

## From the Chair



I would like to highlight the important role that volunteers play in Operation Cleft and to say thank you on behalf of all the children who have received surgery as a direct result of the funds raised or saved through your efforts.

The remarkable creativity of our volunteer fundraisers never ceases to amaze me. From all parts of the globe, individuals and groups work tirelessly to raise the funds that pay for surgery, speech therapy and community education. Our educational program, whilst a relatively new and small part of the overall program, has become an integral part of our service and is vital to the well being of the children and their families.

We recently received a substantial donation from the Rotary Club of Bendigo being the proceeds from their annual Night Golf event. As a result of the generosity of club members, sponsors, players and the organising team, this contribution will enable us to provide cleft repair surgery for another thirty three children. Well done and thank you all.

Many clubs and individuals create events or products to raise funds for us. In every case it is the unstinting contribution of individual volunteers that make these a success. The hours of work and the care and commitment is deeply appreciated. Your efforts contribute to transforming the lives of children who otherwise would continue living with disfigurement, social isolation, infections and other consequences of untreated cleft conditions.

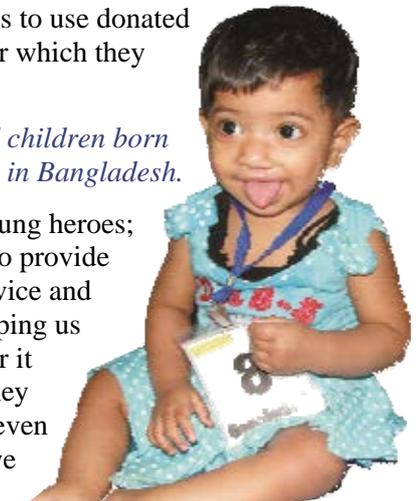
A big thank you to all our Ambassadors from Australia and overseas who promote Operation Cleft and raise funds for the program. Our success is largely due to your continued passion and support. Special thanks to our Patron and Ambassador in Bangladesh who, with support from a group of dedicated colleagues make regular and significant contributions. I would also like to acknowledge the generosity of our donors, whether

businesses, individuals or groups, family trusts or private supporters. And to the many people who have dedicated birthday and anniversary celebrations to our work by asking friends and family to donate to Operation Cleft in lieu of a gift. Your consideration and generosity is deeply appreciated.

I must take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers who assist with our administration. Your loyalty and reliability week after week is remarkable. Also over the years various businesses have provided us with office space pro bono. This is a very substantial and important donation in kind that together with our voluntary administration team saves us a considerable amount which enables us to use donated funds for the purpose for which they were given.

*To help underprivileged children born with a cleft lip or palate in Bangladesh.*

I also note the other unsung heroes; relatives and friends who provide background support, advice and assistance including helping us recover our website after it was recently hacked. They never ask for thanks or even acknowledgement but we greatly appreciate your quiet and generous contributions.



Finally my thanks go to our voluntary committee members and in particular those people who act as treasurer and secretary. Also to our previous Chairmen. Your dedication and many hours of work have made an important contribution to our success.

While not strictly volunteers, the ongoing support of our Plastic Surgeons and their support teams in Bangladesh make the program possible. While we pay them for their services, it is important to note that the cost of surgery is far less than they could charge a private patient. So thank you all. Together we are able to make the world a better place.

*Vici Funnell*

*Chair, Operation Cleft Management Committee*

*Operation Cleft Australia Inc. is a public ancillary fund with DGR (item 2) status. It is corporate trustee for the Operation Cleft Australia Foundation Trust. All donations of \$2.00 or more are fully tax deductible in Australia. ABN # 36 063 471 446*

## Exciting news

After due consideration, the Operation Cleft Management Committee decided that effective July 1, 2015 Operation Cleft would be split into two major components; one being surgical and the other, speech therapy. The surgical program will continue with our team of eight plastic surgeons completing at least 1,000 operations annually.



The big change is that the Operation Cleft surgical program will now be implemented in Bangladesh by our new in-country partner, the Glencoe Foundation rather than by CDD as it has been for the past nine years. The Glencoe Foundation Bangladesh was established in 2010 by Colin McFarlane AM as an international NGO to run "Walk for Life", the club foot correction program using the poinsettia method. Many of you will know Colin as he was the founder of Operation Cleft and has always maintained his passion for this unique project that has such a huge impact on children's lives. Colin and the team at Glencoe are excited about their new role with Operation Cleft and aim to inject new enthusiasm and vitality into the program.

**Glencoe Foundation Bangladesh staff - pictured from left to right - Hero Clement Gomes, Accounts Officer, Moinul Islam, Operation Cleft In country Project Manager, (centre back) Moin Uddin Khaled Chy, IT & Communications Officer, (centre front ) Zanahgir Alam, Country Director, Liton Rozarrio, HR & Admin Officer and Colin McFarlane AM, Founder & Chairman**

## Speech therapy

In addition to the surgical program we will continue to support speech therapy as a post operative service for our patients. The speech therapy program will be further developed and implemented in partnership with CDD which will compliment their extensive range of programs focusing on rehabilitation and integration of people with a disability.



Last year the Government of Bangladesh (Ministry of Social Welfare) agreed to support the National Disability Foundation in the development of 103 one-stop disability service centres spread across 68 districts. This is welcome news to the people of Bangladesh as rehabilitation services are currently very limited.

All the centres will provide physiotherapy, vision and hearing assessment, support and assistive devices. These one-stop centres will be staffed by a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, therapy assistant, audiometric assistant, refractionist and other support staff. Speech therapy is also included in the package but due to the low number of qualified speech and language therapists in Bangladesh, very few of the centres are currently able to offer speech therapy services. Recently, in an effort to address this problem, the foundation ran some short course training sessions for a number of the centres therapy assistants in the hope of providing some speech therapy services at a basic level. This however does not adequately provide the knowledge and skills required to offer quality services.

Our aim is to work with CDD to develop a model that will assist in making speech and language therapy a sustainable and readily accessible service to the people of Bangladesh. We will be particularly focused on early intervention for the young children who have had cleft repair surgery and would benefit greatly from ongoing speech therapy after their surgery.



We look forward to confirming all details and re-launching the new speech therapy program in a month or so.

*Watch our web site and Facebook page for updates.*

## Cost of a smile

Whilst it is said that a smile costs nothing to give, for Operation Cleft there is a cost. A small one in the grand scheme of things but a cost never the less. Our aim is to give children in Bangladesh who were born with a cleft lip or palate, a smile of their very own. One that they can keep forever and share generously with others.

Although we strive to keep costs to a minimum, inflation is inevitable. Due to increased in-country costs, a small increase in surgeons fees and variations in the exchange rate, each operation now costs around \$300. This is a small increase and considering the incredible difference that this surgery makes we believe it is still a very small price to pay for the *gift of a smile for life*.



## The face that started it all



Meet Amedul - This sad and shy young man was largely responsible for the birth of Operation Cleft. He was twelve at the time he was spotted by a group of visiting Rotarians at a hospital in Bangladesh. But Amedul was not there for treatment on his cleft lip. He was part of a family group visiting a patient.

Never having seen a person with an untreated cleft before, the group was shocked and asked one of the doctors, why this child's mouth had not been fixed. The doctor responded sadly, "Our plastic surgeons can fix this condition quite quickly and economically but these patients are very poor and the surgery is not covered by our public health system. They just do not have the money to pay". The Doctor went on to explain that there are about 300,000 people of all ages with untreated cleft lips and palates in Bangladesh and another 5,000 – 6,000 babies born with this condition every year.

These statistics and the image of this young man had a profound effect on the visiting Rotarians. On returning to Australia they approached the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central to ask if they would consider sponsoring some cleft repair operations.



Now many years later, we are preparing to celebrate our 10th anniversary and 10,000th operation. Thank you for helping us reach this incredible milestone. As part of our planned celebrations, we are endeavouring to locate Amedul, who would now be 22. Will we be able to find him? If so, what would you like to know about how your donation changed his life? Did he finish school? Does he have a job? Is he married? Does he have children? Send your suggestions to [info@operationcleft.org.au](mailto:info@operationcleft.org.au).

## Help us help them

- ◆ **Donations** may be made by completing the form on the back page or via our website using PayPal.
  - ◆ **Schools** - Run a 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, Rotaract, Interact Clubs** - as part of your commitment to international service, consider making a club contribution to Operation Cleft.
  - ◆ **Businesses** - Make 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.
  - ◆ **Accountants /Solicitors** - Suggest Operation Cleft to your clients as a worthy and reputable charity who have DGR (item 2) status.
  - ◆ **Private Family Foundations (DGR item 1)** wishing to contribute to Operation Cleft may do so via the RAWCS website at [www.rawcs.com.au](http://www.rawcs.com.au)
- project #64/2007-08



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



**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*



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

**\$300** will give an underprivileged child in Bangladesh a

**"a smile for life"**

*(All figures quoted in Australian dollars).*

To make a donation, please complete the form below

For more details go to [www.operationcleft.org.au](http://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](http://www.operationcleft.org.au)

\$300 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:.....

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](mailto:info@operationcleft.org.au) Web: [www.operationcleft.org.au](http://www.operationcleft.org.au)**

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