

Almost 1000 more doctors in Timor Leste since 2001: a work in progress

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The creation of a new independent health system for Timor-Leste over the last 16 years has seen a growth of more than 980 doctors enter the system, from only 20 in 2001.

This figure is expected to jump to more than 1000 by the end of 2017, according to an article in the latest issue of the *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Surgery (ANZJS)*, the peer-review publication of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS).

Author Philip Truskett, past RACS President provides a stark reminder of the recent history, when Indonesian military forces finally withdrew after 24 years of control in 1999.

Timor-Leste was left with only 20 doctors to service the entire country and no specialists to undertake clinical work for a population of 700,000.

Thankfully with hospitals and churches still standing despite the emense destruction of infrastructure, Mr Truskett said that the country set about increasing its medical and surgical capacity to better service its growing population.

With ongoing support and collaboration in the way of education programs, medical training and funding from the Ministry of Health, Universidade Nacional de Timor Lorosa'e, Australian Aid, Cuba and RACS, the country now provides a 1000 strong medical workforce.

The article documents the career progression of Timorese medical personel and reports from the Australian East Timor Specialist Services Project (AETSSP) and Australian Timor-Leste Program of Assistance for Specialty/Secondary Services (ATLASS) and highlights the incredible dedication and commitment to the delivery of surgical training and care in the country.

[Read the full article here.](#)

The ANZ Journal of Surgery, published by Wiley-Blackwell, is the pre-eminent surgical journal published in Australia, New Zealand and the South-East Asian region for the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. The Journal is dedicated to the promotion of outstanding surgical practice, and research of contemporary and international interest.



About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck

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