



Operation Cleft Australia is an international project of the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central Inc. District 9810 Australia



Operation Cleft Australia Foundation Inc.  
PO Box 631, Box Hill VIC 3128 T: +613 9877 9717 E: info@operationcleft.org.au  
www.operationcleft.org.au

# Newsletter

## Christmas 2017



### Message from the Chair

In June 2017 we achieved a major milestone in conducting our 11,000<sup>th</sup> cleft operation. But with more than 5,000 children born with clefts in Bangladesh each year, there is still so much more to do. We maintain our target at 1,000 operations per year. As in previous years, much of the surgery has been conducted in hospitals widely dispersed throughout Bangladesh. In order to reach one of the most impoverished areas in Bangladesh, Operation Cleft has recently conducted operations in Kurigram on the Emirates Friendship Floating Hospital for the first time. We are hoping that it will be possible to conduct more operations on a floating hospital thereby reaching children who have no other access to hospitals. We continue working to develop other strategies to provide cleft surgeries in the most impoverished areas in Bangladesh.

There have been some changes at Operation Cleft. In May 2017 Nirasha De Silva joined as a part-time Fundraising Officer. Peter Enlund retired from the position of Treasurer at the beginning of July 2017, and David Routledge has agreed to join the Committee of Management and to undertake the role of Treasurer.

Despite the impact of high inflation on costs in Bangladesh, we have been able to keep the all up cost of an operation to A\$300 thanks to the generosity of the Bangladeshi surgeons and hospitals. By using local highly qualified surgeons and local hospitals, Operation Cleft continues to keep the cost of operations low enabling us to Gift a Smile to more children with the available resources.

We are extremely grateful to all members of our surgical team for their outstanding work, and to our in-country manager Moinul Islam for his tireless work in implementing the program in Bangladesh in collaboration with the team at Glencoe Foundation.

The current economic climate remains a challenging one from a fundraising perspective. In common with many other charities, we have found fundraising more of a challenge and some of our standard fundraising activities have been significantly less successful than in past years. Under the guidance of our new Fundraising Officer, Nirasha De Silva, a revised fundraising plan has been prepared and a range of new fundraising

activities have been developed and implemented to address this fundraising challenge.

This issue reports on a number of fundraising activities including the Bentleigh Secondary College Spella-thon, the opportunity to sponsor Jeffrey Wright's Three Marathons, Three Continents in Five Weeks to "Gift a Smile for Life", and registration of Operation Cleft in Ritchies Community Benefit program.

Our donors are the life blood of the project. The amazing generosity as Smile Donors of the many Rotary Clubs, Rotarians, groups and individuals and our supporters in Bangladesh enables us to continue to fund operations for underprivileged children in Bangladesh.

I earnestly seek your continuing support for this project. For a donation of just A\$300 you can fund an operation and change a child's life. Or for a monthly donation of \$25 for 12 months you can fund a child's operation (and that's only about the cost of one cup of coffee a week!).



Dr Lindsay Mackay  
Chair





## Emirates Floating Hospital

May 2017

In collaboration with Friendship Hospital, Kurigram, Operation Cleft organised a surgical camp on the floating hospital to provide free surgery to poor children suffering from cleft lip and palates.

Kurigram is a highly disadvantaged and remote coastal area of Bangladesh. Survival is an everyday struggle for these marginalised communities. People die from easily preventable diseases due to poor communications and lack of access to medical care. The literacy rate in Kurigram is only 23%. During the years of heavy monsoonal rains, Kurigram is the first region to feel the pain of ensuing floods and as a result the development of the region lags far behind the mainstream and the region's infrastructure is frequently destroyed.

*Photo credits: Moinul Islam, Country Manager, Operation Cleft Bangladesh and Emirates Foundation*



## 11,056 Smiles to-date and counting

**In June this year, we reached a very important milestone!**

Since inception we have provided more than 11,000 smiles to-date and counting!

Operation Cleft has changed the lives of more than 11,000 children since it started in 2005. But there is still so much to do with more than 5,000 children born in Bangladesh each year with a cleft lip and/or cleft palate. By providing these children with the opportunity to have the cleft repair surgery they need we are not just giving them a smile, we are giving them a future.



**We are going Green! Receive your next Operation Cleft Australia Newsletter by email. Email your details to [info@operationcleft.org.au](mailto:info@operationcleft.org.au)**



## Bentleigh Secondary College Spellathon

For the eighth consecutive year, Bentleigh Secondary College held their annual Spellathon to raise vital funds to provide free cleft lip/palate operations to poor children in Bangladesh.

Months and months of excitement and preparation came down to one fun-filled morning on the 7th September at the school library.



OCA would like to congratulate the winners and thank the school's wellness coordinator and Rotarian Dr Intha Chetty, teachers Suzy Watt and Marc Koenig, volunteer Marge Cheggwidden and all the students who participated. A big thank you also goes to Rotary Club of Moorleigh Moorabbin, who have been passionate supporters of Operation Cleft Australia.

The 2017 Spellathon raised over \$1,400 to help support children with cleft lips and palates in Bangladesh.

### Three Marathons, Three Continents in Five Weeks to "Gift a Smile for Life"!



A friend of Operation Cleft Australia, Jeff Wright will be running three marathons in three continents within five weeks late 2017 to raise funds to provide free operations to poor children born with cleft lips and palates. His marathons will span from Melbourne, New York and Valencia, Spain.

So far Jeff's friends and family have helped him raise \$1,102!

## Noosa District State High School BBQ Fundraiser

It is humbling to know that our friends living far and wide are supporting Operation Cleft Australia to give an underprivileged child a second chance in life!

Early this year, the Interact Club of Noosa District State High School held a BBQ to raise funds to provide free cleft operations to underprivileged children in Bangladesh. Cath Lyndon, a long time supporter of OCA, has been working hand-in-hand with the Interact Club for the last few years to encourage the children to give back to the community.

Our Secretary Bruce McEwen was up in Sunshine Coast in August and had the privilege to meet and thank the Interact Club members and also had the opportunity to catch up with the lovely members of the Cooroy Rotary Club.

We would like to wholeheartedly thank everyone who was involved!



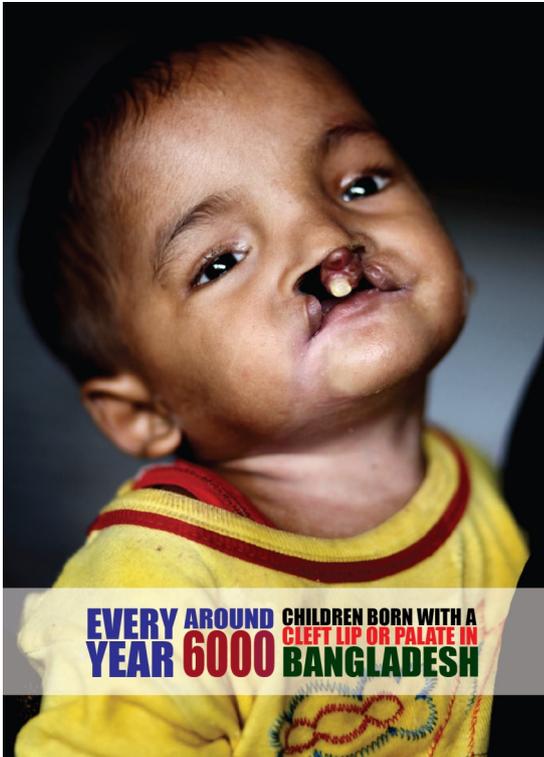
### Our New Website is live!

The new site is user friendly and is easier to navigate, with more direct links for fundraising and donating. We would like to thank Maddie Schaeche, the Box Hill TAFE student who has just finished her Advanced Diploma in Graphic Design for designing, coding the site and also training and supporting our Fundraising Officer!

We hope you take the time to have a look at our new, improved website at [www.operationcleft.org.au](http://www.operationcleft.org.au)

**Round up your friends and family and hold your own Fundraiser to raise vital funds for the operations by setting up a campaign at [www.gofundraise.com.au](http://www.gofundraise.com.au) and choosing Operation Cleft Australia as the beneficiary.**

**This Christmas..**  
**give a chance, give the best gift..**  
**Gift a smile for life!**



**Upcoming surgery camps by Operation Cleft**

- > 9th and 10th of November at Jessore, Nova Medical Center
- > 28th, 29th and 30th October at Netrokona Ideal Hospital, Netrokona
- > 15th, 16th November, Surgical Camp in Pabna



**All donations no matter how small will help us towards our target of 1,000 cleft operations a year**



**I wish to be a Smile Donor**

An international humanitarian project of the Rotary Club of the Box Hill Central Inc District 9810 Australia



Donate safely online at [www.operationcleft.org.au](http://www.operationcleft.org.au)

**OR** complete the following and post it to **Operation Cleft Australia, PO Box 631, Box Hill VIC 3128**

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

I wish to donate by  Cheque  
 Credit Card Please debit my  Visa  MasterCard

For a  one off OR  monthly payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_ which I can cancel at any time

Card Number             Expiry Date  /

Donor's Name(s).....

Address.....State.....POSTCODE.....

Email..... Contact Number.....Signature.....

**Operation Cleft Australia Foundation** (ABN 36 063 471 446)  
 PO Box 631, Box Hill VIC 3128  
 T: +613 9877 9717 E: [info@operationcleft.org.au](mailto:info@operationcleft.org.au)  
[www.operationcleft.org.au](http://www.operationcleft.org.au)

Operation Cleft Australia is a Public Ancillary Fund with DGR status. Deductions of \$2 or more are tax-deductible in Australia.