promotes quality care

11 eye doctors and 22 eye nurses from eight Pacific countries came together to learn, share their experiences and network at Hollows NZ's annual Pacific Eye Care Workshop in Suva in early March.

The workshop was an opportunity for Pacific eye care personnel and Hollows NZ to identify

ways to improve the quality of eye care provision in the Pacific, including defining quality of care, establishing quality standards and introducing appropriate monitoring and evaluation techniques.

Hollows NZ teaching staff assessed participants' clinical skills and workplace environments to determine on-going continuing education and workforce support requirements. Participants also benefited from presentations by their peers on various aspects of their respective eye care services - from supporting visiting surgical teams to managing a hospital-based eye clinic.

| Photo courtesy FHFNZ



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