



Andrew Rochford, left, and Glenn Keys are bringing improved healthcare to Indonesia. PHOTO: AISHAH KENTON

Australians sign \$1.3b Javan health deal

Exclusive

Ronald Mizen

Two Australian companies have secured a \$US1 billion (\$1.3 billion) deal to build and operate 650 healthcare clinics and 23 hospitals across Indonesia's most populous province.

Canberra-based Aspen Medical and Sydney's Docta will formally sign the agreement this week with the West Javan government, adding more than 6000 beds to the province of 50 million people.

The deal provides for Aspen and Docta to partner with state-owned enterprise PT Jasa Sanara to develop infrastructure to meet the growing demand in Indonesia's universal health coverage system, established in 2014.

Aspen Medical chief executive Glenn Keys said the "scale and scope" of what was needed in Indonesia to service the largest public healthcare system in the world was enormous.

"If the government were to attempt to do this all on its own, it would take a lot longer," Mr Keys said, noting that both Australia and Aspen Medical's record on healthcare delivery was viewed positively in other nations.

Docta, founded in 2013 by former

emergency physician and television presenter Andrew Rochford, has been operating in Indonesia since 2017, rolling out mobile healthcare clinics and telehealth services.

Dr Rochford said Indonesia had a population of about 267 million people but some parts had fewer than 150 hospital beds to service 700,000 people.

"That ratio at the moment is one hospital bed to about 4000 people and the World Health Organisation standard is 1000," he said.

"The scarcity of beds and primary care services means there's a large gap to be filled.

"There's a recognition within the area there needs to be a rapid, efficient upgrade of what's available for citizens. Not just in quantity, but also very much in quality."

The deal to be signed tomorrow with West Java's governor, Ridwan Kamil, is part of a 23-year plan to roll out improved healthcare facilities and services to 26 cities, 620 districts, 1576 urban villages and 4301 rural villages.

Under the planned rollout, Docta and Aspen will build 40 clinics and one hospital by the end of next year, 400 clinics and five hospitals by the end of 2023, and the remaining 250 clinics and 18 hos-

pitals over the following 20 years.

"The governor saw us being able not only to just provide one or two healthcare facilities but to genuinely create a transformational healthcare project that would be able to service large numbers of people," Dr Rochford said.

"We have the possibility of creating over half-a-million jobs in an economy that needs stimulus to provide healthcare to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people over the next 20 years."

The long time frame for the project, which has been two years in the making, may prove problematic for the two Australian companies, with concerns being raised over Indonesia's already ballooning healthcare budget.

The agency responsible for the country's health insurance system recorded a near \$US2 billion deficit in 2018.

Mr Keys, a veteran of large-scale medical operations around the world, said the three-stage approach allowed Aspen and Docta to reduce the risks and reassess the rollout at the end of each phase.

"We're really excited about it and continuing to confirm our ability to take Australian healthcare models overseas into new and exciting environments," he said.