



## **AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT REGARDING HAMLIN FISTULA ETHIOPIA**

I am writing to you on behalf of Hamlin Fistula Australia Limited ("HFA") to advise you of some matters of concern that have taken place in Ethiopia. Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia ("HFE") is governed by a Board of Trustees responsible for the management of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and its five regional centres, the Hamlin College of Midwives and Desta Mender.

The HFA Board has become aware of the following developments:

- Three of the HFE Trustees were asked to resign. Dr Hamlin AC and Mr Richard Hamlin remained as Trustees. The HFA Board understands that replacement Trustees have now been appointed.
- The CEO of HFE, Mr Mark Bennett, has resigned and will leave Ethiopia at the end of his contract in June 2012.
- Sister Annette Bennett, Founding Dean of the Hamlin College of Midwives and more recently the Vice-Dean of the College with responsibilities for the recruitment of student midwives and the midwifery rural deployment programme, has had her employment terminated.
- The Medical Director, Professor Gordon Williams OBE, has resigned effective 15 April, 2012.
- The Dean of the Hamlin College of Midwives, Sister Jacqueline Bernhard, has resigned effective the end of May, 2012, although the end of the academic year of the College concludes in August.

The HFA Board acknowledges the significant contributions made by the recent retired Trustees of HFE, Mr Mark Bennett, Professor Gordon Williams, Sr Jacqueline Bernhard and Sr Annette Bennett to the work of HFE.

The HFA Board is seeking further information from HFE about these developments and the steps being taken to fill the vacated positions.

The HFA Board assures its donors that all monies donated to the Fund, and which have not yet been dispersed to Ethiopia, will continue to be sent to HFE as requested by them for projects and operating expenses following our usual practice. The HFA Board also assures supporters that due to the past generosity of donors, there are sufficient funds to continue to support the work of HFE.

The directors of the Australian Board remain fully committed to the treatment and care of women with obstetric fistula and to the prevention of this condition in Ethiopia. A newsletter incorporating a letter from Dr Catherine Hamlin will be issued shortly.

The Board intends that future statements about the situation will be posted on the Fund's website ([www.hamlinfistula.org.au](http://www.hamlinfistula.org.au)). Alternatively, supporters can contact the Fund's office to enquire about any up to date information by telephoning (02) 8007 7435 or by emailing: [emailus@hamlinfistula.org.au](mailto:emailus@hamlinfistula.org.au) .

David Barnsdall, OAM  
Chairman

27 March, 2012