



Interplast™

Repairing bodies & rebuilding lives
in the Asia Pacific region

MEDIA RELEASE

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PanAust Limited (PanAust) and Interplast Australia & New Zealand (Interplast) bring free surgery to people from remote communities in Papua New Guinea (PNG)

PanAust Limited (PanAust) and Interplast Australia & New Zealand (Interplast) are pleased to announce the successful completion of a PanAust-sponsored surgical program carried out at the Vanimo General Hospital, PNG.

A team of five Interplast volunteers, led by current President of the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons, Professor Mark Ashton, travelled to the hospital in PNG's north from 23 to 28 September. The team treated 15 patients who received transformative surgery to treat conditions including cleft lip and palates and burns/scar contracture releases.

PanAust transported five villagers from communities close to its Frieda River Copper-Gold Project site to the hospital for treatment.

During the program, local medical staff received training from the visiting Interplast team. This capacity-building and mentoring of PNG medical professionals – including the country's only plastic surgery trainee, Dr Danlop Akule – ensures that reconstructive surgery skills and services in PNG will endure.

The Member for Telefomin and Defence Minister Hon. Solan Mirisim MP, welcomed the program.

"The partnership between the Frieda River Project and Interplast is an excellent initiative that helps the people of Telefomin District. It is an example of the important community development work that the Project undertakes," commented the Defence Minister.

The program is the successful continuation of a partnership between PanAust and Interplast which commenced in Laos in 2012. Since the collaboration commenced, over 1,631 people have received surgical consultations, 772 of whom underwent surgery.

In November 2016, the partnership extended to PNG with a week-long surgical assessment program that identified patients in need of reconstructive surgery. Interplast volunteers, aided by PanAust Community

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ORDER CLASS 1
BEST RURAL
DEVELOPMENT



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Affairs representatives, carried out surgical assessments in Paupe, Wabia, Ok Isai, Oum 3, Iniok, Sokamin, Fiak and Telefomin.

PanAust Managing Director, Dr Fred Hess said PanAust's continued partnership with Interplast demonstrates its commitment to significantly improving the lives of those living close to where it operates.

"PanAust is a mining company that integrates sustainability into all facets of its activities. Enriching the lives of those living in communities close to its operating sites has, and will continue to remain, a priority for PanAust," Dr Hess said.

Interplast Chief Executive Officer, Prue Ingram spoke about Interplast's partnership with PanAust expanding into PNG.

"Working with PanAust in PNG has facilitated Interplast's ability to reach communities it has not previously worked in, extending the reach and impact of Interplast's work with medical professionals across the country," Prue said.

PanAust holds an 80 per cent interest in the Frieda River Copper-Gold Project in PNG. The Project will be the first major, large-scale natural resource project in the provinces of Sandaun and East Sepik.

Interplast Australia & New Zealand is a not-for-profit organisation providing volunteer plastic and reconstructive surgical services and training throughout developing countries in the Asia Pacific region. Operating for 34 years, the Organisation is fully accredited with the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Interplast has been working in PNG since 1985, delivering surgical and training programs in Port Moresby and across the districts in partnership with local hospitals, government and universities.

For more information, visit the PanAust website www.panaust.com.au and the Interplast Australia & New Zealand website www.interplast.org.au.



Left: PNG medical professionals learn valuable skills from the visiting Interplast team during the surgical program that ran from 23-28 September at the Vanimo General Hospital, PNG. Photo courtesy of Interplast.

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