



## State of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Report

### Terms of Reference

#### Research to be conducted into the current state of plastic and reconstructive surgery in the Pacific

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An Australian aid initiative implemented by Interplast Australia & New Zealand on behalf of the Australian Government.

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#### **Submitting an *Expression of Interest*:**

Interplast welcomes *Expressions of Interest* (EOI) from suitably qualified individuals or organisations to undertake this research.

Please submit your EOI addressing the following Terms of Reference, and a statement outlining your suitability to undertake this research by COB Tuesday 12 April 2022, to:

Amanda Richmond  
Director-International Programs  
Interplast Australia and New Zealand  
Email: [contactus@interplast.org.au](mailto:contactus@interplast.org.au)

Any enquiries regarding the project can also be sent to: [contactus@interplast.org.au](mailto:contactus@interplast.org.au)  
For inquiries or submissions, please use *State of Surgery research* in the subject line.

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#### **Background**

Interplast Australia and New Zealand (Interplast) is a non-government organisation (NGO) which sends teams of volunteer plastic and reconstructive surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and allied health professionals to provide life-changing surgery and medical training in 17 countries across the Asia Pacific region.

Interplast's vision is:

*Quality and accessible surgical care, for all*

and its mission is:

*Enhancing quality of life through positive surgical and health outcomes*

Interplast does this through providing surgical services to those who could not otherwise afford or access these services; by building the capacity of local medical systems (including rehabilitation services) through training and mentoring programs, and through supporting the strengthening of hospitals and health systems.

Its work focusses on four key areas:

- *Provision of outstanding patient care*
- *Building a sustainable surgical workforce*
- *Strengthening hospitals and clinical institutions*
- *Delivery of systemic change.*

Interplast is accredited with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, is registered by the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission, and is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct. Interplast works in partnership with local organisations in partner countries; including hospitals, universities and local NGOs, and like-minded international and domestic organisations and partners.

## Project details

The *State of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Report* is a research project that will be undertaken on behalf of Interplast. It will provide a comprehensive, evidence base related to the state of plastic and reconstructive surgery across seven (7) Pacific Island countries, with a focus on clinical services and workforce capacity.

It falls under Interplast's strategic goal of *Delivery of Systemic Change*. Consistent with the focus of working with health systems and governments to strengthen their policy settings, the project seeks to:

- develop a thorough understanding of the current state of plastic and reconstructive surgery
- help collaborating partners inform the planning of future programs
- provide an evidence based, current snapshot of the Pacific region and report findings to partner governments and other local stakeholders.

## Outputs

Initially focused on the Pacific region, the report will provide a snapshot and analysis of the state of plastic and reconstructive surgery, together with associated health services, within developing countries across the region. The first *State of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* report will be published in 2022 and will provide a baseline for subsequent reports and analyses which Interplast will complete every five years to measure progress against key indicators.

The report will cover seven (7) Pacific Island countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga), outlining the current state of plastic and reconstructive surgery and related services in each country, and will include recommendations regarding workforce development and planning, clinical capacity requirements and broader health system planning. The

report will provide a comprehensive picture for national governments and their health ministries on the national provision of plastic and reconstructive surgery and related services, and aims to support longer term health workforce and systems planning.

This project is made possible through funding to Interplast from the Australian Government's Australian NGO Cooperation Program.

## Key research questions and focus areas

The report seeks to answer the following key questions:

1. What level of specialist plastic and reconstructive surgery is currently provided across the Pacific region?
2. What contribution does allied health and nursing make in achieving surgical outcomes?
3. What are the existing employment pathways for surgeons and related health professionals?
4. What investment is occurring to build capacity of general surgeons in plastic and reconstructive surgical capacity, and related health professionals across the region?

Broadly, the report will address:

- Plastic and reconstructive surgery in a context of broader workforce and health priorities.
- The role of allied health and nursing in supporting surgical outcomes.
- Plastic and reconstructive surgery roles in developing health systems, covering the role of surgery in:
  - Achieving universal health coverage
  - Dealing with congenital and acquired disability, and its contribution to averting DALYs (disability adjusted life years)
  - Achieving population health and well-being.
- Policy levers supporting the surgical workforce
  - Pre-service education and training
  - Workforce inflows and outflows
  - Distribution and efficiency.
- Regulation
  - Status of evidence and data on the surgical workforce
  - Surgical workforce availability, composition and distribution
  - Equity in availability of, and access, to the surgical workforce
  - International surgical migration and mobility
  - Regulation of surgical education and practice
  - Education and surgical workforce supply
  - Regulation of employment and working conditions
  - Governance and leadership.
- Future directions
  - Strengthening the evidence base for ongoing planning, monitoring and accountability
  - Developing and supporting the surgical workforce
  - Building institutional capacity and leadership skills for effective governance
  - Investment for the creation of surgical positions
  - Establishing a plastic and reconstructive surgery research and evidence agenda
  - The feasibility of establishing a plastic surgery unit in a larger centre (PNG or Fiji) to support capability in the region.

When considering the above topics, the report will consider capacity and roles of:

- Specialist plastic and reconstructive surgeons
- General surgeons performing plastic and reconstructive surgery
- Anaesthetists
- Nurses – both specialist and generalists
- Allied Health Professionals.

While the report is examining data from the seven Pacific Island countries, the scope for deliverables under *Status of evidence and data on the surgical workforce* (under Regulation) should also include other low and middle income countries across the Pacific region.

## Methodology

The *State of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Report* will be informed by a review of existing secondary published data; however, it is anticipated that the researcher/research team will source primary evidence where required. In addition to the data sets used within the report, the report will include a series of primary-sourced case studies.

To ensure transparency, the report will include a specific *materials and methods* section to describe the materials, apparatus, and procedures used to carry out the collection of evidence and subsequent measurements. The section will provide a clear presentation of how key evidence was obtained, and how data was analysed.

## Research Principles

The researcher will be expected to seek ethics approval for the research, and abide by the following principles to guide the conduct of ethical research:

- Social value
  - Validity
  - Fair subject selection
  - Favourable risk-benefit ratio
  - Independent review
  - Informed consent
  - Respect for confirmed subjects.
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