

# VSA Assignment Description

<b>Assignment Title</b>	Pacific Roving Ophthalmologist SI
<b>Country</b>	Solomon Islands
<b>Location</b>	Honiara
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	Fred Hollows Foundation SI
<b>Duration</b>	3+ months
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	



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## 1. Partner organisation overview

Fred Hollows Foundation's mission is to end avoidable blindness in Solomon Islands. The organisation operates out of the Regional Eye Centre (REC) that was opened in 2015 in Honiara. The REC, with support from Fred Hollows Foundation, provides free eye health care to Solomon Islands and is a training facility for eye care practitioners from across the region. The goals of the REC are to achieve progress towards eliminating avoidable blindness, reduce vision impairment, tackle diabetic retinopathy, and strengthen health systems in Solomon Islands. The REC contains rooms for eye clinics, eye surgery, diabetic retinopathy treatments, minor procedures, sterilisation, stores and training rooms.

The Foundation's long-term development goal is help build resilient, locally-led and sustainable quality eye care in the Pacific. The realisation of this goal will mean that eye care is fully integrated in national health systems including planning and policy, and is owned, managed, and delivered by health authorities in the Pacific. Therefore, programme interventions are targeted at strengthening local systems, health practices, and build eye health clinicians skills in a sustainable, inclusive and empowering way.

Fred Hollows Foundation SI and REC are committed to providing quality patient care and health services to achieve the goal of universal health coverage, with patients accessing healthcare in a timely manner. The Covid-19 pandemic has increased the number of people who have worsened cataracts and diabetic retinopathy (DR) – they are in real danger of going blind if they are not attended to urgently.

## 2. Assignment overview

The purpose of this assignment is to support Fred Hollows Foundation SI and REC to reduce surgical backlog and waiting times for patients, and to mentor and coach graduates.

The volunteer Pacific Roving Ophthalmologist SI will support, mentor and work alongside local staff, particularly recent graduates, to support patient care and strengthening of systems at the REC.

## 3. Goal/outcomes/outputs

### Goal

National Sports Council has sound financial and operational systems in place that enable it to function efficiently.



## Outcome 1

Patients needing eye operations are attended to in a timely manner.  
Working alongside staff and recent graduates:

- Ensure that least 300 surgeries performed per year.
- Support patients before and after operations.
- Treat diabetic retinopathy patients.

## Outcome 2

Graduates are being mentored and coached

- Working alongside the Finance Manager:
- Deliver lectures as and when required and appropriate.
- Provide one-on-one and group coaching and mentoring to graduates.

## Outcome 3

Patient consultations (general outpatients, pre-operative clinics, post-operative clinics)

- Conduct outpatient clinics and participate in outreaches.

## 4. Reporting and working relationships and capacity building

The volunteer Pacific Roving Ophthalmologist SI will work with Fred Hollow Foundation SI and REC staff team, in a manner that supports shared learning on providing quality patient care and health services. They will report directly to the Fred Hollows Foundation SI Medical Director.

The volunteer will design and deliver capacity building initiatives that support ongoing learning, mentoring and coaching particularly to recent graduates.

The volunteer and Fred Hollows Foundation SI will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager in terms of assignment monitoring, reporting, professional advice and personal support.

**As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the Assignment Description on arrival in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA Programme Manager. By their very nature, development situations can involve significant change, so it is advisable that the volunteer periodically review and reflect on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.**



## 5. Selection criteria/position requirements

### Person specifications (professional)

#### Essential

- Qualified Ophthalmologist competent in Manual small incision cataract surgery technique (MSICS)

#### Desirable

- Experience in providing laser treatment for DR
- Experience in mentoring graduate ophthalmologists
- Other subspecialty skill sets such as oculoplasty and retinopathy

### Person specifications (personal)

#### Essential

- Cultural sensitivity
- Flexibility
- Reliable
- Positive attitude
- Patience
- Willingness to learn basic Solomon Islands Pijin

#### Desirable

- Experience living and working in a Melanesian country/low resource setting

### VSA Essential Attributes

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation.
- Cross cultural awareness.
- Adaptability and a willingness to approach change or newness positively.
- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with work colleagues and in the community.
- Resilience and an ability to manage setbacks.
- Initiative and resourcefulness.
- An ability to facilitate learning through skills exchange.

## 6. Living Situation

Honiara is the business centre of Solomon Islands and as such is a melting pot for people from all the island groups that make up the diverse nation. A hot and dusty place, Honiara offers most facilities albeit in a rudimentary form. You are strongly encouraged to build relationships in the local community and socialise with Solomon Islanders at every opportunity, as this will enrich your experience of living in Solomons. However, entertainment options are few and far between so there is also a very active expatriate social scene. There are various clubs and social groups in Honiara, which you will get to know with time.



VSA will provide basic, furnished accommodation with gas facilities for cooking. In Honiara, you will have access to power (although power outages can occur), phone, internet, piped water, restaurants, a variety of shops and a large expatriate population. Public transport is very cheap within Honiara. The local bus service is provided by a plethora of vans, and some larger buses. A single fare of SBD3 applies, regardless of the length of the trip. Taxis charge a moderate fare (currently SBD10 per kilometre) but it is wise to establish a fare before commencing a journey.

Most volunteers feel safe in Solomon Islands, but it is important to know the risks and take personal responsibility for your safety. As in many countries, foreigners tend to be the target of petty crime, so always be alert and take precautions. In general, there are no problems moving around the majority of Honiara during the day, but it is not safe to walk or catch public transport alone in Honiara after dark.

For more information, see <https://vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/solomon-islands/>.

## **Additional information**

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### **Residency status**

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.

### **Pre-departure briefing**

As part of the volunteer's contract, successful candidates will be required to take part in a pre-departure briefing course run by VSA in Wellington and complete all required pre-reading.

### **Final appointment**

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances (costs covered by VSA), partner organisation acceptance, and successful completion of the pre-departure briefing course.

### **Family status**

VSA supports partners to accompany volunteers on assignments of six months or longer. However, volunteers with accompanying dependents will not be considered for this assignment.

### **Fundraising**

Volunteers are encouraged to fundraise at least \$1000 with the support of VSA's fundraising team. Accompanying partners are encouraged to raise the same amount. All funds raised will help VSA keep its programmes in action and support future volunteers.

### **Vaccination requirements**

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be inoculated, prior to departure, in accordance with the instructions of VSA's medical adviser. VSA covers the cost of any required vaccinations.

### **Children's Act**

While on assignment, VSA volunteers may be required to work with children and/or may choose to participate in informal activities in their own time that involve interactions with children (such as coaching teams or teaching English). VSA is committed to the protection of vulnerable children and adults, which also includes meeting our commitment under the Children's Act 2014.

The information requested during the application process is necessary to assist VSA to determine applicant suitability to work and/or interact regularly with children and is part of a series of pre-selection checks undertaken on all applicants for VSA assignments.



## **Volunteer package**

The volunteer's package includes the following:

### *Reimbursements and grants*

1. Volunteers will receive an establishment grant of NZ\$750 to help them set up in their country of assignment. For volunteers with an accompanying partner (whether that partner is also a VSA volunteer), VSA will pay an establishment grant of NZ\$1,100 per couple.
2. For two-year assignments, the volunteer will receive a rest and respite grant of NZ\$1000 on completion of the first year.
3. A resettlement grant of NZ\$200 will be paid for each month the volunteer is on assignment. This is payable on completion of the assignment.
4. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of SBD 7,000.

### *Accommodation*

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. For security purposes volunteers in Honiara should expect to share accommodation.

### *Airfares and baggage allowance*

VSA will provide the volunteer with economy airfares to and from New Zealand for their assignment plus a baggage allowance.

### *Insurance*

VSA will provide travel insurance to cover baggage and personal property, and non-routine medical expenses for the duration of the assignment. Further details of the insurance cover will be provided during the volunteer pre-departure briefing.

### *Utilities*

VSA will reimburse volunteers reasonable expenses for household utilities while on assignment.

**Final terms and conditions relating to the specific volunteer assignment will be confirmed in a personalised volunteer contract prior to departure.**

