

Since 2008, Dr Mark Ellis has screened and treated 3,453 people on the Island of Sumba for eye disease



Vision for change

Cotham Private Hospital specialist Dr Mark Ellis receives recognition for his life-changing international eye program

Cotham Private Hospital's ophthalmologist Dr Mark Ellis was appointed a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for significant services to medicine and to eye health in Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

Dr Ellis runs the Hawthorn Eye Clinic in the Melbourne suburb of Kew, and has been operating at nearby Cotham Private Hospital since 1997. He is a valued member of the Cotham Private Hospital Medical Advisory Committee.

A decade ago, Dr Ellis began working voluntarily with the East Timor Eye Program (ETEP) and the External Affairs

Division of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS).

Dr Ellis said his work with ETEP and the trust of its founder Dr Nitin Verma AM gave him the courage and skills to work as team leader in East Timor and to set up another eye program.

"In 2007, RACS sent me to the Island of Sumba in East Indonesia to explore the idea of eye service delivery," said Dr Ellis.

"A chance meeting with the health director of the Sumba Foundation, Dr Claus Bogh, on that trip opened up a chance to set up the Sumba Eye Program," he said.

The Sumba Foundation works toward lessening the consequences of

poverty by fostering projects in health, education, water and income-generation.

After the fateful meeting, Dr Ellis established the Sumba Eye Program with two optometrists, Peter Stewart and Peter Lewis.

Since 2008, the Sumba Eye Program has screened and treated 3,453 people for eye disease, performed 416 operations and prescribed 2,062 spectacles.

The program is funded by Rotary and private donations. All work undertaken is voluntary. 

By Kellie Furey