

Consumers must drive surgical services

By LAWRENCIA PIRPIR

PROFESSOR Patrick Dewan, world renowned paediatric urologist from the organisation Kind Cuts for Kids Melbourne, says PNG needs a consumer-driven push for the development of paediatric surgical services.

This means getting the consumer involved in being part of the services because often there is great wisdom in the community about health needs and if we listen to that, both in individual contact with patients and in the broader context, you end up with a better quality of product as long as all the participants are respected in the communication, he said.

"So it is not only the medical knowledge, it is the geographic point, it is what the will of the people is. This includes, to some degree, imposing medical knowledge, but respecting the rest of the knowledge so that you end up with a good product. I think we can go far very fast in PNG," Professor Dewan said.

He said there has been a fragmentation of communication within the PNG paediatric surgical stakeholder's network through the interruption of the Australian aid funding, which had been a major contributor to the development of paediatric surgery 21 years ago till it ceased in 2009.

Prof Dewan said there were more specialised surgeons in the country than 21 years ago but there was more room for creating the PNG paediatric surgery solution.

"There are things that should be put in place, such as a national paediatric surgery audit. This is to begin a process of data collection and then a process of data evaluation so that any child with a major condition gets entered into the database.

"This includes tracking every outcome to see whether some cases can only be done in some centres or whether the service can be delivered more broadly, pro-

vided you have the appropriate trained manpower," Prof Paddy said.

He said the evolution of the model could be part of the ongoing development of the service, adaptive to changing circumstances. So it has to be PNG driven, outcome driven and quality assurance driven.

Prof Dewan explained that the PNG solution was important given there was no international paediatric database that could effectively do quality assurance more broadly.

In PNG, he said, there is a network of surgeons in place to some degree.

Particularly for the Islands Petroleum *katim na halivim pikinini* medical project, he said: "What we have done here is to have connections with the surgical community and the commercial world which has resulted in the funding of the project that has fulfilled the need of a community and the people who try to deliver that service in a local way.

"The business minded approach is what we would like to see promoted as it transcends the strategic alliance between private and public sectors in different locations but this needs co-ordination around the country."

He said there needs to be an alliance developed that aligns all health programs with the health plan of the country.

"That includes ongoing communication with the Ministry of Health and making them see the achievement here to help them see how perhaps this model might develop with a broader plan. It needs to be driven by the local community and the local service providers driven by broader considerations.

"And with this you do have to factor in how paediatric surgery fits in with the rest of the service. But once you do that, you can then through how children's surgery can benefit the community in a proportional way."

The week-long *katim na halivim pikinini* medical project ends today and has contributed to making a difference in the lives of more than 30 children with special surgical needs.

He anticipates a time will come when he would not be needed to come back to PNG, given the country's own national paediatric surgeons here, particularly Dr Mclee Mathew. Prof Dewan explained that his organisation Kind Cuts for Kids concept has been around for 21 years.

"The concept really is the skills transfer into countries that do not have paediatric surgery as a well-developed specialty, or if the specialty is reasonably developed that people share their skills to give an opportunity to exchange techniques and skills with other health professionals," he said.

One example he gave of countries around the world he had been to even though paediatric surgery was developed was the Balkans.

"One of the places we've been to in recent times is the Balkans in Eastern Europe - Kosovo, Albania and Bosnia and that was because they are looking for increasing the level of their expertise where they ask to have the specialty developed."

Prof Dewan said PNG has been close to the heart of Kind Cuts for Kids because for 21 years it has helped the further existence of the organisation through the many cases that presented the development of surgical techniques for various medical diagnoses.

"And in coming here we saw the existence of three paediatric surgeons who still have a lot to do to develop the service. And the new level of achievement is that Dr Mclee Mathew is the team leader to the Islands Petroleum *katim na halivim pikinini* medical project. This is to make sure that the understanding of the nurses, general practitioners, the surgeons and paediatricians is developed."



rk cleaning a flower gar-

vital tools

rough this new training sponsored by the Technical for Agricultural and Rural ment, this can change.

is the first of four train- courses to be held in PNG tnership with National tural Research Institute, iculture Department and takeholders.

ombunaka said it was good about new technology and can be used and translated itive outcomes particular- aral farmers.

allenged the course par- ts from the government and sector to use the knowledge lls gained to effectively dis- te information to promote rk of their organisations vices. He said the depart- eeds a complete overhaul of services.

KES GOING BACK TO SCHOOL