

Media Release

Thursday, 23 September 2010

Airfares for two Timorese teenagers have been paid

St John of God Hospital Warrnambool in regional Victoria has come to the aid of two East Timorese teenagers requiring lifesaving heart treatment in Australia by paying their airfares to and from Australia.

The hospital's Chief Executive Officer, Glyn Palmer, said Dr Noel Bayley, one of the hospital's cardiologists, had asked the hospital if it could help.

"As a division of St John of God Health Care, we already have a long standing relationship with the East Timorese people, providing pathology, primary health care and nursing services in East Timor through our Social Outreach and Advocacy program, which reaches out to people experiencing disadvantage," Glyn said.

"Given our hospitals across Australia also often assist in treating patients in need from neighbouring countries, we were more than happy to help out."

Glyn said the hospital would not normally publicise its donation, but media coverage across Australia had led members of the public to inundate the hospital, where Dr Bayley works, with offers to pay the airfares or otherwise assist the teenagers.

Dr Bayley, who has helped Timorese patients for years, had also publicly offered to personally pay the teenagers' airfares.

"The generosity of ordinary Australians has been overwhelming but as a small regional hospital, we don't have the resources to adequately handle the number of people now contacting us with offers of help to pay the airfares," Glyn said.

"We are therefore very keen to let people know that we have already arranged to pay the airfares and the teenagers can now fly to Australia for treatment in Melbourne at the MonashHEART medical centre, which is providing the life-saving heart treatment for both girls.

"We would really like to acknowledge the generosity of Australians and thank them for their concern and care for the two young women, who so urgently require our help."

St John of God Health Care is Australia's largest Catholic not for profit private healthcare group. It operates seven hospitals in Victoria, four hospitals in WA and two hospitals in New South Wales, as well as pathology services in WA and Victoria, and Social Outreach and Advocacy services reaching out to people experiencing disadvantage in Australia, New Zealand and the wider Asia-Pacific region.

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