



ST VINCENT'S PACIFIC HEALTH FUND

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

2019: a year in review

St Vincent's Pacific Health Fund provides financial support for a wide variety of projects and activities to improve health care and medical education resources in the Pacific Region.

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. The Pacific Health Fund and provided just over \$37,500 in financial support to 13 projects for training and support in 6 different countries.

In 2019, the Pacific Health Fund engaged with health workers in Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa, Kiribati, and Solomon Islands. Here's a snapshot of the activities.

General Project and Conference Grants (\$23,366)

- Partnered with Fiji Ministry of Health to support our Fiji Emergency Physician colleague, Salote Behr to attend the SMACC (Social Media and Critical Care) conference in Sydney, March 2019. This included several more professional development workshops and a NoWEM event as part of a community of emergency physicians that celebrate and promote the advancement of women in medicine in Australasia (\$3,215)
- Supported another Fiji ED colleague, Raj Lavinesh, to attend the International Conference on Emergency Medicine (ICEM) in Seoul, South Korea. This created the opportunity to participate as a speaker, and also to present a research paper on the Improvement of Trauma Care in the Emergency Department in Fiji- Implementing and Assessing the Trauma Call System. (\$3,500)



"The SMACC (Social Media and Critical Care) conference was one with the highest quality of critical and emergency care education, and one of the first that I was privileged to attend."

Salote Behr, Fiji ED physician and Team Fiji at the SMACC Conference, recording a podcast with Dr Doug Lynch, a co-author of Life in the Fast Lane and producer of the Jellybean podcasts.



- Partnering with Alfred Health, our Vanuatu specialist emergency physician colleague, Vincent Atua, attended the Global Emergency Care Conference 18-21 September 2019 Melbourne. This also included Meetings with key staff at the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) and AVI, who are currently in the process of developing a partnership agreement that would place ACEM trainee volunteers at Vanuatu under Dr Atua's supervision (\$2,500)
- ICU World Congress October 2019, Melbourne was the first ICU conference that our senior registrar colleague, Cecilia Vaai-Bartley from Samoa had the opportunity to attend. She noted that despite Australia and New Zealand being close to the Pacific Islands, healthcare provision is at times worlds apart. But similar issues such as burnout and gender equity (lack of) pervade both environments. This was a key opportunity to meet ICU professionals that are willing to help the development and sustainability of ICU services in the Pacific; something which is sorely needed in Samoa. (\$2,490)
- Partnered with Ministry of Health in Kiribati, FNU and Ministry of Health and Medical Services in Fiji to support a tailored professional development plan for an ED trainee, Dr. Teanneko. In Dec 2019, our colleague started her emergency department clinical attachment as part of a structured post-grad training on emergency medicine. (\$4,395)



“My attendance and participation was a great opportunity to highlight the challenges that I faced in Vanuatu in establishing a new emergency department. Knowing that others are facing similar challenges and seeing the perseverance it required it require in getting them forward was moral boosting for me.”

Dr. Vincent Atua, specialist emergency physician, Vila Central Hospital, Vanuatu

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and facebook page

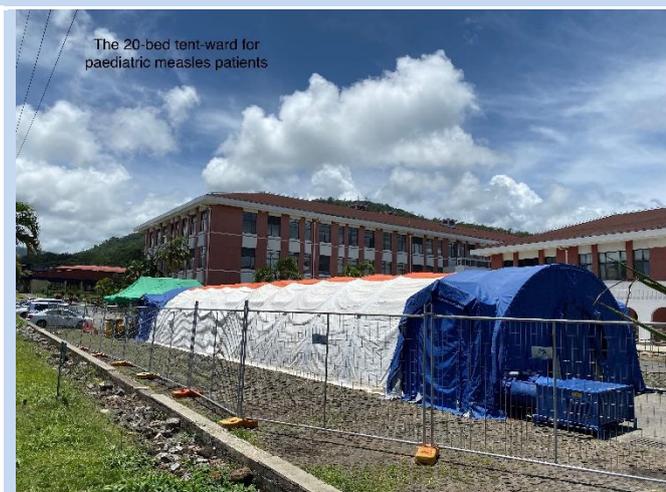
Andrew Dent Student Scholarships (\$14,159)

The Andrew Dent Scholarship is offered each year to health sector students who need support to undertake volunteer work, electives or study trips that aid people in the Pacific Region.

<https://www.svhm.org.au/supportus/pacific-health-fund/scholarships>

In 2019, we granted 7 scholarships. For more, visit our website and facebook page.

- Angus McCormack spent six weeks on elective at the Northern Provincial Hospital (NPH) on the beautiful island of Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu. Angus also had the opportunity to consult with local junior doctors to help identify barriers to training in remote and rural medicine
- Also in Vanuatu, Andrew Ngan completed a five week elective with Vila Central Hospital, a 200 bed hospital with 4 wards, 2 theatres, a very busy outpatients department and an emergency department.
- Batsho Mandlebe participated in the Fiji Village Project, an ongoing initiative that aims to bring together Fijian, Australian and New Zealand healthcare students in the name of future global healthcare.
- Rebecca Kwa spent one month in Apia, Samoa for an elective with the Obstetrics and Gynaecology team at Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital, arriving in Samoa to find a state of emergency during the height of the measles epidemic.
- Jameson Trainor enjoyed four weeks in the Solomon Islands undertaking a Medical elective at Gizo Hospital. This is the second largest hospital in the country, set within a health network with nurse aid posts, rural and area health clinics and provincial hospitals



My time in Samoa has deeply impacted me and will be present in my mind for a long time. I am still processing the enormity of it all - the heart break of the nation, the tireless healthcare workers, the deaths. It has left me thinking about healthcare systems and how we must start with infrastructure and organisation if we want to make the biggest impact in community health.

Rebecca Kwa, University of Sydney Medicine Student



- Kitty Wang undertook a four-week medical elective at Vila Central Hospital in Port Vila, Vanuatu, her time divided between general medicine and paediatrics
- Seema Deb also spent 4 weeks for her elective at the Port Vila Central Hospital, Vanuatu hosted by teams in the general out-patient clinic and the maternity ward.

Despite all these barriers to healthcare that the people of Vanuatu face, whether it be the healthcare workers or the patients; they continue to be some of the most hopeful, hospitable and happy people that I have met. The resilience that they show when faced with uncertainty and suffering is something to be admired. The generosity that I have experienced here is something that I will never forget, especially since I gave so little in comparison.

Andrew Ngan, UQ Bundaberg Rural Clinical School
Medicine Student



Although my expectations for hands-on experience were met (and exceeded), what has struck with me the most is the importance of educating patients and advocating for greater health literacy. This is something that is integral to all fields of medicine and all health systems, whether that be Vanuatu or Australia. I'd like to express my thanks to the staff at PVCH, for allowing me to be part of their teams, the patients for letting me be involved in their care, and finally, the Andrew Dent scholarship, for assisting me on this placement.

Seema Deb,
Monash University Medicine Student

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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