



AUGUST 2016

2016 CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The Barbara May Foundation continues to support the work of Valerie Browning AM and Dr Andrew Browning in providing access to maternal healthcare, outreach services and hospitals for poor women in remote communities in Africa. The projects we fund aim to decrease the incidence of women and babies who die or who are injured during childbirth.

DONATIONS

During the year ended 30 June 2016 donations received totalled AUD\$1,252,000. This compares with \$682,502 last year. This is a wonderful outcome and has been aided significantly by our upgrade last year to a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) with DGR1 status. This has meant that many more organisations have been able to assist our fundraising goals and receive an Australian Tax Office endorsed tax-deduction as a result.

In addition, we have received significant in-kind contributions and services. They include the work of doctors, midwives and administrators who volunteer to help run the maternity hospitals, train local staff or supervise building operations. Other in-kind contributions include donations of equipment for the hospitals. We are very grateful to Sonic Healthcare who organised the transport of a large container containing all the equipment for the fit-out of the soon to be completed Vision Maternity Care Hospital in Barhirdar. Much of the equipment in this container was donated.

We support the work of three operating centres. One is the Barbara May Maternity Hospital in Mille in Ethiopia, the second is the Vision Maternity Care (VMC) Hospital in Barhirdar, Ethiopia, and the third is Maternity Africa which operates from Arusha in Tanzania.

THE BARBARA MAY MATERNITY HOSPITAL

This hospital is run by a local Board under the guiding hand of Valerie Browning and the Afar Pastoral Development Association (APDA). We continue to fund the operations of the hospital in addition to funding improvements to the hospital and its equipment. This funding comes from the Workplace Giving Program of the Sydney and South Western Sydney Local Health Districts.

During the year a severe drought affected the Afar people in Ethiopia which affected birth rates. However, this remote hospital works across all maternal healthcare issues including pre and post-natal care, emergency obstetric care and obstetric fistula treatment, HIV screening, family planning, and education into, and treatment of the effects of the traditional practice of female genital mutilation. So in all, it was an extremely busy year for the unit.

From 30 June, 2016 the Australian Government ceased to finance maternal healthcare in the remote villages and local health centres of the Afar district. APDA considers these services an essential part of their network of maternal healthcare, and they were a founding aim of the Barbara May Foundation, so we have agreed to finance the cost, which is estimated to be AUD\$120,000 next year.

VISION MATERNITY CARE HOSPITAL (VMC)

This hospital is run by a local Board with oversight from Andrew Browning. The rundown health centre provided by the Ethiopian Government, and renovated by BMF funds, has successfully provided free obstetric services for women who cannot afford such help. This 10-bed interim centre continues to deliver more than 2,000 babies a year. Such is its outstanding reputation that mothers come from as far away as Addis Ababa to have their babies. The hospital is struggling to keep up with the demand.

The Foundation has raised the funds for the new 22-bed purpose built maternity hospital and its construction is expected to be completed by year end.

MATERNITY AFRICA

Andrew resides in Arusha with his family. From there he visits hospitals throughout Africa treating women suffering from obstetric fistula. He also works with Sister Katie Christie to run midwife training at the Selian Hospital in Arusha and at another Tanzanian hospital in Dareda. Deliveries in both these hospitals exceeded 2,000 for the year.

Last year land was donated and a grant promised to build a new hospital and medical centre, to be named *Kivulini*, in Arusha to provide maternity services, fistula repairs and midwife training. Progress has been slow because of difficulties in finding water on the land (a pre-requisite to building in Arusha) which has now been found, and an unfunded cost of \$600,000 being the VAT on the cost of the building. The estimated costs of the building, apart from the VAT, has been underwritten by an American donor.


Our Foundation's contribution to Maternity Africa is a small part of its total budget and comes mainly from donations to us from Planet Wheeler. The cost of building and operating this new facility (due to be operational in 2018) will be significant but is not a part of the business plan for the Foundation at present. This will be reviewed in future as part of the organisation's continued strategy planning, and will only be considered if sustainable funding is possible. However, the board will continue to assist Andrew and his team to find supporters and funding for this important project.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

I welcome to our Board three new directors, Dr Sam Hargreaves, Louise Harknett and Tom Crawford. Sam is a Victorian obstetrician who has been to Africa and has already shown her ability as an active fundraiser. Tom and Louise are both from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) who has encouraged them to provide their financial and accounting skills to assist our expanding work. I thank our retiring directors, Frank Roberts, Susan Doyle, Bishop John Noble and Helen Cox, for their hard work over many years. As our work expands our directors have more work to do and I thank them all. Finally, I thank our General Manager and Company Secretary, Jo Crowley, for her continued great efforts during the year.

OUR SINCERE THANKS TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank-you for helping us fund the expanding programs in Africa led so ably by Valerie and Andrew. We are benefiting thousands of women who live in poverty and suffer greatly in childbirth. If we had more money there is so much more we could do. The proposed hospital in Arusha is a great example. Thank-you to all donors for your generous giving. Thank you to all volunteers and to MACH Foundation which finances most of the costs of our project's volunteers. Special thanks to Andrew and Valerie for their untiring and sacrificial work. They know the culture and needs of the people of Africa and enable us to operate efficiently without corruption. We ask them to pass on our thanks to their staff. Our hospitals perform their services at incredibly low costs with outstanding outcomes. It is right that we all combine to give such benefits to the poor women of Africa. To God be the glory.



Michael Sharpe AO
Chairman