DISCUSSION

RANZCO partners with local organisations to strengthen capacity of eye health workforce and training institutions. So far we have collaborated with organisations in the Pacific, Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Myanmar.

Our partnership with the Pacific Eye Institute is building the capacity to train ophthalmologists from the Pacific region through curriculum development and customisation, provision of teaching faculty, provision of short term teaching ophthalmologists in priority areas and external examiners; similarly in Cambodia RANZCO is working with the University of Health Sciences to review and develop the ophthalmology curriculum and assessment. RANZCO has established links with the Pacific Eye Care Society (PacEyes), the Indonesian College of Ophthalmology, and the Cambodian Ophthalmological Society (COS) through academic and scientific exchanges and international scholarship opportunities. RANZCO is also working with COS to support the establishment of a continuing professional development system and the National Program for Eye Health in Cambodia to support the development of professional standards.

We ensure best practice by aligning with national eye health plans and peak bodies such as the Australian Council for International Development and working within the framework of Vision2020: The Right to Sight. Our technical input is informed by International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) materials and evidence based publications.

We collaborate with other eye health organisations through participation in the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust Commonwealth Eye Health Consortium and Vision 2020 Global Consortium. Annual scientific exchanges hosted by RANZCO provide a platform for international ophthalmologists and RANZCO Fellows to share knowledge and ideas and to develop ongoing collaborations.

INTERNATIONAL OPHTHALMOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) formalised its international ophthalmology development initiative in 2011. The goal is to develop and strengthen ophthalmic education and professional standards in the Asia-Pacific region. We have developed and established a capacity building model that involves multi-level partnerships aimed at sustainable outcomes and that can easily be tailored to meet local needs.

METHODS

• Surveyed RANZCO Members for interest in volunteering internationally
• Established an oversight structure
• Developed strategy and policies
• Created operational capacity to manage projects
• Developed grant proposals and project designs
• Leveraged partnerships and engaged local communities
• Implemented, monitored and evaluated projects

CONCLUSION

• International development is embedded as a key pillar of the 2014-2016 RANZCO organisational strategy
• Multi-level capacity building programs in the Asia Pacific region have been established
• Partnership approach ensures projects are sustainable and accessible to everyone.
• RANZCO is a member of, and regularly contributes to, national and international eye health advocacy bodies
• Updated development procedures and processes contribute to best practice
• Collective expertise of College has been harnessed to contribute to a reduction in avoidable blindness