



**Interplast**™

Repairing bodies & rebuilding lives  
in the Asia Pacific region

# ROTARIAN *review*

AUTUMN 2016

INTERPLAST AND ROTARY. CHANGING LIVES TOGETHER SINCE 1983.



Fijian physiotherapist Alena Lawena demonstrating her new skills to her colleagues in Suva

## ROTARY HELPS ALENA BECOME A LEADER

**FIJIAN PHYSIOTHERAPIST TAKES NEW SKILLS HOME, THANKS TO ROTARY AND INTERPLAST**

Fijian physiotherapist Alena Lawena has taken a leadership role since returning home after her two-week placement in Victoria and Tasmania last September, generously funded by Rotary District 9685.

Alena joined physiotherapist Jenny Ball, with whom she had worked in Suva through Interplast's programs for three years, in Hobart, and spent some time at the Alfred Hospital's burns unit in Melbourne.

"I learnt so many new techniques about hand and burns management - splinting and rehabilitation," Alena said.

Thanks to Rotary, Alena's patients in Fiji are now benefitting from the skills she learnt in Australia, and she is passing them on to her colleagues through training sessions that she runs herself at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva.

"The head of Alena's department has noted a substantial improvement in her work ethic and skills following her training in Australia," said Interplast Programs Manager, Jess Hill.

"The department head informed us that Alena is now taking a leadership role in

training the junior physiotherapists, who all undertake a rotation through the hand clinic where she teaches them about splints and compression garments," Jess wrote.

Alena has continued to work very hard upon her return, not only as therapist and a trainer, but also as a student.

"The biggest challenge was studying and trying to complete my Bachelor in Physiotherapy at the same time and attend to my daily clinics and also run In-Service Programmes for the physiotherapists," she wrote.

"Despite of all these challenges, from 2014-2015 the rupture rate from all the hand operations was only 1 per cent," Alena reported, adding that the physiotherapist to patient ratio was 1:15 per month.

"But at the moment, I am in desperate need of orthoplasts, which is the most important material for splinting," she added.

Alena's hospital has recognised her commitment and achievements, naming her Best Supportive Staff Member last year.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- > FIJIAN PHYSIOTHERAPIST'S TRAINING FUNDED BY ROTARY
- > DON'T MISS - INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST, 10 MARCH
- > ROTARIAN AMAZED BY LIFE-CHANGING WORK IN TONGA
- > INTERPLAST AMBASSADOR, TURIA PITT'S INSPIRATIONAL EVENING

## INTERPLAST HAS A NEW WEBSITE



INTERPLAST HAS LAUNCHED A NEW WEBSITE, WITH MORE FUNDRAISING RESOURCES FOR ROTARIANS.

THE ADDRESS IS THE SAME:

[www.interplast.org.au](http://www.interplast.org.au)

PLEASE TAKE A LOOK, AND DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT INTERPLAST'S ROTARIAN COORDINATOR, DI GILLIES, IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNDRAISING FOR US, OR WOULD LIKE US TO ARRANGE A SPEAKER TO ATTEND YOUR MEETING OR EVENT.

PHONE: 03 9249 1231

EMAIL: [DI.GILLIES@INTERPLAST.ORG.AU](mailto:DI.GILLIES@INTERPLAST.ORG.AU)

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

## YOUR SUPPORT CHANGES FUTURES

Rotary's support has had a ripple effect through Alena - making a long-lasting difference to her career, her patients and her colleagues.

With your ongoing help, Interplast can continue to provide training opportunities to professionals like Alena, strengthening local health systems and changing futures across the Asia Pacific region.

DONATE NOW



Fijian physiotherapist Alena Lawena

## CONNECT WITH US

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## LIFE-CHANGING WORK AMAZES ROTARIAN

Rotary Club of Mornington member Geoff Gilsenan joined an Interplast trip to Nuku'alofa in Tonga in December last year.

Geoff accompanied the Interplast team as an observer, alongside two surgeons, an anaesthetist, a physiotherapist, a nurse and Interplast's Fundraising and Events Coordinator.

The team consulted 71 patients and performed 49 procedures in just eight days.

"To complete the number of life-changing procedures in such a short time was amazing," Geoff wrote.

"Being present in the operating theatre during the procedures and having the surgeons clearly explain every step of their work was extremely rewarding," Geoff wrote. He was particularly impressed by the work of Interplast volunteer nurse, Sam Jervios, who has been on 12 programs including this one.

"Her organising of the theatres and rapport with the local staff was outstanding. She was able to locate anything the surgeons required without any fuss or panic," Geoff reflected.



Geoff Gilsenan with the Tonga Medical Team

"I FEEL VERY PRIVILEGED TO HAVE OBSERVED A TEAM OF EXTREMELY DEDICATED MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS."

## ROTARY CLUB OF KENWICK INVITES YOU TO AN INSPIRATIONAL EVENING WITH INTERPLAST AMBASSADOR, TURIA PITT

**Date: Tuesday 5 April 2016**

**Time: 7:00 for 7:30 pm start**

**Venue: South of Perth Yacht Club**

**Cost: Tickets are \$60 per head**

Perth Rotarians - save the date to come hear Turia Pitt tell her remarkable story of survival after being caught in a devastating fire and talk about why she is so dedicated to supporting Interplast.

RSVP: Book online at

[www.trybooking.com/KMXT](http://www.trybooking.com/KMXT)



Interplast Ambassador, Turia Pitt

## DON'T MISS IT: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST

Melbourne Rotarians, colleagues and friends have the chance to attend Women In Rotary's International Women's Day Breakfast hosted by Tom Gleisner on 10 March from 7am-9am at the Crown Palladium in Southbank.

Journalist and former Federal Member of Parliament Maxine McKew will moderate a panel that includes Mitsubishi Executive Director Marie Turner, broadcaster and writer Sally Warhaft, Law Institute Past President Mark Woods and Australia Post Managing Director Ahmed Fahour as they discuss the question: can 2016 be the year of women's ascent?

To register visit

[www.rotarywomen.org.au](http://www.rotarywomen.org.au)