

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday 20 June 2014

**Repairing bodies. Rebuilding lives.  
In the Asia Pacific region.**

## **Interplast partners with the University of Tasmania for second Pacific Island surgical training workshop**

Interplast Australia & New Zealand (Interplast) has partnered with the University of Tasmania's School of Medicine Short Course Program to host the second Applied Plastic and Reconstructive Surgical Skills workshop for surgeons visiting from the Pacific region. The workshop will run from Friday 20 June to Saturday 21 June in Hobart.

The workshop, co-convened by Interplast volunteer plastic surgeons, Simon Thomson (Hobart) and Mike Klaassen (Auckland), and including teaching from other Interplast volunteer surgeons, will bring nine surgeons from six Pacific Island countries (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa) to Australia for surgical training. Focusing specifically on practical surgery principles and concepts, which will be easily applied in their home countries, the training course intends to provide techniques that are also applicable across a number of other surgical specialities.

"For many years, Tasmania has been outstanding in providing plastic surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses to provide state of the art care in most, if not all developing countries in our region," said Simon Thomson, Interplast volunteer plastic surgeon.

"For the second year in a row, we have a unique opportunity to bring the future surgeons of this region, many of whom have received training by us in their own countries, to Tasmania for advanced training in reconstructive techniques for the first time. This will enable a huge improvement in the health care of these nations with the hope that they will achieve surgical independence from countries like Australia and New Zealand."

For 30 years, Interplast has been sending plastic and reconstructive surgical volunteers to the Pacific region to provide free surgical treatment to relieve disability and empower local medical staff through training. More than 360 program activities, both surgical and training, have been sent to the Pacific region since 1983, with more than 25,000 patients consulted and almost 14,000 procedures performed. Throughout these activities, dozens of local medical and nursing personnel have received training, mentoring and professional development opportunities through Interplast. "We are very proud to have been able to assist in providing what is often basic surgery in Australia across the Pacific region and are committed to ensuring this continues for generations to come by also equipping the local medical staff to provide these services independently, as a result of our training programs," said CEO Prue Ingram. "This workshop is one component towards achieving this."

The University of Tasmania's School of Medicine Short Course Program assists health professionals to meet their unique learning needs and professional development requirements through participation in a variety of practical, workplace-orientated short courses.



**ACFID**  
MEMBER



The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons established Interplast with Rotarians and the Fellows remain active supporters.



Interplast Australia & New Zealand is actively supported by Rotarians from Clubs and Districts throughout Australia & New Zealand.



**Interplast**<sup>TM</sup>

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Emphasis is placed on applied anatomy and clinical skills development with medical professionals being offered the unique opportunity of participating in cadaver-based learning programs, delivered by surgeons and anatomists, in the University's state of the art laboratories. The Faculty of Health Body Bequest Program supports these learning opportunities and the generous donations from the public are gratefully acknowledged. Tracey Walls, the Body Bequest Program Coordinator said "Body bequests are an opportunity for people to make a significant difference in enhancing medical care not only in Australia, but in this case, in developing countries as well."

The course has been generously funded by Avant Mutual Group, who is a long term corporate partner of Interplast. B.Braun is also supporting the course through donation of supplies required for the training.

**-ENDS-**

#### **About Interplast Australia & New Zealand ([www.interplast.org.au](http://www.interplast.org.au))**

Interplast Australia & New Zealand (Interplast) sends volunteer teams of fully qualified plastic and reconstructive surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and allied health professionals to developing countries in the Asia Pacific region to facilitate surgical treatment and training to local medical personnel. Our volunteers provide free treatment to people living with a disability due to congenital conditions such as cleft lip and cleft palate, or acquired conditions such as burn scar contractures. Treatment is targeted to people who would otherwise not be able to afford or access these services. We also pride ourselves on our intentions to leave a legacy. We focus heavily on facilitating medical training and mentoring for in-country medical personnel by supporting and building the capacity of local health services. Interplast has worked in 25 developing countries, implemented more than 500 surgical and training program activities, sent more than 600 volunteers, enabled more than 32,000 consultations, performed more than 21,000 life-changing procedures and trained countless medical staff.



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Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Building  
250 - 290 Spring Street, East Melbourne, VICTORIA 3002  
T. +61 (3) 9249 1231 F. +61 (3) 9249 1235  
contactus@interplast.org.au  
interplast.org.au  
ABN 59 006 155 193