



## ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Medical Aid Abroad NZ (MAANZ) has continued to fulfil its aim of providing medical supplies for health programmes in many countries overseas.

From February 2007 to February 2008 we dispatched 252 cartons of goods plus wheel chairs, hospital beds, instrument trolleys, examination couches, theatre trolleys and stools in small numbers. An infant incubator was sent to the Solomon Islands. Other consignments included walking sticks, crutches, artificial lower legs, an otoscope and a pulse oximeter, and a range of other medical equipment. We are trying to expand our list of overseas contacts and by regular contact try to keep them informed of stock we have in hand and this is proving useful. The limitation on our activities is the difficulty in sending goods and the associated transport costs.

We supplied large quantities of goods to other medical organisations working in Pacific Island Countries. For example we supported cardiac and urology projects to Samoa, and cleft lip repair and cataract teams to Fiji. This greatly reduces the costs of their projects. We would like to expand our work in this area.

Arun Pragji has also sent consignments of dental equipment to a number of countries. Extra assistance with this important dental work is needed.

The feedback from some overseas groups has been very encouraging, particularly from Tonga, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomons.

**Where do they go to?** Consignments were sent to Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Samoa and carried by medical students on electives to Zambia, Niger, Uganda, Ecuador, Indonesia, Laos, Somalia, and India.

### Supplies In

We are grateful for the many consignments of goods from hospitals, pharmacies, wholesalers and private individuals. Canterbury MAA has shipped large consignments of medicines to us.

### Rooms

MAANZ is now well established in our rooms in National Women's Hospital basement below block 17. A Hospital address (MAANZ, Basement Bldg 17, Greenlane Hospital site, c/o Inwards Goods, Auckland City Hospital, Park Rd, Grafton) has made it easier for goods to come to us. Not only do we have an office and toilets but a good room for secure storage of pharmaceuticals. The availability of a loading dock has been an asset facilitating the reception and despatch of goods. We are grateful for the help of the Auckland District Health Board for the use of these rooms. Having the rooms open on Wednesday mornings has been a huge improvement. Our main challenge is the absence of a telephone and hence an email point and although we explored the possibility of installation it was too expensive at this stage of our development. A computer, printer and abel processor have been installed. The shelves of goods are now largely labelled and there has been considerable re-organisation of goods to make access easier.

Dr. Tony Wansbrough has continued as stores manager to provide continuity of action for MAANZ. There are now many visitors to the rooms and increased numbers of volunteers to assist. We have even been able to arrange a concession for parking, but only on the ramp which gets rather crowded at times!

We have also been able to assist Volunteer Ophthalmic Service Overseas (VOSO) by providing space for their storage of ophthalmic items.

### **Volunteers**

We could not function without our volunteers. New volunteers have joined the team and we expect more in the future as the availability of a services becomes better known. Pharmacists *Clive Watkins, Digby and Jan Nelson* and *Lily Kwok* visit regularly to sort and classify drugs. Volunteers *Rosemary Fairbanks, Joy Glasgow, Pamela Hunt, and David Caughey* have carried out much work in the rooms. Thanks are due especially to *Mary Ann France* for her liaison work with Rotary in facilitating the delivery of goods to Fiji. *John Amos* has been very helpful in arranging goods and programmes for Taveuni. *Ross Waldron* of Printware Ltd donated a label printer. *Barbara Lomas* (ADHB) assisted with the setting up of the rooms and on-going support. The input of *medical students* through their organisation (Medical Aid Abroad Programme MAAP) is now starting to be felt and we hope in the longer term, these future young Doctors will be able to continue the work of MAANZ. Our life-time members *Gordon Nicholson* and *Newton Wickham* gave practical support. Thanks also to *Rotary Clubs* for their support and *Diagnostic Med Lab* for arranging for the transport of some medical items; to the *Disability Resource Centre* for supplying equipment; *Smith & Nephew* with consumables and the *RNZAF* for transporting goods overseas. *Dr Bernie Brenner* has been helpful with fundraising and *Dick Seddon* has advised on our relationship with the Charities Commission.

### **Executive committee**

This group has met to discuss operational matters. Members include Dr Graeme Woodfield (Chairman), Dr Chris Bullen (Secretary), Dr David Morris (Treasurer), Dr Glenys Mafi, Murray Kerr, Arun Praji and Dr Bernie Brenner.

### **Trustees**

Our trustees Dick Seddon, David Halstead and Dr Peter Vanniasingham have been very active and we are grateful for their time and input.

### **Promotions**

*Larry Robbins* has upgraded the website. New brochures have been developed with *David Halstead's* help and *Dick Seddon* updated the membership database. We have had publicity in "Pharmacy Today", and "Nova" (ADHB magazine).

### **Membership**

The membership list has expanded recently after a letter was sent to many doctors in the Auckland area. We need to encourage more dentists, nurses, pharmacists and technical staff to join MAANZ.

### **Finances**

*David Morris* has continued as treasurer. The annual subscription/donation was \$50 and this resulted in an improvement in finances. Several significant donations been extremely helpful. A stronger financial base would allow us to purchase goods we do not have in stock

Auckland University Development Studies student Milos Blucher worked with us to investigate and advise on the funding available through the NZAID scheme KOHA-PICD. An annual grant of about \$20000 would mean that we could function much more effectively and expand our work.

### **Canterbury branch**

John Tavener from Christchurch writes: "We have continued to receive and sort the discard bags from Canterbury pharmacy, rescuing in-date medicines that are suitable for donation to clinics etc outside New Zealand. It has been a successful year with more than \$60,000 of reclaimed and gifted medicines were sorted and gifted on to Himalayan hospitals, Tongan Clinics, Cambodian and Philippine Clinics and many boxes of goods passed to the Auckland group for supplying to known areas. We have been fortunate that 0800Hungry has continued to allow us to use rooms in their building at no cost to us. As it would be our main expense we are fortunate as we are not in the area of raising money. Toniq Computers have continued to allow us the use of the dispensary program. This is very good for printing supply orders and invoices and valuing the stock sent. Currently we have good supplies with a value of over \$150,000- all in-date and in good order. We still have been unable to interest any young pharmacists (or retired ones) to assist us and we find it very difficult to keep up with just 3 of us. It is the thanks of those we have supplied that have always made it a rewarding task. I am attending the Christchurch Pharmacy Society meeting and will attempt to generate some interest in MAA. I am concerned, as we are stable at 3 people, but by the end of this year may have none registered and this creates legal problems of possession of the drugs and responsibility. We will be trying to see if we can get some of the current pharmacists to put aside a night every week or three, to sort, then possibly take over the work in future. Thank to Malcom Macann and Gordon Shields, Peter Cook, Earl Shaw, Claude Sisson and Ian Sheerin. We plan on continuing for another year."

### **Conclusion**

MAANZ meets a real need supplementing the often poor supply of medical items many countries receive. Very often the items are required urgently and we try to meet these special needs. Many countries in the Pacific are now under pressure and their health needs are considerable. MAANZ can provide some 'first aid' but has the potential to supply much more given adequate financing. Nevertheless we can be pleased with the activities of the past year. MAANZ is running well and playing a small but important role.

### **The year ahead**

There is little doubt that the work we do is valued by recipients. We need to build on that base and expand our work in an effort to meet the special health needs of developing countries. A "wishlist" for the year ahead includes the following

- Regular newsletters to our supporters both within NZ and overseas
- A source of funding that would allow us to more frequently pay the costs of freight and to purchase urgently needed medical items as well as meeting some of the other expenses
- Improved labelling of outgoing packages
- Commencement of a formal development programme with a recipient country funded from NZAID
- Upgrading of our 'in-house' administrative procedures.
- The rooms to be opened more frequently rather than the half day/week at present.
- An improved inventory system, preferably computerised
- The appointment of volunteers to arrange transportation, liaise with medical companies and liaise regularly with overseas organisations.
- Visits to some of the Pacific countries to evaluate and develop partnerships and assess directly how we can improve our aid programme
- New members joining the Executive
- Improved liaison with other health professional groups
- A telephone and email access system
- An administrator

**Dr Graeme Woodfield**  
**Chairman, on behalf of the Auckland Executive Committee, MAANZ**  
**May 2008**