

ROTARY CLUB OF TAREE

# Project PPE



Project PPE stands for PPE relief support to Philippines covid-risk Exposed health care workers  
A project of Rotary Club of Taree in coordination with the Quezon Provincial Health Office, Philippines

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## BACKGROUND

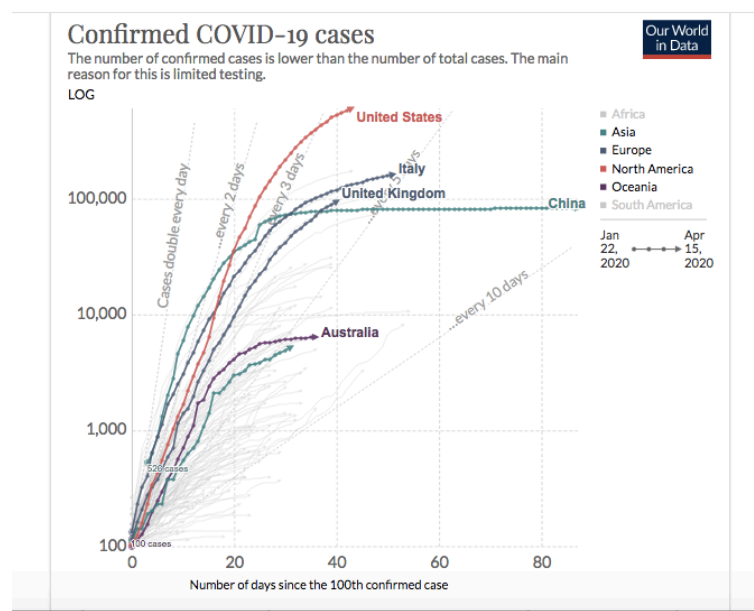
The Coronavirus pandemic hit the world unprepared causing unprecedented major challenges not just in health but also affecting economy and finances at all levels – worldwide, national and personal. Impact on life and livelihood -people from all walks of life, countries big and small, all are affected, all are battling this virus, NO ONE IS EXEMPT.

The spread of infection is exponential, the mortality rate is high especially in the high risk groups. Currently, there is no proven safe and effective treatment nor vaccine (yet) to combat this disease.

The proverbial ‘prevention is better than cure’ – became not just a statement but is now the ‘way of life’ as hand hygiene, social distancing, self isolation, quarantine, and different levels of restrictions are put in place.

## WHERE AUSTRALIA STAND

Based on the latest statistics as of 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020 (see graph), Australia is showing signs of ability to ‘flatten the curve’. Australia is one of the countries with the lowest number of deaths (63 deaths out of 6440 confirmed cases to-date) and <2% infection growth rate. We are faring relatively well and to quote the minister for health Greg Hunt “I’d rather be in Australia than anywhere in the world”!



### Reference:

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6688275/where-does-australias-covid-19-response-stand/>

[https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html?fbclid=IwAR3ajwE9ZVmFxCIx\\_vg1F9Uvpf4RduQwYYje66UPwskbIh1bd84d\\_Vco6sg#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6](https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html?fbclid=IwAR3ajwE9ZVmFxCIx_vg1F9Uvpf4RduQwYYje66UPwskbIh1bd84d_Vco6sg#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6)

## WHERE THE PHILIPPINES STAND

One of our neighbouring Asian country, the Philippines, on the other hand, is not so much in luck. The nation was not as fast as others in Southeast Asia to cancel flights, close schools, and restrict movement therefore coronavirus infections continued to spike in numbers in mid-March. Philippines became the first in the region to order a national lockdown. A third world country besieged with druglord-war and corruption, with an overly densed population close to 110 million, the Philippines now face coronavirus! To date, there are around 349 deaths out of 5,453 confirmed cases.

## THE CONNECTION – WHY PHILIPPINES?

I hailed from the Philippines, finished medical school in Manila (the nation's capital city) but soon as I graduated I went back to my Province – Quezon Province which is 3-4 hours drive down south of Manila – to serve in rural hospitals. Needless to say, for 4 years I have experienced working in 4 of the 16 government public hospitals and 3 of the 7 Level II private hospitals in the province and have good friends who are doctors. One of them had rose to the rank of the Provincial Health Officer – Dr Grace Santiago – is now in charge of all these hospitals and she had reached out to me regarding the need for PPE for health care workers in the region.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, Dr Grace Santiago wrote: “Despite our efforts to provide all our health facilities with Proper Personal Equipment (PPE), we still run short of supplies added to the fact that the nation requires these PPEs and suppliers have difficulty looking for resources.

We are now catering to 231 validated Patients Under Investigation (PUI) and 9 confirmed cases for CoViD-19. If uncontained, we predict an exponential growth of around 2000 plus PUIs and 288 confirmed cases.

With these in mind, we appeal for your support in helping our health facilities acquire at least 1000 PPEs, a Polymerase Chain Reaction(PCR) Machine, thermal scanners, and sanitation tents. We are hoping that you will be our partner in containing the infection by providing our health work force the necessary logistics.”

On facebook, I saw a collective effort being run by our College Alumni Organization to address the lack/insufficient PPEs and I personally contacted other doctor-friends in the Philippines who then also confirmed the need. PPE, after-all, are an ongoing need being single-use consumable supplies.

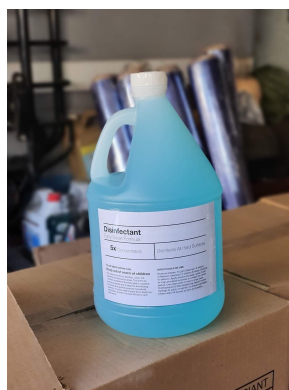
Washington Post news reported at least 150 doctors have been infected and 20 have died, accounting to 5% of covid19-related deaths in the Philippines as of the first week of April!

Reference: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/2020/04/11/meet-health-care-workers-spearheading-philippiness-fight-against-coronavirus/>

## THE NEED

After doing a bit of research and coordination with local counterparts and college friends in the last few days, I have learned what is needed and how much each would cost, please see an estimated quantity against unit cost on the table below (with pictures to illustrate underneath):

ITEM	QUANTITY	Unit price in AUD	Total price in AUD
Coverall gowns – locally sewn but approved by infection control committee in the Philippines	1,000.00	15.00	15,000.00
N95 mask	1,000.00	7.00	7,000.00
Surgical Masks – 50 pcs/box	100.00	46.00	4,600.00
Face Shield per pc – locally made	1,000.00	1.50	1,500.00
Latex Gloves – 100 pcs/box	100.00	15.00	1,500.00
Ethyl alcohol per gallon	100.00	22.00	2,200.00
Surface disinfectant per gallon	100.00	26.00	2,600.00
Total			\$ 34,400 aud



## THE RESPONSE

As a Rotarian and a doctor, who had fortunately not lost job but gets continually exposed to the health risks associated with the profession – I totally can relate to the fear and extreme apprehension felt by my colleagues who are not as lucky to be living in Australia. Where I work (Manning Base Hospital), the PPE supplies are low but not desperate – we have not resorted to locally sewn/recycled PPEs! I believe, we are still well protected against the virus, and yet we fear of the day we may accidentally get the virus from unsuspected virus-carrier patient!

One night after browsing Facebook and saw the ‘cry for help’ – there was no hesitation, I sprung to action – the seeds of “Project PPE” was born. Without Rotary, the need to response to that call for help was strong, I have pledged \$2000 to purchase 100 coverall. With Rotary and with help of other likeminded people, I know together we can do more and help more!



Corresponding local counterparts are as follows:

1. Dr Grace Santiago – Provincial Health Officer, Quezon Province  
Email: [gvs34@yahoo.com](mailto:gvs34@yahoo.com),  
Mobile: +63 917 820 1006
2. Attorney Rhaetia Marie Abcede – Town Councilor of Lucena City (capital of Quezon Province)  
Email: [rhaetia22@yahoo.com](mailto:rhaetia22@yahoo.com), Mobile: +63 917 885 1575
3. Johann Tagle – Coordinator of Quezon Bayanihan, group spearheading relief and support for PPE, Contact via FB Messenger
4. Dr Eduardo Ayuste – Surgeon at Philippine General Hospital, Contact via FB Messenger



## THE PLAN OF ACTION

Rotary Club of Taree had agreed to support the project and created the Project committee composed of myself, Phil Streatfield and Susie Ploder.

A RAWCS Overseas Aid Project was applied for, approved at district and regional level only to be disapproved at national level.

After dutifully doing my research, and having been disappointed by RAWCS, I have ordered the taffeta materials which will be locally sewn to give income to local women in Lucena City (capital of Quezon Province) – to be made into 100 coveralls (will cost around \$1500 more or less, depending on final charge on labour), the rest of the funds (\$500) will be divided into purchasing disinfectants and gloves.

If we manage to get any other personal/club contribution or district disaster response grant, these funds will be used to purchase further PPEs down the track as these are foreseeable ongoing need on a day-to-day, month-to-month basis until the pandemic resolves (whenever that will be!).

Receipts and accountability reports will be provided on ongoing basis until the project is deemed complete.

## WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE?

If you are reading this (whining or not whining about our social distancing and restriction measures) and wondering how you can do something worthwhile during these trying times, thinking outside the box....

This may just be the idea you need!

Ask yourself – how much you can spare without hurting your pocket – and make a donation to the Rotary Club of Taree towards Project PPE (dedicated bank account details to follow), while saying a prayer of gratitude and love towards all those health workers (with or without PPE) who are in the frontline fighting this virus to help those inflicted patients come out as survivors in the other end.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and springing into action with me, with our club, with the theme of Rotary this year: Rotary Connects the World!

Yours in Rotary connecting with the world, Quezon Province in Philippines in particular,



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