



The Fred Hollows  
Foundation NZ

# THE FUTURE FUND 2024 PROJECTS

“Leave the world  
a better place.”

Professor Fred Hollows



# THE FUTURE FUND 2024 PROJECTS

# WELCOME

We are firmly focused on ending avoidable blindness and vision impairment in the Pacific.

A future with resilient and sustainable eye care systems that are locally-led. This is at the heart of our long-term strategy.

Our Pacific neighbours have some of the highest rates of avoidable blindness. Significant environmental disasters, coupled with the pandemic disruption have only seen eye care needs increase. In addition, vision loss is projected to increase for various factors such as aging populations and the ongoing rise of diabetes.

Our efforts with our partners have enabled the delivery of well over 1.1 million eye health consultations and 88,000 eye surgeries to date. The impact of these services means people can learn, work, support their families and be active contributing members of their communities.

We know that when someone loses their vision, it is overwhelmingly women and even girls who bear the brunt of the care work – resulting in missed educational and economic opportunities. We also know that women and girls are significantly more likely than men and boys to experience vision loss, in large part due to inequitable access to healthcare.

Although there are many more eye health workers across the Pacific region today, there remains a shortage to meet the eye care needs of the population both now and in the future. We are committed to continuing to work alongside Ministries of Health to grow the eye health workforce to ensure that everyone,

no matter where they live can access quality eye care. This is at the very heart of our organisation, and central to Fred's ethos.

An ongoing focus for us is taking a holistic approach to strengthening health systems. This means we don't look at the eye care workforce and services in isolation – but also everything else that impacts on and enables eye care services; from medicines, equipment, and data, to health management, funding, and leadership.

A central challenge is limited eye health data and information, meaning Pacific governments cannot plan for the projected increases in eye disease. Alongside the University of Auckland and Pacific governments, we are undertaking the 'State of Eye Health in the Pacific' research programme to help generate this vital data.

Your investment in the Future Fund directly provides the resources our Pacific teams need to continue to develop the local eye care workforce whilst also strengthening health systems to restore sight. This will change the lives of thousands of people for many years to come. We are deeply grateful for your generous support.

**Thank you.**



**Dr Audrey Aumua**  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Fred Hollows  
Foundation NZ



# MAKING A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE

Major gifts can make a life-changing difference to people living with avoidable blindness and vision impairment. Significant donations allow The Foundation to fund extensive projects and initiatives including essential equipment, training eye care specialists, outreaches to remote communities and much needed research.



## Tonga's new eye care van

An eye screening van was generously funded by one of our major donors, Pat Pettit. We are so grateful for her kindness, which has allowed the eye care team in Tonga to provide quality eye care services in remote and disadvantaged communities.

## Meet Pat

*“My sight is the sense which I most value - to see the smiles on the faces of my children and friends, to interact with my precious nine grandchildren and watch them growing, developing and achieving goals. It distresses me greatly that there are people in this world who are needlessly blind or with restricted vision.*

*I have long admired the work achieved by The Foundation, providing much-needed facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of eye conditions. I feel honoured to be able to facilitate the provision of eye care to outlying areas of Tonga by funding a van for this purpose.”*

We are so grateful to have a remarkable community of donors, like Pat, who wish to make a significant contribution and care about our vision and work in the Pacific as much as we do.



Pat Pettit with her family



The Pacific Eye Institute, Suva.

The Foundation assists the Ministry of Health and Medical Services of Fiji, through the Pacific Eye Institute based in Suva, to deliver comprehensive eye care services to tens of thousands of Fijians each year.

However, there is still high unmet demand for eye surgery, diabetes eye disease treatment, and refractive and optical services in the Western and Northern divisions of Viti Levu, Fiji's largest and most populated island.

The three most common causes of blindness and vision impairment in Fiji are expected to be cataract, refractive error and diabetes eye disease.

- Cataracts cause approximately 70% of blindness in Fiji, affecting over 16,000 Fijians, yet sight can be restored by a short 20-minute operation.
- Two-thirds of all vision impairment in Fiji is caused by refractive error, which is a basic eye condition that can be easily remedied with a pair of spectacles.

- Fiji has one of the highest prevalence rates of diabetes in the world, affecting approximately 30% of all Fijians. Diabetes eye disease is expected to develop in approximately 35% of patients with diabetes and can lead to blindness if untreated. Crucially, vision loss from diabetes is irreversible and because diabetes eye disease is initially asymptomatic, many people are not aware of their condition. Therefore, screening and early intervention through outreach services are critical to increasing the likelihood of preventing vision loss from diabetes eye disease.

## Training the workforce

The Pacific Eye Institute partners with Fiji National University to deliver eye care training for the regional workforce.

In 2024, we have a record number of doctor and nurse students studying at the Pacific Eye Institute who will then be able to return to their communities across the Pacific and provide valuable eye care services.

### 2024 Eye Nurse and Doctor students

	Fiji	Tonga	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu	Tuvalu	Cook Islands	Timor Leste	Total
Eye Nurse students	2	2	2	2	1	1		10
Eye Doctor students	3		1	2	1		1	8

## Significant Project

# State of Eye Health Research Project

The Foundation has commenced the State of Eye Health research programme, in partnership with the University of Auckland. This programme supports our partner countries to gather the data they require to strengthen their eye health systems, using tools such as the Rapid Assessment of Avoidable Blindness (RAAB) national survey, which assesses the prevalence of blindness and vision impairment in their country.

Developed by the World Health Organization, the RAAB survey involves eye doctors and nurses travelling across an entire country collecting prevalence data on cataract, refractive error, and diabetes eye disease.

Anyone that is identified with an eye condition is referred to a clinic for further care. Throughout the process, the survey teams also raise awareness about eye health and services available, including providing information about conditions such as diabetes and how it can lead to blindness if not effectively managed.



## FUNDING REQUIRED - FIJI

<b>CLINICS</b>	Pacific Eye Institute - Running costs per week	\$16,585
	Mobile Eye Clinic - Running costs per week	\$8,795
	Diabetes Eye Clinic - Running costs per week	\$4,735
	Uniforms and scrubs	\$6,180
	Teaching equipment and books	\$7,500
<b>NURSE TRAINING</b>	Post Graduate Diploma in Eyecare (PGDEC) students	\$34,800 each
<b>DOCTOR TRAINING</b>	Post Graduate Diploma in Ophthalmology (PGDO) students	\$36,000 each
	Master of Medicine in Ophthalmology (MMed) students	\$31,300 each
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	Novum Eye Stretcher	\$14,285
	Oxyviva	\$13,830
	Cardiac Monitor	\$3,800
<b>RESEARCH</b>	Rapid Assessment of Avoidable Blindness survey	\$250,000

# PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Architectural drawing of the PNG Centre for Eye Health scheduled to commence late 2024.

## Significant Project

### **PNG Centre for Eye Health in Port Moresby**

Our aim is to build a sustainable eye care workforce, deliver quality eye care services and foster strong national and regional eye health leadership, coordination and planning.

Central to achieving these outcomes is the construction of the PNG Centre for Eye Health which will provide quality training and on-going support for more eye doctors and nurses, and specialised eye care services alongside Port Moresby Hospital.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) has one of the highest rates of avoidable blindness and vision impairment in the world, and the highest in the Pacific.

Deteriorating health infrastructure, limited availability of medical supplies, and insufficient health workers are significant ongoing challenges to the delivery of basic eye health services. PNG currently has 12 active eye doctors, when at least 10 times this number of eye doctors are needed to respond to these enormous eye care challenges.

The Foundation has therefore committed to ramping up its investments in PNG, alongside efforts from the PNG and NZ governments, The Fred Hollows Foundation Australia and the NZ public.



## Eye Doctor and Nurse Training

In 2024, there are a record number of eye doctor and nurse students enrolled to train in PNG:

- 12 Advanced Diploma in Eye Care students at Divine Word University, Madang.
- 5 Post Graduate Diploma in Ophthalmology students at University of PNG.
- 2 Master of Medicine students at University of PNG.

Meet 75-year-old Louro from Papua New Guinea. A skilled painter and woodcutter, Louro’s life took a turn in 2021 when an accident at work led to a cataract, impairing his vision.

The Outreach Team arrived in Kerema, the capital of Gulf Province, near where Louro lives. This was the first time our Outreach Team had travelled to this area, which due to its geographical isolation, lack of facilities, and a shortage of trained medical personnel, normally has very limited access to eye care.

They were able to perform life-changing eye surgery on Louro so he could see clearly again. Overjoyed, Louro expressed his gratitude: “Thank you! To the doctors and to all of you!”



## FUNDING REQUIRED - PNG

<b>CLINIC</b>	Madang Eye Clinic - running costs per week	\$9,440
<b>NURSE TRAINING</b>	Advanced Diploma in Eye care students	\$27,900 each
<b>DOCTOR TRAINING</b>	Post Graduate Diploma in Ophthalmology students	\$69,265 each
	Master of Medicine in Ophthalmology students	\$67,283 each
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	Teaching equipment and books	\$3,200
	Accutome A Scan	\$11,250
	2 x 90D Lens	\$1,030
	2 x Algerbrush	\$900
	Bipolar Cautery Machine	\$850

# SOLOMON ISLANDS



Solomon Islands is home to just over 700,000 people, with many living in rural villages and maintaining subsistence livelihoods. Only one-third of the country’s 900 islands are populated, with its largest city, Honiara, home to around 80,000 people.

The challenges of delivering health care in Solomon Islands reflect those across other nations in the Pacific region. With low spending on health, low ratios of doctors and nurses to population, poor health infrastructure, environmental vulnerability, and geography that isolates much of the population from health services, it can be extremely difficult to receive essential health care.

All eye doctors, and many of the eye nurses, that received support from The Foundation during their training, are based at the Regional Eye Centre, Honiara, established in 2015. The Regional Eye Centre is off-the-grid, producing energy through its solar panels.



**Dr Pius Singeia** is one of the incredible eye doctors our donors have helped support through training.

Like many in his field, Dr Pius was drawn to eye care by the profound difference it can make in people’s lives. This dream became a reality when in 2021 he was offered a scholarship to study a Postgraduate Diploma in Ophthalmology at Fiji National University, supported by the Pacific Eye Institute. Since graduating last year, Dr. Pius is now back home in Honiara, doing exactly what he hoped for – helping people in his community regain their sight. As he says,

*“When you treat a patient who was really blind, and afterward they can see, and they smile when they can see somebody who they have never seen before, it gives me encouragement to continue working in eye care, to go out on outreaches and save people’s sight.”*

## FUNDING REQUIRED - SOLOMON ISLANDS

<b>OUTREACH</b>	One eye care team to a remote village	\$5,900
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	4 x Algerbrush	\$1,800
	3 x Blood pressure machines	\$1,980
	7 x Stethoscopes	\$1,120



# SAMOA



Samoa has a population of over 200,000 people across four islands, with the largest island, Upolu, home to nearly 75% of the population.

There are currently a total of 14 active eye nurses and one eye doctor in Samoa, who graduated from Fiji National University with a Master of Medicine in Ophthalmology in 2016, supported by the Pacific Eye Institute.

In Samoa, cataract is still expected to be the leading cause of blindness, in addition to diabetes eye disease and refractive error.

With support from The Foundation, the government is planning a Rapid Assessment of Avoidable Blindness survey in 2024. The survey will cover approximately 5,000 patients, who will be treated or referred for further care. This will provide valuable information to assist with planning and decision-making about which eye care resources to target in which areas.

## FUNDING REQUIRED - SAMOA

<b>RESEARCH</b>	Rapid Assessment of Avoidable Blindness survey (part funded)	\$100,000
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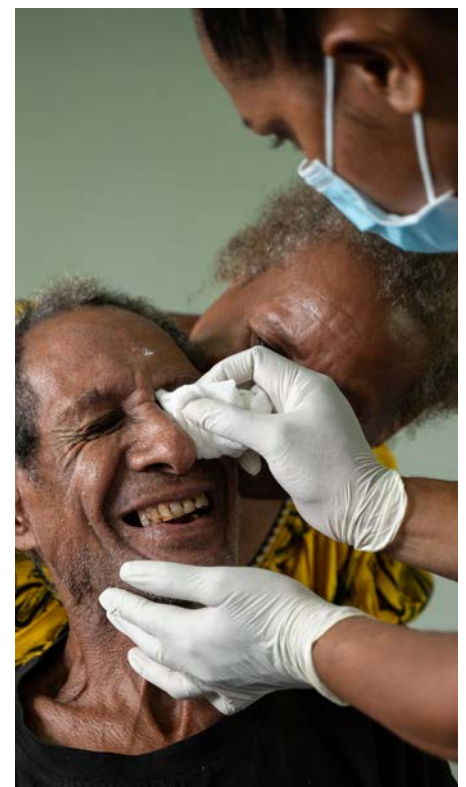
Good vision can help children to participate in education, learn, and reach their full potential across their lives. Spectacles can reduce the likelihood of a student failing a class by 44%.



In the world's poorest countries, supporting eye health services stimulates the broader economy, while bringing life-changing benefits to individuals and their carers. Globally, every \$1 USD invested in cataract treatment delivers an economic return of \$20.50. And in PNG, every \$1 USD invested in cataract treatment delivers an economic return of \$29.50.\*



While there have been limited studies on the prevalence of diabetes eye disease in the Pacific, it has been estimated that in some Pacific countries, up to 69% of people with diabetes presenting at the clinics, have a form of diabetes eye disease. This is more than double the global rate.



Vision loss costs the global economy \$410 billion every year in lost productivity.



\*Hennessy, J and Sweeny, K 2023, Transforming Lives: An Investment Case for Eye Health, The Fred Hollows Foundation, Melbourne Australia.



“I can see clearly!  
I can go back to diving!”

Rupeni

Rupeni is a devoted husband and father of six from Fiji. Due to bi-lateral cataracts, **Rupeni was going blind.**

Losing his sight in both eyes meant that Rupeni had to give up work and needed a constant companion to guide him around. Thankfully, he had the support of his wife and four of his children who lived with him. They would help him around the house and read his bible to him so he could continue to preach at church on Sundays.

Before Rupeni lost his sight, he worked as a diving plumber, specialising in underwater plumbing. He would connect water pipes from the mainland to holiday resorts. When his vision began to deteriorate, he could no longer see clearly underwater and lost his job.

Since then, Rupeni worked hard on the farm to try and provide food and income for his family. Fish is also a main source of food for many, but Rupeni could only go fishing at night because the brightness during the day would hurt his eyes. All of this was such a struggle for Rupeni, so his children would go with him to be his eyes.

Rupeni hoped for the day he would see clearly.

As his sight worsened, Rupeni and his wife went to seek help at Ba Hospital. There they referred him to the Mobile Eye Clinic (MEC). Rupeni was overjoyed to learn that there was a MEC visit

planned in Ba and that he would finally have his sight restored.

On the day of his surgery, Rupeni met with the Outreach Team which included Foundation-trained Dr Mundi Qoqonokana, who graduated in 2009, and Dr Epili Navel, who was also offered a scholarship through The Foundation in 2019.

A few days after Rupeni's surgery, our team met with him to see how he was doing. Both Rupeni and his wife were so happy. The surgery had been a great success.

Rupeni is looking forward to returning to work and to reading his bible again. He also plans to inform his community of the eye care services that exist in Fiji. He wants them to know of his life-changing experience and hopes to encourage people to access this much-needed eye care and receive the incredible gift of sight too.

**This is what the power of a donation can do. It helps us to train more eye care specialists in the Pacific, so they can return to their communities and ensure that high-quality and affordable eye care is accessible to everyone.**



If you are interested in finding out more about any of these initiatives, please indicate your interest on the enclosed reply form or contact Stephne Vaughan directly on **021 460 196** or email **[svaughan@hollows.nz](mailto:svaughan@hollows.nz)**