



A first for Makassar, Indonesia

Plastic Surgeon, Dr Jonathan Wheeler (now based in New Zealand) and Mater Staff Speech Pathologist, Ms Julie Jensen joined an international team at the Sayang Rakyat Hospital in Makassar, Indonesia in November. This was Operation Smile's first mission to this site. 110 patients were screened, with 93 receiving their life-changing surgery. Here are their stories –

Speech Pathology was involved in Screening, Pre-operative Parent Education, Post-Operative Feeding and Education of parents with feeding and speech/language stimulation. There was considerable involvement in the post-op ward and all feeding equipment provided by Operation Smile and equipment donated by Cleft Pals was well utilized.

The Speech Pathologists also assisted by taking on the role of the Child Life Specialist (under the guidance of our Team Leader Vanessa who has performed this role in the past) We assisted in preparing children for Surgery.



There was also an opportunity during the mission to provide education and mentoring with the local Speech Pathologist who spent many hours with us discussing Cleft Palate Speech Pathology Management, Assessment and treatment techniques. Some patients were referred on to Dr Nilla Rasic for ongoing Speech Pathology management.

"This Mission proved to be an enriching experience both professionally and personally and I am very

grateful to Operation Smile for including me in this Mission" said Julie.

We arrived on site for the day of screening but our equipment had been held up in customs. Fortunately Hoang, our medical records tech, was able to generate the paperwork we needed to process the patients with minimal delay. The crates were delivered at 3am on the morning we had planned to start operating. We lost a half day of surgery because of this but we were able to run four General Anaesthetic operating tables for the four days and a fulltime local anaesthetic table to safely treat the patients in the time frame we had.

A really impressive part of the mission was how the team of international volunteers combined with the local medical, nursing and allied health staff to work together to help treat the patients and share knowledge and experiences. We were grateful to Dr Oeke, a local Plastic Surgeon, who was able to provide support during the mission and later follow-up for the patients we treated. Dr Djohansjah Marzoeki the Plastic Surgery Team leader and Indonesian Plastic Surgeon said that it was the "happiest climate" of any the missions he had been on."



Upcoming Events

Trivia Night – come in your best 80's attire!

Pineapple Hotel

Friday 18 March

Pizzas from 6pm, Trivia from 7pm

Teams of 8, \$25.00 per person

SWING FOR SMILES

With Sofitel Brisbane and OSA

Friday 8 April

Noon tee-off

Victoria Park Golf Course

\$600 for a team of four

'Pirates of the Carribean 2'

Thursday 19 May

Dendy Portside, Hamilton

'IT'S TIME TO SMILE!'

Annual Gala Ball

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition

Centre

Friday 24 June

Family Movie Night

'Harry Potter 7'

Friday 22 July

Ebony & Ivory – A charity Gala Dinner for Operation Smile

Date: 6.30pm Saturday 30 July

Venue: Carousel, 22 Aughtie Drive, Albert Park

Dress Code: Cocktail, in black and white attire

Tickets \$150

For more information on any of these events, please email events@operationsmile.com.au or call 07 3163 2866.



Message from the Founder

Dear friends of Operation Smile Australia.

The year certainly did start off with a bang. Unfortunately it was not the start any of us wanted or needed. At OSA we continue to reach out to like-minded people around the world to help those left with deformity. In March, our colleagues from Cambodia will arrive in Australia for ACLAPA meeting in Perth. The theme this year is the team approach to cleft lip and palate repair. There will be sections for all including a session on Humanitarian assistance during which I will present OSA's work and philosophy. Perhaps the best measure of OSA's commitment will be the Cambodian teams' participation in establishing current standards of cleft care.

This from a country and group who only a few years ago could not provide care for any of these cases, let alone hold their heads high amongst some of the best centres in Australasia.

This is the future of what we do - assisting others to help their own. As much as we all believe that each one of us can make a difference individually, it is the sum of all of our efforts that will truly help to change the world - one smile at a time.

Welcome New Board Members

Operation Smile is delighted to announce the appointment of 3 new Board Members.

Mr Tony Chisholm was appointed General Manager for the luxury Sofitel Brisbane Central in April 2010. A graduate of the Auckland Institute of Studies, Tony holds a diploma in Hospitality Management and commenced his hotel career with Hyatt Regency Auckland. In March 2004 Tony Chisholm joined the Accor Group as Resident Manager of Sofitel Saigon Plaza. During his time in Saigon, Tony became aware of the work of Operation Smile Vietnam and was invited to join their Board.



As Hotel Manager at Novotel Clarke Quay Singapore, where he remained for two years, Tony worked with Operation Smile and was instrumental in helping establish the Singapore Chapter. In January 2008, Tony returned to Vietnam and took as General Manager of Sofitel Dalat Palace and Novotel Dalat. Upon his re-location to Australia, Tony has again followed his heart and has now accepted a position on the Board of Operation Smile Australia.



Mr Andrew King is the country manager for Markit (a Financial Information Services company) in Australia based in Sydney where he has been located since the end of 2007.

A Canadian by birth, Andrew is a graduate of the CASS MBA program in London where he was living for ten years prior to moving to Australia.

Before moving to the UK, Andrew worked in Toronto in the Financial Services industry after graduating from the University of Western Ontario.

After involvement with Operation Smile events in Sydney last year, Andrew has now accepted a position on the Board of Operation Smile Australia.

Mr Tom Richardson along with his wife Jenny are Directors of Australian Property Developments Pty Ltd based in Brisbane with a national network servicing the property industry.

Originally from Melbourne Tom was an airline pilot coming from engineering background.

In 1989 Tom and Jenny established Australian Property Developments Pty Ltd in Brisbane and over the past 20years, along with raising 3 children through to university, they grew their property business to its current national position.

For many years Tom and Jenny have been supporters of Operation Smile events and developed a personal friendship with Richard and Sue Lewandowski, Founders of Operation Smile Australia.

When offered a position on the Board of Operation Smile, Tom was delighted to accept and be given the opportunity to support a team he had come to know and respect personally.



Where are they now?

OSA's Medical Project Officer, Heather Moore recently visited the Philippines. Heather was there with Paediatric Intensivist Dr Julie McEniery, a member of our Medical Advisory Committee. During their brief stay in Davao, they conducted a comprehensive fact-finding mission at the Brokenshire Hospital, which we hope will be the site of our next Craniofacial Mission program.

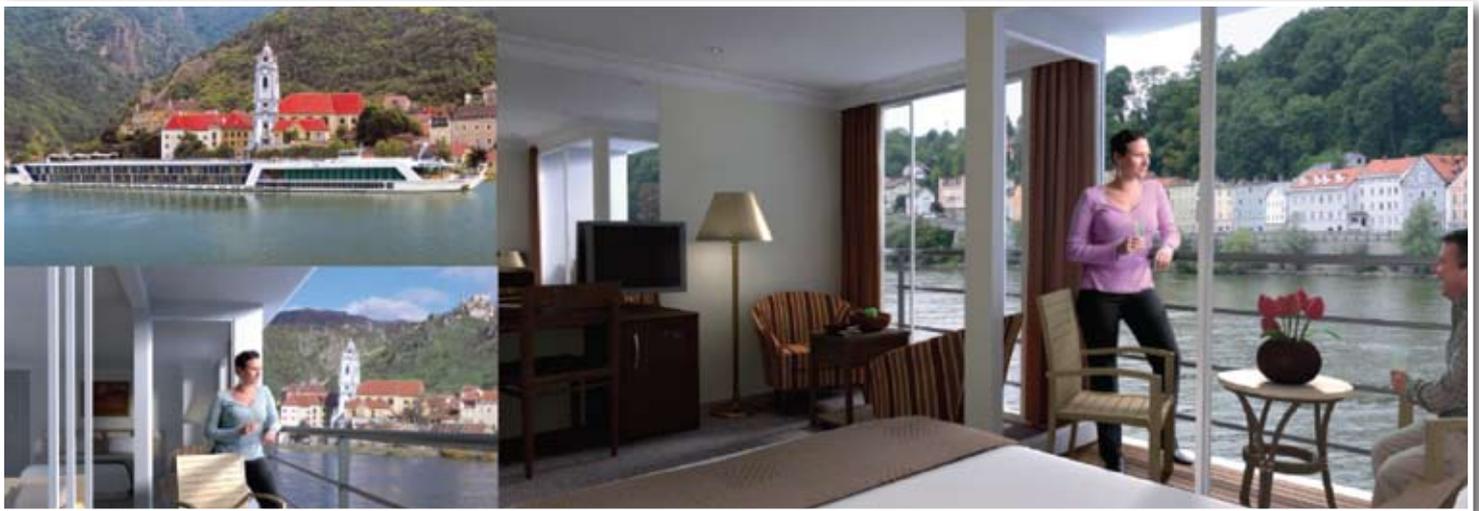
The aim of our Craniofacial program is to work with and educate local medical personnel on this type of advanced surgery, while offering free surgeries to their community, over a period of five missions.

With so many of our young patients on our World Care program coming from this area of the Philippines, it is hoped that the Doctors from Brokenshire Hospital and their young patients will benefit from this program.

While Heather was there she also managed to catch up with Sonny Jay and Genford, 2 of our most recent patients. We are very happy to report that both are doing very well and look terrific.



Here's is your chance to win a once-in-a-lifetime trip for 2 people, flying Emirates then travelling for 15 days from Amsterdam to Budapest aboard the MS Amabella!



Tickets are only \$5.00 each or a book of 10 for \$40.00.

To order your tickets, please call 07 3163 2866 or email exec@operationsmile.com.au

Drawn Tuesday 5th April - winner will be notified in writing.

Special thanks to:



OSA Team Members Return to Cambodia

Following on from our participation in an international cleft mission in Cambodia in 2010, OSA once again recruited 3 of our medical volunteers to join the team in 2011. Giovanni Tatti (medical records), Courtney Allan (OR Nurse) and Paul Rebgetz (Pre/Post Op Nurse) were, once again, inspired by the charm and inner beauty of the people of Cambodia.

Each mission with Op Smile is always a new experience for me and my sixth one to Phnom Penh was no exception. I always learn something new about the world and myself on these missions and this time I met a beautiful person whose strength and compassion I will remember for a long time. Her name was Srey Toch and she was a patient who had experienced extensive facial and hand burns while helping out in the family business.

I first met 19 year old Srey on screening day at the Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital and learnt she had been an Op Smile patient previously. She had returned to have follow-up surgery to make her eyelids more functional. I was so pleased to see her arrive a few days later with her mother in the pre op area as not all patients are suitable for surgery on missions. She was one of the lucky 130 patients for surgery this time.

The following day after her procedure was completed and I had the privilege of caring for her when her eye lids had been sutured together to allow the skin grafts to heal. She was polite, co-operative and appreciative and experienced little pain she said.

I later reflected on what perhaps Srey had been through with her initial injuries and the subsequent surgeries. She was an individual who had found ways to deal with the pain of her scars and repeated surgeries and exhibited qualities of a wonderful and beautiful human being. I also remembered having looked after a burns patient in my home town of Adelaide recently feeling that to care for a burns patient on an Op Smile mission would be a bit too much of an ask, as they can be very challenging. After meeting Srey I no longer feel this way. Burns patients are manageable and their appreciation of and benefits from their surgery are enough to motivate me to sign up once again to be part of another Op Smile mission team.

Paula Rebgetz



It had been well over 12 months since my last Operation Smile Mission, and the old feelings of excitement and anticipation came flooding back as I arrived into Phnom Penh International Airport.

Day 1 of the mission, Screening Day! This is always one of my favourite days of the missions, as it gives me an opportunity to interact with the families and also other volunteers that I wouldn't ordinarily get to do when I am working in the Operating Room. It always amazes me the huge need for medical attention and how desperate many parents and patients are. The stories of how they travelled many kilometres and hours to get to us, represents the pure desperation some of these parents experience. In a country where pain and suffering has been a part of their lives, the people were remarkably welcoming and peaceful. We screened over 200 patients in one day and over 60 turned up throughout the operating week.

After a big day of screening, the team that was made up of over 80 volunteers from all over the world was keen to start what was an intense week of operating. I was happy with my choice to work as an operating room nurse, as the poor volunteers who were working on the wards had to deal with very hot, humid and tight conditions! The team worked really well together, which is a representation of the experience and organisation

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Help change the life of a child



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Please find my cheque to Operation Smile Australia enclosed

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www.ourcommunity.com.au/operationsmile

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of the committed volunteers. Our 12-14 hour days for the week, ending with many happy smiles and families whose future will be changed forever. We worked very closely with the Cambodian volunteers that included doctors and nurses from the local area plus a group of very enthusiastic medical students who helped on the wards and scrubbed all day to assist our surgeons. Watching the local staff members interact with the international volunteers was very rewarding as you can see the need and desire to learn more and expand their knowledge. They were also able to teach us a thing or two about new innovations for IV poles and dressings; to demonstrating how resourceful you can and need to be with limited supplies.



By the end of the week, we were all exhausted but satisfied with the work we had achieved. The Operation Smile Cambodia team gave us a great party to end the week in style. The night included karaoke, speeches, prizes, food eating competitions, dance-offs, great food and many many laughs with people I can now call my friends. Another mission for me but another amazing life experience for all us volunteers and our patients and families.

Bits & Bites

EASTER EGGS FOR SALE – PLEASE HELP WITH THIS FUND RAISER! Packets of eggs are \$4.00 each – boxes of 24 packets available from the office.

Another Smile to fix!

Our next World Care patient is 2 year old bundle of energy, Neil Mamparo. Neil will travel to Brisbane with his Mum, Trisha. Surgery had been scheduled for February at the Mater Children's Private Hospital, but unfortunately there was a hold-up with their visas. Our team is now being re-assembled for a Saturday in the very near future.



Newcastle Fun Run

In October, our friends from Wake Up! Global Health Group at The University of Newcastle conducted their annual Fun-Run and, once again this year, Operation Smile were the recipients of their fund raising. "Just over \$2000 was raised from the run itself, the raffle and donations" said James Lawler,



the Group's Vice President. With surgery for one child on a Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate mission costing around \$300, another 7 young lives will be changed through the hard work of this group and the supporters of their Fun Run.

A big thank you to the organisers and all the participants.

A big thank you also to OSA Sydney Board member, Jeff Brunton, who travelled up to Newcastle for this event.

Return to Dili - Part Two

Joining an Operation Smile mission has been up there on the bucket list for a number of years, many excuses have conveniently blocked the way.

It was with a mixture of anticipation and excitement that I arrived at Brisbane Airport early on Ekka Wednesday. After about 5 seconds I ran into (you couldn't miss them) Hither (she is a kiwi), Princess Kate, Hosey and Sarah. Heather proceeded to unload a crate load of diathermy electrodes into my suitcase while laughing hysterically, this was to set the tone for the next 10 days.

We arrived at Darwin airport and met up with the Adelaide crew which included Mark, Roger, Steve (one of three Steve's on the mission), Erin, Lexie and Jessica. There was an opportunity to spend a couple of hours checking out Darwin Central including a great wave pool on the harbour foreshore. A pleasant evening was had by all with a team bonding session including a few drinks and some delicious seafood on the Darwin wharf.

Thursday morning began before sunrise to catch a 6am flight to Dili, 1 hour later we were disembarking onto the tarmac at Dili airport. East Timor or as it is more correctly known, Timor-Leste has a population of approximately 1.2 million people, it is one of the poorest countries in Asia, the language is Tetum and the currency is the U.S dollar. Timor was colonised by the Portuguese in the 16th century, the original exports were sandalwood and coffee.

Timor was occupied by a company of Australian commandos during World War II in an attempt to pre-empt the Japanese invasion of the island. A brutal war ensued resulting in the death of between 40 – 70,000 Timorese. The process of decolonisation of Portuguese in Timor-Leste began in 1974, followed by abandonment and a unilateral declaration of independence in November 1975. Nine days later Timor-Leste was invaded and occupied by Indonesian forces for the next 14 years. A United Nations supervised referendum was held on August 30 1999 and 78.5% of voters chose independence, violent clashes broke out soon afterwards. The United Nations continues to have strong presence with a large number of white Toyota Landcruisers with large black UN letters painted on them, highly visible on the streets of Dili.

After a quick bag drop at our accommodation the salubrious Timor Lodge we were delivered to the Bairo Pite Clinic (<http://bairopiteclinic.org>) run by Dr Dan Murphy. One hundred plus patients were waiting outside Dan's tiny consulting room and we took over some space at the back of the clinic to conduct our 2 days of screening. This process involves all potential patients passing through a series of stations including photography, weight, height, basic observations, recording of patient details and creation of medical records, surgical assessment, medical/anaesthetic assessment and venepuncture for full blood count.

Saturday morning saw us packing our cruise gear and heading off to Dili harbour for a 10 minute ferry ride to the USNS Mercy. (<http://www.mercy.navy.mil>)

The Mercy is a US navy hospital ship which started life as an oil tanker in 1976.

The visit to Timor-Leste was part of the Pacific partnership

2010 program. The Mercy left her home port, San Diego in early May for a tour of six nations including Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste. The Mercy is capable of maintaining up to 5000 units of blood and has a total patient capacity of 1000 beds. Facilities on the US Mercy include several operating theatres, approximately 12 wards, an intensive care unit, recovery unit, pathology laboratory, and radiology services including a CT scanner.

The next four days were busy. Patients were shipped across to the Mercy on the day prior to surgery, they were then checked in and identity wrist bands applied, pre operative checks completed and fasting instructions clearly stated and repeated. The mission would not have been possible without the assistance of an enthusiastic band of Timorese interpreters.

The mornings were busy preparing the post-op patients for their return to Dili. In general the patients having a cleft lip repair would stay one night post operatively while the ones having a cleft palate repair would stay two nights. Post op care generally involved fluid management, usually by mouth rather than IV, analgesics as required, a mixture of paracetamol (acetaminophen) and Nurofen and a number of patients receiving antibiotics for a few days.

57 patients were operated on over a period of four days with a total of 98 procedures being performed. All went smoothly with no significant complications or adverse events.

Life on the ship was interesting to say the least, with a wake up call through the ships speaker system including bells and whistles at 06:00, and a similar call shutting things down and turning most of the lights off at 22:00 hours. Sleeping facilities were basic and the bunks on the ship are not called "racks" for nothing, they are constructed in tiers of three with the amount of head room that can only be described as cosy. As one could imagine lining up for meals in the ships mess with several hundred other people including sailors of every shape and size was quite an experience.

Would I recommend signing up for Operation Smile? Absolutely! The highlights for me were to be given the opportunity to work in a fantastic team of people with a common goal and worthwhile purpose. Special thanks to Heather, Kate, Richard and Vernon for their support and leadership.

The visit to Timor-Leste was a wonderful opportunity and it certainly provided me with some perspective on my life and work in the Australian healthcare system which while not perfect has a lot going for it. I was also constantly reminded how fortunate we are to live in Australia, it is indeed a lucky country.

