



A medical first for Vanuatu with help from the Royal Hospital for Women

In April this year, the Royal Hospital for Women was contacted by Dr Jason Sly, the obstetrician in Port Vila, Vanuatu, for advice about a difficult clinical problem. Linda, one of their patients, was found to have a very sick anaemic fetus at 29 weeks of pregnancy, and the local doctors didn't have the skills required to perform a fetal intra-uterine transfusion (blood transfusion). The baby already had signs of severe heart failure and would have died within days without this treatment. Linda had previously lost 3 babies who had been stillborn with this same problem.

Dr Sly discussed the case with the specialists of Maternal Fetal Medicine and Newborn Care at the 'Royal', and the decision was made for one of our specialists to fly to Vanuatu the next day to perform a fetal intrauterine transfusion procedure. Dr Challis from the 'Royal' took all the instruments and equipment to perform the procedure.

The procedure was successful and resulted in dramatic improvement in the baby's condition. The heart failure improved and the baby started moving again in the womb. The story of the successful "hi-tech" treatment was reported on the front page of the Vanuatu newspaper!

Following this initial procedure, the clinicians approached the Royal Hospital for Women Foundation to ask for financial support to bring Linda to Australia for further treatment. The Foundation is committed to helping provide care to the women and babies who depend on the



Linda and Baby Faith at Port Vila Hospital, Vanuatu

specialised care of the 'Royal' and were thrilled to be given the opportunity to participate in helping Linda.

The Foundation flew Linda to Sydney for two further visits including a second fetal transfusion at the 'Royal' performed by Professor Alec Welsh.

After a long and worrying pregnancy, we were very excited to receive the wonderful news that Baby "Faith" was delivered by caesarean section in Vanuatu on June 23rd weighing 2.5kg and is doing well.

Thank you to our committed donors who support the work of the Foundation. Your donations certainly do save lives.