



Committed to improving health services and medical education resources in the Pacific Region

2018: a year in review

2018 saw the Pacific Health Fund engage with health workers in Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Kiribati, Cook Islands, Timor Leste and Solomon Islands.

The Fund engages with health workers in the region to provide essential equipment to hospitals, facilitate clinical exchange programs for health workers and assist in capacity building through financial grants and scholarships.

In 2018, the committee worked hard to maintain the vibrant health of the Pacific Health Fund and provided just over \$32,000 in financial support to 13 projects that included training and support in 6 different countries. Here's a snapshot of the activities we supported.

General Project Grants (\$21,299)

- Enabled a productive health exchange between the Gold Coast Hospital, Queensland and the remote Kirakira Hospital, Solomon Islands. As the backbone of the Solomon Islands health system, the Solomon Island nurses Smyrna Karibongi and Sam Taaru, are in-charge of medical and surgical, men's, women's, paediatric and midwifery, were keen to participate in this learning experiences. The ongoing partnerships allow exchanges of resources and equipment, and strengthen a mutually beneficial relationship. Further information can be found at strongislandfoundation.com.au (\$3,000)
- Commenced a 3 year partnership with the PNG Society of Rural and Remote Health. This includes financial support for the Annual Symposium held in Madang in September 2018. Skills workshops included Maxillofacial infections and injury, obstetric emergencies and pulse oximetry. (\$10,000)
- Supported art therapy workshops in Suva, Fiji to aid with rehabilitation in consumers with mental illness. Having an ongoing art therapy program that helps recovery and maintains wellness for consumers, this community based program is also aiming to improve the recovery pathways for post-discharge patients by offering them an opportunity to engage. (\$2985)
- Worked together with the Kiribati Emergency Nurse Training Program, so that an innovative and collaborative approach to advancing Emergency Nursing in the Pacific was presented at the South Pacific Nurses Forum, Rarotonga, Oct 2018 (\$3814)
- Sponsored medical students from Papua New Guinea to attend the Pacific Medical Students' Association (PMSA) annual Southern Hemisphere Medical Camp (SHMC). This week long conference brings together health students studying within the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand (\$1500)



Andrew Dent Student Scholarships (\$20,000)

In 2018, we granted 14 scholarships for the following medical student electives;

- Evan McRobb and Harley Owens undertook a 2 week placement in Kompiam District Hospital, Mt. Hagen Papua New Guinea, learning a lot about tuberculosis treatment regimes along with the unique difficulties in maintaining TB treatment in a remote and rural settings (2,000)
- Jennifer Xu was placed for three-week medical elective at Vila Central Hospital, Vanuatu, describing her learnings as both personal and professional. She writes that when investigations such as routine blood tests, CT and MRI scans and angiograms are not available, highly competent medical and nursing staff who think on their feet and outside the box are needed.
- Amy Aitken visiting Raratonga in the Cook Islands, describing it as a film set for Moana. Working with the Hospital's obstetrics and gynaecology department, and enjoying Christmas celebrations with the team, Amy reports an appreciation of the broader skills and expertise needed in rural health settings.
- Sophia Henderson spent 6 weeks with Port Vila Hospital in Vanuatu. With a keen eye on the opportunity for working somewhere with such spectacular diving opportunities, Sophia's visit gave her the opportunity to experience a surgical placement, and also to understand how the hospital functions, as well as how the health system in Vanuatu is progressing.
- Tessa Marshall participated in the Fiji Village Project, a student-run public health initiative established by medical students from Australian National University, Fiji School of Medicine, and the University of Auckland. This program encourages medical students to experience the hospital system where pain management options available were 'opioids and reassurance', as well as making house calls in villages perched on steep, muddy terrain to promote health screening visits.

- Kimberley Durber, Lucy Davidson (Vanuatu) rotated through four areas: Emergency, Internal Medicine, Paediatrics and Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Noting the skills of the team to work without advanced medical investigations and treatments, it was great to be taught how to build a diagnosis based on history and clinical signs.

These reports are available on our website and facebook page. Further stories and adventures to follow from:

Sam Grace (PNG) Ilona Jakzb, Nakul Chaudry (Fiji), Jason Ratcliffe (Timor Leste), Marney Bonn, Sarika Suresh (Vanuatu) from their placements in Dec 2018



The St. Vincent's Pacific Health Fund was established in 2008. One hundred per cent of donations received by the Pacific Health Fund are allocated to improving health services and medical education resources in the Pacific Region with no overhead administrative costs.

We warmly thank you for your support and encourage your ongoing involvement through donations, spreading the word about our valuable work by 'liking' us on Facebook and encouraging your networks in the Pacific to apply for grants and support us.

If you would like more information on these or other projects don't hesitate to contact us.

www.stvpacifichealth.org

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