

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

Receipt:

To receive 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 Inc. in Vanuatu.

Our current activities are focused on expanding the Gudfala Tut Skul Program (Healthy Tooth School) in partnership with the Vanuatu Ministry of Health and PCV Health (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 !!

So how much does it cost – per child?

Our 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 2017 National Vanuatu Oral Health Survey, dental decay in children living in the main urban centres is around 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 the 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 3 cappuccinos PER YEAR. That’s around AUS \$12.00 (approximately 1000 Vatu in the local currency) per child, per year, to pay for toothpaste, brushes, personal brushing record booklets and transport.



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 were shown to have 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 poor oral health include:

- 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 Ministry 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

