

Rotary Club of Ballarat West

Cook Islands Dental Volunteers visit

October 24 to November 8th 2009

RAWCS Project 2008/*9

This was an excellent visit – lots of work done, with tremendous local interest, support and appreciation. It was a multifaceted visit involving Three teams, 17 volunteers and Two islands.

Good publicity was generated for Rotary in Press and TV on both Rarotonga and Aitutaki islands. There was enthusiastic local involvement in much of the work done.

Rotary support came from the Rotary Foundation, the Rotary Clubs of Ballarat West, Ballarat South and Rarotonga. Donations-in-Kind D9780 and RAWCS Southern Region

Many lasting and sustainable aspects to the project with tremendous goodwill generated

The whole Rotary team with the dental staff at the Rarotonga Dental Clinic



1. Oral Health Project ;

A talented multidisciplinary team of dentists, therapists, nurses, & schoolteachers worked in schools on the islands of Rarotonga and Aitutaki in conjunction with local Cook Island dental therapists

Dianna Brotheridge - Dental Therapist Tasmania

Debbie Nunn- Dental Therapist Queensland.

Pam Hall - Primary School Teacher

Camille Lewis Dental Nurse

Helen Cooper - Teacher

Dr Erika Ohvall Swedish Dentist

Dr. Claudia Gunther German Dentist

L to R- ; Pam Hall, Helen Cooper, Di Brotheridge, Camille Lewis, Erika Ohvall, Claudia Gunther, Debbie Nunn



Before the visit the dental therapists collected public Oral Hygiene resources from all around Australia – DVDs, CDs, posters, pamphlets, books, flip charts, etc. These were then demonstrated and evaluated for suitability in the Cook Is. environment by seminars involving the 5 local Cook Islander Dental Therapists (Taiora Henry, Mata Maxwell, Maara Kenning, Shane Napa and Tina Kanvai)



Rotary Supplied;

3500 tooth brushes and 3000 tubes of toothpaste
6 Dentition Models and Brushes
8 Small Animal Dentition Models
2 Large Dog Dentition Models with brushes
6 DVDs of Dr Rabbit's World Tour
4 Videos of Dr Rabbit's World Tour
6 DVDs of Healthy Teeth for Life
2 DVDs of the display of "Think before you drink"
6 Laminated posters of "Lift the Lip"
Approx. 100 stickers for Mirrors on How to Brush

The local TV station was visited and a meeting with station manager Jeanne Matenga to encourage broadcasting of public health education messages. DVDs of Healthy Teeth for Life and Dr Rabbits World Tour were left for Jeanne to look at.

A meeting was arranged with the local visiting Health Care Nurses and promotional materials discussed and evaluated. They were very impressed with the Healthy Teeth for life DVD and wanted copies to show to mothers. Their suggestion was that a dedicated Oral Health Promotion Officer was needed to run a health promotion program in the islands and liaise with them on implementation.

Led by Dental Therapists Di Brotheridge and Debbie Nunn, the team developed a hands-on Oral Health Education program in the schools consisting of

1. Tooth brushing instruction using a large hand puppet ("Buster") with student involvement
2. Question and Answer time; 20 structured questions with open ended answers to encourage group interaction and discussion (Questionnaires were handed out to groups of 6 children)
3. Nutrition – "Healthy" foods and "Sometimes" foods.
4. Story time; an amusing large sized colour illustrated book "Ratbag and Scatterbrain learn about their teeth!"
5. Amusing dress-up and play-acting sketch involving Erika Ohvall or Helen Cooper as a Plaque Monster and "Vanilla Camilla" the Tooth Fairy, Di as "Buster" and Pam Hall as "Dr Bright Smiles"
6. Group plaque disclosing sessions – children divided up into groups of 10; Two children chewed plaque disclosing tablets and the others identified the pink plaque – subjects then brushed their teeth and the other 8 checked to see if and where there was remaining plaque on the teeth.
7. Donations of free toothpaste and brushes (3500) to schoolchildren on Rarotonga and Aitutaki and supplies sent to the other outer islands. (Their supplies had run out)

Nearly all children have their own brushes which are placed in a named bottle for storage

Schools visited were Avarua School (Primary, Intermediate and Seniors) and Nikau on Rarotonga; and the Vaitau School, Tekaaroa Seventh Day Adventist School and Ararua Primary and Secondary Colleges on Aitutaki island.

At the Avarua school a tooth brushing photo of the team was printed and placed in the school newsletter whilst we were still working there!



“Buster”



Camille the “Tooth Fairy”- a tremendous hit with all the children!

Overall we had a fantastic reception at all the schools. Many of the children had seen us perform the play on TV and were very keen to see us live!! The schools were so accommodating and so grateful to us being there it was overwhelming.

We were also given fabulous morning teas/lunches at all the schools.

A Wish List was drawn up of requested selected resource materials will be sent later.

2. Building Project

Building Team

Peter Copp PHF - Dental Equipment Installation Engineer.

Wayne Cooper – Building Surveyor, Master Builders Association, RC Ballarat West

Brian Hall – Engineer and I.T., - RC Ballarat South

Felicity Copp – Bank Employee





Team members pictured here Kendra Attwell, Peter Copp, Fellicity Copp, Wayne Cooper and Brian Hall



On a Rotary volunteer visit to the Cook Islands in 2008 the dental team measured the dimensions of the Prosthetic labs. on both Rarotonga and Aitutaki and designed new cabinetry. The old dental prosthetics Lab. was very shabby. The bench tops were cracked and uneven, and most of the cabinetry rotten and unhygienic - this was a priority for replacement by the Cook Islands Ministry of Health.

New custom fitted cabinets were ordered and packed into a Rotary DIK container in Geelong with help from Rotarian, Cook Islander and other Pacific Island volunteers. This was then shipped over in flat packs (on arrival they completely filled up the waiting room and part of one surgery!) There were some 72 boxes of cabinetry in total - some were destined for Rarotonga and some for Aitutaki, so they had to be arranged carefully as the split-port container contents had to go to two widely separated islands and there was no room for mistakes in their allocated destinations.

Assembling and fitting the cabinetry to create two new labs. was a big task in the short time we had available, but under the leadership of Wayne Cooper and Peter Copp and with support from the Cook islands dental staff and the rest of the team, we were able to make both labs. fully operational before we left.

Both Labs. (Rarotonga and Aitutaki) were stocked with new equipment and supplies (e.g. plaster, acrylic, 100's of sets of new denture teeth, burs, bench motors, wax, clasp wire etc.) as needed to make them fully functional. This was of particular significance at Aitutaki where and there was a large waiting list of denture patients and where previously the Prosthetics Lab. was non functional

Cook Islander and Tongan volunteers helped Rotarians to pack the container in Geelong Australia



Also loaded into the DIK container were donations of dental supplies and equipment, medical supplies, kitchen equipment for the Aitutaki hospital, books and computers for schools, Rotary assembled wheelchairs for handicapped children, sports uniforms for the Cook Islands athletics teams and other items. Previous visits and good communications with the Cook Islands dental department resulted in many of these items being included that had been specifically requested by the Islanders and were provided by the resources of Rotary D9780 DIK.



The funding for the custom fitted cabinets with stone tops was provided by a generous donation from Ballarat South Rotary Club and a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant.

Also repairs to equipment were done by dental equipment engineer Peter Copp and dentists in the team on both Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

New cabinetry constructed for Prosthetics labs. on Rarotonga and Aitutaki by Wayne Cooper, Peter & Felicity Copp and Brian Hall. Brian also looked after the IT component of the project.
Some cabinetry pieces went to the wrong island in the shipping container but >90% OK
General repairs to equipment such as x-ray developer, autoclave, dental chairs, mobile units, lights.

3. Clinical Education and Treatment

Dr. David Goldsmith Dentist

Bill Davies Dental Prosthetist

Dr. Toni McNicol Specialist Orthodontist

Dr. John Williams General dentist with a special interest in Dental Implants

Dr. Garry Owen – Specialist Endodontist

Kendra-Lee Attwell Dental Nurse

Cook Islander dentists have very little access to further education or to be exposed directly to modern specialist dental techniques. The team had several specialist dentists and performed some advanced dental techniques with active participation clinically by the local Cook Islander dentists.



Mini Implants
Dr John Williams
Ballarat Dentist

Titanium Implants – over 14 fixtures placed surgically with local dentist involvement by Dr John Williams.

Spares kits of Mini Implants were left in Rarotonga so that this type of work can be carried on in the future.

These types of implants are very useful for the stabilization of full or partial dentures.



Orthodontics
Dr Toni McNicol
Ballarat Orthodontist



Orthodontics – instruction in the placement of fixed appliance (braces) with local dentist participation. Possibility of a follow up program of future visits explored by specialist orthodontist Dr Toni McNicol who has offered to make 6 monthly visits to provide continuity of orthodontic care available to the Cook Is. for the first time.



Endodontics –
Dr Garry Owen

Endodontics; Many complex and less complex Root Canal cases were treated both in Rarotonga and Aitutaki by Ballarat dentist Dr Garry Owen (who has a Masters degree in endodontics) with demonstrations of recommended techniques given to local dentists as well as many general dentistry cases.

General dentistry – some cases treated in Aitutaki and 2 Swedish dentists will carry on clinical work on Aitutaki Island. Much dental stock and equipment was donated and the store room was completely reorganized including new shelving. Stock also reorganized at Aitutaki clinic.



Dental Prosthetics
Bill Davies Prosthetist
- RC Ballarat West

Prosthetics; many clinical denture cases were undertaken by Prosthetist Bill Davies. Technical instruction was given in denture construction and processing utilising time and cost saving techniques and modern materials. Bill also gave invaluable Prosthetics support to Dr J. Williams with his implant work in stabilizing dentures and to Dr T. McNicol with fabricating removable orthodontic appliances. Bill Davies was always first team member to start work, was last to leave and he even brought clinical cases back to Australia to finish!

4. Aitutaki Hospital

A needs assessment Rotary visit in 2008 to Aitutaki island identified several areas where Rotary could help, particularly in the hospital kitchen, dental prosthetics lab, and school libraries. The contacts established on this visit proved useful as our shipping container was there waiting for our team on arrival with logistical support available and all local shipping and freight and Customs charges generously waived.



Thanks to the Rotary Foundation Matching Grant funding we were able to buy new kitchen equipment, including a new freezer, fridge, oven, microwave, sandwich makers, BBQ, kettle etc. to complement the crockery and cutlery donated by Rotary DIK. This was all greatly appreciated and put to immediate use; the Rotary team being some of the first beneficiaries!

Rotary D9780 DIK also provided useful donations of wheelchairs, walking frames, linen, medical and dental supplies and equipment and a computer, 2 TVs, 2 DVD players and a data projector were donated and put to use in the Aitutaki hospital for public health education

5. Schools

Primary and Secondary books, exercise books, encyclopedias and computers donated by DIK D9780 were presented to schools on Rarotonga, Aitutaki and several of the outer islands – they were well received and appreciated by the schools who vouched that the content and quality of the DIK books were very good and the numbers of books received (150+boxes) was truly exceptional.

Brian Hall the Rotarian in our team with extensive IT experience was able to install all the computers and get them operational.

The Oral Health Promotion team continued their work on Aitutaki and visited all of the schools on the island, getting a great reception wherever they went.



Aitutaki Oral Hygiene Promotion in the schools team



Books for school Libraries

Donations of Second hand clothing was donated to the Red Cross, and 4 new wheelchairs for handicapped children which had been assembled by a Rotary Club in Western Australia.

24 sets of new track suits were donated to the Cook Islands Sport Associations by the University of Ballarat.



The Rotary Club of Ballarat West Polo Shirts were appreciated and worn by the team on most days.

They were comfortable and easy care whilst providing good publicity for Rotary.

Two Rotarians, Pam & Brian Hall, Stayed longer to visit the Southern outer islands of Mauke and Atiu and did useful work there, particularly in the schools. Their entrepreneurial spirit exhibited by visiting these more remote communities was greatly appreciated by the people whilst providing good publicity for Rotary.

A follow-up parcel of specially targeted goods that we identified during the visit as being greatly needed is currently being put together and this will be sent to the Cook Islands in the near future.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who made this visit possible; To-

The **Rotary Foundation** for lending its financial support at a particularly difficult time for Rotary following the Global Financial Crisis. This vote of confidence that Rotary International gave by supporting this project was much appreciated and I feel this was endorsed by the results achieved.

The **Rotary Clubs** of Ballarat West, Ballarat South and Rarotonga for their support both financial and practical. Especially Mike Pynenberg, Mousie Skews and John McElhinney in Raro.

George Hosking, and all the friendly Nurses, Dentists and Dental Therapists at the Rarotonga Dental clinics for their involvement, support (and great food!)

Rotary D9780 **Donations in Kind** in Geelong

Rotary Australia World Community Service (**RAWCS**)

Taia Charlie and all the friendly Aitutaki Hospital staff especially Dr Koko, Maui and Anna

And most of all to a fantastic team of volunteers!

Some of us had been on similar visits before but many others had never even met one another before. Everyone put in a great effort and supported one another; - this was a very harmonious team working amongst friendly people in a beautiful, pristine part of the world. The whole team had a wonderful time whilst making lasting improvements and fostering Rotary goodwill on both islands



If ever there was “Magic Moment” that defined the visit for the team, then this was it!

On our last day on Aitutaki and we were all individually brought together, completely unawares and dressed in these individually made and custom fitted outfits, then covered in lais and ais before being taken to the airport, dressed just like this, and put on the airplane by the hospital staff and helpers...

Conclusion

Australians and Cook Islanders worked together in both countries.

A multidisciplinary team of dental experts was supported by experienced tradesmen and educators. Rotary D9780 DIK and RAWCS helped with donations, tax deductibility, transportation and logistics. Individual Rotary Clubs in two countries and a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant from USA provided funding.

And they all combined to provide education, treatment, lasting infrastructure improvements, and an ongoing health education program provided with the materials to carry this work on into the future.

This was a project that could only be done by Rotary.

Volunteer Team Members

Clinical Team

(Working at Tupapa Dental Clinic, Rarotonga, and Aitutaki Hospital)

Dr. David Goldsmith Dentist & Team Leader

Bill Davies Dental Prosthetist

Dr. Toni McNicol Specialist Orthodontist

Dr. John Williams General Dentist with a special interest in Dental Implants

Dr. Garry Owen – Specialist Endodontist

Kendra-Lee Attwell Dental Nurse

Oral Health Promotion Project Team

(working in schools on Rarotonga and Aitutaki and with local therapists)

Dianna Brotheridge - Dental Therapist Tasmania

Debbie Nunn- Dental Therapist Queensland.

Pam Hall – Primary School Teacher

Camille Lewis Dental Nurse

Helen Cooper - Teacher

Dr Erika Ohvall Swedish Dentist

Dr. Claudia Gunther German Dentist

Building Team

(Installing new Dental prosthetics Labs. on Rarotonga and Aitutaki and other work)

Peter Copp PHF - Dental Equipment Installation Engineer.

Brian Hall Engineer, - RC Ballarat South

Wayne Cooper – Building Surveyor, Master Builders Association, Ballarat

Felicity Copp – Banking