

[Home](#) » [Opinion](#) » [Miranda Devine](#) » Article

Source: The Sun-Herald

Miranda Devine
May 4, 2008

Light shines on Hollows legacy

Congratulations to the Fred Hollows Foundation, which last week won the Givewell charity award for "best practice not-for-profit" organisation.

It has been 15 years since legendary ophthalmologist Fred Hollows died of cancer at the age of 63. But his work powers on at the foundation he set up to prevent blindness and restore the sight of those in remote Australia and developing countries.

The Givewell award acknowledges the tangible results, transparency and financial accountability which make the foundation a deserving recipient of donations.

It is a tribute to those such as chief executive Brian Doolan and Hollows's widow, Gabi, an orthoptist who remains the foundation's public face.

The Fred Hollows Foundation has helped restore the sight of more than 1 million people in 30 countries, including 140,000 people last year, Doolan says. Last year, it also trained 3284 new eye-health workers and supplied \$1.3million of medical equipment.

Hollows's philosophy was that it was not enough just to fly to a place and fix people's eyes. You had to pass on the knowledge to perform the 20-minute surgery to treat cataract blindness, and the ability to cheaply produce the intraocular lenses which are inserted inside the eye.

Much of Hollows's effort was spent finding the best way to manufacture lenses inexpensively in portable factories that could be set up in developing countries. In Nepal and Eritrea these profitable factories have produced more than 3 million lenses.

It is an Australian triumph and a worthy legacy of a brave, wonderful man I had the privilege of accompanying on his last trip to Hanoi in 1992. Sick and knowing he was dying, Hollows was determined to finish what he had started, God bless him.