



NEWSLETTER

Volume 20: June 2012

A message of thanks from the Governor General

Early in June 2012 Mark had a visitor to see him at Calvary Hospital; it was Her Excellency Quentin Bryce AC CVO the Governor General.

Some years ago when Her Excellency was visiting Timor Leste for the first time she visited a birthing centre, where she was invited to hold a baby just a few hours old. When she



The extended Quentin family

looked down, she saw that the baby had a cleft. The mother named the little girl after Her Excellency and since then she has maintained a close interest in the welfare of the child. After initial thoughts that the child may need to come to Australia, the Governor General's Office were made aware of the OSSAA / RACS team visits and that the surgery could be performed by them in Dili.

The cleft lip repair occurred in March 2009 when baby Quentin was two months old.

Her Excellency saw her little namesake again on her recent visit to Timor Leste to celebrate the nation's ten years of independence.



Mark and Her Excellency

Following up on this visit she, on her recent visit to Adelaide, met with Mark and passed on her personal thanks for what has been done for baby Quentin.

A Word from the President:

There were 6 surgical team trips to the region in the first half of 2012.....another terrific effort.

In February **Bob Sillar** led a general surgery team to Halilulik.

In February *and* May **Mark Moore AM** led a plastic and reconstructive team to Timor Leste;

In March **Rob Coren** led a plastic and reconstructive team to Cancar.

In May **Colin Whitewood** led an orthopaedic team to Cancar.

In June **Michael Switajewski** led an ENT team to Cancar.

At the Committee meeting in June, I was elected to replace Joan Reed who resigned from the presidency due to ill health. We wish her a speedy recovery.

Considerable effort has been made to ensure that the higher standards of team member documentation required by Indonesian health authorities are met. There has been a large increase in the number of local doctors attending operations. Some operating theatres have become a little overcrowded and this needs to be better planned to ensure all attendees benefit from our team's efforts. Pleasing improvements in hospital staff capability in each of the locales have been noted by our teams – training is a key and growing component of our visits.

Latest recruits into the visiting OSSAA surgical teams included: general surgeon Dr Christine O'Neill; anaesthetist Dr Andrew Fenton; Srs Joy Booth, Bronwyn Hindley-Cooke and Elizabeth Murphy; and interpreter Dylan Venables.

The following fundraising events have been organised for the second half of 2012:

- . the annual mid-year luncheon in July with Mark Moore as guest speaker (best ever)!
- . a film evening on August 19 with a showing of 'Hope Springs' starring Meryl Streep

[A decade ago, on 2 March 2002, OSSAA was incorporated.....reason to celebrate!](#)

I was delighted to note that general surgeon and OSSAA team leader Dr Brian Miller was awarded an AM in the Australia Day Honours.

Thank you one and all.

Doug Omond OAM

Timor Leste (East Timor)

a. Oecussi

Under the 'Timor Leste Program of Assistance Specialist Services' (ATLASS) a team visit was

undertaken from 25 February – 3 March....our first to that area. The team comprised plastic surgeon Dr Mark Moore, anaesthetist Dr David Barker and theatre sister Vanessa Dittmar. Trainee plastic surgeon Dr Joao Ximenes accompanied the team.

Due to its isolation, the District of Oecussi is the last major region of Timor Leste to receive a plastic and reconstructive surgical team visit. Access is via small plane (with seats needing to be removed to take the team and its equipment). Good preplanning by organisers made the trip remarkably smooth and ensured that most of the people chosen for surgery received it. Operating theatre conditions were of a high standard but more effort is required on post-op. There were 34 patient consultations and 28 operations, comprising mainly cleft (with ages ranging from 7 months to 64 years) and burn contractures.



The beautiful and remote Oecussi district

Dili (and Aileu Clinic)

A further team trip was undertaken 25 May – 2 June comprising Dr Mark Moore, anaesthetist Dr Andrew Fenton and theatre sister Joy Booth. Dr Joao Ximenes being trained by Mark, Dr Eric Vreede the RACS team leader and Rogerio da Conceicao the director of the Aileu Health Clinic were also intimately involved. There were 98 consultations and 46 operations comprising mainly cleft and palates and burns/contractures...again highly productive.

Sister Joy Booth had previously hosted 2 senior theatre sisters from Dili Hospital at the RAH, and on this occasion spent time training 2 new 'pupil' nurses on theatre sister techniques. Dr Joao has now performed 50 unilateral clefts since training began over 3 years ago – he returned with the team to Adelaide for further surgery insights.



Spreading the Joy

Nusa Tenggara Timur (West Timor)

Halilulik

From 1-11 February, at the invitation of the administration at Rumah Sakit Katolik Marianum, Dr Bob Sillar and his general surgery team of anaesthetist Dr Tom Walker, theatre nurses Kerrie Nicholls and Elizabeth Murphy, and interpreter/coordinator Dylan Venables attended the hospital. They were accompanied by local clinician Dr Harijanto. A contingent of 13 visiting doctors from the primary health care hospitals and 5 medical students attended to observe and assist with the operations. The trip was highly productive – but forewarning is needed to upgrade the training component if there is a strong visiting medical contingent.

There were 125 consultations and 103 operations, including 55 minor operations through Dr Hari. Surgery on hernias, thyroids and other head and neck trauma dominated the more major operations.



Great to be popular Bob!

Flores

Cancar

The St Damian and St Raphael Hospital at Cancar benefitted from 3 team visits over the period:

Plastic and Reconstructive – Dr Rob Coren led a team to Cancar March 2-11 comprising plastic surgeon Dr Marcus Nikitins, anaesthetists Drs Matthew Grill and Todd Maddock, theatre sisters Amanda McFail and Margaret Maloney, and coordinator/interpreter Anastasia Stain. Considerable support to enable the trip was provided by a Lions Club President Ibu Nunuk (see picture below) from near Jakarta. There were 89 patient consultations and 60 operations, of which cleft/palate numbered 38 and burn contractures 10.



Ibu Nunuk with Anastasia

Orthopaedic – Dr Colin Whitewood and his team of anaesthetist Dr Jerome Wisniewski, theatre sister Paula Karra and interpreter Anastasia Stain visited May 4 – 12. Dr Laura Wisniewski accompanied the team. The nuns and the Bupati in Manggarai were instrumental in arranging the trip, which was again successful. A medical team from Surabaya joined the team and assisted with the operations while observing the surgical techniques and involved themselves in the training provided by Colin and Jerome. In all, 70 patients were assessed for the current and future trips, and 20 operations performed.



A 17 year old with club feet – one foot was saved by surgery

Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) – From May 4 – 12, a ENT team led by Drs Michael Switajewski and Dr Suren Krishnan, and including anaesthetist Dr Andy Beinssen, theatre sisters Helen van der Jeugd and Bronwyn Hindley-Cooke, and interpreter Dylan Venables visited Cancar.

There were 150 patient consultations and 35 operations, mainly comprising thyroidectomies, tonsillectomies, and sino-nasal surgery. An emergency tracheotomy was successfully managed. Many of the patients consulted were able to receive advice and non surgical interventions to successfully manage a range of ENT problems. Two local doctors Dr&Sr Natalia Maria and Dr Alia Sube assisted with operations and received training. It has been suggested that there be a second team, dedicated to otology, to cater for the large number of tonsillectomies – these operations require a longer period of observation to guard against secondary bleeding. More could also be done to combat hearing loss.



Dylan, Helen, Andy, Suren, Michael and Bronwyn

Future trips

For the next six months the following trips are planned:

- Dr Bob Sillar’s general surgery team is heading back to Halilulik in August.
- Dr Mark Moore’s plastic team will visit Cancar in September/October.
- Dr Yuges Caplash’s plastic team will visit East Timor in November
- Dr Tim Keenan’s orthopaedic team will visit Sumba/Halilulik in December

Acknowledgments

Thanks are again due to our generous donors, the many volunteers who work behind the scenes in Australia and overseas, Indonesian embassy staff, airline staff and others who assist our marvellous surgical teams operate so successfully. Special mention on this occasion is made of the wonderful donations of the Kennedy family, Johnson & Johnson, and OHNNG (Otorhinolaryngology Head and Neck Group).

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Photographic Gallery

East Timor

Plastic and reconstructive



On the flight to Oecussi.



Mark and Carlos – In 1999, Carlos was Mark's first palate surgery patient in the region...actually in West Timor.....13 years later he is showing Mark how to grow hair!



Another beautiful job

Cancar - Flores

Orthopaedics



The injury in 2011, the remediation as X-rayed prior to removal of the screws in 2012

ENT



A successful thyroidectomy

Halilulik - West Timor



Very happy to lose the lipoma (lump)!



About to become very happy!