

Board of Trustees Meeting  
28 March, 2014

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## CONSENT AGENDA ITEM 3.1g: Western Pacific Report

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### IAPB WESTERN PACIFIC UPDATE REPORT

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

- **China: Community Eye Health Journal & NGO Forum**  
IAPB convened an editorial committee meeting in February for the Chinese-language edition of the Community Eye Health Journal, with support from Lions International and the Fred Hollows Foundation. China's annual Forum for eye health NGOs and the National Health and Family Planning Commission (formerly the Ministry of Health) will take place in Kunming on 13 and 14 May.
- **Philippines: Review of National Eye Health Plan & Typhoon Haiyan**  
Early last year, the Department of Health in Manila endorsed a national blindness prevention plan within its Degenerative Disease Strategy. Funding for the national program, health financing reforms and an administrative order for eye health were also released at this time. More recently, the Department reported in January 2014 on progress against this plan as part of its routine reporting; this represents a very positive step and indicator of integration, which followed ongoing advocacy by IAPB and the National Committee for Sight Preservation (NSCP). The NSCP is also working with the Department to rehabilitate public eye health facilities in and around Tacloban, the area most affected by Typhoon Haiyan late last year, as well as raising funds to purchase equipment for ophthalmologists who lost equipment. IAPB members are invited to contribute funds and equipment to these projects; the Fred Hollows Foundation has already pledged around \$25,000. Please contact Steve Alcantara ([salcantara@iapb.org](mailto:salcantara@iapb.org)) for more information.
- **Trachoma: Elimination in the Pacific and the Mekong countries**  
The impact of advocacy and mapping of trachoma, conducted in 2012, is continuing to have an impact. Mapping of trachoma (with funds from DFID through Sightsavers) will commence in Vanuatu in August. A proposal is currently being prepared for further intervention work in Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu, which will be submitted to the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust. As Fiji is not in the Commonwealth, other funding options will need to be explored as intervention with SAFE is needed. LSHTM is also looking at the clinical enigma of trachoma in Fiji, through a research project funded by the Fred Hollows Foundation. Surveys are continuing in China, Lao PDR, China, Vietnam and Cambodia. With most areas surveyed reporting very low levels of prevalence, these countries are on-track to declaring elimination.

- **Australia: National Implementation Plan & National Eye Health Survey**  
Advocacy efforts of Vision 2020 Australia and its members have intensified towards development of a new National Framework Implementation Plan, aligned with “Universal Eye Health: A Global Action Plan 2014-2019”. Australia’s Federal Health Minister is supportive, but it is critical that state and territory Health Ministers also endorse the plan for effective implementation, and Vision 2020 Australia and its members have been advocating for a broader base of support. Over the coming months, a significant focus will be on securing funding for a National Eye Health Survey to measure the progress and impact of eye health services in Australia and help guide the allocation of resources.

## CHALLENGES

- **Changes within Australia’s Aid Program**  
Since the change of government in September, significant changes have been announced and discussed for Australia’s overseas aid program. Institutionally, AusAID has been absorbed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and a stronger ‘national interest’ is guiding aid decisions. Aid for trade and economic development over poverty alleviation are among the new priorities. Funding cuts to NGOs, governments and multilateral partners were announced early in the new year. At this stage, the cuts do not pose a direct threat to the work of IAPB and WHO in the Western Pacific (which is covered in a funding agreement until the end of 2015). In the mean time, there has been greater scrutiny of work plans and much slower approvals of funding tranches, which has created a few programmatic headaches. Vision 2020 Australia and Australian NGOs are continuing to advocate to ensure eye health is maintained as a priority for the aid program. Clearly though, IAPB and WHO will need to diversify funding sources to maintain its program and staff in regional and subregional offices, particularly after 2015.