



The Fred Hollows
Foundation NZ

YOUR VISION

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2019



Message from **Andrew Bell**

We are immensely proud of the eye care specialists who graduate from our courses and we take every opportunity to speak of the amazing work that they do. And rightly so. They are super skilled and talented doctors and nurses who perform ‘micro-surgery in the jungle’. The work they do is the only way to eliminate avoidable blindness in a sustainable way in the Pacific.

In 2018, we had 15 graduates from our Pacific Eye Institute, leading to the first permanent eye doctor in Vanuatu and Tonga. I am proud to say this means all seven countries where we work now have full-time local eye doctors. This is testament to the tremendous effort of The Foundation, which couldn't have been achieved without our donors. Not even the wealthiest people just give their money away. It must be a cause that people can believe in.

Donations are as important to eliminating avoidable blindness as a clinician with a slit-lamp examining a patient. In fact, it is often the generous donors who have provided the slit-lamp in the first place.



Being able to fund and undertake outreaches and provide expensive equipment to remote locations; to tackle diabetes and to not shrink from the challenge that is Papua New Guinea; to be able to see fresh opportunities for advocacy and coalitions and to build impressive infrastructure that sets the standard – all takes time, funding, careful planning and a good mix of patience and tenacity. It is an essential part of the huge engine room of massive energy, vitality and skill that is The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ! It's an organisation I am proud to be part of and one that I hope Kiwis are proud to support.

Recently I reminded the graduates that we didn't train them to stay at the Pacific Eye Institute in Fiji. We trained them to join the great wave of graduates from previous years to provide eye care leadership in their home country and hospital. I also assured them that they don't go out alone. Our staff and our donors are with them every step of the way. Together, all the staff and our generous donors are keeping Fred's vision of a world where no one is needlessly blind, alive.

What's happening in the community

Radius Care

Recently we have partnered with Radius Care, a specialist health and aged care provider for elderly and disabled New Zealanders. Within their 22 communities, Radius Care will raise money for The Foundation. We're really looking forward to working with such a great organisation and to support their fundraising efforts – thank you Radius Care.

The Fred Hollows Humanity Awards

This July we plan to launch The Fred Hollows Humanity Awards. These awards continue Fred's legacy by recognising children in their final year of Primary or Intermediate school who are making a positive difference in their community. Celebrating children who show compassion, integrity and kindness in their lives, just as Fred did. Principals, teachers, parents and members of the community can all nominate.

Nominations will open in July, so keep a look out.

Throughout the Pacific

Thanks to the support from our donors, The Foundation has made a huge impact in 2018:



97,981 patient consultations to detect eye conditions have been carried out.



6,583 sight-saving surgeries have been performed.



15 Pacific eye doctors and nurses have graduated.



1 eye clinic in Vanuatu has been rebuilt.



All 7 countries where we work now have **full-time local eye doctors**.



114 eye nurses have been upskilled in diabetes eye care.



1-on-1 support to nurses across 7 countries has been provided.

Congratulations to the Pacific Eye Institute

2018 GRADUATE



DR DUKE MATAKA

Dr Duke graduated at the end of 2018 and returned to Tonga as a fully qualified eye doctor.

“Without the Fred Hollows’ scholarship, I would still be a Medical Officer, but they sponsored me and sent me to Fiji to train as an eye doctor. We owe a lot to The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ and the donors. They have been helping a lot, training and putting full-time eye doctors in islands across the Pacific.”

In December 2018, 15 eye doctors and nurses graduated from Fiji’s Pacific Eye Institute. It was a very proud moment for the students, lecturers and The Foundation.

The adventure for these 15 new graduates has just begun – they have now joined the 275 graduates from previous years in an incredible revolution of eye care that is taking place around the Pacific.

This revolution is due in no small part to the Pacific Eye Institute, which not only offers eye care training, but is a significant provider of eye care services in Fiji and in outreach locations across the Pacific. This has led to Pacific Eye Institute performing over 22,000 sight-saving surgeries.

Vinaka Vakalevu to all those who have made this possible!

Sometimes, all it takes is a pair of glasses

Globally, uncorrected refractive error is the main cause of visual impairment. Most people can see again with a correctly-prescribed pair of glasses. In fact, refractive error is responsible for 43 per cent of visual impairment globally.

We train our eye doctors and eye nurses to treat refractive error and, through our Pacific clinics and surgical outreach teams, we distribute ready-made glasses, with over 11,608 patients receiving spectacles in 2018 alone.

Pratima is one of these patients. Recently, she visited our Pacific Eye Institute in Fiji to have her eyes checked, she told us she has had blurred vision since 2010.

The results of her eye test showed all she

needed was a pair of glasses to change her life. “I took the bus here by myself, which was difficult, but I am happy now because I can see clearly. The glasses help a lot.”

Refractive error can often stop people from going to work, doing their chores and leaving their homes by themselves.

With your support we’ll continue to provide glasses across the Pacific nations, helping more people to see.



Pratima told us she has had blurred vision since 2010. All she needed was a pair of glasses.

If you would like to donate pair of glasses, please send them to the Lions Club:

Eyeglasses for Recycling by the Papakura Lions Club, C/- Selwyn Homestead, 21 Youngs Rd, Papakura 2110

Vanuatu National Eye Centre is now open!

Thanks to your ongoing support, we're delighted to announce that the new Vanuatu National Eye Centre in Port Vila is now open, following a \$2.5 million upgrade and expansion of the previous centre.

The upgraded eye centre, combined with the recent return of Dr Johnson Kasso, a Foundation-trained eye doctor, will go a long way to increasing Vanuatu's eye surgery capacity from 200 to 800 per year, which will meet the country's needs as estimated by the World Health Organization.

It also means the escalating number of diabetes eye care patients in Vanuatu will be able to receive better treatment.

The NZ Herald highlighted The Foundation in week-long series raising money for the Vanuatu National Eye Centre. The stories featured people whose lives have been affected by the dramatic rise in diabetes-related blindness in the Pacific. This led the New Zealand public to donate over \$155,700. The money was spent on an eye camera, computers, electronic eye charts and building costs for the eye centre.



Official opening by the Vanuatu Minister of Health, the Honourable Norris Jack Kalmet looked on by Trustee Debbie Sorensen.



"Thank you to The Fred Hollows Foundation for this new clinic. I am very happy that I and other patients will be able to use the facilities."

CLERENCE

Last year we shared a story with you about 22 year old Clarence.

Clarence has suffered from diabetes since she was a baby. As is often the case in Vanuatu, her condition was not diagnosed for many years. She has been continuously affected by infections for which she has not always been able to afford antibiotics. Amongst the consequences have been two amputations to remove her toes on both feet.

She also has dense cataracts, leaving her with seriously impaired vision. This is another symptom of her diabetes. Under-treated, her diabetes has led to a series of complications which has led to infections. Her cataract operations have been cancelled four times

because of skin infections on her face, and with an outreach only once a year, this means Clarence has been waiting for a long time.

Despite the setback, she smiles still and says she is "happy tumas" (very happy) to even be given the chance to have eye surgery.

There is a reason for hope...

In February 2019, Clarence was the first patient at the new Vanuatu National Eye Centre and the country's first permanent eye doctor, Dr Kasso, operated on her. Clarence can now see properly for the first time in years.

As Dr Kasso checked Clarence's vision she shouted, "I kiln I pitim kiln!" [More than clear!]. It was a truly amazing moment for Dr Kasso and the nurses who witnessed the transformation.

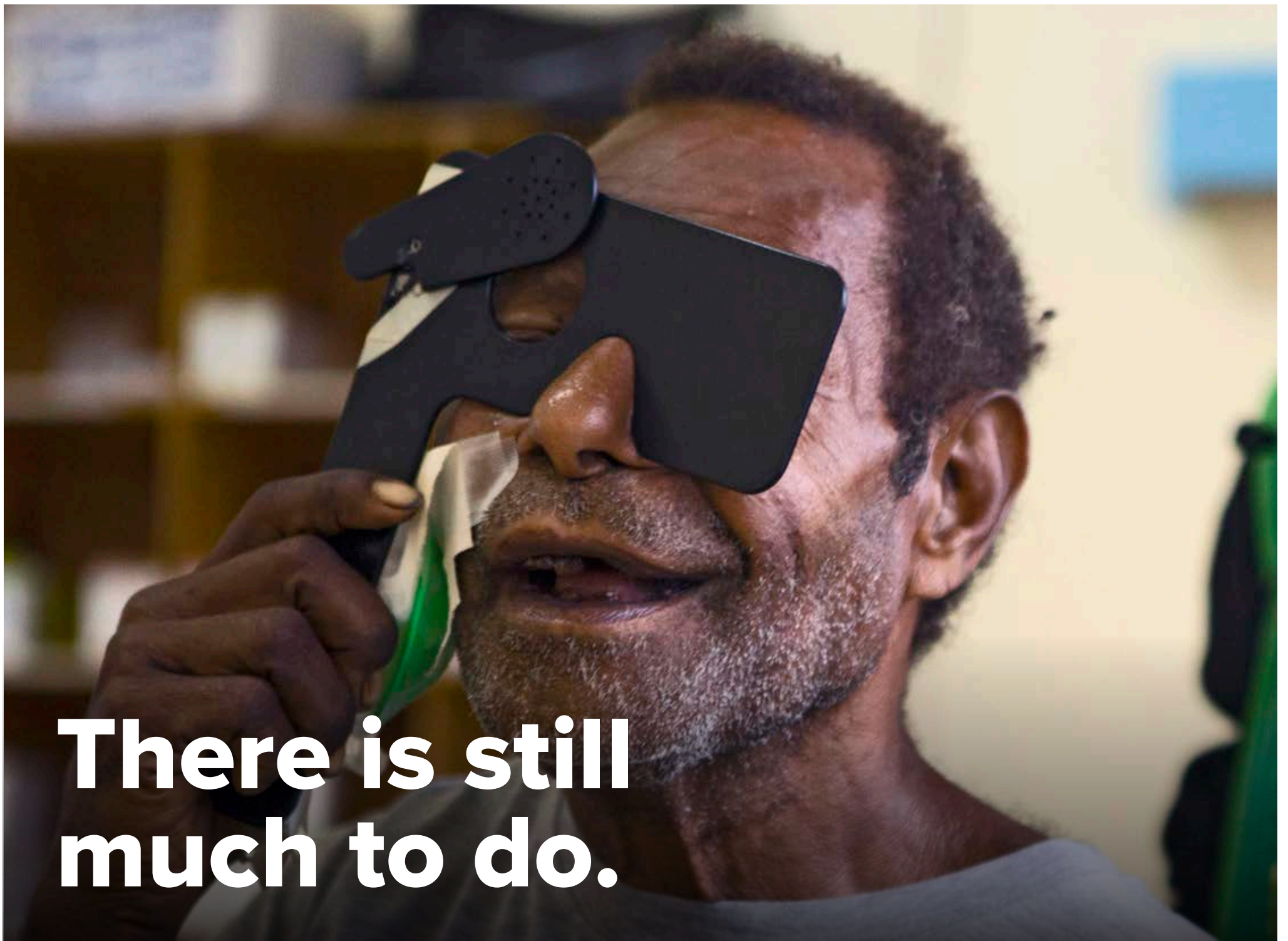
"We are proud to have this facility in place. I want to make sure that Fred Hollows' vision for eye care is being delivered to the people of Vanuatu.

To the generous donors from New Zealand, I would like to say thank you very much for your kind hearts."

DR JOHNSON KASSO



You can read the stories covered by the NZ Herald and watch their videos by visiting our website at: hollows.org.nz/herald-series.



There is still much to do.

We are working extremely hard as an organisation to do ourselves out of a job. But we are not there yet.

Looking forward, our next biggest challenge is Papua New Guinea. The eye health challenges in Papua New Guinea are immense and complex. With just 18 per cent of its population occupying urban areas and close to 40 per cent living below the international poverty line, it is of little surprise that the country has the highest

rate of blindness in the Pacific. We can't address this alone and are working hard to align interested parties in a sustainable solution for Papua New Guinea.

In addition to this, we will keep running our Mobile Eye Clinic to remote parts of Fiji, supporting our existing and newly trained workforce of eye care specialists and continue providing sustainable eye care for people in the Pacific, through training local doctors, nurses and health care workers.

In 2019 we aren't holding back and we hope you won't either.

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