



BUILDING INTERNATIONAL SKILLS

A College award has allowed an Indonesian doctor develop her skills with Australian peers

The College recently part-funded a visit to Australia by a senior Indonesian ophthalmologist through the Surgeons International Award to help broaden her skills in the complex surgical treatment of glaucoma, now the second most common cause of blindness in Indonesia. Dr Nikompyang Rahayu arrived in Perth in August this year and spent four weeks undertaking a short Fellowship in glaucoma management and surgery under the supervision of Professor Bill Morgan, Consultant Ophthalmologist at the Royal Perth Hospital and Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Science at the University of WA.

While in Australia, Dr Rahayu spent the bulk of her time working alongside Professor Morgan at the Lions Eye Institute, St John of God Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital to expand her skills in trabeculectomy and glaucoma drainage device surgery, used to relieve pressure in the eye, as well as refining her gonioscopic skills.

She also spent time working with Dr Philip House at his

private rooms and at the Perth Eye Centre, Dr Steve Colley at the Perth Eye Centre, Dr Joshua Yuen at Fremantle Hospital and assisted Dr Anthony Giubilato in theatre at the Royal Perth.

During the trip, Dr Rahayu also attended the annual WA meeting of the Royal Australasian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmology (RANZCO) in Kalgoorlie where she gave a presentation on eye health delivery in Bali.

Upon her return home, Professor Morgan then took one of his regular teaching trips to Bali in October to work with Dr Rahayu to conduct tube implant and drainage surgery and to consult with her on complex patients.

A fully qualified ophthalmologist and experienced teacher at the Australian Bali Memorial Eye Centre (also known as the Indera Hospital), Dr Rahayu described the experience she gained in Perth and the support of Australian colleagues as “amazing”.

“I came to Perth to learn more about glaucoma implant surgery and finally I did,” she said.

“I learned how to implant drainage tubes, the indications and complications involved and how to manage those complications.

“Basically, I learned how to manage glaucoma patients properly which means a great deal to me because I teach and train medical students and registrars for glaucoma and manual small-incision cataract surgery so now I am in a position to pass on the skills I have learned.

“In Indonesia, many patients come to the hospital in blind or severe stage probably because of a lack of education about glaucoma.

“These patients often need more complex care and sometimes have more complications so the skills I learned in Australia will help me a great deal.

“I am particularly grateful for the support of Professor Morgan who allowed me to work with him in the eye clinic and operating theatre in Perth.

“He taught me how to diagnose early to advanced glaucoma, how to detect the progression and how to treat complications.

“I also observed him doing some filtering and implant surgery and when he visited me in Bali, we worked in the eye clinic and theatre and he supervised me while I did implant surgery.

“It was the best thing in my practice.”

Improved eye care

Professor Morgan has been visiting Indonesia for the past 15 years, teaching ophthalmologists and registrars in Jakarta and Bali during twice-yearly trips.

His work there is self-funded and coordinated through the John Fawcett Foundation, a humanitarian organisation which grew out of a number of Rotary projects best known for its Sight Restoration and Blindness Prevention Project.

The Fawcett Foundation supported Dr Rahayu’s visit to Australia through the provision of accommodation during her stay.

Professor Morgan said that while he began taking the trips to teach cataract surgery, Indonesian surgeons now had the skills and resources to undertake the required cataract work.

He said glaucoma had now become the more pressing issue.

“The standard of eye health care

delivery has improved dramatically in the past 15 years, particularly in Jakarta and Bali,” Professor Morgan said.

“In Jakarta there are around 70 ophthalmology registrars in training at the very well-equipped six-storey stand-alone eye hospital there, while in Bali there are 35 registrars training at the Bali Memorial Eye Centre.

“This shows the great efforts they have made to prioritise this aspect of health care.

“Then, however, the urgency was based around cataract blindness whereas now the issue is glaucoma.

“This is because there are two broad categories of glaucoma – open angled and closed angled glaucoma.

“In South East Asia we tend to see more closed angle glaucoma, which is the more aggressive condition. With the increasing uptake of more Western diets, Indonesia is now also seeing an increase in the rate of diabetes which can also lead to very aggressive forms of glaucoma.”

Professor Morgan said it was these drivers that made the core team of Perth ophthalmologists so keen to assist Dr Rahayu during her visit.

“Dr Rahayu’s main aims during the visit here were to learn glaucoma draining device surgery and to refine her gonioscopic skills,” he said.

“The art of gonioscopy revolves mainly around the technique, but also the interpretation of the findings and she was able to distinguish between the key sub-types of angle closure glaucoma including pupil block, ciliary block, plateau iris and the rarer causes with ease at the end of her Fellowship.

“Many of the patients she saw in the Lions Institute clinic were being followed post-surgery and so that exposure, as well as the discussions she had with myself, Dr House and Dr Giubilato added to her skills in relation to post-operative management and the pre-operative assessment of patients requiring glaucoma surgery. ▶

Left:
Dr Rahayu
operating;
Dr Rahayu
with team.



2016 Rowan Nicks Pacific Islands Scholarship & 2016 Rowan Nicks International Scholarship 2015 Rowan Nicks Australia & New Zealand Exchange Fellowship



The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons invites suitable applicants for the 2016 Rowan Nicks International Scholarship and the 2016 Rowan Nicks Pacific Islands Scholarship.

These are the most prestigious of the College's International Awards and are directed at qualified surgeons who are destined to become leaders in their home countries.

The Rowan Nicks Scholarships provide opportunities for surgeons to develop their management, leadership, teaching and clinical skills through clinical attachments in selected hospitals in Australia, New Zealand and South-East Asia.

Application Criteria:

Applicants for the Rowan Nicks International and Pacific Islands Scholarships must:

- commit to return to their home country on completion of their Scholarship;
- meet the English Language Requirement for medical registration in Australia or New Zealand (equivalent to an IELTS score of 7.0 in every category for Australia, and 7.5 for New Zealand);
- be under 45 years of age at the closing date for applications.

In addition, applicants for the International Scholarship must:

- hold a relevant post-graduate qualification in Surgery;
- be a citizen of one of the nominated countries to be listed on the College website from December 2014.

Applicants for the Pacific Islands Scholarship must:

- be a citizen of the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu or Vanuatu;
- hold a Masters of Medicine in Surgery (or equivalent). However, consideration will be given to applicants who have completed local general post-graduate surgical training, where appropriate to the needs of their home country.

Selection Criteria

The Committee will

- consider the potential of the applicant to become a surgical leader in the country of origin, and/or to supply a much-needed service in a particular surgical discipline.
- The Committee must be convinced that the applicant is of high calibre in surgical ability, ethical integrity and qualities of leadership.
- Selection will primarily be based on merit, with applicants providing an essential service in remote areas, without opportunities for institutional support or educational facilities, being given earnest consideration.

Value: Up to \$50,000 pro-rata, plus one return economy airfare from home country

Tenure: 3 - 12 months

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons invites suitable applicants who are citizens of Australia and New Zealand to apply for the 2016 Rowan Nicks Australia and New Zealand Fellowship.



The Rowan Nicks Australia and New Zealand Fellowship is intended to promote international surgical interchange at the levels of practice and research, raise and maintain the profile of surgery in Australia and New Zealand and increase interaction between Australian and New Zealand surgical communities.

The Fellowship provides funding to assist a New Zealander to work in an Australian unit judged by the College to be of national excellence for a period of up to one year and an Australian to work in a New Zealand unit using the same criteria.

Application Criteria:

Applicants must

- have gained Fellowship of the RACS within the previous ten years on the closing date for applications.
- provide evidence that they have passed the final exit exam to allow them to obtain a Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons by the time selection takes place.

Selection criteria:

The Committee will

- consider the potential of the applicant to become a surgical leader and ability to provide a particular service that may be deficient in their chosen surgical discipline.
- assess the applicants in the areas of surgical ability, ethical integrity, scholarship and leadership.

The Fellowship is not available for the purpose of extending a candidate's position in Australia or New Zealand, either in their existing position or in another position.

Value: Up to \$50,000 pro-rata, depending on the funding situation of the candidate and provided sufficient funds are available, plus one return economy airfare between Australia and New Zealand.

Tenure: 3 - 12 months

Application forms and instructions will be available from the College website from December 2014:

www.surgeons.org

Closing date: **5pm Monday 4 May, 2015.**

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by **30 October 2015.**

Please contact: Secretariat, Rowan Nicks Committee, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
250 - 290 Spring Street, East Melbourne VIC 3002
Email: international.scholarships@surgeons.org
Phone: + 61 3 9249 1211 Fax: + 61 3 9276 7431

2016 Rowan Nicks United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland Fellowship

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons invites suitable applicants who are citizens of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland to apply for the 2016 Rowan Nicks United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland Fellowship.

The Rowan Nicks United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland Fellowship is intended to promote international surgical interchange at the levels of practice and research, and increase interaction between the surgical communities of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

Application Criteria:

Applicants must

- hold his/her country's post-graduate qualification in surgery or its equivalent and must have completed his/her specialist surgical training program within ten years of the closing date for applications.
- provide evidence that he/she has passed the final exit exam which allows him/her to obtain a Fellowship of one of the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland Colleges by the time selection takes place.

Selection criteria:

The Committee will

- consider the potential of the applicant to become a surgical leader and ability to provide a particular service that may be deficient in their chosen surgical discipline.
- assess the applicants in the areas of surgical ability, ethical integrity, scholarship and leadership.

The Fellowship is not available for the purpose of extending a candidate's position in Australia or New Zealand, either in their existing position or in another position.

Value: Up to \$50,000 pro-rata, depending on the funding situation of the candidate and provided sufficient funds are available.

Tenure: 3 - 12 months

"During one weekend in September she also attended the annual WA branch meeting of the RANZCO during which she developed contacts with other ophthalmologists while one of the key-note speakers gave a presentation on gonioscopy which also added to her education.

"It was clear this Fellowship would provide great value not just for Dr Rahayu, but for the people of Indonesia given her excellent surgical skills, intelligence and teaching responsibilities back in Bali."

Professor Morgan said that while great strides had been made in providing complex eye care to glaucoma patients in Indonesia in recent years, the health care system and continuing poverty seen in some communities limited what could be surgically achieved.

He said he was now working with international partners to overcome one such problem.

"The tubes we use in implant surgery cost around \$700 each, which is very expensive within the Indonesian context so we now have a project underway in Jakarta working with a Japanese company that makes lenses to try and create the tubes at a much lower cost," he said.

"We now have a prototype, but we are still some time away from conducting human trials.

"Quite a few of us are very enthusiastic about this and hope that it works given the current and future needs of glaucoma patients in Indonesia."

Professor Morgan said he also hoped to find the funding to conduct a survey to measure blindness rates over recent years, both to assess the success of Indonesian ophthalmologists in treating cataracts and to measure the disease burden caused by glaucoma.

"Through the development of complex glaucoma care and surgery, we have halved the rate of glaucoma-related blindness in WA over the past 25 years and we hope that passing on these skills to Indonesian ophthalmologists such as Dr Rahayu will have a similar effect. We are fortunate to have a very cohesive group of Glaucoma surgeons in Perth, who are keen to teach overseas colleagues," he said.

"I thank the RACS for their generosity in donating funds to support her Fellowship."

The Surgeons International Award was established by Professor Richard Bennett and his wife Enid in 1989 to fund short-term visits to Australia by surgeons, doctors, nurses or other health professionals from developing countries.

Aimed at helping to improve the standard and delivery of health care in their home countries, the Surgeons International Award has enabled more than 45 health professionals from 14 countries access further training opportunities in Australia.

With Karen Murphy