

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20



## ***Vision***

To take simple and practical steps to strengthen the existing healthcare facilities in Papua New Guinea with the aim of decreasing the infant and maternal mortality and morbidity rates and supporting women's health.

## ***Mission***

To take simple and practical steps to decrease the maternal and infant health complications and deaths following birth by;

1. encouraging women to attend health services for antenatal care and birth (Mother and Baby Packs);
2. equipping birth attendants with life saving equipment (Health Worker Kits) and;
3. supporting Provincial Health Authorities with education support and provision of much needed equipment and supplies.

# President's Annual Report



As I write this report I reflect on the beginning of the highlands foundation 16 years ago and what inspired me to form a foundation. Mothers and babies I had the honour of assisting in birth and believing in equal distribution of resources for ALL. The notion that healthy families make healthy nations has guided our work. The relationships formed with health workers and communities in different provinces of PNG have been instrumental in the longevity of this foundation. However, all that we have

achieved has been due to our committee members' commitment and hard work and our volunteers' selfless time and efforts. When our personal lives become hectic, and we grow weary of doing this labour of love, I am reminded that maternal and infant mortality rates are still at tragically high levels in Papua New Guinea. Hence an amazing team and I continue to do what we can to make a difference.

The last year has been quite full for us as a foundation and personally. We have continued to have a strong relationship with our partners Williamstown Rotary and Beaumaris Rotary who have supported us financially and physically in recent years and continue to do so. Hazel Ackland from Williamstown Rotary has been amazing raising large funds with her Christmas raffles raising over \$3000. Heather Chisholm had a very influential presidential year in raising over \$5000 for the foundation with Beaumaris Rotary. Her passion and commitment for the Highlands Foundation carried on to the new president's wife and the organisation has also committed their fundraising year to the foundation.

The highlight of this year was a field trip to 3 provinces of Papua New Guinea for 4 committee members. Leslie Lobo (Treasurer), Ricky Kirori (Cultural Liaison), Kylie Stanley (Secretary) and myself had a very productive time in Eastern Highlands Province - Goroka General Hospital meeting with executives and staff and reconnecting with the origins of our foundation. Kylie and I also supported women in labour and caught a few babies named after us as a sign of gratitude. Great things are happening in the Eastern Highlands with a brand new hospital and some well-equipped Community Health Centres. We also had the opportunity to go rural and visit one of these centres (they are ambitious). The roads, as usual, were not the smoothest ride, but with an experienced driver, we made a safe trip while enjoying the sights of the heart of the highlands.

Our next destination was the beautiful coastal town of Kavieng in New Ireland. Here we met with Dr Frank Apamumu and toured the quite run down but very functioning hospital with some new buildings going up. However, due to a lack of funding progress was slow. After a bit of R&R, we headed to the capital Port Moresby, where we connected with the people of Boira Village who hosted a lovely gathering by the sea. We discussed the community's challenges in accessing Health Care and Education, especially among young women. Great networks were made, and we experienced true PNG warmth and hospitality. This was Kylie and Leslie's first trip to PNG, and hence they have many photos which I'm sure they would be delighted to show anyone and tell the stories behind them. This trip was important to make a physical connection and reconnection to the cause of the foundation.

Due to many challenges of the year, our fundraising activities did not take flight. However, we have remained financially afloat to make the next container delivery possible in the New Year.

The past year also saw The Highlands Foundation move into a new working space in a shed at Scout Hall in Dousa Road Altona. After moving all our belongings into a 40ft container and waiting at our old site in Cross Street Footscray for over 4 months, we had to move the 40ft container to Altona and empty the contents into the shed. Return the 40ft container, get a 20ft container delivered to Altona, and begin packing to send to Kompian in Enga Province. Shan and Elaine have been instrumental in organising all our supplies and managing the move very efficiently. Kylie, Shan and Elaine have also had some successful packing days making several mother and baby packs and health worker kits.

Elaine Price has kept us environmentally conscious by ensuring we do not include too much plastic in our packs, replacing disposable sanitary pads with sustainable and environmentally safe sanitary packs made from cloth. Elaine's charity "Friends of Girls" has been supported for many years by 1. Envision: who does much of the sewing for the mother and baby packs while Elaine supplies the fabric. 2. Dr Andrew Tucker-Collins St Periodontics has donated several toothbrushes and toothpaste for toddler packs. 3. Elizabeth Donohue sews hundreds of PUL liners for sanitary packs.

The Northern Hospital donated over 30 infant cots on wheels which Collin and his wife Alice tirelessly transported from Epping to Altona in 3 trips finishing after dark.

Kylie and Shan could send completed health worker kits with Dr Tana Kiak back to Tari in the Southern Highlands. They recently sent another batch with Dr Frank Apamumu back to Kavieng for the new Obstetric Emergency Upskilling Program graduates.

Thank you to Sarah our Vice President /Marketing Officer who with her very busy life of being a mum to young ones and completing her Bachelor of Midwifery has maintained our social media and marketing presence.

Kylie has been working on the governance requirements of the foundation. We are very grateful for the talents she has brought to the foundation attending to all the areas that we as a foundation have neglected and lacked the skill to complete. Kylie is one amazing human. Despite her personal issues has powered on to be an extraordinary Secretary.

Thank you for caring and making a difference for mothers and babies in PNG. The Northern Hospital donated over 30 infant cots on wheels which Collin and his wife Alice tirelessly transported from Epping to Altona in 3 trips finishing after dark.

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## Donation Coordinator's Annual Report

Our container sits on-site at Altona waiting to be filled for transport to Kompian, we look forward to this happening once Covid 19 restrictions are lifted. I have contacted Container Traders regarding delays in shipping and informed them we had been affected by restrictions. They were understanding, and we will contact them when ready to transport.

We have had two successful packing days, thank you to all our volunteers who donated their time and efforts to help complete approx 250 of our mum and baby packs on November 3rd and March 7th and a special thank you to Kylie for helping coordinate both days. Also thank you to Ricky and his helpers, who started filling the container on the 7th. Great job, hopefully not too long before filled. Also thank you to Hazel and Elaine for your continued help and support. Look forward to when we can share Wednesdays at the shed again.

I have continued at the shed until recently, working under strict covid 19 guidelines. I would like to thank my husband Walter and Aliesha, Lizzie, Vanessa and Tanya (student midwives from ACU) who have kindly donated their time during these difficult times.

Donations of mother and baby items have managed to be sorted, boxed and labelled. A further 6 boxes of donations are being delivered to my home by generous donors. 20 bags of Medical items have also been sorted, boxed and labelled. All sorting on site has now ceased due to tighter lockdown restrictions.

I would like to thank Elaine Price and her charity, Friends of Girls for continuing to support the foundation with her generous donation of reusable sanitary kits for our mother packs, helping to improve hygiene and infection levels. Also, Elaine introduced me to Envision, an NFP organisation that supports the long-term unemployed by teaching them new skills and they

have generously taken on the difficult task of halving and overlocking the towelling nappies as well as making skirts for our mothers. A thank you letter has been sent.

I have made two successful trips to DIK with Ann Hallett adding to equipment already put aside previously. Surgical equipment, dressings, filing cabinets and wheelchairs, We are on a waiting list for a Birthing Bed on Kompam's wish list. A surprise find was a new Dental chair (not something we would usually be sourcing), but Kompam has a Dentist, who when contacted by Ann was thrilled. These items will be collected once DIK reopens (closed due to restrictions). Also, propose further visits to DIK when time allows. Hopefully, we can coordinate the collection from DIK along with the linen donated by Warrigal Laundry.

Despite our container not yet being sent we are delighted to have fulfilled requests by two doctors visiting from PNG. Dr Frank from Kavieng returned home with 5 Health Worker kits for successful graduates. Dr TK has returned to Hela Province with six health worker kits (for graduate upskilled health workers) and 5 Fetal Dopplers for use in the clinics (making surveillance of fetal heart sounds easier to monitor). Also thanks to the kind donation by Dr Max Cole, Dr TK was gifted 3 stainless steel speculums that were on his wish list. This along with 10 further HW kits, 10 gestational wheels and a few other sundry medical items have also made their way to PNG thanks to Dr TK and his wife Katy, a midwife.

With regard to Health Worker Kits, I am happy to say I have packed a further 25 complete kits and 5 incomplete kits, these were packed at home due to the lockdown (21 kits have already been sent to PNG in 2019/2020). Thanks to funds donated from 2018 High Tea we could purchase the items needed to complete these kits.

Not knowing when restrictions may be lifted, it may be some time before we can all get together to complete packing the container for shipping, until then, everyone, please take care and stay safe.

***Shan***

## Treasurer's Annual Report

<b>Profit and loss Statement</b>	
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$ 8,532.92</b>
Interest	\$ 18.93
Donations	
-Organisations	\$ 8,170.00
-Christmas fundraiser	\$ 240.00
-Give Now	\$ 103.99
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,944.87</b>
Health Worker Kit	\$ 762.96
Website+domain	\$ 315.00
Truck Hire	\$ 406.93
Committee Expenses	\$ 459.98
	<b>+\$ 6,588.05</b>
<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>\$ 18,661.44</b>
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>\$ 25,249.49</b>
	<b>+\$ 6,588.05</b>

Unfortunately, due to personal reasons Elaine was not able to see out her full year as Treasurer. We would like to thank her for all her efforts. Her Friend of Girls projects have benefited The Highlands Foundation through the reusable sanitary kits, women's skirts, toddler shorts and dresses. We have had a challenging year. We had big expectations, but the COVID situation interrupted many plans. Not being able to hold our High Tea was very disappointing. But we received two very generous donations from Beaumaris Rotary and Williamstown Rotary. Both clubs have been strong financial contributors to our Foundation, and we feel very lucky that they continue to send their hard fundraised money our way. They not only offer financial support but also people support.

We were given a donation of Sukin products around Christmas time, so we held a small fundraiser, selling off packs of lovely Sukin Items. This was not as successful as we had hoped, but every dollar counts.

Our Give Now page received a random donation. We have not really pushed this platform, but now that our Governance is on track, our social media presence is our next improvement goal.

We spent some money to purchase items for our health worker kits. This money was donated to the High Tea in 2018. We purchased 20 blood pressure kits, thermometers, headlamps and umbilical clamps. These completed the 31 Health Worker Kits that made their way to PNG and

have allowed us a surplus of ready-to-go kits for the next request. 5 dopplers were also purchased - Dr TK had requested these for use at the Tari Hospital. These also arrived in PNG along with 3 large speculums (that were kindly donated by Dr Max Cole).

A truck was hired to move 20 infant cots donated by the Northern Hospital. This was a big job, and a thank you needs to go out to Ricki and his team of helpers.

The committee expenses related to our trip to PNG. The printing of t-shirts, business cards and other miscellaneous items.

Thankfully we had a successful High Tea in 2018 and were able to purchase our container and begin to fill it. Once restrictions are lifted, we will jump into action and get the container onto the sea.

## Secretary's Annual Report

Since our 2018 AGM and the arrival of our last two containers - one to Tari in Hela Province and one to Maprik District in East Sepik Province we set about planning to send a container to Kompiam Hospital in Enga Province. Things did not go to plan as we were met with the challenging task of needing to move the shed location and difficulty finding suitable storage space, which put us back about 7 months. Also committee members had personal challenges with work, study and life commitments led to some changes to our committee members and finally, COVID-19 has seen us pretty much shut down since April.

We were lucky to squeeze in a couple of packing days at the new shed this year, and Shan was able to run weekly sorting days which means our donations are well organised making packing Mother and Baby packs far more efficient. We also understand the medical supplies we have stored and have 25 Health Worker Kits ready for the next group of Health Workers.

We have spent a lot of time working on our governance documents. We developed a new Constitution that speaks more to our Foundation; we have adopted and updated our list of policies; and created a volunteer handbook and committee pack. These documents' work toward best practices has put us in a great place to gain recognition by the ACNC, to be a registered charity (our application is in). This should allow us to apply for TDGR (Tax Deductible Gift Recipients). This would greatly improve our ability to fundraise and receive larger donations from organisations. We are very excited about this next step in our Foundations journey.

An absolute highlight for me this year was our trip to PNG (my first). It was a whirlwind of a trip - Port Moresby, Goroka, Kavieng, Boera Village and PM again. Most of our time was spent at the Goroka General Hospital. We stayed onsite, living next door to Mummy Sonia (Sonia Van Korowi, Director of Nursing) who has been involved with the Highlands Foundation since we began in 2004 and sharing with Margaret Evans, Infection Prevention and Control Clinical Nurse Consultant from Sydney, who travelled to PNG for the first time 10 years ago with The Highlands Foundation and has returned every year since. My first walk through the hospital was confronting (the smells were overwhelming) but not unexpected. The staff are working with very little, but they are passionate. It was clear to me from the beginning that it is the women in the hospital who really get things done. They are not on the executive, but they are in positions everywhere

else - the new anaesthetist gave the presentation; a woman (at the Grand Rounds) was so emotional, powerful and promising that I felt optimistic about the leadership.

Being the only blond white person walking the streets of Goroka made me a spectacle, but I felt welcomed - everyone said hello! and I was welcomed into Ricky's family (called Aunty from the get-go by the younger children). There was excitement in the street. We arrived on independence day, and the Goroka show brought many people to the town.

Birthing babies was an amazing experience with Marie. She is so loved at the hospital, all the staff were so happy to see her back. Everyone remembered her and clearly respected her. The hospital recognised the Highlands Foundation - the staff loved our t-shirts. Everyone wanted one! It was clear that we have made an impact in the area. Marie is also amazingly skilled. Watching her with the women gave me the confidence to help. At first, I felt quite useless, but once I saw Marie's work and the need in the women's eyes for support, I could do simple things to support the women. They are expected to be very independent - even cleaning up after themselves after birth! Please read the blog on our website where I have written about my experience in more detail.

A meeting with the Executive allowed us to discuss how we can remain engaged with the Eastern Highlands Province. They have recently had a new wing of the hospital building which houses a new labour ward (amongst other wards). The District also has an ambitious plan to roll out 72 new Rural Health Centres staffed with two community health workers and one midwife. We plan to provide a Health Worker Kit to each health worker in these centres (a total of 216 kits). More details to come. A trip to one of these centres was eye-opening. The drive was long and slow, the countryside beautiful and rural, having little infrastructure and subsistence living. The health centre was impressive - too large for the two community health workers (CHW) employed to work in it. It was a perfect example of how Western investment (monies from AusAID were used to build and stock the centre) can be poorly targeted and projects not completely followed through. For example; the sanitiser was not set up (still in the plastic. I was not able to get it to work), and the CHW could not work out how to turn the humidity crib on or work the Oxygen (Marie was able to fix this), the blood glucose machine did not work. The CHW has not been supported in how to keep the centre clean (it was very, very dusty), The medications and consumables were not well sorted (and probably would not be restocked). We left feeling very frustrated.

The Goroka Show was another amazing first. A total overstimulation of the senses; colour, song, dance, culture and pride. I felt so privileged to be a part of such an event. For such a small country there is so much variation. PNG is the most linguistically diverse country in the world (over 700 distinct languages). This is one reason why healthcare delivery is so challenging, along with superstitions and tribal fighting. English is the language of the Educated, most people understand Tok Pisin (a Pidgin language) and Motu, but many converse in their tribal language.

We then headed to Kavieng, in New Ireland (the northern tip of the most easterly island in PNG). This place allowed for a little R&R but more discussions about life's challenges in PNG. Dr Frank showed us around the hospital (a very basic coastal hospital). They have some of the highest maternal mortality here in the world due to their isolation.

Our final stop was Boera Village (1 hour out from Port Moresby) for a large family Mumu and gathering. About 80 people attended. I talked to the family's matriarchs, trying to understand



the community's needs. They needed support for the young women - they needed support to attend health centres for their reproductive health and wellbeing. many young women suffered from reproductive health conditions that were treatable if found early. Things as simple as clean menstrual products would be of benefit.

I hope to be able to present at a High Tea in 2021 and share in more detail the nuances of such a diverse and challenging country.

*Kylie*

## Committee Nominations

All positions are declared vacant

Please see nominations:

President: Marie Trelore

Vice President: Sarah Langford

*Since November 2018 I have enjoyed representing THF as Vice President and would like to continue serving in this role. I am passionate about maternal and infant morbidity and mortality and completed my Bachelor of Midwifery earlier this month. During my time as VP I have made myself a valuable team member by:*

- supporting the secretary and president in their roles,*
- helping craft the new constitution/government documents,*
- attending committee meetings, sourcing donation items,*
- volunteering at packing days and*
- helping new volunteers learn the ropes on packing days.*

*Since May 2017 I have also endeavoured to raise THF's public profile and attract new donors and volunteers via social media. I created Twitter, and Instagram accounts for THF and have increased engagement on the FB page.*

*I welcome a new volunteer to take on the role of social media and marketing director as I transition into full-time midwifery practice in 2021. I am more than happy to support whoever takes this role next as I see my job as VP focused on supporting all members to achieve THF's vision. SARAH*

Secretary: Kylie Stanley

*I am very proud of the work that has been done around the governance of our Foundation. I feel that I was able to build on the work of previous Committee members who since 2004 have done amazing work to help improve the outcomes for women and babies and in turn communities in PNG. I feel that following my first trip to PNG, I am now better informed and am in a position to lead our Foundation in a direction that will support the infrastructure in PNG set up to support women during pregnancy, childbirth and beyond.*

Donations Coordinator: Shan Podolakin

*I would also like to be considered for continuing my position as donations coordinator. I have very much enjoyed working with old and new volunteers over the last 18 months organising our donations into our new shed at Altona, ready for packing into our container for Kompian. Unfortunately, Covid 19 restrictions have impacted our ability to pack the container, and once restrictions have been lifted, I would like to see this through. I would also like to continue the weekly sorting which seems to have been successful, introducing new midwifery volunteers to the foundation who have been keen workers and are interested in continuing to help.*

Cultural Liaison Officer: Ricki Kiori

General Member: Ann Hallet

*12 months experience in PNG as Director of Nursing @ Kompian District Hospital*

*Registered Nurse/Midwife*

*Master of Public Health*

*Master of International Development*

*Experience in writing governance documents, project plans, policies and procedures.*

Executive Members	Current 19/20	Nominations 20/21
President	Marie Trelore	Marie Trelore
Vice President	Sarah Langford	Sarah Langford
Committee Secretary	Kylie Stanley	Kylie Stanley
Treasurer	Elaine Price	-
Donations Coordinator	Shan Podolakin	Shan Podolakin
Ordinary Members		
Social Media Officer	Sarah Langford	-
Cultural Liaison Officer	Ricki Kioiri	Ricki Kioiri
General Member	-	Ann Hallett

## 2020/21 Membership

Full members: 10

Associate members: 3

Lifetime member: Dr Ian Hoffman. Dr Ian is a founding member of the Highlands Foundation. He was the treasurer for many years and stepped down from active membership in 2017. We want to recognise his work in PNG and thank him for his commitment. He is the reason WE exist. He came home from a working trip to PNG, talked with some midwives (Marie being one) and shared his stories. A trip was planned in 2004, and The Highlands Foundation began on their return. We are proud to continue in his footsteps. We often talk about "what Ian would say!"

*I first went to PNG as a young Resident Medical Officer for two years in 1971/1972. Wendy and I had been married for two weeks when we departed for PNG in late January of 1971. I worked at Port Moresby, Goroka and Mount Hagen hospitals. Wendy was a high school teacher at the respective High Schools. I enjoyed the challenge of obstetrics and gynaecology in PNG so much that I decided to train as a specialist when I returned to Australia. Over the years we've had three children -- Catherine, Andrew and Paul -- who are now all grown up.*

*In 2002 both Goroka and Mount Hagen hospitals were without a specialist Obstetrician Gynaecologist and since then I've been up several times to each of these hospitals to provide short-term cover. The Highlands of PNG is an easy place to fall in love with. The people are friendly and the lush, tropical mountainous countryside is magnificent. Both Goroka and Mount Hagen hospitals each have approximately 4002 to 4500 deliveries per year. There is a high perinatal and maternal mortality. The maternal mortality is between 500 to 900 per 100,000 births. The facilities are grossly inadequate and the nursing and medical staff work under trying circumstances. Many nurses and doctors have also done short-term stints at both of these hospitals. The people are friendly and the lush, tropical mountainous countryside is magnificent. In 2002 when I returned to PNG after nearly 30 years of absence two things struck me immediately. Firstly there had been a massive increase in population and secondly, I had forgotten how friendly and hospitable the locals are. One of the great pleasures of my life has to become reacquainted with this beautiful country and its very friendly people.*



# Successes of 2019/20

## Trip to PNG by four committee members

This trip was many years in the making and finally came to fruition. The purposes were many, but mainly to reconnect with the highlands and assess things on the ground. This was the first trip for Kylie and Leslie, and it really was an amazing two weeks. Definitely not long enough - a month would have been great. Things definitely do not happen quickly!

The goals:

To reconnect with **Eastern Highlands Provincial Health (EHPH), Goroka Hospital** - this is where the foundation began. Our ties have once again been strengthened, and a project to support Community Health Workers (CHW) and Midwives (by providing them with a Health Worker Kit) working in newly built community health centres (CHC) was proposed.

The goal set out in the EHPH plan is to build 3 new CHCs in each province district. With 2 CHWs and a midwife working in each. There are 24 districts - therefore  $24 \times 3 \times 2 = 144$  health Worker kits will be delivered to the district. We propose that there will also be more with movements of workers also possible. This is an ambitious project on both sides. But very exciting.

There is also a new hospital wing at the hospital housing a new labour ward - quite amazing, but unfortunately, they are not currently using it. We hoped to help move them into the ward and get it working, but we did not have the time.

We were in Goroka for the annual Goroka Show - a cultural spectacle, awesomely overstimulating for the senses and emotionally overwhelming. I have never experienced such a beautiful thing, and I recommend that everyone make the effort to go! Groups from all over the province come out to show their dance and song in a singing competition - this has been running since the 1950s.



Next, a visit **Kavieng General Hospital in New Ireland Province** to visit **Dr Frank Apamumu** - the senior gynecologist/obstetrician in the hospital. Dr Frank has received Health Worker Kits from us to give to newly qualified midwives and CHWs who have undergone extra maternal and newborn care training. We will continue to support this project. This province is an island with 90% (190 000 people) of the population living out of the capital city, Kavieng. There are many islands, and this province has one of the country's highest maternal mortality rates. Women die trying to get to the hospital. There

is a shortage of midwives therefore the upskilling program is so valuable, and our project to support those upskilled workers is important for them to have their own *tool bag* to attend births.

This project in the PNG PostCourier is similar to the one we support in a different part of New Ireland. This project is funded by the government



October 28, 2019

BY GRACE LIMA

Meet Fidelis Gira, a community health worker (CHW) at the Simberi Health Center, Namatanai district of New Ireland Province, who shared his challenges and untold stories regarding maternal and newborn health.

"Seeing mothers and children who need health care but do not receive the care that they deserve is very sad and challenging," Mr Gira said.

Father of four and the only male among eight female graduating with the CHW Upskilling in Maternal and New Born Care at the St Mary's Vunapope Hospital last week, Fidelis Gira recalled how he struggled to help people who needed health care.

He said their small health facility in Simberi has no health extension officer and no nursing officers.

Just him, a male CHW from 2014 to 2016 and two CHWs between 2016 and 2019. Mr Gira is 42 years old from Pinikidu village, Central Kavieng, growing up with his dream in mind to serve people after finishing his education.

He attended Lemakot School of Nursing from 1996 to 1997 and graduated with a certificate in CHW.

Mr Gira was employed by Simberi Health Centre in 2014 after working at the International SOS (Lihir Medical Centre) at the Lihir Newcrest Mining Ltd area and was the only health worker at the facility from October 2014 to 2016.

A female CHW was recruited in 2016 to the facility and since then there were in there was no pregnant women accessing health facility for antenatal care because of safe supervised delivery from a male health worker socio-cultural barriers to safe midwifery care.

"When we received the news for someone to attend the up-skilled training in Kokopo, I volunteered to come and attend the training because I have the heart for my people," he said.

"I honestly have no in-depth idea and skills about being a midwife in helping mothers to deliver their babies, which resulted in an instance where a mother lost her life under our care while the baby survived," Mr Gira said.

Presenting his experiences and challenges in front of the people who came to witness their graduation, Mr Gira shared tears and said with the training he has a fair idea and now he can map a path forward by looking back and learning how to avoid past mistakes to improve care next time.

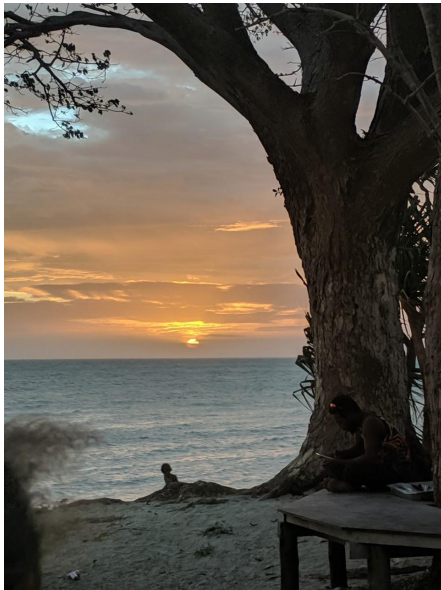
"Health should never be seen as a standalone sector in Papua New Guinea because health is everyone's business," he said.

**Port Moresby and Boera Village.** Visiting a coastal village close to the capital was a pleasure. Making contact with the village matriarchs brought us a potential new project. There is a need to support young women - with reproductive and general health.

We are guided by the concept of *Healthy families ... Healthy Nations.*

### *Supporting Health for all.*

Women in PNG are amazingly capable - they really are the country's future. They really do most of the work and have voices - they do what they say they will, and they lead by example. The most impressive people I met in the hospitals were the female doctors, nurses and midwives - some brought me to tears when they spoke due to their passion and tireless love for their people. If we can support them to be able to keep healthy, especially within a village, then their whole village is empowered.



Read Kylie's blog on the website to get a detailed trip account.

[www.highlandsfoundaiton.org.au/blog](http://www.highlandsfoundaiton.org.au/blog)



## Our Projects

### Kompam, our next container destination

#### **A report from Ann Hallett - Director of Nursing, Kompam Rural Hospital**

The Enga Baptist Health Services Management (Kompam District Hospital) would like to extend their gratitude to The Highlands Foundation for packing the mother and baby packs for the women and their babies of the Kompam District. While much work is done in the hospital, scheduled clinics are also held in the community. When tribal fighting occurs, communities become cut off from essential health care. Medicines, health messages, antenatal care, access to long-acting contraception and immunisation were provided to 1214 people in the community in the month of July 2018 as tribes were cut off from accessing health care at the Kompam District Hospital. The Digicel ambulance acted as a private space for antenatal care and insertion of long-acting contraception during community clinics.

It is a pleasure to work in partnership with The Highlands Foundation to make a difference in the lives of women and their babies in remote areas of Papua New Guinea. This is particularly in supplying mother and baby packs for women who often come to the hospital with the clothing they wear.



Winoko's Clinic



Winoko's Clinic 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019



Winoko's Clinic, Rebeka Hallett



On the way to Paipalus Clinic 9<sup>th</sup> July



Setting up for Kainden Clinic 18<sup>th</sup> July



Yonepmai Elementary School (near Aperas) Sr Gillie Kasi and Nrs Edwin Danny  
106 immunisations  
Vitamin A given to 106 children



Long-acting contraceptive choices in back of ambulance  
Ann Hallett

Once restrictions lift we will complete the filling of the container and get it on the water as quickly as we can. Some of the challenges that David Mills and the team at Kompiam have faced are the diversion of funding from the religious-based hospitals to COVID-19 projects (will need more information from Ann here)

We have sent some items to Kompiam (Ann Hallett/Shan to add detail here)

Some general information from Dr David Mills

*Getting real maternal mortality data in PNG is difficult. For a long time, Supervised birth rates have been used as a proxy for MMR and this has been supported in the research. Supervised birth rates have fallen in the last 10 years in PNG.*

*I have attached the official data (just released) from the Sector Performance Review. You can see the supervised delivery rates across the country and in Enga, particularly, are terrible and getting worse (only 20% in 2018).*

*Baby bundles have been shown in Milne Bay to increase supervised birth rates significantly. We are working towards a major implementation of the bundles across our district in the latter half of next year in conjunction with a program of medical retrieval for pregnant women called Merilift.*

*These bundles will be an important addition to this.*

See the information about the research performed in Milne Bay in our 2018/19 Annual report. In appendix 1 is the data referred to by David.



## Health Worker Kits

This project has taken some time to get off the ground, but it is now making some impact. The first kits were left with Dr Frank Apamumu in 2016. He again took more kits in 2019.

Dr Tana Kiak has taken two sets. Initially 10 and then a further 6.

These kits are presented to Community Health Workers who are undertaking specialist obstetrics training so they are more capable of offering antenatal care and performing emergency obstetric care. There is a shortage of midwives in PNG. Training is expensive and is only offered in two universities in the country. Goroka is one of them. Women often don't make it to central, provincial hospitals for care, so upskilling the health workers in community health centres is vital. Giving them their own tools to assist in obstetrics is how we can support this program. The programs are funded by the government and added support comes from private companies (often mining companies)

Our next large commitment is with the Eastern Highlands Provincial Health. As stated before they have an ambitious goal to build 72 new Health Centres that will act like mini hospitals. They would like us to support this program by giving every health worker their own kit. We are in the process of planning how this will happen. COVID has interrupted communications.

## Community Engagement in Melbourne

Some goals:

- looking for assistance with our social media (Kylie has some ideas of people to ask for assistance)
- improve communications with hospital labour wards.
  - Send communications to share in their lunchroom
  - set up donation bins (possibly in lunchrooms) to collect textbooks and other items
  - have contacts at each hospital who we can engage with when looking for specific items
  - investigate the option of dining small presentations
- to improve connections with universities teaching midwifery
  - create contacts who we can work within their social groups and midwifery societies
  - investigate options of doing presentations
- investigate attending nursing/midwifery conferences with a stall
- Set up remote donation points with volunteers to collect donations. This means people don't need to attend Altona and have more options than Brighton, Kew and Reservoir. These people would be inducted and trained in what we need, the quality of products and what goes into the packs.
- investigate setting up of information stalls at different community events

- improve/begin communications with large donors (once our TDGR status comes in) for items for containers, packs and Health Worker Kits
- begin planning for a major fundraiser next year
- Expand our donations efforts (Give Now, FaceBook . . . .other avenues)