



InterplastTM

Repairing bodies & rebuilding lives
in the Asia Pacific region

inside INTERPLAST

REPAIRING BODIES. REBUILDING LIVES.

OCTOBER 2013

VINNA'S STORY

BURNT AT A YOUNG AGE, VINNA'S FUTURE IS LOOKING MUCH BRIGHTER THANKS TO YOU



Senator the Hon Bob Carr with Vinna and her grandmother, two years after her operations (2013). Photo courtesy of Bart Verweij (AusAID).

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KEEN TO RECEIVE OUR ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER TOO? WE'D LOVE TO APPEAR IN YOUR INBOX ONCE EVERY TWO MONTHS WITH MORE INTERPLAST NEWS! SIMPLY HEAD TO INTERPLAST.ORG.AU AND SUBSCRIBE.*

In March 2011, a team of Interplast volunteers met 10-month-old Vinna in Vientiane, Laos. The left side of her body was pink and scarred and her severely burnt arm poked through her flowery sundress. Her contracted hand stretched backwards as it fused tightly onto her forearm.

Vinna sustained her horrific burns months earlier when she and her mother were trapped in a house fire. Unfortunately, her mother passed away and she has since been cared for by her grandmother. As the months progressed, her untreated burns contracted. The burnt skin on Vinna's ankle, elbow, armpit and hand tightened. It became taut. And it

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constricted so much that her function on the left side of body began to diminish. She could no longer use her left hand.

Vinna's burn scar contractures were released on that Interplast trip in order to restore as much function as possible. She also received another operation to release additional contractures in late 2011. And the outcome is encouraging: "Vinna's one of those really memorable patients," explained Dr James Savundra, an

Interplast plastic surgeon who, since 2001, has volunteered on 14 surgical and training trips. "We've operated on her on two separate trips, both to release her burn scar contractures on the left hand side of her body. Given that she was treated at such a young age, and shortly after she sustained her burns, her hand function, which was very limited when we first met her, is virtually normal! She has healthy function."

With check-ups since then, she's

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VOLUNTEER YOUR THOUGHTS...

DAMIEN GRINSELL
PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGEON

"I have been involved with Interplast for the last six years primarily in the Nepalese microsurgical program. I began my involvement soon after gaining my fellowship and have since become the Country Coordinator for Nepal. I would recommend it highly to junior and senior surgeons as well

as anaesthetic and nursing staff alike. Microsurgery has transformed reconstructive surgery and we are now able to bring the benefits of it to the developing world. We undoubtedly live in the best country in the world and it is luck that most of us were born here. I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to practice in my chosen profession and believe that it is of paramount importance to give something back to the underprivileged. While there are different levels of charitable action, (most centre around personal motivations for giving) my personal satisfaction derives from the fact that the program in Nepal is primarily educational rather than service provision alone. The training and education given to the local surgeons has allowed them to perform complicated microsurgical procedures independently, which is always in more trying and difficult conditions than we are afforded here. It means there is a lasting legacy for future generations of Nepalese microsurgeons! From a professional development perspective, I derive a number of benefits which are not always tangible. Certainly there is an immense sense of immediate satisfaction treating patients with 'incurable' problems, however, the richness of the cultural experience remains with you for a lifetime."



DAMIEN GRINSELL OPERATING IN NEPAL (2010)

VINNA'S STORY

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become a regular visitor at all recent Interplast trips. She even had an opportunity to meet the former Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon Bob Carr earlier this year, when he visited the team in Vientiane.

"Vinna is a beautiful little girl and she made my life better for knowing her," explained Christine Latimer, a member of Women's International Group (WIG), who assists Interplast in Laos by supporting our patients with transportation, food allowances, toiletries, clothing and monitoring their recovery. "I've been visiting Vinna, along with our interpreter, Miss Onh and the former WIG President, Shirley Russell, in her village for just over two years now. I built up a great rapport with her and she would blow kisses to me when I was leaving - it was wonderful! I'm like a proud grandmother."

"She's an intelligent little girl, who loves doing jigsaw puzzles, reading books and colouring in - her repaired hand now allows her to do such things! Thanks to the wonderful work of the Interplast team, as well as the work of the WIG volunteers to raise money for Vinna, she will lead a better life. That's pretty incredible."



VINNA WHEN SHE WAS FIRST SEEN BY AN INTERPLAST TEAM (2011, VIENTIANE)



VINNA WITH HER GRANDMOTHER AND INTERPLAST ANAESTHETIST, MEGAN GRAY, AFTER HER FIRST OPERATION (2011)

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A SURGEON TO CHANGE LIVES. ALL YOU NEED IS A PAIR OF RUNNERS AND SOME STAIRS! REGISTER NOW FOR THIS YEAR'S EUREKA CLIMB [OR SUPPORT A FRIEND WHO ALREADY HAS] AND DONATE DIRECTLY TO CHARITY PARTNERS, INTERPLAST [US!] AND WHITELION. HEAD TO EUREKACLIMB.COM.AU NOW!

AND THE WINNER IS...

AVANT'S INTERPLAST COMPETITION WINNER IS ANNOUNCED

University of New South Wales medical student, Dinuksha De Silva, was recently announced as Avant's 2013 Interplast competition winner. Selected from 208 applicants, Dinuksha has been awarded the opportunity to travel with an Interplast team to Fiji in 2014, to observe our volunteers in action!

Humbled by his selection, Dinuksha's enthusiasm for being given the chance to work with communities who would otherwise not have access to life-changing surgery, shone through: "I'll have access to medical and surgical experiences far beyond what I would normally be exposed to as a medical student... This trip will give me a taste of what it's like to work in a community outreach program, which is something I feel strongly about and hope to pursue in my career."

A new initiative between Interplast and corporate supporter Avant, the competition strives to support medical students in their careers by providing an opportunity to gain valuable experience in the field. For last year's inaugural winner, it did just that. "I really cannot thank Avant and Interplast enough for what was just an incredible opportunity," said Melissa Radjenovic, a final year medical student from the University of Western Sydney, who joined an Interplast team in Suva earlier this year. "It was amazing to see the faces of patients and their families light up and see how happy and grateful they were for what the Interplast team was there to do. It reminded me of how humbling it is to be a part of such a great profession."



AVANT 2012 INTERPLAST COMPETITION WINNER,
MELISSA RADJENOVIC IN SUVA, FIJI (FEBRUARY 2013)



MELISSA OBSERVING INTERPLAST VOLUNTEERS IN
THEATRE (FEBRUARY 2013)

KEEP UPDATED WITH ALL AVANT/INTERPLAST
COMPETITION WINNER NEWS VIA THE NEWS
SECTION OF OUR WEBSITE - INTERPLAST.ORG.AU.

JUMP ON BOARD

THIS YEAR, INTERPLAST IS BEING SUPPORTED BY THE ASX THOMPSON REUTERS CHARITY FOUNDATION THROUGH FUNDS RAISED AT EVENTS HELD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. AND, THE FIRST CAB OFF THE RANK IS THE FINANCIAL AND MEDIA MARKETS CHARITY REGATTA IN SYDNEY AT THE MIDDLE HARBOUR YACHT CLUB ON FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER. WITH ALL PROCEEDS GOING TO CHARITIES, INCLUDING INTERPLAST, THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GET INVOLVED, FROM SPONSORSHIP, PARTICIPATING AS CREW, ENTERING YOUR OWN YACHT OR DONATING YOUR TIME AND BOAT FOR OTHERS TO HIRE. IF YOU'D LIKE MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT AMANDA WHITTY AT AMANDA.WHITTY@INTERPLAST.ORG.AU OR VISIT ASXREUTERSREGATTA.COM.AU.

Would you like to win a Lexus? Or a diamond and pearl pendant? Buy a ticket from Interplast to enter the draw. You've got to be in it to win it! They're just \$20 a ticket or \$100 for a book of 6. Simply fill in the enclosed form and send back with your payment. The more funds we raise, the more programs we can support, so tell your friends to buy tickets too!

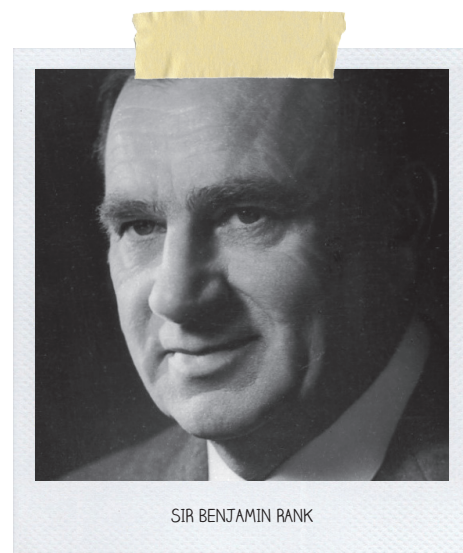
SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

SIR BENJAMIN RANK IS RECOGNISED THROUGH A SCHOLARSHIP

One of the pioneers of plastic and reconstructive surgery in Australia, Sir Benjamin Rank was instrumental in the establishment of Interplast 30 years ago. Having served as a Board Director and President from 1985 to 2000, his influence on Interplast's identity is undeniable. In honour of his contributions, a scholarship in his name has been set up.

Announced by his grandson, Sam Gray, at Interplast's 30th celebrations in Perth, the scholarship will support a surgeon from the Asia Pacific region to visit Australia for a short-term

observational placement. This will develop their area of expertise and, by extension, strengthen the surgical services in their home country. "It is a wonderful privilege for the family of Sir Benjamin to commence a scholarship in his honour," said Sam Gray of his grandfather's scholarship. "For us, this celebrates his legacy in the 30th year of Interplast and the perpetuation of his contribution through training other surgeons, and ultimately improving health outcomes as well as raising the bar for standards of surgery across developing regions in Asia and the Pacific."



SIR BENJAMIN RANK

WOULD YOU LIKE TO DONATE DIRECTLY TO THE SIR BENJAMIN RANK SCHOLARSHIP? SIMPLY HEAD TO [INTERPLAST.ORG.AU/GET-INVOLVED/DONATE/DONATE-FORM-PAGE/](https://interplast.org.au/get-involved/donate/donate-form-page/) AND MAKE YOUR CONTRIBUTION (IN THE MESSAGE BOX, TYPE 'SIR BENJAMIN RANK'). ALTERNATIVELY, FILL OUT THE DONATION SLIP ATTACHED, CALL US ON 03 9249 1231 OR EMAIL US AT CONTACTUS@INTERPLAST.ORG.AU TO MAKE YOUR DONATION.

TURIA PITT: EVERYTHING TO LIVE FOR

INTERPLAST ATTENDS TURIA'S BOOK LAUNCH

Interplast's CEO, Prue Ingram, and Corporate and Community Relations Manager, Amanda Whitty, recently travelled to Ulladulla in New South Wales to attend the launch of Turia Pitt's book, *Everything to Live For*. Turia's experiences over the past two years have been well documented - she was horrifically burnt to 65 per cent of her body while competing in an ultra-marathon race in 2011. With two of her surgeons, Associate Professor Peter Haertsch and Professor Peter Maitz, long-serving Interplast volunteers, the opportunity to attend her book launch, according to Prue Ingram, was very rewarding: "Turia has supported the wonderful work we do. It was our turn to support her! To be part of her launch event, to see her local community rally around her, and to hear her amazing story, was fantastic. A book well worth reading!"



TURIA PITT WITH INTERPLAST CEO, PRUE INGRAM

HEAD TO RANDOMHOUSE.COM.AU TO ORDER YOUR COPY OF TURIA'S BOOK!

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