

Changing lives together since 1983

Patma's story

Meet Patma, a little girl who lives in Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea.

Patma is 2 years old in this photo, but is tiny for her age. She was born with a cleft lip and a cleft palate, making it very difficult for her to feed properly. Without proper nutrition in her formative years, Patma was failing to thrive and was unable to put on weight.

Interplast Australia & New Zealand has been working in Papua New Guinea since 1985. Papua New Guinea has one of the largest populations in the Pacific, with over 8 million people spread out over more than 150 islands.

Interplast is helping our local partners to build capacity, as many local surgeons are general surgeons, and only a small number specialize in plastic and reconstructive surgery.

Whilst Patma was considered too small for surgery on this visit, volunteer nurse Hayley Benbow was able to teach her mother how to feed her with a specific bottle and technique. In time, Patma should be a perfect candidate for surgery when the team returns.

You and your Rotary Club can help Interplast make more trips and provide life-changing care to more children and their families. Find out how at interplast.org.au.



2-year-old Patma smiles for the visiting Interplast team.



Interplast volunteer nurse, Hayley Benbow, showing Patma's family a safer feeding technique.