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## Staff dig deep to support Ethiopian community

Staff at Bowral & District Hospital are digging deep to help an impoverished community in Ethiopia.

The team is celebrating its Workplace Giving Program this week with Southern Highlands Christian School food technology students cooking traditional Ethiopian cuisine for lunch.

Bowral & District Hospital General Manager Joel Bardsley said the Workplace Giving Program was well supported by staff, with more than 20 per cent contributing \$1 a week before tax.

“Whether you are a cleaner or in the executive team, it is affordable for everybody,” Mr Bardsley said.

“This sort of generosity further cements our staff’s desire to provide compassion and kindness.

“We are very lucky to live in a part of the world that has the highest standard of health care.

“Unfortunately, there are communities overseas which are unable to access reasonable levels of care. They depend on the work of charitable organisations to survive.”

Staff donations are capped at \$1 a week with the South Western Sydney Local Health District covering administrative costs to ensure every dollar is spent on health care in Africa.

The donations from nurses, doctors, cleaners, executive staff and allied health professionals largely fund the lifesaving maternal healthcare in the Afar region of Ethiopia.

More than \$1 million has been raised over the last 10 years through staff donations across the health district. The funds have helped set up and continue to operate the 20-bed maternity hospital and, in turn, prevent death during child birth.

The donations also keep local doctors and nurses employed and working in their community.

Former Bowral & District Hospital gynaecologist, David Browning helped found the Barbara May Foundation, where the Workplace Giving funds are directed. He will be attending the celebration on Wednesday 24 October.

Since 2009, the Workplace Giving Program has used funds to support charitable, health-related organisations including the maternity hospital in Ethiopia.