

HEALTHCARE FIJI ASSOCIATION INC

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Annual Newsletter – September 2008

No. 5

Bula vinaka once again!

Believe it or not it is our 7th Fiji Charity Golf Day. How time has flown so to speak.

Thank you very much to all of you who have attended our previous Golf Days. This year's event is again at the beautiful Carnarvon Golf Club fairways in Lidcombe, in Sydney's west and expected to be even bigger and better with Alex Wendt our chief co-coordinator and the committee currently tying up loose ends.

The only minor change this year is dinner will be replaced by cocktail-style food taking into account some feedback we received last year to allow players to get home relatively quickly after a hard afternoon of golf.

Please note registration commences at 10.30am for a shotgun start at noon so "Don't Forget to Bring your Clubs!"

Opening of Fiji's First Dialysis Centre

Congratulations all round, collectively you have all made a wonderful contribution towards our prime objective – the establishment of Fiji's first ever Dialysis Centre.

We could not have contributed to this result through our donations without your support. Through our Golf Days, HFAl has contributed the equivalent of FJ\$35,000 to the Kidney Foundation of Fiji ("KFOF") towards the Dialysis Centre.

Indian Government Contribution

The Suva Dialysis Centre was opened on Thursday 13 March 2008, World Kidney Day, by the High Commissioner in Fiji for the Government of India, Dr Phar. It was a fitting gesture as the Government of India has backed the project all the way and donated US\$100,000.

This was negotiated by Fiji businessman and KFOF Chairman Mr Dewan Maharaj, who has been most instrumental in setting up the new Dialysis Centre.

This donation enabled KFOF to purchase 7 brand new Fresenius dialysis machines plus other consumables and equipment vital to the treatment of patients plus the fit-out of the centre.

The Indian Government also provided two fully experienced Dialysis staff from India, a technician and a nurse who were started at the Centre a week before the official opening.

Philanthropists

US\$100,000 was generously donated by a particular Rotarian in the USA from his own personal funds, who had heard of our project.

In addition and including HFAl's contributions, other local companies such as Vodaphone made generous donations to help KFOF achieve our objectives.

Fiji's Interim PM Donates

Fiji's Interim Prime Minister, the much talked about Commodore Frank Bainimarama, dropped in one day right out of the blue so to speak, and handed over FJ\$26,000 of "my own money".

The Interim Prime Minister who was also a guest of honor during the opening mentioned the Government, which had not made any financial contributions towards the development of the Centre apart from generously offering the space, would contribute FJ\$1.5 million in the next November 2008 budget. The initial cash injection would be approximately FJ\$369,000.

That was good news. He added the government's contribution would also help to bring down the cost of dialysis which at the time was FJ\$225 per session to about FJ\$10 or FJ\$15.

He also said that the Government would like to see Dialysis Centres built in other regional towns of Lautoka, Labasa and Savusavu – so there's a lot more work to be done!

Mel Gibson Donates

Australia's own Hollywood-based son has made a A\$50,000 donation towards the Suva Dialysis Centre. This cheque was presented by his son Milo to the Secretary of KFOF, Bernadette Gaunilau at a ceremony in Suva last week. We are truly grateful for this gesture, which is a great indication that Mel, who recently purchased an island in Fiji, is sympathetic towards the development of Fijian people in general.

HFAl fundraiser for Victims of Cyclone Gene Fund Victims March 2008

HFAl diverted its activities in March and fundraised for the Interim PM's Hurricane Relief Fund to help our people in Fiji who suffered losses from recent cyclones in February this year. Lives were lost and many people lost their homes when their villages were decimated and their crops wiped out.

Committee member Ellen Whippy set up a sub-committee in March to organize the Hurricane Gene's "Night of Paradise" dinner/dance on Saturday 15 March 2008 at the Marrickville Town Hall in Sydney.

With the help of Fiji's premier airline Air Pacific, managed in Sydney by Victor Sharan, and the Golden Dragon Swingers headed by Ken Janson who were flown in especially for the event, 400+ guests enjoyed a very entertaining and successful evening.

The event raised approximately A\$14,000 which was deposited into the PM's Cyclone Gene Trust Account totaling FJ\$20,000.

Dialysis for City of Lautoka

This is wonderful news. A group of Fiji expats living in Canberra, Ben Ram, Oscar Emberson and Peter Manueli are behind plans to form a Committee to fundraise for the purpose of building a Dialysis Centre in Lautoka in the west of Fiji and our second city.

The HFAI Sydney Committee looks forward to working with the enthusiasts to build on the success of the Suva Centre and extend this to other locations in Fiji such as Lautoka.

Thank you Golfers

HFAI appreciates your continued support over the past 6 years which has enabled us to donate in aggregate an amount of A\$26,860 over the years to KFOF towards the establishment of the Dialysis Centre.

According to preliminary figures the Suva Dialysis Centre cost FJ\$1.1 million to build and equip. Our committee member, Ellen visited the Suva Dialysis Centre in August with Mr Maharaj and said it was an emotional visit to see the fruits of the labour of everyone involved. The Centre is running very well as envisaged but needs ongoing financial support.

Meanwhile patients are being dialysed whilst KFOF keenly waits the announcement of the 2009 Budget in early November. We have our fingers crossed and I hope, not for too long.

Thank you Sponsors and Prize Donors

Thanks once again to Air Pacific's dynamic Sydney-based Australian manager Victor Sharan for providing the return air tickets to Fiji as part of our First Place Prize and thank you also to the Managing Director of the Shangri La Fijian Resort & Spa, my old friend Radike Qereqeretabua for providing the accompanying accommodation prize package of a 5 night stay at the beautiful resort on Yanuca Island.

Other prize donors we are most grateful to for their contributions this year include Blue Lagoon Cruises, Mana Island Resort and Raffles Gateway (look out for their contributions to a fantastic first prize in this year's Raffle), Captain Cook Cruises (Second Place Golf Prize), the undying support of returning Corporate Package Sponsors GMS General Insurance Services and GJ Financial Services as well as new Corporate Package Sponsors AMP Services and Ausbil Dexia. We are also grateful for the annual and generous donations of golf giveaways and prizes from Image On as well as other similar contributions from GMS, AMP and Inside Social Golf.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Peter Simpson of P K Simpson & Co, Sydney's leading compensation law firm for once again sponsoring our annual Golf Day advertisement in Australia's popular Inside Social Golf Magazine – look out for it in the October 2008 edition at your local golf club.

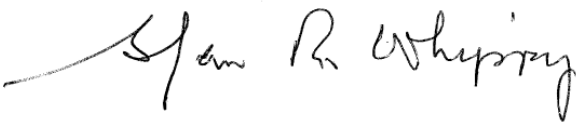
Finally a big vinaka again to our **HFAI Committee**

- Anil Singh - Deputy Chairman
- Shirley Heffernan – Honorable Secretary
- Ellen Whippy-Knight – Marketing Officer
- Melisha Whippy-Hughes – Treasurer
- Tamsy (Simpson) Griffen – Committee Member
- Alex Wendt – Chief Coordinator Fiji Golf Day
- Lily (Whippy) Rae – Committee member
- Mark Knight – Committee member

Special thanks in particular to our hard working secretary Shirley who provides us with meticulous up-to-date minutes.

We really look forward to seeing you all again this year at Carnarvon Golf Club, Nottinghill Road, Lidcombe on Friday 7 November 2008.

Vinaka vakalevu, best wishes for a successful day and God Bless.



Stan Ritova-Whippy
Chairman

