

Medical Aid Abroad, Auckland

Annual Report 2000

2000 was another active year for MAA. The organisation is in good heart and plans are in place to develop our operations further. This report summarises some of the progress that has been made.

INCOMING GOODS

Supplies come from many sources, some of very high quality and well in date. Donations from manufacturers and wholesalers are particularly useful and we are very grateful for these. Many pharmacies send us goods but these are of variable quality and we have difficulty in convincing some suppliers not to use MAA as place to send drug waste. This matter needs more effort on our part in the future to ensure that all incoming pharmaceuticals meet minimum standards of acceptability.

With the closure of the NZBS rooms in Grafton MAA members are temporarily storing incoming goods at the Red Cross Society rooms at Wakefield St and also at the Diagnostic Medlab branch in Symonds St prior to regular collection. We are very grateful for this help. Hospital pharmacies have also been helpful, as well as various doctors.

OUTGOING GOODS

We have sent 48 orders to a wide range of countries, a large increase on previous years (Table 1). We have continued to supply Bougainville and Vietnam and sent a large order to East Timor. Redundant equipment from the SDA hospital in Auckland was sent to Vietnam in two containers. Large volumes of supplies have also been sent to Tonga. These orders have meant a great deal of work for individual MAA members, which is greatly appreciated.

Table 1. Orders processed by MAA Auckland 1996-1999

	1997	1998	1999	2000
Orders processed	25	30	27	48
Areas orders sent				
Pacific* (%)	64	53	52	50
Asia† (%)	28	20	19	30
Africa/India‡ (%)	8	23	19	10
Others¶ (%)	0	4	10	10

*PNG (incl. Bougainville) Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue

† Vietnam, Cambodia, Mongolia, East Timor, Philippines

‡ Somalia, Mozambique, India

¶ Others includes Azerbaijan, VOSO and Mercy Ships

COMMUNICATIONS

The MAA website (www.maa.org.nz) is proving to be a valuable source of enquiries and orders. We have included links to similar organisations around the world on our web site that should be of value to interested viewers. Thanks to Larry Robbins for facilitating this. Another popular innovation this year has been a quarterly newsletter, [CommunicAid](#).

CONSTITUTION

This has been under review for some time. At the moment Auckland MAA is the only branch operating and the old constitution is now not operative. It was thus important to review all constitutional matters. The final draft is in the hands of Gina Woodfield, solicitor, for completion. MAA will change its name to MAA-NZ. This clearly identifies the origin of MAA as a NZ

organisation and means that any other Centre wanting to set up a branch can do so under this name. Potential Trustees are being approached.

ROOMS

The present rooms are adequate but only because some members are storing goods and equipment in their homes. We are negotiating with the Medical School for space in the old ARBS building. We have also had discussions with World Vision regarding a permanent site in their planned new facility in Penrose. Goods in the present rooms have been better organised and although room is limited, good use has been made of available space.

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

An article on MAA has instead been submitted by Pharmacy Today. An article on MAA is currently being prepared for the NZ Doctor magazine and another article has appeared in the NZ Dental Journal. Press releases from time to time would seem a reasonable move. Posters have been placed in hospitals and the University. Later this year we will be presenting a paper at a community development conference in Rotorua.

DENTAL SECTION

Many large shipments of dental equipment have been sent overseas. The generous donations of many dental colleagues and dental equipment suppliers is gratefully acknowledged. Dr Newton Wickham has generously established a dental aid trust, with which to better facilitate continued provision of dental supplies overseas.

SORTING AND PACKING

We are indebted to a small team of dedicated pharmacists who regularly sort incoming goods and assist in the packing of orders. Owen Diggelman and Lily Kwok, together with Digby and Jan Nelson, do a great job.

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

These have been held every second month and have been well attended. Resignations have come from a long term member and helper Brian McGrath due to ill health and Dr Stafford Bourke. We made a presentation to Dr John and Audrey Stevens who for many years maintained the work of packing orders requested from MAA. We welcomed Dr Bernie Brenner, Pat Alley and Don Watkins to the group.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Bernie Brenner and Pat Alley arranged for Michael Chilombo a radiographer from Swaziland to travel to NZ for a training course. The Executive feels that MAA should support and facilitate more projects of this nature in future.

2001

There is a determination by members of MAA to keep the organisation alive and to expand its activities. We need to work more closely with Government-funded organisations to facilitate training and teaching in developing countries. Links with other charitable organisations should be expanded to share the load. Increased publicity is also needed to keep countries aware of our activities and to also keep churches and other charitable organisations fully informed. Expansion of our liaisons with drug manufacturers and wholesalers is also required to ensure a steady flow of high quality goods. In the hospitals we need a better system of locating and obtaining serviceable equipment before it is discarded. We also need a larger base store in a better location ie a permanent home. Given time and finance, a part-time worker may soon be required either on an honorarium or wage. A fund raising effort may be soon needed.

CONCLUSION

Thanks are due to the many people who have contributed during the year to the work of MAA. It is a quiet background organisation but its work is greatly appreciated by those who use our services. We receive numerous letters acknowledging our contribution .

I personally am optimistic about the future of MAA but we will need to recruit younger members of the overall medical fraternity into the organisation if we are to fulfil our potential. I sense a determination to move forward in new directions so I think we can look forward to the future with some confidence.

Finally I would like to thank our hardworking Secretary for well-organised documentation and the Treasurer for keeping track of our finances as well as many other positive contributions.

Dr Graeme Woodfield
Chairman, MAA Executive
March 2001