



## MSM Donation Details (Now tax deductible)

There are two ways to make a donation to Medical Sailing Ministries:

### Bank Transfer:

ANZ Ringwood –Medical Sailing Ministries Inc. A/c, BSB: 013 403 A/c No.: 313809003

*(Please include your name on the bank transfer to assist with cross-checking)*

For international money transfers, the ANZ SWIFT code (sometimes called an “IBAN”) is **ANZBAU3M**

### By Cheque:

Pay to – “Medical Sailing Ministries Inc. A/c”, Post to - MSM, 29 Wonga Rd, Ringwood North, 3134

If you would like a receipt, please let us know via email or post, including your name, home address and the donation amount paid

**Tank Yu Tumas !!**

### Where does the money go ...?

With no paid staff and the most minimal of operating costs, virtually all of your donation is applied to the work of Medical Sailing Ministries in Vanuatu.

Our current activities are focused on expanding the Gudfala Tut Skul Projek (Healthy Tooth School Project) in partnership with the Vanuatu Ministry of Health and PCV Health ([www.pcvhealth.org](http://www.pcvhealth.org)). Further details on the program and the importance of oral health, have been included below and on the following page.

Thank you again your interest, encouragement and support !!

## Every Child – Every Class – Every School



For the cost of 1½ cappuccinos, **oral health care** can be provided to **one child**, for **one year** through the supervised brushing in schools program - **Gudfala Tut Skul Projek**.



[www.msm.org.au](http://www.msm.org.au)



## Oral Health in Vanuatu – Why so important?

The recently completed National Oral Health Survey, revealed a very high burden of oral disease throughout Vanuatu. For example, based on the national average, 69% of 5-7 year-old children had tooth decay; however the number of cavities per child in the major urban centres was over 2½ times greater than in the outlying regions.

Furthermore, one in every ten children reported toothache in the last month with this having a direct and measurable impact on:

- school attendance
- sleep
- family disruption, in terms of time off work, expense and impact on other family members

... quite apart from the pain and suffering of the child.

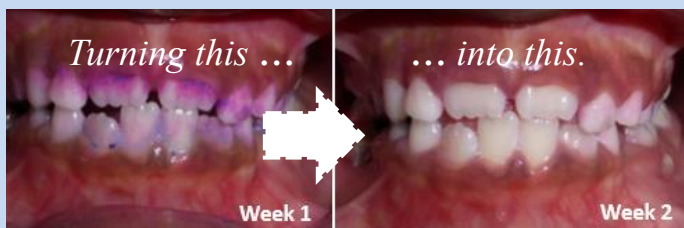
The primary causes of the national oral health disaster are:

- lollies, soft drink and the adoption of an increasingly sugar-based diet
- low compliance with respect to daily tooth brushing habits
- lack of information, knowledge and education on oral health and its links to a range of other chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, child development, stroke and increased frailty in the elderly
- **AND** a widespread absence of suitable levels of fluoride in drinking water, particularly in the main urban centres where fluoride is well below the optimal level

In response to the findings of the Oral Health Survey, Vanuatu NOW has a National Oral Health Policy (2019-2023) – the first ever.

In recognising the importance of oral health, the Vanuatu Department of Public Health have recently established a new unit called the ... Integrated Oral Health, Eye Care and ENT Unit, headed by a dentist with a particular focus on oral health prevention and promotion.

One simple, practical response [to poor oral health] is the introduction of supervised tooth brushing in school. The measurable improvement in oral hygiene after just ONE WEEK under a supervised school brushing program is clearly evident from the photos below:



Source: Gudfala Tut Skul tooth brushing trial 2018, Vila Central School

Our future vision is for Vanuatu to lead the world in positive oral health outcomes, with our key goals being:

1. Early childhood intervention to improve oral health habits through supervised tooth brushing in schools
2. Up-skilling of all existing health workers across the country to play their part in education, screening and prevention strategies.
3. Oral health curriculum development and resourcing in schools to empower teachers, principals and parents to make a difference
4. Active-partnering with all supportive organisations, volunteers and donors to communicate key priorities and goals, encourage better coordination of activities and facilitate networking in order to achieve more effective services
5. Communicate this message to all stakeholders on a regular basis

The benefits of this approach in the short and long term will be:

- Less pain and suffering amongst children and adults
- Better educational outcomes
- Long term cost savings in broader health care services through a healthier population
- Greater economic return for society through less time off work for carers and sufferers



## So how much does it cost – per child?

### Every child – Every class – Every school

**O**ur shared goal, with the Vanuatu Ministry of Health, is to roll-out the Gudfala Tut Skul (Healthy Tooth School) supervised tooth brushing program across the whole country. Easier said than done, I hear you say, given the challenges of transport and limited resources. But, as revealed in the **National Oral Health Survey**, dental decay in children living in the main urban centres is 2½ times worse than those in the rural areas – so that's where we will be focusing our initial attention.

Again, referring to the survey results, the biggest impact in terms of altering brushing habits and improving oral health is amongst pre-school and grade 1 children – specifically ages 3-6.

Based on last year's Vanuatu Ministry of Education statistics, (2018) this amounts to around **2,800 pre-school** (kindergarten) children across approximately 170 centres *plus* **1,600 grade 1** children over around 90 primary schools. **A total of 4,400**, with these being located primarily in Port Vila and Luganville.

Whilst each pre-school and grade 1 class will likely comprise different numbers of children, our current experience, however, uses an average of **40 children per class in urban schools**. This narrows it down to **110 classes** and around **36 schools**.

So, in answer to the question "**How much does it cost?**" ... it all comes down to around **1½ cups of coffee PER YEAR**. That's around **AUS \$7.50** (approximately 600 Vatu in the local currency) per child, per year, to pay for toothpaste, brushes, personal brushing record booklets, transport and an individual, twice yearly, fluoride varnish protection treatment.



Source: Gudfala Tut Skul tooth brushing trial 2018, Vila Central School

Evidenced-based research has shown that children who participated in a supervised brushing program for the first three years of their school life, will maintain positive life-long oral health habits.

What's more, after three years, each child's parents, guardians and siblings will also be well informed on the importance of regular brushing, leading to the creation of a whole new culture around the "importance of caring for your teeth".