

The Highlands Foundation Annual Report

2020/2021





**A Message from our
President
and
Donations Coordinator**

Presidents Report

Marie Treloare

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land that we are meeting today. We would like to pay our respect to elders, past, present and emerging and extend that respect to Aboriginal community members with us. We would also like to pay our respect to non-Aboriginal people with us today.

As I consider this year's report, I am distracted by the fact that 2020-2021 has been a year like no other for Australia and our globe with the COVID 19 pandemic challenges that emerged, testing every individual and community's resilience and coping mechanisms.

Rather than wait till the end of this report, I would like to express my great appreciation and respect for our committee members, volunteers and ongoing supporters of the Highlands Foundation's (THF) work. 15 years on and we continue to provide aid to PNG on an annual basis.

As the world's focus and resources were directed to keeping on top of a pandemic, infant and maternal health and public health services in developing countries such as Papua New Guinea continued to struggle with failing and poorly resourced health systems.

The COVID19 pandemic added insult to injury, seeing many community and health worker deaths with little to no facilities to care for them. Reports of overflowing morgues and funeral facilities called upon a task force of local community members and health resources to transport the deceased to their villages rather than waiting for their families to take ownership of this movement. A national shortage of medical grade Oxygen supplies contributed to lives being lost. Supplies of vaccines are depleted, relying on international aid to support vaccination rollout. Hesitancy and scepticism also have played a major role in the vaccination program in PNG, as limited access to trusted scientific information and health education has led to the reliance on TV and social media to inform people's decisions. At this stage approximately 1.2% of the over 9 million population has been fully vaccinated.

We mustn't lose sight that the recent pandemic is not PNG's only and greatest threat. Parallel to this are their existing extremely high rates of maternal/infant mortality rates (the highest in the pacific) due to a shortage of skilled birth attendants, poor facilities and limited access to life saving medical supplies and medications. TB, malaria, HIV and many other communicable and non-communicable diseases continue to harm the health of Papua New Guineans and stretch their limited health resources.

As we all faced our own inconveniences and impacts of heavy lockdowns and changes to our lifestyles in Melbourne as a foundation we continued to follow through with our projects to strengthen an already struggling health system in Papua New Guinea.

As a foundation, we endeavoured to keep our focus and continue to do what we could amidst the restrictions. During the COVID lockdowns Kylie, our Secretary, has worked hard to streamline our Governance to ensure the foundation is able to extend our aid reach and work across PNG with good recording and monitoring. Documentation is vital, allowing for good planning and groundwork on Australian soil and good accountability and reporting from PNG health service recipients.

Fundraising activities were limited during the lockdowns, however gaining registered charity status (ACNC endorsement and Tax Deductible Recipient (TDR) status will enable more opportunities as we recommence movement to plan for more fundraising and submissions for funding in 2022.

Our main focus coming out of lockdown is a membership drive to have more committed volunteers to take part in everyday operations that enable the work of the foundation. At present the work is much but the labourers are few and we are needing to share the workload. The hard work of the committee has ensured the yearly projects are completed however we know we could do more as the need is great all across the remote areas of PNG.

Our fundraising will focus on providing aid in 3 areas:

- Building up depleted and some non-functioning health services in the highlands of Papua New Guinea
- Supporting the upskilling and training of skilled birth attendants and midwives
- Providing Health Worker Kits (HWK) to community health workers undergoing formal obstetrics training
- Provision of Mother and Baby packs and medical supplies to equip health services to provide safe health care

Summary of the areas we are working with

Enga Province, Kompam - Dr David Mills

The packing and sending of a 20ft container filled with essential medical supplies and mother & baby packs destined for Kompam, Enga Province were delayed in the last financial year. The delays in processes and logistics due to COVID increased the usual shipping, transport and customs costs. However, through perseverance and doing what we could around restrictions the container finally was delivered for Dr Mills and his team on the ground to begin the process of unpacking, distributing and putting to good use the contents. We look forward to sharing the photos of the unloading on THF Facebook page and website as they arrive from PNG. One of the major items we were able to send in this container was a *new birthing bed* for women requiring medically assisted births and medical procedures such as perineal suturing. Birthing beds are a highly sought-after commodity in any maternity care service and are rare to find as donated items. They are also quite expensive; however, we were fortunate enough to get a display model at an affordable price. It would be ideal for every health service in PNG to at least have one functioning and safe birthing bed for safe births and maternal wellbeing.

Southern Highlands, Hela Province, Tari - Dr Tana Kiak (TK)

It is evident that currently there are many poorly resourced facilities surrounding Tari in the Hela province. Many of these clinics in Southern Highlands of PNG were at the epicentre of the 2018 earthquakes. These clinics which were the nearest facilities for women and families to give birth and access acute care with skilled birth attendants and health workers were severely damaged and not able to function due to loss of electricity, water, supplies and lack of skilled health care workers.

Dr Kiak reported, that due to the pandemic it has been extremely challenging working here in Hela. However, he has led his team with great compassion and commitment sacrificing being away for months on end from his wife and children in Melbourne.

Although the last container we sent to Hela province was in 2018, the good stewardship of Dr Kiak has made the items last for a long time. The items helped him and his team to set up extra wards to deal with the surge of COVID related patients. The mother and baby (M&B) packs are still being distributed.

A new request has come through from Tari for more M&B packs so we would love your support next year to get onto that. On his very infrequent visits to Melbourne, we were able to load him up with HWK to give to graduates of their upskilling programs. Tari Health Service has requested more HWK and M&B packs as they are making a great difference to their communities.

Eastern Highlands Province, Goroka - Aiva Pikuri, Birth Suite Manager

With our intention to support the upskilling and training of skilled birth attendants and midwives; because we know that is a key to reducing maternal/infant deaths. We know that in PNG the estimated population is close to 9million, with up to 2.2million women of reproductive age.

The situation of midwives in PNG is as follows;

Midwifery Professionals: 765 (93 graduated in 2016 and nurses that have midwifery training is about 677 as of 2019). Australia has 30 000 +.

The training of midwives takes 18 months and costs K36,000.00 (approx. AU\$14,000) This is an inhibitive expense and is paid for from hospital budgets. The challenges for the health system is the low number of midwives in the country (0.8 midwives per 10,000, In Australia: 91.5 per 10 000). PNG needs about 5000 midwives by 2030. We as a foundation will work towards sponsorships for trained Midwives. Sponsorship is the predominant way the PNG population access training as no way would PNG wages support formal education.

In the meantime, while they wait for more midwives to be trained, Aiva and her team are running a 6 month in-service program to upskill Community Health Workers (CHW) in Advanced Maternity Care skills. The training includes antenatal care, complications in pregnancy, physiology changes during labor including care and observations, delivery, postpartum care, obstetric complications, newborn complications, family planning and referrals.

"The program only enrolls CHWs. We started the program in 2018 and this is the 3rd group of graduates we have supported. We graduated 10 CHWs in 2018 and another 10 in 2019. Now in 2021 we have 12 CHWs in the program. The training is full-time. We have classes for 2 hours from Monday to Friday and the students are rostered to work in the ANC clinic, family planning clinic, labor ward, postnatal and gynaecology ward, well women's clinic, SCN and OBS consultation clinic for eight hours for five days and have 2 days off. "

To support Aiva and her graduates we will be aiming to send HW kits for all the graduates. This will require funds for freight and supplies for the Health Worker Kits.

Kavieng – East New Britain -Dr Frank Apamumu

Frank has been connected to THF from the time he came to Australia for his registrar and Obstetrics and Gynaecology training at Sunshine Hospital over 6 years ago. Frank returned to his homeland of PNG and has been another local champion who has great dedication and commitment to his community's health.

Kylie, Ricky, Leslie and myself (THF committee in 2019) had the wonderful experience of visiting Frank and Aiva on our field trip to PNG in 2019. We have maintained links with Frank, who on his trips to Melbourne collected 2 batches of HWKs to give to his graduates of the upskilling program in Kavieng, East New Britain. We will continue to support Dr Frank and his team as the requests arise.

As we enter into a new normal out of COVID restrictions, THF is so grateful to be reconnecting with current and new members and volunteers to move forward with all the projects, fundraising and awareness efforts to work towards healthy families and healthy nations.

Donations Report

Shan Podolakin

The container has at last been collected (6/6/21) and is on its way to Kompam. Hopefully, it will be smooth sailing during these difficult times.

Another year of lockdowns have had a huge impact on us all; work, school, health, travel, jobs, businesses. Births, deaths and marriages have all been affected by Covid19, but most of all we have especially missed sharing time with family and friends.

We were so fortunate between lockdowns to have a couple of packing days. Although numbers were small, it was lovely to see some of our regular volunteers and some new faces. The energy and enthusiasm to complete as many Mum & Bub packs as possible were heartwarming. So to all who attended, please accept a huge thank you. Many of you came with donations that helped complete packs, so please know it is not only your donations but also your gift of time that is much appreciated. Our March packing Day, a late Saturday afternoon event ended with everyone staying on and enjoying supper. A lovely evening. It is because of the generosity of our community that 470+ packs are going to be gifted to the mothers in the Highlands of PNG

Due to continued generosity and hours of work donated by our supporters, another container has been filled with much-needed items for mums and bubs of Enga Province and essential items for the Kompam Hospital.

Thank you to **Williamstown Rotary** for their vital ongoing support. Their generosity covers our shed rental costs at Duosa Rd and covers the costs that grant us access to DIK; allowing us to source many essential hospital items. This year we acquired a much sought after dental chair for the Kompam Hospital dentist. Special thanks to **Hazel** for her delightful company and help at the weekly sorting days, the time flies. Thank you to **John, Steve** and **Nils** who made time to do the heavy work as well as time for essential equipment pickups with the Rotary truck.

Thank you to **Heather** and the members of **Beaumaris Rotary** for their ongoing support and generosity. As a result of successful fundraising we were able to purchase a much-needed Birthing Bed (at a heavily reduced price from AIDACARE). We know that Doctor David at Kompam District Hospital will be very pleased when it arrives.

Thank you to **Maria** and the **Sewing Room Ladies of Warragul Laundry** for the very generous donation of valuable hospital linen. This led to a couple of trips to Warragul to collect. No vans were available for hire, so thank you to my daughter Aleks for her time, not only driving, but along with Hazel, Steve, Anna and myself the linen was all sorted, counted and packed.

Thank you to the members of the **Combined Probus Club of Deer Park**. Dawn and Brian arrive reliably laden with blankets, baby clothes, hats and scarves. A cheque for \$450, raised from the sale of beautiful blankets, was such a bonus to receive from this group. We cannot thank them enough for their commitment, energy and ongoing support.

Thank you to the **Point Cook CWA** evening group for their generous donations, especially **Carmel** for organising the funding of essential items needed to complete the Mother & Baby packs.

Thank you to **Carolyn**, her quilting group and **Brimbank Girl Guides** for their support and generous donations especially the sewing of the packing bags we use to make the M&B Packs, and the completed toiletry kits, they are very much appreciated.

We thank **Cindy** and **St Kilda Mums** for their donations of reusable nappies, items always arrive when most needed and are very much appreciated.

Thank you to **Elaine Price (Friends of Girls)** for her ongoing support through the supplying reusable sanitary kits. Elaine and her team sew and package these fabulous kits. We wish her a comfortable recovery after enduring two knee replacements in the past year.

Thank you to **Viv Speight, CWA international Coordinator** for organising 2 carloads of donations.

A huge thank you to John, Steve, Brian, Rikki and Kylie for using their tetris skills to pack the container.

Just as packing the container was nearing completion, we received 2 generous donations because both donors had heard news reports of the health situation in PNG.

Thank you, to **Sally Doran** and her company, **Infectious Clothing in Queensland** for sending us 4000 N95 masks along with 30 sets of expensive and invaluable scrubs to help support the people of PNG.

We also received a last-minute call from **Melbourne City Mission**, who donated a van full of PPE gear, including face shields, hazard suits, hand wash, masks and gloves. Thank you **Cait and Suzanne** for contacting us because of your concern for the people of PNG during these difficult times.

Kylie and I, fortunately, got to the shed the Sunday before the container was collected, so Kylie could clamber over boxes and fill any voids with the new donations, a truly fully packed container.

I send a huge bouquet of thank yous to Kylie Stanley whose constant support, can do, never complain attitude and guidance has made my position as Donations Coordinator a pleasure.

I look forward to continuing the Wednesday 10:30am - 2pm weekly sorting once conditions allow. So if you have a little time, I invite you to come along and join us for a cup of tea and chat while we sort. In the meantime stay safe.

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Financial Report

Treasurer's Report

Kylie Stanley

Profit and loss Statement	
Income	\$ 1,979.78
Interest	\$ 12.18
Donations	
-Full Membership	\$ 480.00
-Associate Memberships	\$ 150.00
-Give Now	\$ 867.60
-Direct Donors	\$ 470.00
Expenses	\$ 6,832.76
Bank Fees	\$ 4.80
Website	\$ 315.00
Container	
Bed	\$ 5,750.00
Health worker kit items	\$ 762.96
	\$ (4,852.98)
Opening Balance	\$ 25,249.49
Closing balance	\$ 20,396.51
	\$ 4,852.98

Due to the disruptions that lockdowns continued to give to Melbourne, we could not hold our annual fundraiser, due to our presence on GiveNow and the continued support of our regular donors, we were able to bring in some income.

The call-out for Membership covered our administrative costs for the current financial year and possibly the following year. Membership is an important income stream that allows other donations to go directly to our projects.

Our major expenses:

A demonstration birthing bed for Kompam (valued at \$12 000). We used the donation from Beaumaris Rotary (\$5000) to make the purchase. Items for our Health Worker Kits (funds raised and allocated to that project from our previous High Tea). We sent 21 kits to Kompaim.

Please refer to Shan's report to see further information about donations-in-kind that we receive that are invaluable to our successes.

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**Tari Project:
Their Story: How the Highlands
Foundation have supported the
Hela Province**



Dr TK has been a friend of The Highlands Foundation for many years.

The first container that we were to send to Tari began in 2017. We began packing boxes to put into the container bound for Mendi. Eventually, Tari received the full contents of the container due to the work done by Dr. TK to clear the container from customs and have the container delivered high into the Highlands of Hela Province.

September. 2017

The container was stuck in customs for a month. First due to a change of management at Mendi Hospital and then due to the devastating earthquake in PNG in 2018.



March 2018

Dr TK was recognised as an Inspirational Papua New Guinean

<https://www.facebook.com/page/163341684223174/search/?q=tana>

Please click on the link above to watch the video on Facebook to see some of the work he did during the earthquake recovery. Tari was at the epicentre of the 7.5 magnitude earthquake that hit the Highlands of PNG

This Facebook page was started by a local PNG journalist who has found there's a deep well of pride and a hunger for stories about Papua New Guineans who have overcome the difficulties of life in this developing country. The stories highlight how hard work and a positive attitude can transform ordinary Papua New Guineans into leaders, and setbacks into successes.



November. 2018

Great news! The hard work of our volunteers has, at last, seen to our container arriving in Tari (Hela province PNG). This has been achieved despite natural disasters and man-made obstacles.

Dr Tana Kiak presented the contents in an official handover ceremony to the Hela Provincial Health Authority. The HPHA will ensure that the supplies are fairly distributed to the hospital and surrounding health centres.

Receiving the container, was Dr James Kintwa (CEO of the HPHA), Management team, partners & hospital staff.

Thank-you to all who worked hard amidst the frustrations, especially to Dr Kiak for his tireless dedication. A wonderful outcome.



August 2019

Marie met with Dr Tana Kiak during his visit to Australia and learnt that Hela Provincial Health Authority has enrolled 12 community health workers to undertake upskilling in emergency obstetrics and midwifery in a 6 month program. These workers will be trained to go back to remote clinics to attend births.

The Highlands Foundation has committed to providing 12 health worker kits at the completion of the program to present to the participants to enable them to do their work.



October 2019

Today the Hela provincial health authority has given 7 community health workers Highlands Foundation birth kits. The midwifery upskilling they have received enables the graduates to provide labour and birth care & tend to obstetrics emergencies back at rural health facilities.

Dr Kana & the health workers send special thanks to Obstetrician Dr Sylvester Tati and the support from Highlands Foundation.



The impacts of our containers



This morning Dr Tana Kiak delivered much needed medical equipment including wheelchairs, crutches and boxes of assorted supplies to Koroba Hospital.

Hela province was severely affected by the 2018 earthquakes. Other facilities in the region will receive our donations later this week

Family support

With the help of Hela Provincial Health Authority & other donor partners, The Highlands Foundation have assisted the newly opened Family Support Centre in Koroba Hospital. Our support came in the form of basic medical equipment including drip stands, suture materials, pelvic examination instruments & adult scales. We've also provided women's clothing, blankets, bed covers, window curtains & chairs. We wish all the very best the new Family Support Centre, Koroba Hospital!

Well done to Katie (TKs wife) for helping with this initiative.



The impacts of our containers



Emergency Department

Dr Kiak, our man on the ground, reports that a new Accident & Emergency department was opened this week in Tari with the support from The Highlands Foundation. We provided an emergency bed, blankets, curtains, suture instruments, nebulizer machine, IV stand, pillows, emergency books, bed covers and other consumables. Receiving our donations are Nursing staff from ECPNG CHURCH Halogali Health Centre.



Medical supplies

'Tis the season of giving and this week we were able to give a centre in PNG an upgrade on their baby scales, replacing their well-used 1970s set. The scales came with boxes of supplies, care from our generous donors.



Christmas babies, Tari 2018



All received a Christmas gift from the Highlands Foundation

August, 2020

Here are our donations being put to good use on the ground. From Dr Kiak: "Setting up COVID Ward - Thanking Highlands Foundation for the Electrical beds, Linens .. & mattress - It's not standard but at least we can start somewhere. This fight against COVID is everyone's business.. (Masking, Distancing, Hand-washing) Keep safe - God Bless."



September 2020

"Titanic"

Thanking Dr Sylvester Tati (Specialist Obstetrician) for passing out the next 6 CHWS on advanced Midwifery training with the support of HPHA & OSF. Highlands Foundation has also continued its support with Midwifery kits despite the lockdown due to COVID-19. Congratulations to all the graduates: A small event but with greater impact"



July 2021

The Tari container sent in 2018 continues to give because our partners on the ground are great stewards of the supplies by giving to those who really benefit from them. This statement from Dr Tana Kiak " I was very careful who gets it .. mothers who comes very hard to reach places, mothers who are very disadvantaged, grand-multi who we encourage them go completion of family - TBL to prevent birth complications etc .. and special care nursery are the beneficiaries of the bundles.. I have still 1/4 of bundles left ..



November, 2021

Dr Tana Kiak and his staff have set up a pop-up Field Ward ...incase of a surge of patients from the Wave of COVID related illnesses anticipated in the highlands area of Papua New Guinea. The last of the linen sent in the Highlands Foundation container to Tari Hela province is being made to good use.



November 2021

Mother and Baby packs heading out on rural outreach to Kopiago in Hela Province this week with Dr Tana Kiak



IMPACTS

The contributions of each individual that gives to The Highlands Foundation is felt many times over by our recipients in PNG.

We build strong relationships with people on the ground who respect the donations they receive and use them to benefit their community.

Thank you TK for working with us to support the people of Hela Province. You are an inspiration to us all.