

From the Chair



Late last year I was appointed Chair of the Operation Cleft Management Committee. I would like to thank my predecessor Michael Kirk for his tireless work for the project over the years and his continuing support as secretary of the committee.

I recently travelled to Bangladesh to personally experience the wonderful work of Operation Cleft. Our busy seven day schedule included a trip from Dhaka to Khulna to visit a surgical camp at the Khulna Medical College Hospital. The hospital was huge, rambling and crowded and the first thing I saw when arriving at the plastic surgery unit was three young mothers dressed in beautiful saris, their shy babies hiding their faces against their mother's shoulders. These three very young babies all had cleft lips and/or palates and their anxious mothers were hopeful that we could provide the surgery and care that they could never afford.

Our surgeon, Professor Ayub Ali and his team had worked through the previous day operating on the children who had been

brought to the hospital as a result of local

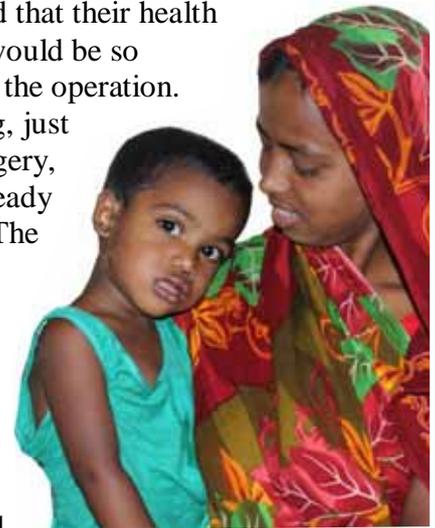
advertising and pamphlet drops. Now he entered the waiting area and gently examined the three babies. The young mums' faces were a fusion of joy and concern as he told



them that their child would be operated on that afternoon. He reassured them that their babies would be fine and that their health and appearance would be so much better after the operation.

The next morning, just one day after surgery, these patients already looked so good. The parents were thrilled and very relieved that it was all over. The quality of the surgical work was remarkable.

Professor Ali told me that he has undertaken more than 1,800 procedures for Operation Cleft and he loves working with us.



During the visit I met all eight of our talented plastic surgeons. They have gained extensive experience undertaking cleft operations over the almost nine years of Operation Cleft's activity in Bangladesh. But despite the 8,500 operations we have already funded, there are still a huge number of children desperately in need of our services. Your donations are changing the lives of these children and their families and bringing hope to their hearts and smiles to their faces. Thank you so much for giving us the means to continue this life changing service.

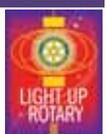
One of the difficulties we face in Bangladesh is the shortage of qualified Plastic Surgeons to meet the needs of the population. In funding operations, we are also providing training opportunities for young surgeons. The teams we send to rural areas for mini camps include both a highly qualified surgeon from our team and an assistant surgeon. This allows us to meet the needs of people

(Continued on page 2)

Operation Cleft Australia Inc. is corporate trustee for the Operation Cleft Australia Foundation Trust, a public ancillary fund with DGR status. All donations of \$2.00 or more are fully tax deductible in Australia. ABN # 36 063 471 446



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



(Continued from page 1)

requiring cleft repair surgery in rural areas. It also provides a unique training opportunity for newly qualified plastic and general surgeons at hospitals outside the main city centres.

We had planned to increase the number of operations we funded in 2014 but recent civil unrest in Bangladesh over the election period made travel potentially dangerous which limited our surgical activities for three months. Even so we will still endeavour to provide around 1,000 operations this year and with your help will be able to grow to 1250 or more over the next twelve months.

Some great news this year was the decision by the ICC Elite Umpires Executive to nominate Operation Cleft as their charity of choice for the Twenty/20 World Cup tournament. This is wonderful international recognition of the importance of our work and the transparent, efficient and effective way we use funds and deliver services.

Another wonderful achievement this year was the successful delivery of our revised speech camp model for parents and community health workers. We have puzzled for years how best to provide the speech therapy needed to get the best outcomes for our

patients. At last we think that we may have found a way to provide some basic care in a country that has very few speech and language therapists. We aim to conduct these speech camps regularly throughout the year in different districts of Bangladesh.



The continuation of our services and the expansion of outreach and training programs depends on your support. Please help us to sustain this vital work by contributing generously and encouraging your friends and local businesses to consider helping us give the children a “smile for life”.

Vici Funnell
Chair, Operation Cleft Management Committee

A stitch in time



This little baby is one of the lucky ones. He will never know the humiliation of growing up with an untreated cleft.

He was one of 12 young children who had their cleft lip or palate repaired at our recent surgical camp at Khulna. Sadly another 10 babies who presented for assessment were suffering from malnutrition or respiratory infections and had to be rejected for surgery at that time. Unfortunately this is not unusual for babies with a cleft condition as they are often underweight due to feeding difficulties.

The parents were very disappointed that their children would not have the surgery they needed. However they were encouraged by medical staff who explained that they would be re-scheduled for surgery once their health

improved. The children were given medication and nutritional supplements and parents were given information and instructions on care and feeding to ensure their babies were getting enough nourishment.

They will all be monitored by community health workers over the next few weeks and once they are deemed fit for surgery, will be rescheduled for assessment when Prof. Ali next visits the Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Speech therapy



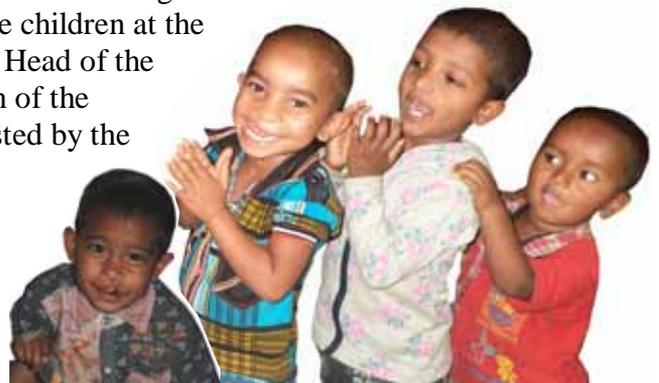
On March 16 we held our first cooperative speech camp in partnership with several Bangladeshi support organisations. Using a new model which focuses on training of community, health and disability support workers, we conducted this five day camp at Polli Sree in the northern district of Danajpur.

women's issues and economic, health and educational opportunities. Over the years, they have formed 380 community groups with a total membership of more than 7,000 men and women from poor families in the district.

Polli Sree is a non-government organisation that has worked with underprivileged people in the Dinajpur district for more than 10 years. They work in 120 villages organising community groups and telling people about

36 people attended the speech camp including former Operation Cleft patients, their parents and health workers. Training in basic speech therapy was provided to disability, community and rehabilitation workers from seven community health and rehabilitation centres. These groups all work closely with people in the community and the basic training will enable them to mentor and encourage continued therapy based on the individual programs set for the children at the speech camp. The camp was lead by Sushama Kanan, Acting Head of the Speech and Language Therapy Department at CRP, a division of the Bangladesh Health Professionals Institute. Sushama was assisted by the Operation Cleft in country Project Co-ordinator, Joya Hasan, herself a qualified Speech & Language Therapist.

The first day an information session was held for all participants. Topics covered were Operation Cleft services, the cause and effect of a cleft lip or palate, social barriers and the importance of speech therapy to achieve best outcomes. Fifteen children aged between 3 and 13 who previously had cleft lip or palate repair surgery attended (with a parent or guardian). The children were assessed by Sushama and Joya and individual therapy programs were developed for each. Parents were encouraged to take an active role in the therapy sessions and were instructed on how to continue with the child's program when they returned home.



Inset - Two years ago this little fellow had his lip surgically repaired. Now his bright smile lights up the room as he sings along with his little friends at the speech camp.

We know that in terms of Australian SLT practises it may not be perfect, however we are very encouraged by the positive feedback from all who attended.

Safiqul Alam said. "Johnny is an eight-year-old boy from Raniganj village in Dinajpur. He had lip and palate surgery some years ago. It is a long-term process to improve the speaking ability of these children but now he is doing really well and is in class 3 at Kanaibari Primary School".

Monowara, Johnny's grandmother said "My grandson's speech did not really improve much after the operations so he still got teased a bit at school". Then with a big smile, she added "But since starting speech therapy, he has improved a lot and now he wants to continue studying which is a really good thing for the family".

Future planning



During a recent monitoring visit to Bangladesh, Vici Funnell, Chair of the Operation Cleft Australia Management Committee and Julie Stein, General Manager of Operation Cleft met with heads of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. They are pictured above with from left Dr. Samanta Lal Sen, National Chief Coordinator, Prof. Sazzad Khondoker, Operation Cleft Plastic Surgeon, Assoc. Prof. Tanveer, Prof. Rahana Awwal Sumi and Professor Abul Kalam, Head of the Plastic Surgery Unit. Also attending the meeting was Razeq Mohammed Fakhrul, Member of Bangladesh Parliament, Comilla District 4.

Our future planning strategy is to seek advice from the leaders in plastic surgery in Bangladesh. Our aim is to establish how best we can assist them in their struggle to increase the number of plastic surgeons, and develop comprehensive cleft care services and speech therapy to improve surgical outcomes.

Bangladeshi surgeons wishing to specialise in plastic surgery must train at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. They have a 14 bed unit dedicated to cleft repair surgery and said they would be happy to consider partnering with Operation Cleft to develop the countries first "Comprehensive Cleft Care Centre".

They anticipate this centre could include all aspect of cleft care, from research to surgery, speech development and dental care. It may also include, a national referral system for very complex cases, training of doctors, nurses and young surgeons and

information sessions for young mothers and Community Health Workers on pre and post op care of babies born with a cleft lip or palate.

We are very excited about the possibility of working with the Dhaka Medical College Hospital Plastic Surgery Unit which is shortly to become the National Institute of Burns and Plastic Surgery.

Professor Kalam and Dr Sen have expressed their gratitude to Operation Cleft and the people who support this project. Professor Kalam said "We appreciate your genuine interest in helping to increase the number of qualified plastic surgeons in Bangladesh and improving their surgical skills and techniques. We are also very pleased that you are not just interested in pushing large numbers of operations like some other organisations but your focus is also on speech therapy and follow up of patients to monitor their progress, wellbeing and long term outcomes.

June 15 - Fathers Day in Bangladesh

What better gift could a father receive than to see his child with
"a smile for life"



Vital equipment

Special thanks to RAWCS project "Medical Equipment for Hospitals in Developing Countries" and the sponsoring club, Rotary Club of Woy Woy. It was through them that we acquired the medical equipment we took with us on our recent trip to Bangladesh.



Vici Funnell presented Khulna Medical College Hospital with a much needed Vital Signs Monitor with paediatric pack.

The Khulna Medical College Hospital and the Bogra Shaheed Zia Medical College were both presented with a Vital Signs Monitor complete with paediatric pack. The Khulna hospital's Superintendent, Dr. Proshanto Kumar Biswas, and Head of the Plastic Surgery Unit, Associate Professor Tariqul Islam, (pictured left) were thrilled with these gifts and asked us to express their sincere gratitude to the people of Australia for their support.

Each of our surgical team were also presented with a portable Pulse Oximeter with paediatric pack. They too were delighted as when previously asked what they needed, this was one of the things they had suggested would help them to ensure the health, safety and well being of their young patients.

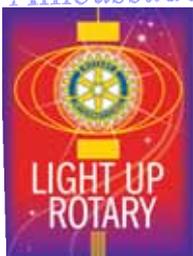
How can you help?

Would you like to support Operation Cleft? There are many ways in which you can help:

- ◆ **Give a donation**, using the form on the back page or via PayPal from our website (*PayPal or EFT are our preferred method of receiving donations in currencies other than Australian dollars*).
- ◆ **Schools** - Run a Spellathon or fundraising event. For some great ideas go to our web site at <http://operationcleft.org.au/want-to-help/schools/> and download "**Fundraising for schools**"
- ◆ **Rotary Clubs** - Coming to the end of the Rotary year - why not make a club contribution to Operation Cleft and encourage your members to support this unique Rotary project.
- ◆ **Businesses** - Give a donation and/or encourage your staff to give a donation and match their contribution. All donations of \$2.00 or more are fully tax deductible in Australia.
- ◆ **District Governors** - Suggest your spouse nominate Operation Cleft as their project of choice in your year or consider nominating an Ambassador in your district if you don't already have one.
- ◆ **Community Clubs** - Invite a guest speaker to tell your members about this amazing project.
- ◆ **Accountants /Solicitors** - Suggest Operation Cleft to your clients as a worthy and reputable charity.

No-one can do everything, but everyone can do something.

Ambassadors



Operation Cleft Ambassador, Yvonne Beadle became very ill and was rushed to hospital whilst on a cruise to New Zealand with her daughter Julianne.

Ironically when Yvonne was chatting to a friend just before the cruise, she mentioned what a wonderful support network Rotary is for people travelling overseas. As it turned out nothing could have been more true.

Knowing no-one in New Zealand, Yvonne suggested Julianne contact the local Rotary Club. The members rallied around to ensure that Yvonne and her daughter were well taken care of and had all the support they needed during what turned out to be a very long stay in hospital.

Special thanks to Charles Lambert and his wife Robyn and to Ann Clarke, President of the Napier Rotary Club. You will be pleased to hear that Yvonne is now well on the road to recovery.

International Cricket Council



From left to right, Faiyaz Khan, Operation Cleft Ambassador, Richard Kettleborough, Elite Umpires Executive, Asif Moyeen, Operation Cleft Patron and Kumar Dharmasena also a member of the Elite Umpires Executive. Richard presented a cheque to representatives of Operation Cleft at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur, Bangladesh

The Elite Umpires Executive of the International Cricket Council make a donation to an appropriate charity within the host country each year at the Twenty 20 World Cricket Tournament. Steve Davis, husband of Ann Davis, Past President of Eastwood Rotary Club in South Australia is a member of the Elite Umpires Executive. At Ann's suggestion, Steve presented an Operation Cleft brochure to the 12 Elite Umpires for consideration when they met for their annual seminar in Dubai. The group unanimously agreed that Operation Cleft would be their nominated charity for the ICC World Twenty 20 tournament in Bangladesh this year as it is an internationally recognized project that provides assistance to needy children in the host country.



"We are delighted to make a small contribution to the marvellous work of Operation Cleft," said Steve Davis, speaking on behalf of the Emirates Elite Panel of ICC Umpires. Providing free cleft repair surgery, as well as speech and language therapy to underprivileged children is a great service to the local community. Through this contribution, the Emirates Elite Panel of ICC Umpires wants to show unity and solidarity with Operation Cleft and also wants to play its role in promoting this project so that it creates more awareness in Bangladesh that, in turn, will benefit the children requiring this support."

Special thanks to Steve and Ann for putting Operation Cleft forward for this prestigious international recognition and support.

Golf night



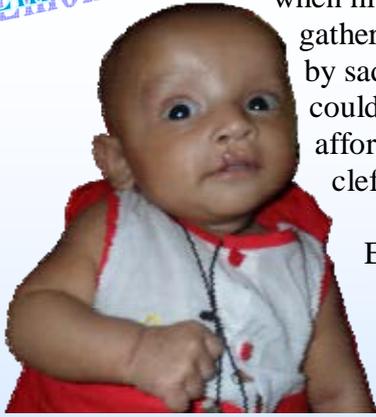
On March 31, the Rotary Club of Bendigo once again ran its annual charity golf event with Operation Cleft being the grateful recipient of funds raised. The evening was a huge success with twenty three teams assembling at 6.30 pm for a Bar B Que prior to hitting off for a 4 person Ambrose (in the dark).

The event this year raised enough to pay for thirty children to have the cleft repair surgery they so desperately need. Thank you to all the players, organisers and sponsors who contribute to making this event such a success.

Very special thanks to Glenn Reilly for the tireless effort he puts in year after year.

PS Thanks to the latest glow ball technology, not too many balls were lost.

Emon's search



Emon was very excited as he awaited the birth of his first child. Finally his wait was over when his wife gave birth to a strong, healthy little boy named Ehan. Emon's family had gathered to celebrate the birth of their first grand child but their joy was overshadowed by sadness when they saw that he had a cleft lip. They had heard about operations that could fix the baby's lip but the family survive on a very low income and they could not afford the cost. A friend in the village told Emon's wife that she had heard about free cleft repair surgery but she did not know who to contact.

Emon searched the internet looking for information on free cleft repair surgery for babies in Bangladesh and found Operation Cleft. In February he emailed us through the contact link on our website:

"Hi , I am Emon , from Bangladesh. I have one son Ehanur Rahman (Ehan) age 8 month 15 days. Problems in cleft Lip. I dont have money for surgery. Please share us your BD team contact number for communication. Please check attachment file for my only son "Ehan" photos and help him to do free treatment.

Thanks its will be very helpful. sic

We responded the same day and put Emon in touch with our surgeon Professor Bari. Two weeks later Ehan had the surgery that he needed. We recently received the following email from Emon with the photo (right) attached:



Dear Mrs Julie,

Sorry for late response. Also Thanks for your more attention.

Have a good news , the Cleft Lip operation has been done successfully by Dr. S. Bari at City Hospital in Dhaka Please find attachment updated photos for your references. Thanks to you and thank you for fixing my child. We are really happy for your cooperation. we hope if you visit in Bangladesh , we will meet you. Please keep in touch with us. Thanks to you from me & my family.

Regards, Emon. sic

On the move

We have been very fortunate for the last few years to have been provided with office space FOC by the Allardice Group. We are very grateful to Ken Allardice for his generosity and wish him all the very best for his new life in retirement.

We have now moved again but not too far. John Travaglini, Director of Prospect Wines and his colleague, Tony are at 16 Apollo Court, Blackburn just a few doors down from Allardice. When they heard we were looking for new premises, they very kindly offered to let us use some offices in their warehouse that were not being used. We are now all settled in and would like to thank John, Tony and Ken for their wonderful support.

Thanks also to our wonderful team of volunteers who did all the heavy lifting and organising. Great job.

Prospect Wines focus on clean skins, gift hampers, fundraising and custom labels. They deliver any where in Australia so why not take a look at their web site when considering your next fundraiser.

<http://www.prospectwines.com.au> or if you would like to simply order some wine at terrific prices go to <http://halfpricewine.com.au>. John says, "Our major focus is on great wine at great prices. Our wines in fact are not cleanskins. We source wines from around Australia and buy them unlabelled, however all our wines are sold under the Prospect Wines label. We are proud of the quality of our wines and are happy to offer a money back guarantee.



When you buy from Prospect Wines you get value, quality and reliability.



A Smile

What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity.

These are but trifles, to be sure; but, scattered along life's pathway, the good they do is inconceivable.

*Joseph Addison
circa 1695*

The cost

With the support of our plastic surgeons, Operation Cleft keeps the cost of surgery to a minimum.

\$250 will give an underprivileged child in Bangladesh a

"a smile for life"

(All figures quoted in Australian dollars).

To make a donation, complete the form below

For more details go to www.operationcleft.org.au

I/we would like to make a donation *monthly *quarterly * Please tick your preferred donation method

** If ticked, the amount indicated below will be charged to your credit card each month or quarter until you terminate the request.*

Credit card donations may also be made via PayPal, (our secure online payment facility) - visit www.operationcleft.org.au

\$250 for cleft repair surgery for one child *or* \$..... for operations

I would like to make a donation of \$

My cheque is enclosed *(Cheques should be made payable to Operation Cleft)*

Please charge my credit card - MasterCard Visa
Please print name above (as it appears on your credit card)

Number on card _ _ _ _ _ Expiry date ____ / ____

Signature of cardholder

Name
First name Last name Please print the name of your club, business, school or group if applicable

Address State P/code

Telephone H: .../..... B: .../..... Mob: Email:.....

* For donations in lieu of - I would like a certificate in the name of
as this donation has been given in lieu of a gift for : birthday Xmas other *or* in memory of

please tick where applicable

Please send this completed coupon with your donation to: **Operation Cleft, PO Box 631, Box Hill Vic. 3128**

For further information - Tel: 0414 246851 Email: info@operationcleft.org.au Web: www.operationcleft.org.au

Operation Cleft Australia is a Public Ancillary Fund with DGR status. ABN - 36 063 471 446

Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible in Australia