

Monash dash saves Anton

Helping Bairo Pite Clinic is a RCR project and we have rewired the whole clinic and updated all the sewerage and water. ROMAC is an Australasian Rotary organisation and a part from the benefits to patients, it probably generates considerable publicity for Rotary.

This story was given prominence in today's Herald Sun. (Monday 11 July 2016)

East Timorese toddler Anton appeared doomed to die of a gargantuan kidney tumour - until doctors and Rotary stepped in.



Now, the two-year old has been given the all-clear — despite a twist to his diagnosis that turned what should have been a routine operation into a six-month battle to save his life. Doctors in Dili had told Teretoriano Antonio Da Silva's parents to take him back to their home in the mountains to die.

They could do nothing to remove the watermelon-sized 3.5kg tumour protruding from his abdomen and crowding out his lungs and heart. But a doctor close to their village of Laclubar, in the Manatuto district, referred them to Dr Dan Murphy, an American GP who runs the [Bairo Pite Clinic in Dili](#). He then alerted [Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children \(ROMAC\)](#). Within a week Anton, as he'd come to be known, and his grandmother Claudina Soares were on a plane bound for Melbourne.

Interpreters were found, and Rotary volunteers met them at every airport transfer. And host family Dianne and William Sides were ready to open their home for what was supposed to be a short stay. But as soon as Anton landed, on December 22, he had to be rushed to hospital and resuscitated.

Monash Children's Cancer Centre oncologist Peter Downie said the tumour — one third of Anton's 11kg body weight — was damaging his heart and leaving him barely able to breathe. "It's a miracle he even got on the plane to get here," Dr Downie said.

"Even at that stage we weren't sure whether resuscitation would be successful. He was extremely malnourished, his blood pressure and circulation were poor, and the tumour was so big it was taking over his diaphragm. "It was like a baby attached to a tumour — one of the biggest things I've ever seen."

Next day paediatric surgeon Associate Professor Chris Kimber and his team removed what they thought was a Wilms' tumour — rare, but a tumour from which the odds of survival were good. On analysis, however, it was found to be a highly aggressive clear cell sarcoma — a diagnosis that set Anton on