

## **Rotuma FAIM Service Project Press Release (Published in Fiji Sun Tuesday 19 July)**

After nearly two months of planning and preparation, friends and members of the Rotary Club of Suva North have returned from a week-long FAIM Service Project in Rotuma, where they successfully renovated the island's hospital.

This project grew out of an appeal made to Rotary International by Rotuma's only doctor, Safu Manueli, who pleaded for assistance in repairing the dilapidated colonial hospital in Ahau. According to Dr. Manueli, the roof leaked during heavy rain, and the wooden floors were rotted and broken. In Dr. Manueli's words, "*The poor condition of the hospital was affecting our ability to serve the people of Rotuma.*"

Seeing this need, the Rotary Club of Suva North initiated a Rotary (FAIM) service project to renovate Rotuma's Rural Hospital. With tremendous support from the Rotuman Council and community, as well as generous donations from the Australian High Commission and Rotary Clubs throughout Australia and New Zealand, the Rotary Club of Suva North achieved this goal.

Unlike the majority of Rotary's fund-raising projects, such projects provide Rotarians with a hands-on opportunity to serve their community. Teresie Paris, acting as the Project Coordinator, organized the team's efforts with her husband, Ray Paris the then President of the Rotary Club of Suva North. Rotarians Sam Cali and George Gilliot of the Rotary Club of Dural, NSW, replaced the internal and external flooring, while Malcolm Harrison and Waqa Ledua, of the Rotary Club of Suva North, refurbished doors, windows and mosquito screens. Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars Holly Gittlein and Aaron "Tremor" Temchin tiled bathroom floors, repaired leaking roof panels and painted the deck with Sereana Sikuri. Acting on behalf of Rotarian John Hill of J.S. Hill and Associates, Site Manager Motufaga Managrave provided the technical planning and on-site leadership necessary for successful completion of this substantial project.

Beyond the service of these Rotarians, nearly 50 members of the Rotuman community assisted in the project each day, generously donating their time and skills, as well as food and accommodations. The dedicated effort, overwhelming graciousness and generosity of the Rotuman people were integral parts of the project's success.

Upon leaving Rotuma, the impact of Rotary's service project on this small island was truly remarkable: Rotuma's once dilapidated hospital had been revived, the Rotuman and Rotarian communities were brought closer together, and plans for on-going repair and maintenance ensured that this project's momentum would not be lost.

Reflecting on this astounding success of this project, Ray Paris, former president of the Rotary Club of Suva North, issued this comment:

*"We are proud to have been involved with this most worthwhile of projects in this the Rotary International's Centennial Year.*

*We hope that our modest project will help the people of Rotuma and Fiji.*

*This project involved the coming together of different peoples from different countries.*

*We had tremendous financial support from the Australian High Commission and from many other local and overseas donors, and we had an overwhelming physical support from the community of Rotuma, who turned up in force to lend a hand and provide some labour, and to help with the provision of some building materials.*

*We ran this project with the financial and physical assistance of the Rotary Club of Dural, NSW, Australia, and particularly from the former CEO of Emperor Gold Mines, Colin Patterson, who instigated this project.*

*We had a major help from other Rotarians overseas.*

*We also had the huge support of M. O. Rotuma, Dr Safu Manueli and his dedicated staff as well as the Rotuma Council.*

*This year we have tried to follow the international Rotary theme of "100 years, Celebrate Rotary".*

*We hope that we have achieved that with this wonderful project."*

This sentiment was echoed by many members of the Rotuman community. Speaking on behalf of her family, Pam Tanu, of Tarsua, had this to say, *"The ladies and gentlemen who most generously and graciously gave of themselves have done an incredible job on the hospital... These people deserve a tremendous thank you--a real debt of gratitude for work long overdue. These people (Rotary Club members) did not come promising big things; they came and **did** big things."*

In celebrating Rotary International's Centennial Anniversary, this project's success clearly reflects the values and commitment to service underpinning the Rotary Organization. Rotary is an organization of business and professional persons united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world.

For more information on this project, the Rotary Club of Suva North, or Rotary International, please feel free to contact Aaron Tremor Temchin, Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar for the Rotary Club of Suva North. He is available via email at [ttemchin@aol.com](mailto:ttemchin@aol.com), or you may write to him at:

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