



# Boosting Pacific health



**Dr Glenn Doherty has spent 16 years helping Māori and Pacific people with health and wellbeing initiatives.**

When Dr Glenn Doherty runs his weekly Auckland clinics you can bet your life his patients don't realise they are being treated by one of the city's more influential primary healthcare professionals – especially when it comes to Tongan health outcomes.

Dr Doherty is CEO and Medical Director of the Tongan Health Society (THS), where he runs an integrated primary health service for 6000 registered clients and approx. 2000 non-registered ones (largely Tongans without residency or visiting from the Pacific Islands).

Over the last two years, Doherty has rescued the

THS from financial collapse, and boosted services at its health centres in Onehunga and Panmure to include dentistry, midwifery, podiatry, psychiatry and dietician services. THS also has an ECE preschool in Manurewa and a Community Centre and garden in Onehunga.

Dr Doherty has recently implemented a new Integrated Outcomes Unit focused on justice, housing, immigration, education and employment and community initiatives as well as clinical issues under a new model of care for families.

The Society surgeries now have Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioner Cornerstone and CYFS accreditation and are teaching practices for General Practice Registrars who are completing their fellowships. Dr Doherty is the practice teacher for the College. He is also on the Royal College Education Advisory Group that overseas General Practice Fellowship training and examinations. More recently he has begun an international strategic collaboration in the Kingdom of Tonga, working with the Tongan

Government and Royal Family on a Tongan Outreach Project, and looking at setting up a satellite clinic in Tonga. He is also a key figure in advocating to improve hepatitis B programmes in Tonga and early screening, diagnosis and treatment of largely undiagnosed chronic conditions. And he is working with a number of NGOs, including the Hepatitis Foundation of NZ, the Blind Foundation of NZ and Arthritis NZ on this initiative.

It is a far cry from the medical student who completed his qualifications as a solo dad, on the DPB, and later found himself working 12-14 hour days in hospitals. "I knew hospital life wasn't for me and I felt a major drive to go into primary care," he says.

Over a 30-year career Doherty has worked on Australian HIV screening and immunology programmes, New Zealand strategic health policy development and diabetes prevention and other initiatives.