

2021 / 2022

# ANNUAL REPORT







*We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional lands of the Ngaruk Willam of the Boon Wurrung language people of the Kulin Nation and acknowledge the traditional owners of other First Nations within this country on which our volunteers live. Sovereignty was never seeded.*





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# UPDATE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



The foundation has wasted no time, post COVID restrictions being eased, to continue delivering much needed aid and support to the poorly resourced health services in remote areas of Papua New Guinea. Although 2020-2021 a global pandemic slowed down our operations, we were able to successfully deliver a jam packed 20ft container to Kompam in the Enga Province. The challenges and obstacles of difficult logistics and poor infrastructure of both Australia and PNG were only heightened during COVID, however through perseverance, patience, problem solving and hard work from both continents a grateful community of staff and health care recipients of the Kompam district are now utilising the medical equipment and mother and baby packs to strengthen their health and services (see Vice President Ann Hallett's report for more detail and photos).

# FOUNDATION GOALS

At the beginning of 2022 as a foundation we committed to 3 aims that required community support and funding:

1. Building and strengthening the maternal and child health care workforce in PNG due to dangerously low numbers. With 0.8% midwives per 10,000 in a population of nearly 9 million **people and a fertility rate of 3.5 per woman, an infant mortality rate of 35.9 per 1000 (Australia 2.8 per 1000) and a maternal mortality rate of 215 per 100,000 (Australia 5 per 100,000) workforce shortage is a major contributing factor of poor maternal and infant health outcomes in PNG.**

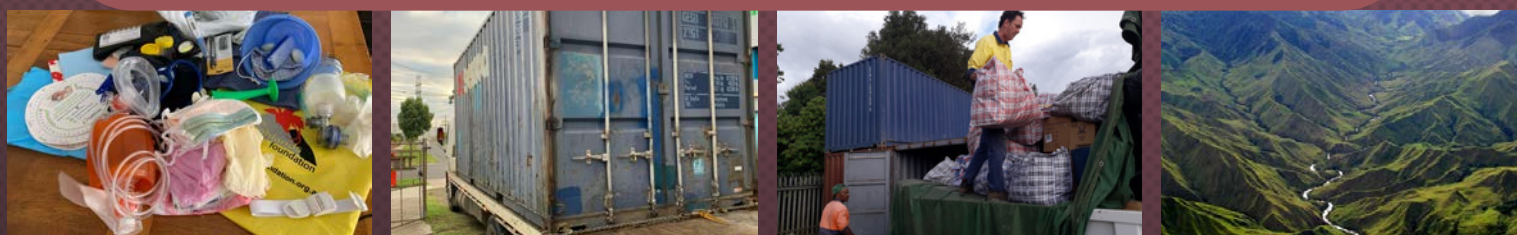
**Progress:** The committee has been researching the avenues available to PNG nurses to upskill and complete a Grad diploma in midwifery in PNG. 4 universities offer the course which is not affordable on local nurses' salaries. THF is working towards raising funds to create scholarships to support training for local nurses to become midwives. World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International confederation of midwives (ICM) support the notion that midwives save lives, hence the foundation is committed to the end goal of all women and families having access to a skilled birth attendant during pregnancy labour, birth and beyond

2. Health worker kits. As we have done for the past 4 years with Kavieng in New Ireland province and Tari in Hela province we will continue to equip current health workers on the ground with essential tools of the trade.

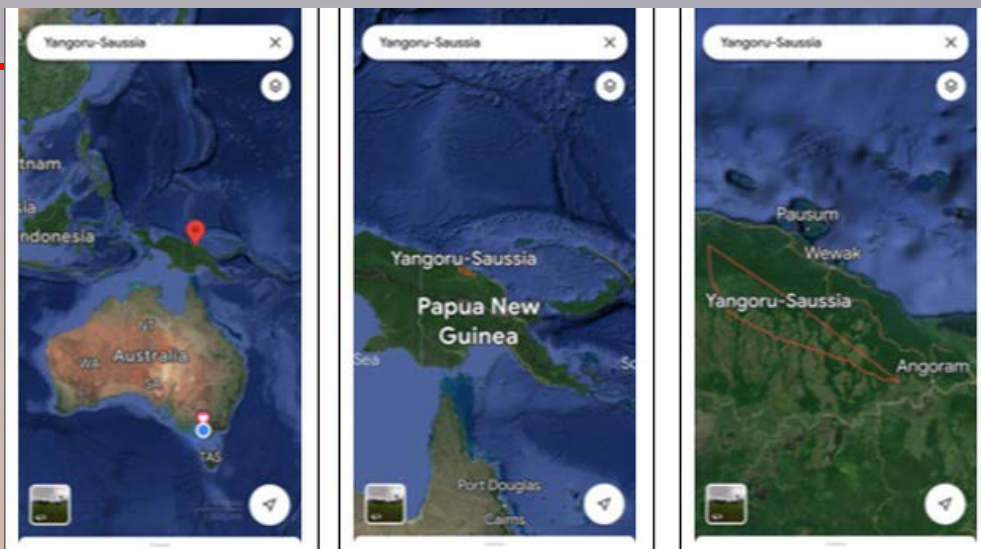
**Progress:** Eastern Highlands Provincial Health Authority (EHPHA) has been running an up-skilling program for Community Health Workers (CHW). Goroka Hospital is the base for this 6-month in-service program to upskill CHW in Advanced Maternity Care Skills. A total of 30 CHWs have graduated representing aid posts and rural and district hospital levels from eight districts of the EH province. 30 complete health worker kits are ready to send via air freight. Quotes are in as we await funding for freight to send these on their way to the deserving recipients who provide care. Supporting the upskilling program is an interim and sustainable way THF can strengthen rural health in PNG while more opportunities for midwifery training eventuates.

3. We are committed to getting essential medical supplies and mother and baby packs to remote areas of PNG where health workers and communities are isolated and poorly resourced. This year we chose another remote and sometimes forgotten area of Papua New Guinea, East Sepik region.

**Progress:** Our initial intention this year was to send a 40ft container with the mindset that given all the work involved in getting a 20ft container there, we might as well send as much as possible to benefit as many as possible. However, after consideration of logistics and poor road and access to health sites in the East Sepik region, we have reverted to the 20ft container due to logistics and size and difficult road conditions in the Sepik region. Our local Champions and leadership on the ground in East Sepik-Yangoru Saussia area are Linda Tano (Midwife) and Glenis Wopmi (Health Extension OfficerODHM). Below is a map of where and how the container and contents will travel.







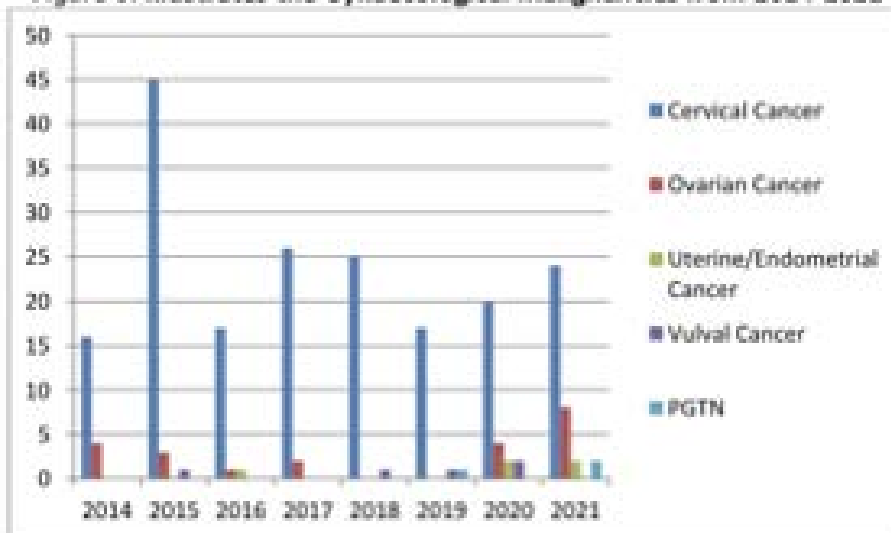
This will involve everything from; delivery of 20ft shipping container to the Altona site in Melbourne; car and truck loads of supplies to the Altona site to pack container; transport of the filled container to the port at Melbourne; shipping to Wewak port PNG; truck transport of container from Wewak to Yangoru-Saussia district which then will be distributed via smaller transport to 4 health centres and 17 Aid posts. This process is not a small task. It requires much labor and funds to complete.

As a foundation we do not shy away from the heavy task ahead of us. We are confident our Australian community who has supported us from the beginning will come on board to see another successful container project arrive and serve a grateful and deserving community in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. Together we can make a difference and strengthen poorly resourced health services in rural PNG and be part of reducing tragically high maternal and infant mortality rates for our neighbouring countries.

More recently the Highlands Foundation committee has agreed to support another health care crisis in PNG. Dr Frank Apamumu from Kavieng in New Ireland Province PNG has reached out to us to support his team to address and support the screening, prevention and treatment of Cervical cancer. As we are aware in Australia through our screening programs, Cervical cancer is treatable if identified early. With the Highlands Foundation's commitment to healthy families and health nations, we are passionate about improving women's health and saving the lives of women who are an integral part of a healthy family. We understand from up to date reports from Dr Apamumu, that there is a rise in new cases since 2014. (see graph below). An average of 20 new cases every year. Only 1-2 cases are identified early enough to be sent to Port Moresby for operative treatment, the rest are too advanced and given the sad news of being inoperable with no radiation therapy available in PNG for over 20 years now. After the poor prognosis, the women are sent back to their villages for to be cared for by relatives as they have no access to palliative health care in their regions. Since 2015 there has been no Cervical cancer screening in Papua New Guinea. Dr Apamumu and his colleagues are serious about addressing this health crisis that is affecting New Ireland province with a population of approximately 225 000. 63 000 of the provinces are women of reproductive age. Of the 63 000 women who will undergo this screening program about approximately 6000 (10%) will be needing treatment. (hrHPV) through Gene Xpert DNA testing. Women who are found POSITIVE will need thermo-ablative cervical treatment with the Cervical Cold Coagulator machine. The female staff of Kavieng have begun their own fundraising for these machines which will cost K31, 498.80 (€8,805.66) to purchase and freight to PNG from Europe manufacturers. The Highlands Foundation will endeavour to direct fund-raising goals to support Kavieng and PNG communities to reduce deaths of women from cervical cancer.



Figure 6: Illustrates the Gynaecological Malignancies from 2014-2021



As the above summary of projects suggest, there is a lot of work to be done to improve the health of our neighbours who do not have the quality of health care as we are privileged to have here in Australia. All this requires funds, volunteers and a collective commitment to seeing families thrive. To this end we invite you and your family and friends to attend our High Tea Fundraising day on the 9th October. Gather your family and friends and book tables of 10 and be part of a great day of treats and finding out more about the projects you will be supporting by your attendance. We also encourage you to become financial members of the foundation and be actively involved in the operations and outreach of the foundation's goals and objectives. Thank you to all our volunteers who journey with us to make it all happen.

Finally, a huge thank you to the hard-working local and interstate THF committee Kylie Stanley (Secretary), Shan Podolakin (Donations Project Manager), Phil Pamb'ai (Treasurer), Ann Hallett (Vice President) and Julia Seitz (Media and Marketing) who as well as juggling their paid work and unpaid family commitments continue to find enough fuel and energy to progress the work of the Highlands Foundation. Look forward to sharing afternoon tea with you at St Johns Toorak on the 9th October. Details can be found on [www.highlandsfoundation.org.au](http://www.highlandsfoundation.org.au) or Phone 0405 409 837 for further details if you can help with planning for the High Tea, become a volunteer for packing days or support the Highlands Foundations projects in any way.

Marie Treloar , President, The Highlands Foundation





# FINANCIALS

## PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT

Income \$ 11,503.02

Interest \$4.04

Donations

-Full Membership \$540.00

-Associate Memberships \$30.00

-Give Now \$2,912.13

-Direct Donors \$5,200.00

-PayPal \$ 803.85

-Grilled\$ 100.00

Container Sale \$1,913.00

**Expenses\$ 10,644.44**

Bank Fees \$ 14.20

Website \$345.00

Container \$7,743.78

Consumables \$330.46

T-shirts \$2,211.00

Opening Balance\$ 20,396.51

Closing balance\$ 21,255.36

## COST OF SENDING A CONTAINER

<b>Container costs:</b>	
<b>Purchase of container:</b> Global Sea and Air Freight - \$2320 (THF) (sold to Kompam Baptist Health Services for \$1910)	
<b>Freight charges in Australia</b> Global Sea and Air Freight Cost of shipping - \$5517.94 (THF)	
<b>Charges for delivery into PNG</b> ANL (shipping company) =\$1094.84 (THF) Swift Agencies ( <u>port / storage/fees</u> ) =\$3374 (THF)	
<b>Customs clearance (GST free)</b> PGK 8754 - Paid by Kompam	
<b>Total cost (inclusive) of contents = \$16 596</b>	

## INCOME \$11 503.02

We received donations from new sources this year - PayPal giving (due to our TDGR status), Give Now continues to provide one-off donations and allows donors to sign up for monthly contributions. The memberships continue to cover our administrative costs. We receive two generous personal donations; Thank you to Julia Seitz for holding a fundraiser for THF on her 21st birthday, raising \$2200), AMAZING!; Thank you to Merrlyn Mernane for donating \$5000 towards our Mother and Baby Pack project. Merrlyn has had close connects with PNG for many years.

## EXPENSES \$10 644.43

As an organisation, we continue to keep our administrative costs low, with the committee absorbing some of these costs and membership covering the balance. This allows all other monies to go directly to our projects. The container costs include the shipping and storage fees of the Kompam container and the purchase of some items to complete the Mother and Baby packs and Health Worker Kits. The purchase of the T-shirt were related to memberships and to be sold

BALANCE

\$21 255.36



## 2022 Annual Report The Highlands Foundation—Kompam Container



Kompam District Hospital, along with ten other health centres and aid posts, is situated deep in the remote north of Papua New Guinea's Enga Province, an area listed as one of the most disadvantaged in PNG. The hospital is 45km from Wabag along a challenging dirt road. Kompam operated on solar, which is generated for 24 hours every day.



Mother and Baby packs were organised by The Highlands Foundation to send in a 20-foot container from Melbourne to Lae. Mother and baby packs encourage women who can move on foot to get closer to a health centre to have their baby. Many women in the highlands of PNG come across significant barriers to seeking health care for birth. PNG women and their infants are estimated to experience the world's second-highest mortality rate. Barriers include substantial delays in seeking higher-level care. PNG women face challenges such as low health literacy, the position of women in society, and access to transportation, when needing to pursue higher-level care. The mother and baby packs contain items that are difficult to obtain in the remote highlands of PNG. Provision of nappies, clothing for mothers, babies and toddlers, soap, toothbrushes, and wraps which are prohibitively expensive for women on a low or no income, provide an incentive to attend supervised birth, despite the above challenges.



In June 2021, a 20-foot container was sent to Kompam from The Highlands Foundation and arrived at Lae. There were significant challenges in getting the container on the water. COVID-19 pandemic delayed the packing and sending of the container. The persistence of our donations manager Shan Podolakin is to be admired. She and a team of faithful volunteers consistently packed the mother and baby packs during the pandemic—packing days were held when able, to ensure that 340 Mother and baby packs were packed and sent. Mother and baby packs, medical equipment, educational material and health worker kits were packed into the container.



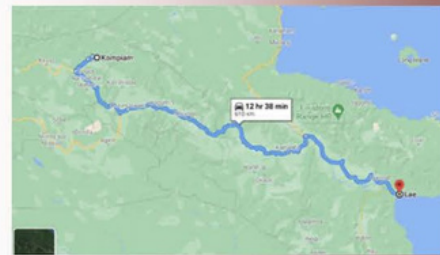
Ann Hallett 2022 Vice President The Highlands Foundation



## 2022 Annual Report The Highlands Foundation—Kompam Container



On arrival to Lae there was a 16-hr truck journey from Lae to Kompam. The container was halted at Mount Hagen. Kompam District hospital had lost one of their two truck drivers from COVID-19; the road conditions were dubious, and the other truck driver was sidelined by tribal fighting. The container's journey halted in Mount Hagen until the Medical Director David Mills had time to move items from the container with their smaller truck. After a period of six months items started to arrive at Kompam District Hospital due to the persistence and commitment of David and his staff PNG side.



"Delivery bed is in place and bundles are being slowly distributed. We have enough for quite awhile I think. Thank you so much for all your hard work. The gear travelled very well. Very little damage - so thank you to those who packed it all so well. Its not easy to get stuff all that way up the bumpy highway with no loss" David Mills.



From the women of Enga Province  
in Kompam District Thank you



Ann Hallett 2022 Vice President The Highlands Foundation



## 2022 Annual Report The Highlands Foundation—Kompam Container



### Training of health staff June 2022 facilitated by equipment in the container

June 15 2022

"Did our first PROMPT style obstetric emergency training about Postpartum Haemorrhage, estimating blood loss. Everyone took to it well, and it was a great learning experience! First of its kind in Kompam (and possibly in PNG)." [Diana Zwiijnenburg](#) GP Obstetrician Kompam District Hospital.



[Diana Zwiijnenburg](#) July 2022

And now just back from a real life reinforcing activity... >1000ml PPH. Well managed by all according to the prescribed recipe .



Ann Hallett 2022 Vice President The Highlands Foundation



## DONATIONS REPORT

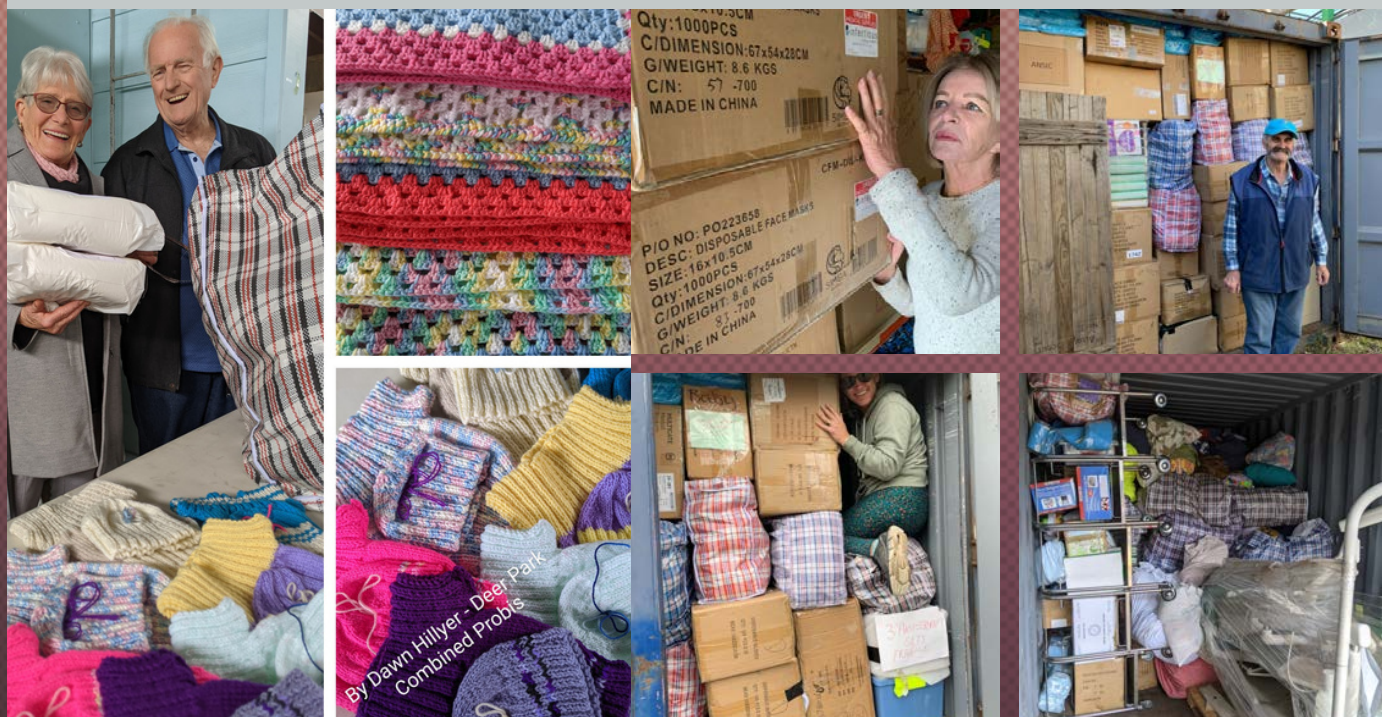
At last, the contents of our 2021 container for Kompiam District Hospital have, after 11 months since departure, reached their destination. Dr David and his small team did an amazing job considering the number of challenges they had to overcome. As the container can only be taken part way, the remaining part of the journey is done by small trucks and this took much longer than expected, hampered unfortunately by driver and road issues.

Sadly two experienced truck drivers died from COVID-19 complications (unfortunately not vaccinated), then tribal fights flared up meaning senior driver and main truck driver could not travel for a time, leaving Dr David to do the first several loads. Then there were road issues, bridges destroyed by tribal infighting, landslides, so trucks couldn't move and then heavy rains making the roads dangerously slippery for the 2WD trucks. Fortunately, Dr David and his team's patience and determination got the job done.

David also commented that all the items in the totally filled container were very well packed, so all donations arrived intact and undamaged. He said, "It is not easy to get stuff all that way up the bumpy highway with no loss - one of the baby bassinets was cracked, but that's all". Well done and thank you to all involved with the packing, you were Tetris wizards.

The Mother and Baby Packs are being distributed to the mothers, we know there will be many smiling faces, as babies are clothed in the gorgeous baby garments and wrapped in the beautiful blankets that have been donated by our many supporters. The Dental chair is in situ and the dentist couldn't be happier.

The much needed Birthing Bed was recently used by Dr Diana, GP Obstetrician at Kompiam when she was doing a practical teaching drill on Post-Partum Haemorrhage with the nursing staff. This was received with enthusiasm and was impactful, as the following day, two emergencies occurred, they were both recognised and well managed. They could not have prayed for more timely teaching drills and better prepared staff. Our donations at work assisting positive outcomes.





Work at "The Shed" in Nth Altona, was affected for a short while due to Victorian Covid restrictions, but once lifted in September, Wednesday sorting days resumed, and we were delighted to have quite a few car loads of donations arrive. the result of people clearing cupboards during lockdown.

We managed to have 2 short packing days this year, November and May. It was lovely to see so many new faces as well as our wonderful regular participants. Just over 100 packs were put together, made possible because of the many donations that arrived on both days. Bags of brand new baby clothes, womens underwear, sanitary pads and womens tops.

Thank you to Dawn and Brian from Deer Park Probis who arrived with a bounty of beautiful baby blankets and small knits made by their dedicated members.

Thank you to St Kilda Mums for their ongoing support.

Thank you, Carmel from Point Cook CWA for the boxes of assorted items.

Thank you, Carolyn from Brimbank Girl guides for the boxes of filled toiletry bags.

A car load of assorted items from Toorak CWA arrived courtesy of Viv, thank you.

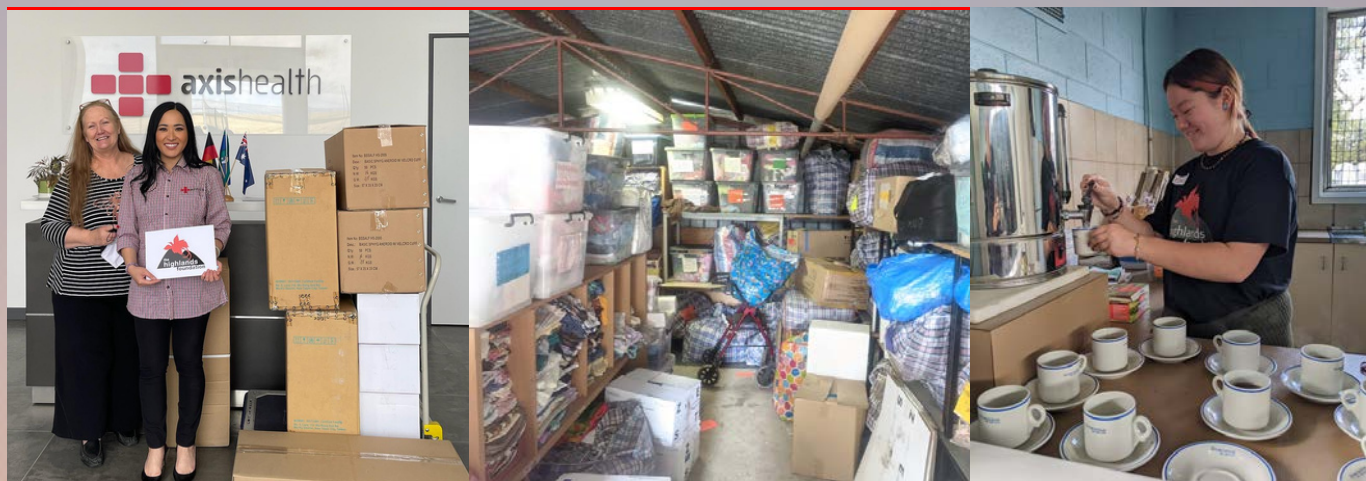
Despite 2 knee replacements Elaine Price (Friends of Girls) has been busy knitting and sewing and has introduced Elizabeth Donohue to the foundation, who has generously donated 220 reusable sanitary kits, these are essential inclusions in our mother packs.

Thank you to Heather and her sewing/knitting circle for your beautiful donation.

To everyone who has been busy knitting and sewing your thoughtful gifts will bring a smile to each mum's face as she opens her bundle. Thank you.







A special thank you for a very generous donation from Dr Merrilyn Murnane (retired OB GYN) who with her husband the late Max Griffiths MBE, has had a connection with PNG for many years. Her wish is for the funds donated to go towards supporting the mother and baby packs project.

This year we have also managed to put together 30 Health Worker Kits destined for graduate midwives and upskilled health workers in Goroka . We hope to air freight these kits once funds are raised.

Axis Health, Dandenong, made it possible to complete these kits, with their generous donation of Forceps, Thermometers, Pen Torches, Paedi Resus packs( always difficult for us to acquire), adult masks and other items that will go into general hospital stock. Thank you to Linda and Karunia for organizing this gift.

Thank you to Julie Wain, SVPH, who kindly arranged the donation of 2 Ventilators and boxes of Circuits.

Thank you to Beaumaris Rotary for your continued support and fundraising , your generous donation goes towards supporting our projects.

We would like to thank all the thoughtful people who have made donations through the Give Now site. We have received support from all over Australia . We receive one-time gifts and gifts from people who donate monthly because of a personal connection to PNG . So special.

A heartwarming surprise gift came from Julia in Western Australia, who in lieu of receiving gifts for her 21st birthday asked her guests to donate to the foundation, so thoughtful.

The Highlands Foundation members send a huge thank you to The Williamstown Rotary members whose continued support grants us use of the storage shed and also allows us access to the Donations in Kind facility. We truly appreciate the Rotary members who have donated their time on packing days, supplied manpower for yard and shed clearing working bees and assisted with the collection of large items with their truck.

A special thank you bouquet to Hazel and Margaret who assist me most Wednesdays at "the shed" and whose company makes for a delightful day, and to Kylie who is always able to assist in times of need.

We encourage anyone who is interested in supporting us to become a member, or come along to one of our Wednesday sorting days for a chat and coffee.







