**Fred's Life**

**The timeline of a Kiwi legend**

**1929:** Fred Hollows is born on April 9 in Dunedin, New Zealand. He grew up in Palmerston North.

**1951:** Hollows graduates with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree from the University of Otago in New Zealand. After he graduated he began assisting eye surgeons.

While living back in Dunedin, Fred was an active member of the New Zealand Alpine Club and climbed several peaks in the Mount Aspiring/Tititea region of Central Otago.

Also in 1951, Fred met New Zealand mountain climber and Everest pioneer Sir Edmund Hillary. Sir Ed was on a test run for Everest, backpacking up the Tasman Glacier carrying a pack that weighed more than 32 kilograms. Fred offered to help Sir Ed with the load he was carrying. Sir Ed said “...Although I didn’t know it at the time, he was Fred Hollows — obviously he started his helpful attitude early in life.”

The resulting friendship paved the way for Sir Ed’s support of Fred’s efforts to end avoidable blindness, particularly in Nepal, later becoming a patron of The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ.

**1961:** He became so interested in eye surgery that he moved to the United Kingdom to specialise in ophthalmology.

**1965:** Fred moved to Australia and became Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of New South Wales.

**1968:** Fred treated two elderly Indigenous Australians from Wattie Creek in the Northern Territory, who then invited him to visit their camp.

He was shocked by the poor state of health — especially eye health — and found it hard to understand how people were living in these conditions in a developed country like Australia. Especially worrying was the large number of people suffering from trachoma, a blinding disease rarely found in the developed world.

When Fred visited Bourke (a township 800km from Sydney) he found the same awful conditions, and he became inspired to fight for improved access to eye health and living conditions for those who need it most.

**Early 1970s:** Gabi was training as an orthoptist when she first met Fred. Not long after, they worked together on the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program and visited more than 465 Indigenous communities in outback Australia. The project sparked the start of their relationship and a lasting partnership to create change for Indigenous Australians and throughout the developing world.

**1976-1978:** Hollows starts the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program in Australia, focusing on combating trachoma, a preventable eye disease.

**1985:** Fred visited Nepal, Burma, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh on behalf of the World Health Organization.

Visiting these countries had a big effect on Fred, inspiring him to find a way to reduce the cost of eye care and treatment in developing countries. He recognised the importance for local factories to produce affordable intraocular lenses for use in cataract surgery. He knew this would cut the cost of restoring sight.

Fred founded factories in Nepal and Eritrea, empowering local communities to make affordable and accessible lenses, far cheaper than if they were made in Australia. The factories have produced millions of lenses and are an enduring reminder of Fred's legacy.

**1987:** Fred visits Eritrea. This leads him to create the Eritrean National Eye Care Program in Eritrea, Africa, to help fix the high rate of blindness in the region.

**Late 1980s:** Hollows is diagnosed with renal cancer but continues his work tirelessly while undergoing treatment.

With only a few months to live he discharged himself from hospital to travel to Vietnam to train over 300 Vietnamese eye specialists in modern surgery techniques. Along with some friends, Fred and Gabi set up The Fred Hollows Foundation to guarantee his work would carry on.

**1992:** Fred Hollows Foundation created. It focuses on treating and preventing blindness and other vision problems.

**1993:** Fred Hollows passes away on February 10 at the age of 63 in Sydney, Australia.