

Association/Committee	Representative/s	Substitute Representative/s	Shire Contact
Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)	Cr Gill	Cr Payne	Amanda Sapolu, Head of Governance and Democratic Support
MAV Emergency Management Committee	Cr Martin	Cr Brooks Cr Morris	Brett Fletcher, Emergency Management Coordinator
MAV Planning Committee	Cr Colomb		Amanda Sapolu, Head of Governance and Democratic Support
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	Cr Martin	Cr Brooks Cr Morris	Brett Fletcher, Emergency Management Coordinator
Peninsula Advisory Committee for Elders (PACE)	Cr Clark	Cr Celi	Jo Bradshaw, Manager – Aged and Disability Services
Point Nepean National Park Management Advisory Committee	Cr Fraser	N/A	Allan Cowley, Manager – Strategic Projects
South East Melbourne (SEM)	Cr Gill	N/A	Tania Treasure, Executive Manager – Innovation and Advocacy
South East Water Sewerage Treatment and Environment Protection Community Liaison Committee	Cr Martin	Cr Colomb	Mark Upton, Team Leader – Environmental Health
Triple A Housing Committee	Cr Brooks	Cr Celi Cr Hearn Cr Roper	Roz Franklin, Senior Social Planner, Housing Justice and Advocacy
Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA)	Cr Brooks	Cr Payne	Amanda Sapolu, Head of Governance and Democratic Support

Friends of Lospalos Community Committee and Specs for Lospalos Inc. (Cr Fraser)

I am delighted to present to Council this detailed report by Ms Hammond on the recent optometry team visit to Dili and Lospalos, Timor-Leste between 22 July and 31 July 2019.

Ms Hammond, senior optometrist at Specsavers Rosebud, led a team of six Mornington Peninsula volunteers including two of our former Councillors and Mayors Tim Rodgers and Graham Pittock, the Deputy Chair Friends of Lospalos. Also volunteering were David and Patricia Ball and Harry Pittock.

The Specs for Lospalos Inc. team was supported by cash donations of \$1,900 with 1,000 prescription spectacles donated by Specsavers Rosebud, in partnership with Lions *Recycle for Sight* and with \$40,000 worth of optometry equipment generously donated by the Mornington Peninsula Optometry and Ophthalmic Professions, a slit lamp from Dr Roufail of the Mornington Peninsula Eye Centre and a new chin rest and power supply by Antonio Miglino, Device Technologies. Medical history cards, uniforms and posters were provided by the Mornington Peninsula Shire (the Shire).

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Initial meetings were held in Dili, to ascertain the extent of referral medical facilities at the National Eye Centre and at the Dili Hospital, Stamford Medical, with the Cassonians Nuns Madre Guilhermina Marcal and the British Consul.

The Lospalos community had been without an optometrist for 18 months. The Specs for Lospalos Inc. optometry clinic was conducted tirelessly by the volunteers over five days at the Hospital from 8am in the morning until 7pm at night, testing 390 Timorese patients triaged by the Hospital's Timorese medical staff. Prescription spectacles were provided to the majority, whilst 14% of patients required cataract surgery – 7% of those urgently.

A sky hydrant for the provision of clean filtered water and donated by Rotary Dromana was also demonstrated by Graham Pittock.

The visit and clinic was facilitated by the Lospalos Hospital medical staff, the Lospalos Nuns, The Lautem District Administrator Zeferino Dos Santos Sequeira M.PA under the Municipal Co-operation Agreement with the Shire and by the Timorese Embassy in Canberra with special thanks to its First Secretary (Political and Economic) Samuel Soares and Seasonal Workers Programme Liaison Officer Lucy Rodgers.

A copy of this report together with a further technical report prepared by Ms Hammond 'Outcomes and Recommendations from the 2019 Visit to Lospalo', will be delivered to the Timor-Leste Government by the Embassy with the urgent request for the recommendations to be implemented.

Report on Specs for Lospalos Inc. Volunteers optometry visit to Lospalos Timor Leste, 22-31 July 2019

By Colleen Hammond, Senior Optometrist, Specsavers Rosebud.

Objectives

Specs for Lospalos Inc. was designed to support the local people of Timor Leste with their eyecare needs. The need for spectacle assistance to the community was highlighted in a previous visit to Lospalos by former Shire Councillors and Mayors, Tim Rodgers and Graham Pittock, when basic non-prescription magnifying spectacles were taken and quickly snapped up by the local community.

The further need for optometric care came from information that there was no longer a practicing optometrist in the Lospalos community and this circumstance had been ongoing for some 18 months.

The Specs clinical optometry program was able to screen 390 Timorese, providing spectacles to the majority. Approximately 7% of patients with cataracts desperately needed cataract surgery, but unfortunately, they declined further care due to the expense and distance of the National Eye Centre Dili where the surgery would take place.

This highlighted a chronic need for not only full time optometric care in Lospalos, but also for a more accessible referral pathway for the likes of cataract surgery and further management. The full scope of care required for the community was not seen in the duration of the testing period as the children were not able to be assessed due to coincidence with their school examinations.

The Specs for Lospalos Inc volunteer team set off for Timor- Leste from the Mornington Peninsula for the inaugural Specs for Lospalos clinical optometry program. The team consisted of Colleen Hammond, Senior Optometrist with Specsavers Rosebud, David Ball, Patricia Ball, Graham Pittock, Harry Pittock and Tim Rodgers. Our ease of arrival was made possible by the many hours of preparatory work undertaken by Councillor Hugh Fraser.

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The Shire assisted with the provision of polo top uniforms, medical history cards, letters of introduction and posters. Customs clearance of some 90kg of optometry equipment donated by the local Mornington Peninsula optometry and ophthalmic professions and over 1,000 spectacles donated by Specsavers with Lions *Recycle for Sight* was secured with letters from the Timor-Leste Ambassador in Canberra.

Day 2 – Tuesday, 23 July 2019

In Dili, the day consisted of meetings at Stamford Medical, with its non-medical director Derek Chua. He runs the only Australian Government accredited medical facility for Timorese seeking seasonal work in Australia. The purpose of this meeting was to thank him for the support introducing Specs to Madre Guilhermina Marcal of the Canossian Order.

This meeting also gave us insight into the medical care available not only the mainly expatriates in Timor-Leste, but also to the Timorese and their public medical system in Timor-Leste. This highlighted the difficulty Dili residents seeking eye care experience, due to the costs involved, particularly as many Timorese are on low average incomes.

The next meeting was at the National Eye centre in Dili. This was adjacent to the Guido Valadares Hospital. This was a humbling and amazing experience of a walk-in clinic operated for patients who may have needed attention in the way of cataract surgery, or diabetic screening (which was not our focus). Surprisingly, there was also a prosthetic eye maker. He had the benefit of training from a visiting Australian who had conducted a 12-week local training course.

Our tour of the National Eye Center facilities showed an extensive range of optometric equipment, including: OCT, Medmont VF (s), FDT VF, multiple slit lamps, laser machines, tonometer- icare. The adjacent dispensary housed an impressive laboratory that allowed for the specific cutting of the lenses for multifocals etc. Single vision lenses are affordable for the patient, but multifocals and the like are still at a considerable cost.

We met a recent graduate in optometry, Gil Costa. He sought support for eye the testing of children, provision of children's frames and equipment (further clarification on this is required as to fixation targets etc). The Head of the National Eye Centre Ophthalmology Department Belmerio Jeronimo outlined to us the capability of the Centre to treat 70 patients a day 'walking in' to the clinic. This highlighted the enormous potential for the people of Lospalos to access ophthalmological care.

The final meeting of the day was with Madre Guilhermina Marcal, of the Canossian Order of Nuns. Our purpose was to thank her for introducing the Specs team to the nuns in Lospalos. On arrival we were greeted with a lovely song by the boarding school girls and we were each presented with a ceremonial Timorese tais or scarf.

While we were there, some of the nuns and some of the boarding school girls were eye tested. Of these, 20 girls tested, 10 were found to require assistance with their visual needs, in the provision of glasses.

That evening we met for dinner with Tracey Morgan, the Honorary British Consul. She outlined to us the difficulty in transport for the people of Timor-Leste to travel to Dili for health care from outlying and remote towns such as Lospalos.

Day 3 – Wednesday, 24 July 2019

Today we had the absolute pleasure of meeting our driver for the following week, Paul, who was to safely take us over the treacherous roads to and from Lospalos. Like a game of Tetris, he successfully packed our vehicle with the precious cargo of our six member team and the donated optometry equipment, including over 1000 pairs of spectacles. It was thought that the roads between Baucau and Lospalos had substantially deteriorated over the last twelve

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months, when members of our team had last travelled to Lospalos as 2018 General Election observers.

Our accommodation was at the convent of Madre Augustine, where we stayed for the duration of our time in Lospalos. We were greeted by the biggest of smiles and ready-made dinner for our craving stomachs.

Day 4 – Thursday, 25 July 2019

Ready and raring to go on our first day of testing, the day started with a meeting with Ministerio da Saude, the Director of the Lospalos Hospital. Fredy Sampaio, focal point worker Friends of Lospalos (embedded in the Lospalos Local Government Administration), was our amazing translator through whom we were able to discuss with the Director the arrangements previously made, the management and registration of the anticipated large numbers of the local community requiring eyecare, and involve them in the process for sustainable ongoing healthcare.

The team then launched straight into testing the eyes of the community. Fredy had done an amazing job of informing the community to come and have their eyes tested for no charge and receive some spectacles as required, which also was for no charge. The Shire prepared posters had previously been electronically circulated on Facebook.

The Timorese patiently lined up and were marshalled by the hospital medical staff to produce their voting entitlement ID card, obtain written registration, secure a numbered ready-made patient card (also provided by the Shire) and listed in order under the guidance of the medical staff, who supervised this entire process. It was a Timorese led marshalling and selection process of patients for examination and testing. The organizational skills of the Timorese and the hospital staff were amazing. To our surprise, the community just kept coming, so much so that the medical staff unfortunately had to close registrations due to the sheer volume.

The Lospalos Hospital facilities could best be described as modest, with parts of the ceiling missing, only one Australian power point and just two lights. Nevertheless, we kept on with vigour to help as many people as we could. The donated optometry equipment was set up by our team members. Harry Pittcock quickly trained the Lospalos hospital staff as to how to operate the equipment and become part of the program team for continuity upon our departure. A detailed record was retained as to each examination and test for future reference.

It was clear that many of the community had never previously accessed eyecare and their expectations for visual improvement were very low. I witnessed a large number of people affected by cataracts. Clinically, cataracts reduce not only contrast but also vision. Therefore, the impact of these cataracts on individuals may include reduced vision, poor mobility and debilitating glare, all of which are problematic given the location and visual requirements of the community: e.g. driving, motorbike riding, weaving, walking. Sadly, even after repetitive explanation and translation of the benefits of having them looked at, many of the patients affected by these cataracts (particularly those of the greatest significance), declined referral for further treatment because of the distance to Dili the journey was too great, or they reported that they had no family in Dili and obtaining accommodation there is impossible.

Day 5 – Friday, 26 July 2019

Due to the large numbers of people already registered, we began testing early at 8am on the Friday. We continued through until dusk at 6.30pm. A long but ultimately thoroughly rewarding day.

4.1 (Cont.)Day 6 – Saturday, 27 July 2019

Saturday again saw a large number of people and tested over extending hours until dusk.

Day 7 – Sunday, 28 July 2019

Sunday meant we were able to take the local custom of a humbling Church service. We met the Priest and were treated to some angelic singing by the congregation.

Fredy kindly invited us to his home to sample some of his home grown produce, which was wholeheartedly prepared by Sra Sampaio and their six children. Onwards to testing the community in the afternoon, with a large turnout of people once again, who patiently continued to wait. Mr and Mrs Ball meticulously dispensed and fitted spectacles to the recipients as prescribed by Colleen Hammond. Their continual effort throughout the clinic allowed the community to not only get a pair of spectacles to help them see, but to also take pride in their new accessories.

Day 8 – Monday, 29 July 2019

Our last day of testing. Some of our team were freed up to train the hospital staff to undertake spectacle repairs. Graham and Tim had taught the staff to take over vision recording, allowing them to focus on a new team for repairs with the donated materials and tools.

Many glasses cords had been made and donated by community in Australia, together with thousands of spare beads. While waiting excitably, some of the patients jumped in to assist making glasses cords as the other pre-made glasses cords had been snapped up.

Day 9 – Tuesday, 30 July 2019

Spent in travelling from Lospalos to Dili with overnight accommodation at the Hotel Esplanada.

Recommendations

The initial aim of the program was to test and distribute spectacles to the community members. For over 18 months there has been no access to professional help as Sr Joanzinho, the Hospital resident Optometrist had become quite unwell and is unlikely to return to his work at the Hospital.

In undertaking this project, many serious concerns were noted in the community. These included:

- Extensive corneal scarring from farm work and foreign objects when riding on unpaved roads;
- Traumatic cataracts from eye injuries sustained in manual work;
- Hypertensive retinopathy; and
- Glaucoma risk from PXF and narrow angles.

Many of these problems would be better managed had the basic services of optometric care be consistently available to the community of Lospalos.

The aims of the optometry program were initially tailored for the Lospalos community as a whole, including children, however, children were unable to attend, as due to the time of the year, the children were undertaking school exams. This can be addressed in subsequent

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visits. Our aim was to involve the Lospalos community and the Hospital as much as possible as a community led project. It is fair to say that was achieved – with much of what we set out to accomplish, was accomplished. The donated optometry equipment has been secured at the Lospalos Hospital for future optometry clinical programs.

Our considered recommendations are as follows:

- Engage a full-time optometrist who is fully qualified, including therapeutic endorsement, for the Lospalos hospital;
- Schedule cataract surgery at Lospalos hospital on a regular basis (every three months) and provide the appropriate facilities;
- Provide free transport and accommodation for those travelling to Dili for ophthalmological care;
- Liaise with National Eye Centre for provision of spectacles;
- Provision of a full time technician to ensure all equipment in Dili and Lospalos are maintained and operating consistently; and
- Regular community education events, focussing on the importance of lid hygiene (compresses), sunglass use, protective eye wear from foreign material and cessation of smoking for good eye health.

All in all, our time as Specs for Lospalos, visiting Timor Leste was a heart-warming and memorable experience, one that none of us will forget. A big thankyou to Fredy Sampaio, the Director of the Hospital and his staff, the Canossa nuns and the wonderful reception we received from the people of Lospalos.

Keep Victoria Beautiful Tidy Towns – Sustainable Communities Awards (Cr Colomb)

Judging: Wednesday 7 August and Thursday 8 August 2019

Judge: Robbie Rae

On Wednesday, 7 August 2019 at 9.15am, Robbie Rae the 'Keep Victoria Beautiful' judge met with St Macartan's Sustainability Teacher Carmela Theobald. Together with Cr Colomb they enjoyed a tour of the school and its surrounds. The school held a most successful Community Market Day in 2019, highlighting its sustainability produce and practices which attracted over 3,000 visitors on the day.

At 11.00am the judge met with students from St Joseph's School Crib Point, who delighted Robbie and Cr Roper with their knowledge and puppetry skills regarding migratory birds and the regeneration of mangroves in the area. The students have also updated the waste management plan for the school.

Later in the day at 3.00pm, a visit to Canadian Bay Beach was surprisingly pleasant, with a glimpse of the sun. Proof the wonderful beach clean-ups which have been organised by Mount Eliza Plastic Free Group was evident by the pristine beach and lack of litter in the area.

On Thursday, 8 August at 8.30am, the weather was wild and windy, when we met at Rye Hotel with local waste warrior Josie Jones, and Peter Horton, the owner of the Rye Hotel, along with Meschelle Cheers of the 'Rye Action Group', to hear of the progress that is being made in eradicating plastic straws being distributed by businesses at the southern end of the Mornington Peninsula. 40,000 plastic straws have been prevented from being distributed.