



Fred Hollows – An Australian Hero

Fred lived an extraordinary life. He is proof that everyone can make a difference and can help other people.

Fred was an eye doctor and used his skills to give people back their sight. However, it was his **personal qualities** and **beliefs** that motivated him to do amazing things to help other people.

That's why we remember him as a hero!



Professor Fred Hollows with an intraocular lens.
Photo Courtesy Newspix/George Fetting.

Fred's personal qualities

Passionate

Fred put all of his energy into his work to help others.

Compassionate

Fred was concerned when he saw how disadvantaged Indigenous Australians in the outback were compared to how other Australians lived. He felt that he wanted to do something about the disadvantage.

Determined

An intraocular lens (IOL) is a small piece of plastic that is inserted into the eye during cataract surgery to replace the damaged natural lens.

Fred realised that because the cost of an IOL was too high (about US\$150 each), many people in developing countries could not afford to have cataract surgery. They had to live with a type of blindness that could easily be treated.

Fred was determined that IOLs didn't have to be so expensive. So, he established factories in Nepal and Eritrea that now make IOLs for around US\$8 each.

Today, because of Fred's determination, cataract surgery is much more affordable for people living in developing countries.

Leader

Fred inspired other people to lend a hand. He led a team of eye doctors and nurses on a three-year tour of outback Australia to treat Trachoma and other eye diseases.

Sense of humour

Fred was known as a larrikin and many people remember sharing a joke with him.

Outspoken

Fred often criticised the Australian government for not providing enough health care and education for Indigenous Australians living in outback Australia.



Fred's beliefs and values

Equality

Fred believed that all people should be treated equally.

Helping other people, especially those in need

Fred believed that being a doctor gave him a special responsibility to help people.

"I believe that the basic attribute of mankind is to look after each other"
Professor Fred Hollows



Photo courtesy of www.michaelamendolia.com

Social Justice for Indigenous Australians

Fred believed that Indigenous Australians should have the same life chances and choices as other Australians. Everyone, whether they live in the outback or the city, should be able to visit a doctor, go to school, have healthy food and be part of their community.

People need to be empowered to improve their health and life

Fred believed that people living in poverty in Australia and in other countries need to be able to help themselves.

He believed Indigenous Australians should be in-charge of their own health care, education and community life.

In developing countries such as Nepal and Vietnam, Fred realised that the key to success was to train local doctors. They could then do cataract surgery on many more people, for many years to come, and train extra doctors as well.

Be willing to try new things and look for new solutions

When Fred first went to villages in Nepal, he found it difficult to do cataract surgery because there wasn't any surgical equipment or electricity. So Fred asked an Australian manufacturer to design a portable microscope that could run off a 12 volt battery.