

THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY DECORATION (N.Z.B.D.)

Dr Lydia Grace JOHNS-PUTRA

Date of action: 22 February 2011

Date of award: 23 June 2014

Citation

When the 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck Christchurch on 22 February, Dr Lydia Johns-Putra had been attending a conference of Australasian urologists. Dr Johns-Putra joined fellow doctors to assist those injured in the quake and was directed by Police to the collapsed Pyne Gould Corporation building. She joined anaesthetist Dr Bryce Curran, a firefighter and a Police officer in a rescue operation for a man who was trapped inside the building. The man was in danger of bleeding to death with his legs pinned between a concrete pillar and a collapsed floor section. There was no way to remove the concrete safely and a decision was made to amputate both of his legs. The man was administered morphine and ketamine to provide anaesthesia and tourniquets were applied to his legs. Dr Johns-Putra then began the amputation procedure lit by torches and using a hacksaw and penknife. She grew fatigued from the effort of operating the saw in a confined space and passed the hacksaw to the Police officer, the firefighter and Dr Curran who took turns in completing the operation. An aftershock occurred during the operation. The man was then placed in a tarpaulin and carried to waiting ambulance staff outside the building. Dr Lydia Johns-Putra and the rescue team carried out a lengthy operation with minimal equipment in a confined, unstable and dark space whilst under the constant threat of aftershocks. The man survived due to their efforts.