

Pacific Paramedical Training Centre. The First 30 Years, 1980-2010.

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The Pacific Paramedical Training Centre (PPTC) was established by Dr Ron Mackenzie and Associate Professor Sandy Ford at Wellington Hospital in 1980. Its main aim was to provide training and support for medical laboratory technicians from South Pacific countries. The PPTC had its genesis and practical beginnings at the Kew Hospital Laboratory, Invercargill where Ron was principal medical technologist. He set up short-term blood bank training modules there and provided logistic support to a number of South Pacific medical laboratories. Upon his move to Wellington as administrative technologist, Ron, together with Sandy Ford, continued these short-term courses and had discussions with the World Health Organization (WHO), New Zealand Red Cross and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which ultimately resulted in the formation of the PPTC with their support.

The PPTC has been in operation continuously since 1980 and this book covers the first 30 years in a chronological order. The author has meticulously detailed all the courses held by the PPTC as well as other support measures, such as the establishment of the Pacific Regional External Quality Assurance Programme, recognition by WHO as a collaborating centre for external quality assessment in health laboratory services in 1990, a three year medical laboratory training course in Samoa, and distance learning programmes through the Pacific Open Learning Health Net.

A feature of this book is the many photos of Pacific Island laboratory technicians, together with teaching staff, who attended the many PPTC in-house short courses. Every single technician who attended one of these courses over the 30 years is also listed in an appendix, as are the Committee Members who oversaw the activities of the PPTC.

Throughout the text is mention of the many New Zealand medical laboratory scientists who assisted the PPTC in areas such as teaching, provision of equipment and books and consultancies; and to the many agencies that supported the PPTC continuously over the years, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the NZAid Programme, NZ Red Cross, WHO, Wellington Hospital Laboratory Services, New Zealand Blood Transfusion Service, Norman Kirk Memorial Trust, University of Otago Wellington and the NZIMLS. Also in the text are named the medical laboratory scientists who ran the PPTC, namely Andrea Hall, Mike Lynch, Gilbert Rose, Christine Story, John Elliot and Philip Wakem.

The founding principles of the PPTC were that teaching and development programmes offered *'must be appropriate, affordable and sustainable for the health care setting in which they will be used'*, with an emphasis on specialized and practical training to ensure an immediate benefit for the trainees and impact the health status of Pacific Island and neighbouring communities. To date, these principles remain the guiding ones.

In the foreword to this book Lady Jocelyn Keith, Past National President of New Zealand Red Cross, calls the PPTC "a remarkable organization" that "punches well above its weight" and "a remarkable story of Kiwi resourcefulness and commitment". Ron Mackenzie has certainly demonstrated that in this delightful history of the PPTC. Copies of this book can be ordered for \$25 from the PPTC, PO Box 7013, Wellington 6242, or email pptc@pptc.org.nz

Reviewed by Rob Siebers, Editor, New Zealand Journal of Medical Laboratory Science and Board Member, PPTC.