



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Trauma experts meet in Sydney

Thursday 11 February, 2010

Experts in trauma, critical care and emergency surgery will discuss issues of disaster preparedness and management in Sydney over coming days.

Delegates to the 10<sup>th</sup> Austrama Conference, organised by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, will also participate in a broad range of workshops and hear presentations by emergency care leaders from around the country and overseas.

Conference convenor Dr Valerie Malka, Director of Trauma Services at Sydney's Westmead Hospital, said that a highlight of this year's conference would be Saturday's plenary session on disaster management. "Experts from around the world will share their experience of the unique challenges posed by mass casualties," Dr Malka said.

A key speaker will be Dr Rowan Gillies, a previous and longstanding President of the global aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres. Dr Gillies, who has worked in such troubled places as Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Liberia, Congo and Sri Lanka, will speak of the challenges and rewards involved in frontline humanitarian work.

Pre-conference "hands-on" sessions in such areas as ultrasound, airways management, woundcare and external fixation and fracture splinting are being held today, along with a previously very popular course in disaster preparedness. Over the next two days there will be numerous scientific presentations by leaders in emergency care.

The program is also notable for a number of debates, including one on the contentious issue of whether or not trauma should be considered a surgical specialty and taught as such. Professor Demetri Demetriades of the University of Southern California, Los Angeles will argue the affirmative case, while Dr Phil Truskett of Sydney's Prince of Wales Hospital will argue the negative.

There will also be a dedicated nursing forum, at which nurses involved in the care of multiply injured and critically ill patients will hear presentations from leaders in the field of nursing, allied health and medicine.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Austrama Conference begins today and runs until Saturday afternoon at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

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