MARATHON MIDWIFE!

Australian midwife Bernadette Lack is running a marathon to raise funds for the Hamlin College of Midwives. But it’s not your average marathon. It’s a gruelling 45km run called the Great Ocean Road Marathon from Lorne to Apollo Bay in Victoria.

And Bernadette is not your average midwife. She works with the Remote Outreach Midwifery Central Team, providing midwifery services to sixteen remote central Australian communities up to 700km out of Alice Springs. Bernadette is studying for her Masters in Pubic Health and is the President of the Australian College of Midwives, Northern Territory. She is also a respite care foster mum. Originally studying to be a sports psychologist, Bernadette read midwifery in hospital by the river several years ago and was so inspired by the Hamlin story that she switched to midwifery.

With a strict training schedule for the marathon, Bernadette uses the outback as her training ground, running on sandy red dirt roads and literally dodging kangaroos and swollen rivers.

Her goal is to raise $20,000 to fund the training of five Ethiopian midwives at the Hamlin College of Midwives in Addis Ababa. With fundraising already at over $9,000 she’s confident that she can reach this goal.

“’When I am training I just keep remembering that every minute, somewhere in the world, a woman dies in childbirth. That keeps me going. If I can fund the training of five or more local midwives in Ethiopia, I can help change that statistic,” says Bernadette.

The race will be run on 20 May 2012. We will be updating supporters on Bernadette’s progress on the Hamlin Fistula Facebook page at facebook.com/DrCatherineHamlin.

MAKE A DONATION

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Every cent goes to the Hamlin College of Midwives.

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The two mothers are now lying in the ward with two lovely babies in cots beside each bed, so each mother has made up for the one they lost. Their happiness is great and ours. So, see images of these beautiful mothers on the next page.
Now I must give you some special news of the great privilege I had of meeting the Queen in Australia in October. This invitation came from the Governor-General of Australia who also most kindly asked me to stay with her as her guest in Canberra and to join 35 others for lunch with the Queen on Sunday 23rd October which as you can imagine was a most exciting and wonderful occasion.

I spent Saturday night in the guest house of Government House where I was surprised to be joined by the Governor-General and her husband. This was because the Queen and her entourage had fully occupied the main residence at Yarralumla. So I was privileged to have breakfast with the Governor-General and her husband next morning – an enjoyable and memorable breakfast occasion.

I had hoped I might have been able to attend church with the Queen, but it was evidently a very small church and only with room for the official party and some of the usual congregation. Instead, I was able to walk about the beautiful gardens of Government House and enjoy the sweeping lawns, huge trees and the mass of flowering azaleas and rhododendrons, still in spring glory.

The lunch was at one-thirty and we were all assembled first and then lined up to go in by one to be introduced to the royal party, flanked by the Governor-General and her husband. The Queen looked relaxed and happy in a pale yellow outfit. So I had hoped I might have been able to attend church with the Queen, and so it was evidently a very small church and only with room for the official party and some of the usual congregation. Instead, I was able to walk about the beautiful gardens of Government House and enjoy the sweeping lawns, huge trees and the mass of flowering azaleas and rhododendrons, still in spring glory.

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After we had all been introduced we were photographed as a group in all about 44 people, with the Queen and Duke in the centre, before going into the dining room for lunch. We were all seated at one long table glittering with silver and cut glass and flowers. I could see the Queen easily as she was on the other side but further down the table. It was a relaxed meal and I had two interesting men on either side – one a headmaster of a school for disadvantaged boys in Melbourne that he had founded.

One stroked the nose of a big black stallion that she had given to the Queen later; one particularly lovely one shows her

I met some interesting photos with the Governor-General to be given to the Queen later; one particularly lovely one shows her

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"We are a multifaceted organisation and it is good to know so

We have just celebrated Easter here, the greatest festival in the Christian calendar, a time of joy and of new life and also of sacrifice and of compassion. I know you too are concerned and are helping us to bring new life to a despairing one. Thank you for being partners in their work.

With love from

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“We are delighted to welcome Pippa to the Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia team. She’s a gift from God!” says Dr Hamlin.

Pippa will take over the role starting in April, as our departing CEO, Australian hospital administrator Mark Bennett, leaves Ethiopia after almost five years with Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. Mark and his wife Annette both made an enormous contribution to the growth of the organisation over the last few years and we wish them all the best on their next mission.

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HAMLIN FISTULA® AUSTRALIA LIMITED
PO Box 965, Wahroonga NSW 2076 Australia | Phone 02 8007 7435 | Fax 02 8007 7470
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In the late 1980s Mikael Gurberchuk used two Russian words to summarise the reforms required in his country: Glasnost and Perestroika 'Restructuring'!

Desta Abdo like any big city in the world has its rumours. One circulating is that Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (HFE) Board has political issues that are affecting service delivery. Opinions about the truth is good for any institution provided it does not unnecessarily name individuals in a disaccustomed manner. Restructuring has been an obligatory and opportune outcome from facing the challenges of the recent months.

In May 2009 a senior manager of HFE, without board authorization, stated to the Chair of an independent Trust in Europe that supports our work, that 'Unless our Foreign Partner Trusts share HFE’s entire Christian Ethos & Values they cannot be Partners of HFE Trust, but may only be donors.'

"You may know that Dr Hamlin, as documented in her book "The Hospital by the River", occasionally mentions her Christian faith as a motivational factor for her and her late husband to come to Ethiopia and start the work of fistula healing and prevention. It is one thing to have a faith, but quite another to make it a condition of support for the work of this Trust. There are many with Christian faith, both Ethiopia Orthodox and Protestant working for HFE, others with us of the Islamic faith and others of no particular religious belief. So this is not a Christian Hospital but it contains many Christians. We respect equally all those who support us or work here, of any faith or none. Sadly last year this became an issue due to the 2009 statement being revived in a stronger form. This attitude demeaned the status of our loyal secular or semi-religious Trusts and almost caused the loss of their support. This religious bias was out of character with the original ethos of this institution, which, as I write your organization the United Nations, consists of a multi-faceted, multi-ethnic and multi-religious community. It requires diplomacy and sensitivity to maintain such an organization, but if we managed it, its variety gives it strength and vigor."

"Unfortunately, this religious bias split the Board and became, for some, a matter of principle, that individuals rather than care for the overall good of our service to the women of Ethiopia. Over the months this also affected some of our overseas Trusts outside mainland Europe. We know this bias must be resisted. In summary, Dr Hamlin using her authority as Co-founder of HFE was obliged to ask for the resignation of several Trustees and some senior managers. To restore the integrity of the Board she has recruited new Trustees to support the Ethiopian doctors and use from the Netherlands, experienced professionals in their fields and in Board work or hospital management."

"These are: Professor Kelerde, Cardiologist and Director of Landmark Private Hospital, Addis Ababa; Dr Li Tedesco, Gynaecologist and Vice President for Medical Services St Paul Hospital Millennium Medical College, Addis Ababa; Dr Ruth Lenkassa, Consultant Dermatologist at Bank Specialized Higher Clinic in Addis Ababa and experienced hospital Trustee; Dr Peter-Jong Huei, Director of Medicine and Oncology from the Netherlands, who has worked in Senior Management with Eli Lilly for many years. These four are our new, valued Board members, along with former member Mr. Richard Hamlin."

"Finally, I am pleased to mention that HFE now has a CEO-elect, Mrs. Philippa Roberts, chosen from a short-list for a six-month interim contract, pending Board approval. By chance she is, like Dr Hamlin, an Australian and brings a strong CV to the post, including two Masters Degrees and certificates in Tropical Medicine and in Business Negotiation. She is also a registered nurse and midwife. She is kindly bilingual, multilingual, and significantly has worked for 11 years in Sudan, five years in Kenya, also four years in southern Ethiopia in the early 1980s. She was an effective fundraiser for HFE in the late 1990s."

"We have had a difficult year, but this institution and especially its spirit of tender care for patients have been worth fighting for; we are recovering from this traumatic era and we shall prevail for the sake of our patients, our staff and for the holy, Dr Hamlin, who inspired and still emulates it. The ethos of this place will again truly be 'Walk to Beauty', just as its founder has already personally demonstrated."