

## Guest Speaker Paula Smith

Our Guest Speaker, Paula Smith, was then introduced to inform our members about the "Mercy Ship" and her role, as a Registered Nurse, and as a volunteer with this charitable organisation. Since 1978 Mercy ships has provided free medical surgeries and other medical interventions to more than 2.5 million people. Paula was part of the Mercy ship's visit to Madagascar and during that visit 1269 Surgeries were done including Orthopaedic, Cleft Palette, Dental, Obstetric and Facial Growths. The charity is involved with 16 other countries throughout the world for funds and volunteers to run this ship. The Mercy ship houses 400 volunteers, has 70 Hospital beds, a School and many tradespeople who both work on jobs as maintenance for the ship, jobs that feed the crew and also go on land and get involved in projects that help the local people. Whilst expensive to run the ship has all of the infrastructure, on board to run the programmes undertaken, all personnel are housed and it is a safe haven for the volunteers. The ship is currently in Madagascar, for a second time, but this is because of the E Bola outbreak in that country.

In Australia there are 7/100,000 deaths for mothers in childbirth, whilst in Liberia the figures are 770/100,000 for the same reason.

One Intensive Care Bed in Australia costs \$4,500.00 per day to run.

Liberia spend \$53.00 per person, per year on Health.

Club Feet, Cleft Palette, Obstetric Fistula, Dentistry and many other disorders are treated on the ship, whilst the trades people also help on land such as setting up a rabbit farm, a sustainable project for feeding the people.

How to help is to raise awareness of the Mercy Ship and the tasks that they do which may help in fundraising, or Volunteer yourself and get friends to do likewise.

There is currently a new ship being built in China, at a cost of \$200,000,000.00 which is due for completion in 2018. This ship will have more capacity to enable more work to be done.

Chris Boddington thanked our guest speaker for her most informative talk.