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## Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel gets the gift of sight

Fredrik Foka danced for joy when his sight was restored in a touching act of good faith last week. Mr Foka, 81, a Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel, was legally blind before he arrived in Australia from Papua New Guinea two weeks ago, but thanks to Prince of Wales Hospital staff he has been given a new lease of life.

Professor Minas Coroneo and the anaesthetist donated their time to perform two cataract surgical procedures on Mr Foka. Qantas donated his airfares and Ab-



bott Medical Optics donated his lenses.

Mr Foka had almost no navigational vision and could not read the top line of an optometry reading chart, but can now read as far as the third line.

When the bandaging was removed from his right eye after the cataract surgery two weeks ago, Mr Foka was so overjoyed that he broke out into a jig.

"I was so happy that I started dancing," he said. "I'm very lucky, because I was really blind. For three years I used to need assistance to walk because all I could see was like snow. It's like a dream come true - I'm very thankful for the operation."

The left eye was operated on last week, with both proce-

dures under a local anaesthetic and taking only about 30 minutes each.

When the Courier met a cheerful Mr Foka three hours later, it was hard to believe he had just undergone surgery.

Prof Coroneo was taught about the Fuzzy Wuzzies by his father, who was in the army in Darwin during the Second World War.

"These guys did tremendous work for Australians in New Guinea during that war and I thought there was an opportunity to repay a debt because although Fredrik is not Australian, in his way, he has been important in Australia's history," Prof Coroneo said.

The Papuans were affectionately dubbed the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels by the Australian troops after they carried supplies and the seriously sick and wounded soldiers along the Kokoda



Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel, Fredrick Foka, arrived in Sydney last week legally blind because of cataracts but now, thanks to some generous Australians, he can see in both eyes. Photo: Erin Byrne

Track back to Owers' Corner.

Mr Foka, who has nine children and 22 grandchildren, said he did not like to think about the war because it was a difficult time.

"It was very dangerous - we were diving and crawling to save wounded people," he said. "War is bad. I saw many people die in front of me. It makes me feel very sad and sorry."

Article from the Southern Courier

## 'Forget the books, build us some schools'...



A placard reading 'Forget the books, build us some schools,' lies on the ground outside a school in Asvestohori, near Thessaloniki. Teachers, pupils and parents staged protests yesterday outside the 14 schools in the Hortiatis municipality to complain about the poor state of the buildings and

a lack of facilities. 'We have a big problem,' said the head of the parents' association, Yiannis Garyfallou. 'The municipality is renting shops to use them as classes. We have classrooms that are separated by sheets of plasterboard.'

## Organ donors come forward

The number of Greeks signing up to be organ donors so far this year is up more than 50 percent on previous years but the number of transplants that have taken place has decreased, it was revealed yesterday. Greece's National Transplant Organization (EOM) said that in the first nine months of this year, 3,096 people had been issued donor cards, which was just over 50 percent higher than during the same period in 2007 and 2008, when some 1,700 people had signed up. EOM made the figures public ahead of National Organ Donor Day on November 1 but it also highlighted that there has been a small drop in transplants this year. So far in 2009, 60 donors have made 131 transplants possible (the vast majority of which involved kidneys), though in the same period last year 73 people had donated organs for 195 operations. Experts put the decline in transplants down to a lack of intensive-care units at hospitals.

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