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Newsletter No1

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# FRIENDS OF HELENA GOLDIE HOSPITAL.



## **WELCOME**

This is the first Newsletter to be produced under the banner of an informal organisation to be known as the FRIENDS OF HELENA GOLDIE HOSPITAL. Distribution will be by email as far as possible, but by post where necessary. As the Project proceeds it is planned to have current information on a website. We will be glad to send the newsletter to anyone interested in the Project. Please let us know the relevant name, address or email.

Even if you have no spare funds, no relevant skills and no equipment to donate we are still glad to have you as Friend of Helena Goldie Hospital.

## **ORIGINS OF THE HELENA GOLDIE HOSPITAL PROJECT**

The hospital celebrated its centenary in 2002, and has served the Western Province of the Solomon Islands for over 100 years. However the present poor state of repair of the Hospital is the result of many factors including two World Wars, adverse weather, irregular maintenance, two recent political upheavals and the passage of time. Over the past 15 years more than 30 Rotary Clubs have visited Munda and the hospital contributing to repairs and maintenance on a piecemeal basis. Burnside Rotary Club was the most recent of these in June 2005 when we completed a Rotary Against Malaria (RAM) project in Munda village. It was following this visit that a detailed, costed proposal for a long term repair and maintenance program was developed by Rotarian John Caddy and others. It has passed the hurdles of acceptance by the Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) Central Zone Committee, endorsement by the Solomon Islands Department of Health, and now allocation of a RAWCS Project Approval Number. We can now publicise the project more widely and begin fundraising.

## **FRIENDS OF HELENA GOLDIE HOSPITAL**

Even before major publicity Burnside Rotary Club has received messages of interest and support from many sources.

Rotarians from Clubs in Queensland, NSW, SA and Victoria have spoken enthusiastically of their previous experience in Munda and offered their help. We are also aware of Clubs in New Zealand and USA in the same category. Strong support for the project has been given by Zonta Clubs in Adelaide. Some modern hospital equipment has been identified and awaits transport to Munda. Funds have been made available for professional development of nurses and midwives. Many individuals have shown interest in the project and asked to be kept informed.

#### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

Burnside Rotary Quiz Night 7.00pm for 7.30pm at Burnside Community Centre.27<sup>th</sup> May.2006.

#### **CHALLENGES TO BE FACED**

As time passes we are increasingly aware of the Challenges that confront the successful completion of the project.

#### **COOPERATION**

We are aware of several parties in the Solomon Islands which have an interest in the effective operation of the Helena Goldie Hospital. These include the Central Government, the United Church, the local Community, and the Hospital authorities both medical and administrative. A working understanding with each of these needs to be established. In particular we need to reach a satisfactory working relationship with local tradesmen and suppliers. Both RAWCS and AusAID rightly emphasise the need to include a significant training component in projects such as this one.

#### **DISTANCE**

The Solomon Islands lie 3000km from Adelaide - a similar distance as Perth to Sydney. All traffic passes through the capital, Honiara and Munda is a further 90 minutes away by air.

#### **WEATHER**

The long wet season will inevitably affect plans for successful completion of the project.

#### **COORDINATION**

In addition to the need for a co-operative effort at Munda there is a similar need for coordination of effort at this end. We are establishing a Board of Management with appropriate financial, managerial and legal skills. Rotarian John Caddy has carried the burden of developing the project thus far and is prepared to offer his expertise and time to act as Project Manager.

The Board may recruit members from those skilled Rotarians with Solomon Islands or PNG experience who have shown an interest and support.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

The need for accurate communication between participants in such a project is well recognised but still a significant challenge. This will be all the greater if Board members are recruited from Interstate.

#### **CONTINUITY**

The project is planned to occur in stages over the next 5 years. While the staged approach is necessary it carries the danger of loss of momentum.

#### **SKILLS**

We will always be interested if you have particular skills to offer but please be patient if your offer is not taken up immediately.

#### **EQUIPMENT**

We have discovered that hospital equipment is relatively easily obtainable and much of it is already stored in Donations In Kind (DIK) depots in Adelaide and Brisbane. Please do not be offended if an offer of equipment is not immediately accepted. On the other hand some equipment is desperately needed and will be accepted readily. Most equipment will need to be fully serviced and may need technical information, support and a maintenance program if it is to be effective when used locally.

#### **FUNDS**

The project has a substantial budget and we have been encouraged to seek financial support from various sources including the Rotary Foundation, Humanitarian Grants and elsewhere. In the meantime the Project needs to accumulate a substantial sum both as evidence of our commitment and to attract matching grants. As a recognized RAWCS project it already attracts Tax Deductibility and all donations should be identified as going to the Helena Goldie Hospital Program.

#### **POLITICS**

In spite of the recent upheaval in Honiara, Munda remains peaceful. We are assured that the project will only suffer minor delays.

Friends of Helena Goldie