



Providing sustainable
maternal health care in developing countries.

October 15, 2015

2015 Annual General Meeting – Chairman’s Address

In accordance with the wishes of Barbara May Browning, the Foundation continues to support her daughter, Valerie Browning AM, and her grandson, Dr Andrew Browning, in providing access to expert maternal healthcare, outreach services and hospitals for poor women, and those in remote communities in Africa. The projects funded by the BMF aim to decrease the high incidence of women and babies who die or who are injured during childbirth. The importance of this work is illustrated by its inclusion in the Millennium Goals of the United Nations.

During 2014/2015 much work has been done to increase and improve the hospitals in Barhirdar and Mille, Ethiopia, and a new hospital complex is being planned for Arusha.

DONATIONS

Donations received in the year ended 30 June 2015 were \$682,502 compared with \$679,110 in the previous year. These figures are not representative of our fundraising efforts as the Foundation has played a role in obtaining donations for our projects from other charitable foundations. These donations, totalling hundreds of thousands of dollars, were paid through other Charities who have DGR1 status to comply with taxation law. It is pleasing to report that the Barbara May Foundation is now a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) with DGR1 status. Hence, all Australian donations can now be made through us. In addition to cash donations our cause was assisted by donations of equipment and the voluntary service of doctors and midwives.

OPERATING CENTRES

As you will see from the reports on our three main projects set out below, the centres we support need funds not only to operate the networks but also to increase their facilities and capacity as activity increases. The decrease in the value of the Australian dollar has increased the cost of operations in East Africa as their currencies tend to be tied to the US dollar.

Barbara May Maternity Hospital- Mille, Ethiopia.

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, and the extensions to, this hospital from donations from the Workplace Giving Program of the Sydney and South Western Sydney Local Health Districts. We are sincerely grateful to the personnel of the hospitals in this district for the continued support.

During the year Crown Princess Mary of Denmark visited the hospital in her capacity as a United Nations Population Fund Patron.

Vision Maternity Care Hospital- Barhirdar, Ethiopia

This hospital is run by a local Board with oversight from Andrew. The rundown health centre originally provided by the Government has successfully provided free obstetric services for women who cannot afford such help. This 10-bed interim centre is delivering more than 2,000 babies a year but cannot cope with the increasing demand. Construction of this badly needed new hospital is well underway and is a highlight of this year. We are particularly grateful to Australian volunteer, Brad Baker, who went to Barhirdar to supervise the beginning of the construction. We anticipate the new hospital will be opened in 2016.

Maternity Africa - Arusha, Tanzania

With the assistance of Sister Katie Christie, Andrew runs a Midwife Training Centre at the Selian Hospital. The centre implements systems to train local maternal health providers in sound clinical skills and competency. It also provides obstetric services and obstetric fistula repair. Andrew resides in Arusha with his family and from there visits hospitals throughout Africa treating women suffering from obstetric fistula.

Recently, land has been donated and a grant promised to build a new Medical Centre in Arusha providing maternity services, fistula repairs and midwife training. This is a major development and will enable Andrew and his team to provide even greater impact on the improvement of maternal healthcare in Africa.

SPECIAL THANKS

In a few years our donors have enabled us to build and operate hospitals dedicated to serving some of the poorest and most disadvantaged people on earth with improved and experienced maternity care. Valerie and Andrew have much experience in Africa but they need the financial help of our donors to implement their network of maternity care. We thank all our supporters whether they provide cash, service as volunteers, equipment or prayers. It should be noted that much support comes from the medical profession and from charitable foundations who have visited the operations in Africa. I suspect that they better understand the merit of the work that we finance.

The Foundation would also like to acknowledge the incredible dedication of the expat volunteers that have visited Africa to work in the various projects. Last year 20 volunteers joined Valerie and Andrew and we are grateful to the MACH Foundation for their continued support of these selfless men and women. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Planet Wheeler for their support of the Midwife Training Centre in Arusha, and the new hospital in Barhirdar. We are equally grateful to all our supporters – large and small.

I would like to thank the tireless efforts of our General Manager, Jo Crowley. Thanks also to our Directors. Our Treasurer and Company Secretary, Frank Roberts, retires this year. Frank has put his heart and soul into serving this Foundation. His contribution was invaluable. Susan Doyle also retires. Susan is an experienced director and a generous benefactor. We thank both these directors for their service in times of much activity and progress.

We start our Board meetings with prayer and we know that many of our supporters pray for us. We believe that the work that Andrew and Valerie and their teams do is work that God would have us do. To God be the Glory.

Michael Sharpe AO



Chairman

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