

**COLLABORATION, CONNECTION, COMMUNITY, SUCCESS:
– IMPACT, REACH, ENGAGE, ADAPT**



Following a successful trial 10 years ago, the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington has partnered with the Somali community, Rotary Donations in Kind and the Rotary Foundation in a major medical aid project to Puntland, Somalia.

Still severely affected by conflict, drought and famine, the 40,000 people of the Jarriban district Mudug province, Puntland Somalia have little medical aid. Current figures suggest that the number of hospital beds per 1000 people is 0.87. The country falls considerably behind its neighbours and most conflict-torn nations in terms of population health indices due to decades of political instability. The inadequate number of health workers, facilities, and health service are reflected in the healthcare system.

We were asked to help. Without a Rotary Club to work with, a team led by Flemington Kensington Rotarian Dr Abdiwahid Hassan partnered with Chancellor of the Jarriban International University Dr Sayid Abdille Hassan and the Minister of Health to develop and implement a plan to improve medical aid to Jarriban.

2 years in the making, and based on an extensive wish list of medical items to be obtained, this project would not have been feasible without a grant from the Rotary Foundation and a significant financial contribution from members of the Somali diaspora in Melbourne.

Members worked with Rotary Donations in Kind Managers Laurie Fisher and Frank Dri to source and collect equipment, pull materials from stock, clarify and finalise the wishlist, and organise purchase of a container and finally obtain a shipping berth.

At Jarriban, Dr Sayid Abdille Hassan worked with hospital Rector Dr Farhan Abdirahman Farah, and Government, customs and port authorities to enable a smooth transition through a region still in the middle of conflict with ISIS rebels.

Finally, on 27 August 2024 the 40' container was loaded at Donations in Kind. Leaders of the Somali community, Mr Yasin Farah and Ms Sareeyo Abdisamad and others assisted the expert team in the tetris like juggle to fit in the treasure trove.

55 beds and mattresses, 2 dialysis machines and chairs donated by the Austin hospital, 35 wheelchairs, an operating table, 2 patient lifting hoists and sacks, 2 autoclaves, 6 cots, 6 medication trolleys, multiple blood pressure and patient monitors, IV poles, crutches, microscopes, CPR dummies, cupboards and 106 cartons of medical consumables. Additionally, 40 university desks and chairs and 16 cartons of stationery. *{We don't pay to ship air so we fill every nook and cranny!}*

The journey was challenging:

Distance - Melbourne to Dubai, to Bosasso and the by truck to Jarriban some 19,800kms

Time - 7 months from loading to arrival

Cost – over \$27,000 as shipping and transport costs to Africa have grown increased

Sanctions – USA Department OFAC requiring additional diligence for any grants due to sanctions.

The arrival at Jarriban on 27 March 2025 was met with celebrations and excitement at such treasure. A formal ceremony including the Mayor, the Rector of the Hospital, the Chancellor of the University, Chief of Police, community leaders and those who had assisted with fundraising was held on 29 March, early in the morning to allow for Ramadan.

Lesley McCarthy, Peter Cribb and Abdiwahid Hassan from Flemington Kensington connected through ZOOM and experienced the joy on the faces of those present and their delight at the donations. The opening of the container doors was met with cheering and applause as boxes tumbled out onto the red dirt.

Over the next week, the container was unpacked and items directed to the appropriate location for cleaning and dusting after the lengthy journey. Dr Sayid sent a final written report to us with photos and videos showing the unloading.

The dialysis machines are now in use providing treatment for the first time.

With the extra beds, patients no longer lay on the floor for treatment and the wheelchairs provide a lifeline for those impacted by mobility issues.

Children's cots and a humidicrib means paediatric services are strengthened.

Wheelchairs, 4-wheel walking frames and crutches provide support for those with mobility issues.

Bandages, sanitiser, burns kits, dressings, forceps and scissors, sutures and eye washes are just some of the items now being used to help the hundreds of patients who present for help.

An additional operating table helps with surgeries.

Surgical dressings, sheets and scrubs provide hygiene measures.

IMPACT: 40,000 people now have additional medical access.

REACH: partnership with the Somali diaspora in Melbourne, connections in Bosasso, Garacad and Jarriban.

ENGAGEMENT: we are diverse, and we know that when we bring together people of different backgrounds, we think of better ideas and more effective ways of serving our community and the world.

ADAPTION: despite the challenges, the hurdles, the logistics a way was found.

This project was funded by the Somali community, the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington and a grant from the Rotary Foundation in District 9800.

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27 August 2024: loading at Donations in Kind

Left: Abdullah, Abdullahi and Sareeya assisting with loading.

Right: The loading team



Loading at DiK
Dialysis chairs to go with the machines,
cots and linen



The formal ceremony to open and
welcome the container at Jarriban.
March 2025



Dr Sayid Abdille Hassan, Chancellor of
the Jarriban International University



hospital Rector Dr Farhan Abdirahman
Farah



Opening the container



Unloading the humidicrib



Dialysis machines with a very happy Dr Sayid at left

