



Interplast®

# Volunteer Guidebook





# Interplast®

## Our vision

Quality and accessible surgical care, for all.

## Our mission

Enhancing quality of life through positive surgical and health outcomes.

## Our values

In all that we do, we operationalise our values of integrity, respect and collaboration.

- **Integrity:** We have an open and transparent culture where people can share openly and say what they mean.
- **Respect:** We value people, listen deeply and ensure all voices are heard and respected.
- **Collaboration:** We work as one team, embrace diversity and actively invite different perspectives.





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# 1. Welcome from our CEO

Congratulations on your decision to provide life-changing care to individuals across the Pacific and Asia. By supporting the work of Interplast Australia & New Zealand, you are demonstrating your belief that every person should have access to essential surgical and medical care when needed.

Your continuing commitment, passion and determination means that we are able to deliver life-saving and life-changing surgery and other medical support in our partner countries, as well as crucial training and skills development of local medical professionals. Through volunteering your time and talent, together we continue to make a real difference to the people with and for whom we work.

I hope that you find this manual useful to understand and guide your volunteer journey – the benefits of volunteering with Interplast, our expectations and the responsibilities of our volunteers, and how we will support the recruitment, preparation, mobilisation and post-program to ensure a positive and productive experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Roth'.

**Tom Roth**  
Chief Executive Officer



## 2. Purpose of this guidebook

This guidebook has been developed as a key resource to support Interplast's volunteers before, during and after mobilisation on an Interplast program activity overseas. It is an expectation that volunteers read through this guidebook as part of their preparation to mobilise, and refer to it when required throughout your deployment.

It contains all the key information that you need to know including how we engage, prepare and support our volunteers, as well as the expectations that we have about how you represent Interplast and deliver our programs.

This guidebook is complemented by Interplast's suite of policies, codes and agreements, as well as the online learning modules and pre-departure briefings which volunteers are required to complete prior to deployment. This is also supported by post-program briefings that occur at the conclusion of the program.

## 3. Related policies, codes and agreements

The following policies, codes and agreements are key to providing oversight and guidance to how Interplast's programs are delivered overseas. Policies can be found on Interplast's website, and you are asked to read, understand and commit to these and their related codes and agreements as part of your preparation for mobilisation. They are also covered in the online learning modules and during Interplast's pre-departure briefings. It is an expectation of all volunteers that they are familiar with and committed to working and behaving in accordance with these policies.

- [Disability Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Gender Equality Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct](#)
- [Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment \(PSEAH\) Policy](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Counter Terrorism & Anti Money Laundering Policy](#)
- [Environment Policy](#)
- [Anti-Fraud & Anti-Corruption Policy](#)
- [Ethical Fundraising Policy](#)
- [Case Study & Photography Policy](#)
- [Statement of Human Rights Policy](#)
- HIV & AIDS Policy
- Development, Proselytisation, Politics and Welfare Policy
- Program Participant Protocol and Agreement
- Media Policy

## 4. Introduction

Interplast Australia & New Zealand (Interplast) aims to enhance quality of life through positive surgical and public health outcomes.

We were established by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and Rotarians in 1983 to address the surgical inequity across the Pacific and Asia. Our vision is quality and accessible health care, for all.

People in remote or low-resourced settings face numerous barriers that prevent them from accessing the care they need. Women, children and people living with disability are impacted most of all. Sustainable, equitable health services are essential to ensure all people can live and participate in family, education and employment.

Collaboration is at the core of our work. By strategically connecting governments, institutions, organisations and volunteers, we increase the ability of health systems to serve their communities both short-term and long-term.

Interplast programs take many forms. Many include short trips which see health professionals volunteering in hospitals in partner countries. These volunteer teams work alongside local professionals to provide consultation, surgery and allied health treatment. At the same time, they mentor and support their local counterparts to build their knowledge and capacity.

## 5. Overview of our work

### 5.1 Focus of Interplast's programs

Interplast programs are focused on countries in the Asia-Pacific region, where our mission *of enhancing quality of life through positive surgical and health outcomes* aims to improve access to plastic and reconstructive surgical and related services to people in countries where these services are not affordable or available.

Our work is guided by a contextual analysis of each partner country, and our goals are consistent with international development goals, and by taking into account WHO priority areas. Each contextual analysis is informed by data on existing capacity; for example, the proportion of clinical workforce to population, and where capacity building and systems strengthening programs will make a sustainable and measurable difference.

Key to this is having a clear understanding of unmet need for plastic and reconstructive surgery and related services, the capacity of partner health systems to work with our teams in-country, and a willingness of partner governments to work in collaboration with Interplast.

### We work within 4 key program areas:



**Provide  
outstanding  
patient care**



**Build a  
sustainable  
workforce**



**Strengthen  
hospitals and  
institutions**



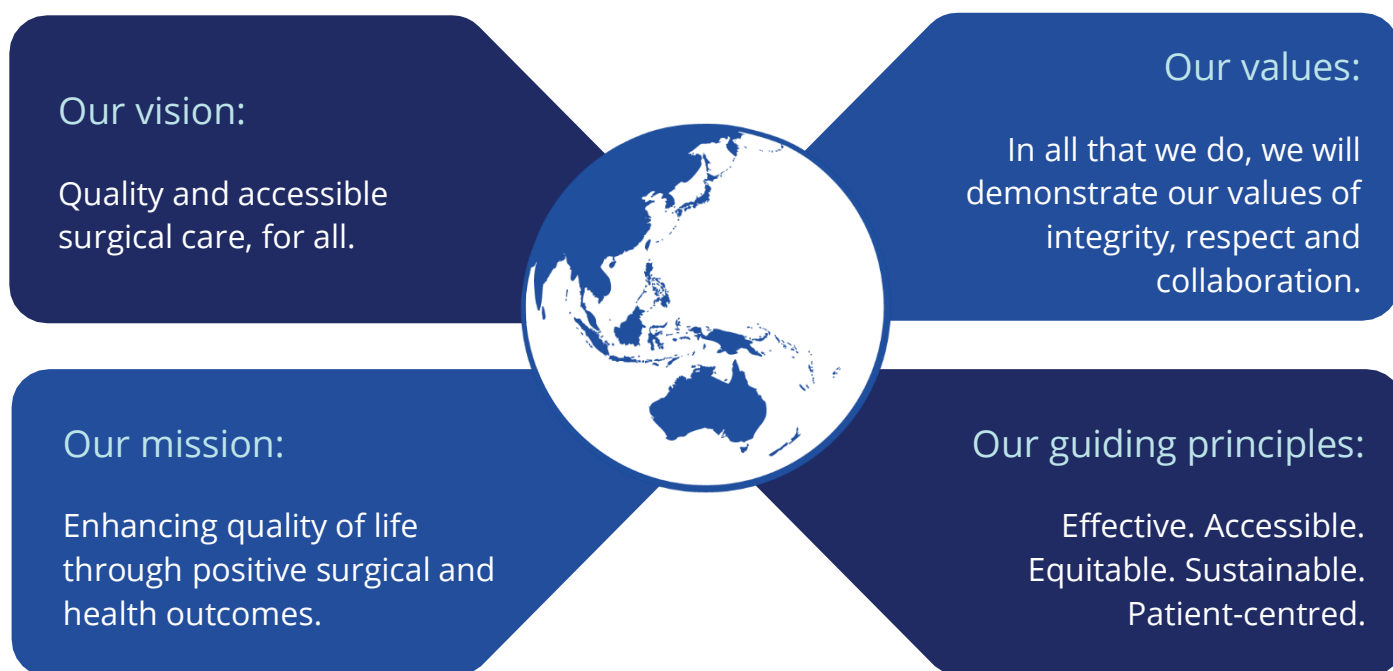
**Deliver  
systemic  
change**

Our [10 Year Program Strategy \(Promise 2030\)](#) explains this in more detail.



## 5.2 Interplast's values and ethos

As an Interplast volunteer, you are expected to demonstrate and work by the guiding principles and values of Interplast – throughout the delivery of overseas programs, and when representing Interplast in any way.



## 5.3 The role and contribution of our volunteers

Interplast's volunteers are central to everything that we do – both in the planning, delivery and evaluation of our programs, as well as our clinical and general governance.

Interplast's clinical volunteers are Australian or New Zealand, fully qualified and highly experienced medical professionals – surgeons, nurses, anaesthetists and allied health professionals. They are engaged to provide training, mentoring and clinical support services to local hospital and other partners overseas, in line with their professional qualifications and experience. Many of these volunteers also play a role in Interplast's various clinical governance committees and working groups, and in the oversight of program planning, monitoring and evaluation.

On occasion, Interplast may accept medical volunteers from countries other than Australia or New Zealand (if a specific program requires it and/or if a specific area of expertise can't be sourced locally), however their qualification must be recognised in Australia or New Zealand and must be accepted by the local partner country. Our volunteers report high levels of satisfaction in relation to their experiences with Interplast. Many have noted their time on Interplast activities as among the most rewarding of their careers. Interplast's focus on capacity building aligns with the values held by many of our volunteers who believe in the old saying that a hand up is better than a hand out. Our volunteers recognise that volunteering for Interplast is a privilege – enabling them to visit incredible locations and to get to know and work with dedicated local medical professionals and patients – expanding their horizons and allowing them to contribute something to their profession which isn't readily possible back home.

Despite the sometimes scenic and picturesque settings of some of our program activities, they are rarely leisurely and relaxing. To make best use of our limited time in country and the availability of our volunteers, activities are often very busy to enable the most effective outcomes possible. This increased workload does not however mean they forsake the standard of professional care provided when practising at home. Interplast and its volunteers are held and remain accountable to the same high professional standards expected of them when they practise in Australia and New Zealand. Interplast works to a high professional standard and all of its programs work within strict compliance requirements.

## 6. Governance and compliance

As an established, professional non-government organisation and development agency, Interplast has a range of governance mechanisms in place which govern how we work, and support our compliance requirements.

### 6.1 Internal governance

Interplast is a company limited by guarantee, with a voluntary Board of Directors. Further information on this can be found on our website. Reporting to the Board of Directors, Interplast has a number of Committees which provide clinical, training and evaluation and risk oversight. These Committees and Working Groups meet on a regular basis and are comprised of volunteer medical professionals as well as a range of other professions (including finance, legal, communications, monitoring & evaluation). These are:

- Interplast Board of Directors
- Corporate Advisory Council
- Gender Equality Advisory Council
- Interplast Allied Health Working Group
- Interplast Audit and Risk Committee
- Interplast Clinical Governance Committee
- Interplast Design, Monitoring & Evaluation Committee
- Interplast Nurse Working Group
- Interplast Rotarian Committee

### 6.2 External regulation and compliance

In Australia, Interplast holds Non-Government Organisation (NGO) accreditation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) – a comprehensive and strict process where Australian NGOs are assessed on a 5-yearly basis to ensure that they meet the compliance requirements of the Australian Government.

Additionally, Interplast is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and is compliant with ACFID's Code of Conduct, as well as the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and the Fundraising Institute of Australia. Both DFAT accreditation and ACFID membership require Interplast to have a specific policies, procedures and frameworks in place which guide everything that we do, from our governance processes, to our fundraising and communications, to the planning, delivery and evaluation of our overseas programs.

Both our staff and our volunteers (including medical volunteers) are bound by these policies and procedures, and it is expected that our local partner organisations also adhere to them. As well as the ACFID membership and DFAT accreditation, Interplast is also required to comply with the regulations of a number of other regulatory and fundraising authorities and standards.

Overseas, Interplast and its personnel must comply with the local regulations and compliance requirements relating to our programs in each of our partner countries. These include requirements relating to local medical and nursing registrations, importation of medical equipment and supplies (customs) immigration (visas) and various other local permissions from different levels of government. These requirements vary between and within countries, and often change on a regular basis. All Interplast volunteers must comply with these local requirements, overseen and coordinated by Interplast staff.



## 7. Safeguarding policies and practices

### 7.1 Child safeguarding

Interplast is committed to ensuring the protection of all children in the context of delivering Interplast activities. We have a zero tolerance approach to child abuse and exploitation. Staff, volunteers and local partners are expected to be fully competent in the area of child safeguarding, and adhere to Interplast's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. This includes a mandatory requirement to report any concerns, suspicions or breaches of child abuse or exploitation. Details of how to report child abuse or exploitation and who to report to can be found on page 15 of Interplast's [Child Protection Policy](#). This policy is mandated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). Interplast volunteers are required to regularly sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct, and to undertake Interplast's Child Protection training as part of pre-mobilisation preparation.

### 7.2 Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH)

Interplast is committed to providing a safe environment for the people we work with, working respectfully, where misconduct is not accepted, and vulnerabilities and power inequalities are not exploited or abused. We acknowledge that unacceptable behaviour will adversely affect our professional reputation with colleagues, partners and patients. We will address any behaviour that does not comply with the standards articulated in policies and procedures. Staff and volunteers must adhere to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy while participating in Interplast's programs, particularly to the requirement to report any concerns, suspicions or breaches of the policy. This policy is mandated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). There is a section of Interplast's pre-mobilisation training package dedicated to understanding your role and responsibilities regarding the prevention of sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment, and you must sign your commitment to upholding the policy as part of your formal agreement to volunteer. Interplast has available a number of resources which will accompany your team overseas – information for local partners and patients, as part of the implementation of this policy. This includes posters and flyers (in local language where appropriate) to display at the hospital during the consultation clinic, and to be made available for the duration of the team's visit. These resources focus on ensuring partners and patients are aware of our commitment to safeguarding, what they can expect from us, and how to raise concerns or make a complaint.



### 7.3 Fraud prevention

Interplast has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and fraudulent activity. Many of the countries in which Interplast activities are delivered represent difficult environments where poverty and disadvantage remain widespread. Governance arrangements can be underdeveloped and attitudes towards fraud and fraudulent activity, transparency and accountability may be different than in Australia or New Zealand. Given these contextual factors, the delivery of projects in these environments may face an increased risk of fraud or fraudulent activity.

The prevention of fraud and corruption is the responsibility of everyone who contributes to Interplast's overseas activities. If fraudulent activities are encountered or suspected in relation to the implementation of activities supported by Interplast or the use of program funds, volunteers and staff must report the matter to Interplast's CEO. For further information, please refer to our Anti-Fraud and Anti-Money Laundering Policy. And the fraud prevention section which is included in the pre-mobilisation training program, which all volunteers must successfully complete.

### 7.4 Ethical stories and images

Interplast is committed to portraying all children and adults in a way that respects their modesty, dignity, privacy, and cultural and religious beliefs. We aim to carefully, safely and respectfully take, store and share visual images taken during in-country visits, and in Australia & New Zealand. While images and personal stories are an essential means of documenting our work, Interplast strives to maintain the dignity of everyone with whom we work and will not use images or information/ stories that are unsafe, disrespectful or demeaning. Staff and volunteers are required to adhere to the Case Study and Photography Guidelines when collecting, storing, and using personal information and images from program visits and always gain prior, free and informed consent from the subject and/or their guardian. Specific tools and templates are made available to the team to assist in collecting stories and to obtain and document informed consent. Pre-mobilisation training for volunteers includes a section on ethical storytelling.

### 7.5 Environmental safeguarding and waste management

Interplast recognises the inextricable link between the health of human communities and their environments, and we aim to minimise the impact of our operations on the environment. Please ensure you follow environmentally sound practices in waste disposal (medical waste in particular), to the best of your abilities, within the limitations of the local setting. The end of trip report includes a section to complete on waste management practices in the facility you visited and worked in. This allows Interplast to advocate for improved practices, where required. For further information, please refer to our Environment Policy.





## 8. Inclusion policies and practices

### 8.1 Gender equality

Gender equality is a key consideration in all of Interplast's programs. Our Gender Equality Policy and our Gender Equity Strategy provide a framework for defining and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of Interplast's work. It is an integral part of our commitment and accountability to the local partners and communities that we work with and support across the Asia-Pacific region. For further information, please refer to our Gender Equality Policy.

#### Gender

Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and boys, women and girls, and those with other gender identities. These vary across cultures and over time.

#### Gender equality

Refers to the process and outcome of ensuring equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all people regardless of their gender identity. Achieving gender equality requires that the interests, needs and priorities of women, men and those with other gender identities are taken into consideration, recognising their diversity and the intersection of gender with other characteristics such as age, ethnicity and class or caste.

Gender is an important determinant of health and access to health care. Women and girls can face additional barriers to accessing health services, where they may have travelled far from home. This can include concerns about safety on transport or in accommodation, previous negative experiences with male clinicians, financial barriers, and caring responsibilities that make it difficult for them to attend consultations or remain away from home for treatment. In many Asia-Pacific contexts violence against women is endemic, which can be related to women's status within the household as well as broader cultural norms. In addition to being unacceptable, gender-based violence has obvious health implications.

The Asia-Pacific region also has many diverse gender identities, such as the third gender fa'afafine in Samoa encompassing transgender people, and fakaleiti identity in Tonga. People with diverse gender identities face barriers in seeking health care, including attitudes of health care providers, and in obtaining care related to their biological sex where this does not match their gender identity.

#### Strategies for considering gender within health care or surgical activities include:

- Discuss with counterparts whether there are any local gender norms to be aware of in engaging with patients: e.g. patient concerns about a consultation with a differently gender clinician, appropriate language to refer to gender-diverse patients.
- If you notice disparity in the gender of patients identified for consultations or surgery (e.g. many more males than females, where this is not for clinical reasons), note this in the visit report.
- Consider raising this with counterparts, asking about processes for identifying patients and any gender-based barriers patients might experience to seeking treatment.
- Ask counterparts what referral services are available where patients have needs beyond the focus of your consultation e.g. they are experiencing domestic violence or they would like to access



family planning.

- If patients are being referred for surgery or other follow-up procedures, ask counterparts what supports may be available to ensure patients can access this e.g. identifying safe accommodation and transport that female patients are comfortable with and assisting with out-of-pocket expenses, where appropriate.

## Healthcare Workers

The health workforce in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as in Australia, New Zealand and many other contexts, is split along gender lines. World Health Organization research has identified that women make up 70 per cent of the global health workforce but hold only 25 per cent of senior roles. They are often clustered into lower status and lower paid jobs. Gender discrimination constrains women's leadership and seniority, and a large percentage of women in the health workforce face bias and discrimination. Strategies for promoting gender equality in training or capacity-building activities include identifying and supporting women in clinical leadership roles and, in particular, women working in non-traditional roles for their gender. Additionally, Interplast teams should lead by example by displaying teamwork and respect for all in clinical settings.

## 8.2 Disability inclusion

Interplast is committed to promoting disability inclusion throughout all of its work, both in Australia and overseas. Interplast believes in promoting participation for all people, including people with disabilities, and recognises that people with disabilities are often marginalised from mainstream development programs, from accessing specialist health care, and from engaging in the medical workforce. Without specific measures towards inclusion, people with disabilities can be left out or excluded from engaging in, and benefiting from development activities on an equal basis with others.

The nature of Interplast's programs mean that volunteers will often be working with people with disabilities, for example in assessments, treatment and surgery. While these activities will of course largely have a medical focus, it is important to consider disability inclusion beyond a focus on a person's impairment or illness, using the social model of disability. Many people with disabilities in developing countries (and elsewhere) may have faced discrimination or stigma in the past, which may make them reluctant to seek treatment or wary of medical professionals. They may also face other barriers to treatment, such as inaccessible transport or accommodation, and communication or financial barriers.

Interplast's Disability Inclusion Strategy outlines why and how disability inclusion is specifically related to Interplast's work – in terms of ensuring access of people with disabilities to Interplast's programs from a clinical point of view (accessing treatment) and from a training point of view (people with disabilities accessing opportunities to train as health professionals).

Interplast volunteers play a key role in supporting the delivery of Interplast's Disability Inclusion strategy, through role modelling to local partners what an inclusive health care team looks like, and through actively promoting inclusive clinical services (by working with local partners to ensure clinics and medical treatment are accessible, that patients are referred on to community-based disability support organisations where relevant, and through considering accessibility in the delivery of training programs).

### **The social model of disability**

Identifies that people with impairments are 'disabled' not by their impairments, but by the barriers that they face in society. This includes barriers in the built environment such as lack of ramps; attitudinal barriers such as low expectations around people's capabilities; communication barriers and institutional barriers.

### **Tips for engaging with patients with disabilities:**

- *Address the person with disability directly, not any support person or interpreter who may be assisting them (unless the person with disability asks you to do so).*
- *If you are unsure of the best way to communicate with, or to make the environment more accessible for an individual with disability, ask the person directly.*
- *Use respectful language when referring to a person's disability or impairment. If a translator is being used, check beforehand that they are using respectful terms in the local language and not using stigmatised or insulting terms for impairments or conditions.*
- *Don't assume that the person wants to be 'fixed' at all costs, or that their condition is a tragedy or great burden. Of course, many patients will be presenting for curative or assistive surgery and will hope to benefit from treatment. However, some groups, for instance the deaf community, may view their impairment as strongly linked to their identity, and it should not be perceived as purely negative. If a person's impairment is not relevant to your consultation (e.g. they are deaf and the consultation is for cardiology), do not dwell on their impairment except to the extent it affects the condition you are treating them for.*

Accessibility measures may largely be under the control of the hospital or health facility you are working with, however, where possible, you could discuss accessibility with counterparts. For example: – Whether consultation rooms are physically accessible to wheelchair users or patients with other mobility impairments.

- Available support for communication with people with vision impairments or those who are deaf or hard of hearing (e.g. sign language interpreters, large print materials).
- What support is available to help patients access services (e.g. can transport be provided, what accommodation is safe and accessible if a patient with disability needs to stay in town to undergo a procedure).
- How to access referral networks – for instance, if a consultation identifies that a person with an impairment is not suitable for a surgical intervention, can the person be referred to local rehabilitation services and/or a local disabled people's organisation or similar? What local services can complement any treatment or surgery being provided e.g. rehabilitation services, assistance in fitting aids and devices such as wheelchairs, hearing aids etc.

Disability inclusion is a key consideration in all Interplast programs. For further information, refer to our Disability Inclusion Policy and our Disability Inclusion Strategy.





## 9. Volunteer mobilisation cycle



### 9.1 Selection of team and activity dates

Interplast teams are selected and confirmed by the International Programs team, in conjunction with team leaders and local partners, based on clinical need, availability, and ensuring the appropriate mix of skills and experience with that particular program. Dates are negotiated with local partners and volunteer teams to suit local availability and requirements. Where possible, teams and dates are confirmed 4-6 months ahead of departure to allow for sufficient planning time.

### 9.2 Volunteer registration and administration

All volunteers will receive detailed support from the Interplast staff team in the preparation for mobilisation. This will include specific instructions, as early as possible, about what is required from individual volunteers in terms of documentation, so that preparations can be made on your behalf. The Interplast staff team work hard to ensure that all other aspects of the program are arranged on your behalf – everything from arranging travel and accommodation, local licencing, visas, customs documentation and medical equipment and supplies. The program coordinator responsible will be your key point of contact at Interplast for all your questions and concerns. When you are selected to participate in a program activity, you will be advised who your coordinator will be.

### 9.3 Pre-departure trainings and briefings

Two mandatory pre-departure briefing sessions will be held – one in the early stages of preparation to introduce the team and cover off on key timelines and information, as well as providing some important briefings about the program itself. A second briefing will be held immediately prior to departure (generally within a week of travel), to update on last-minute information. The second session may also be a case discussion with members of the local surgical, anaesthetic, nursing and/ or allied health personnel to discuss the case list and program schedule. These sessions will be held via Zoom, and will be scheduled to suit the team.

Interplast volunteers must all also complete the required mandatory pre-departure training packages – including 'Keeping Children Safe' (Interplast's child protection training) and Interplast's 'Mobilisation Training Pack', which covers several key topics. These training packages can be done in the volunteer's own time, through Interplast's training portal, but must be completed at least 4 weeks prior to departure.

## 9.4 In-country program delivery

While in-country, you will be working under the leadership of the volunteer team leader, and in close collaboration with key local clinical partners. You will be briefed on who these are prior to departure, and there will be an initial meeting held with key personnel when you arrive.

Interplast staff in Australia will keep in contact with you during your time overseas – to confirm safe arrival, to undertake periodic ‘welfare checks’, and as needed, to respond to any requirements or issues which may arrive. It is important to understand and be familiar with Interplast’s incident reporting processes, should they be required. Clear information on what to do in an emergency is provided to volunteers ahead of mobilisation, and is available both electronically and in the Team Manual.

## 9.5 Return home, debrief and reporting

All mobilisations will include a ‘debrief’ with key local partners before departing the program location – this may include clinical staff, administrators, and/or Ministry of Health personnel. It may also include meeting with Australian Government personnel in that country (i.e representatives from the Embassy or High Commission). Interplast staff will provide you with further information on these, if relevant. These debriefs include discussion of what was achieved during the visit, handover of patient care, and plans for future support. These discussions should be documented to include in reporting back to Interplast.

Once you have returned to Australia, you will be contacted by a member of the Interplast team for a post- program debrief – these are usually done over the phone, individually with each member of the team, and information gathered will supplement that which is captured in the team reporting. This is an opportunity for you to provide feedback to Interplast on all aspects of the program planning and delivery, including providing feedback on any issues which arose.





## 10. Medical indemnity insurance

It is the responsibility of surgeons and anaesthetists to provide written proof to Interplast that they have their own *medical indemnity insurance* which will cover them during the program activity. This is obtained by notifying the medical defence organisation of your intention to undertake an Interplast activity and providing relevant details. Interplast will request this as part of the paperwork required during the pre-mobilisation preparation stage. Interplast's own insurance policy covers professional indemnity for nurses and allied health practitioners, and a copy of this can be provided to the relevant volunteers if necessary.

## 11. Overseas medical, nursing and allied health registration

Most countries in the Asia Pacific have a requirement that visiting overseas medical professionals who are undertaking any clinical work (and in some cases, non-clinical teaching) apply for and obtain a local temporary medical or nursing registration prior to their arrival in country.

The process and timeframes to apply and obtain such registration varies considerably from country to country, but the process is lengthy and contains many parts – and as such, completed documentation is needed by Interplast 3-4 months in advance of the program. The Interplast team will provide you with a specific list of documents which you are required to provide, and timeframes in which they are needed, so that we can make this application on your behalf. However, most require a completed local registration application form with details of qualifications and experience, as well as:

- a current federal police check
- passport copy
- reference letter/s
- copies of qualifications and medical/nursing registration in Australia/NZ
- a Certificate of Registration Status / Certificate of Good Standing from AHPRA or the New Zealand equivalent (noting that these can take several weeks to be processed once they are applied for).

In many cases these documents must be certified copies of originals and for some countries documents must also be authenticated by a Public Notary.





## 12. Medical equipment and supplies

Many of Interplast's programs require medical equipment and supplies to be taken by the team to the partner country, for use in teaching and providing clinical services. This includes surgical and anaesthetic equipment, as well as consumable products used in surgery and other clinical work – including drugs, medications, dressings, sutures and other supplies.

Interplast's Coordinator of Equipment & Supplies will work closely with volunteer teams to ensure that they have the required equipment and supplies. We may be able to procure and accommodate specific requests made by the team where feasible. The packing list for each trip will be sent to the key volunteers on the team ahead of each trip.

In all cases, where a drug case is being sent, a member of the team must transport the drug case with them on the flight. Interplast staff will facilitate this process, including obtaining a Customs Export/Import Declaration and excess baggage waivers if possible.

The team leader must also ensure sterilisation of equipment prior to returning equipment and instruments to Interplast in Melbourne. A sterilisation certificate must be provided by the team with their end of trip reporting and must be signed by the local hospital's Central Sterile Supply Department and an Interplast Registered Nurse. The certificate can be found inside the team manual.

All equipment, unused supplies, sutures and especially drugs (a legal requirement) must be returned with the team to Australia. The team may use their discretion to leave some dressings and other supplies required for post-operative care of patients treated with local partners.

It is critical that a drug count must be completed with a final count at the end of the program, and the drug book must be completed. Any discrepancies must be reported by Interplast to the Department of Health.

Teams must report any damaged or missing equipment, or equipment in need of repair, to Interplast on return. Incidents and near-misses must be reported as soon as possible – incident reporting forms are available in the Team Manual.

In some cases, volunteers may wish to take donated items on a trip with them to provide to the host country/hospital. This must be discussed with and cleared by Interplast well ahead of the visit, as donated items must be in line with Interplast's *Guidelines for Donation of Equipment and Supplies*, be acceptable to the host country, and fit within logistical considerations (for example within baggage limits and other requirements). The Interplast Coordinator of Equipment and Supplies has final approval of all donated goods to ensure suitability and that the goods meet clinical standards.

The team is provided with a 'Team Manual' on departure, which contains all the required information, permits and contacts for the duration of the program. This Team Manual includes details of the equipment and supplies kit, and the code to open the kit boxes. It is important that everyone in the team is familiar with this Manual.



## 13. Travel arrangements

### 13.1 Airfares

In most cases, volunteer airfares and required ground transport are booked and paid for directly by Interplast to and from the country (city) of destination. Interplast will only cover the costs of an economy airfare, and if volunteers wish to book business class (or higher), they must pay the additional cost directly to the Interplast travel agent.

This is to ensure the best value fares through Interplast's travel agent, and to ensure that if the activity is postponed or cancelled that airfares are able to be changed or cancelled with minimal financial risk and are covered by Interplast's travel insurance. It also ensures that the team is booked as a group so that if changes are required prior to or during the activity, they are made as a team. Group bookings done through Interplast's agent also improve opportunity for excess baggage waiver from the airlines, which is an important factor in ensuring our programs are best value for money.

If volunteers wish to include a holiday on to either end of the Interplast program activity, Interplast can include this in their booking, however if additional costs are incurred, these must be met by the volunteer. Interplast's travel and health insurance does not extend to holidays, and insurance for volunteer holidays at either end of the program activity are the responsibility of the volunteer. Any arrangements for volunteers to book their own airfares must be approved by Interplast prior to booking, and will only be considered under strict circumstances. Volunteers are responsible and liable for the cost of obtaining and retaining their own passport with at least six months validity.

### 13.2 Accommodation

Accommodation will be booked and paid for by Interplast, in hotels which have been assessed and deemed as secure and suitable for purpose. Volunteers will be consulted where practical. They will be comfortable, secure, as close as possible to the hospital, and will have facilities for dining. Accommodation is generally 3-4 star, and all volunteers will be accommodated in their own rooms unless requested otherwise. The room rate, covered by Interplast, will usually include breakfast, otherwise this will be factored into your per-diem. Where volunteers require transit accommodation (either in Australia or en-route overseas) due to flight schedules related to their home and destination locations, this will be arranged as part of the program, following the same process outlined above.





If volunteers wish to stay in alternative accommodation or be upgraded, they will be responsible for additional cost, and Interplast reserves the right to refuse this request, should the alternative proposed not meet the security and logistical requirements of the program.

Volunteers should report any concerns regarding the security of an accommodation provider to Interplast staff immediately, and if necessary, appropriate alternative accommodation can be found. During periods of heightened risk staff may have to be moved to other accommodation. For security reasons the accommodation used by volunteers in high risk countries, needs to be assessed as safe by security support engaged by Interplast.

### 13.3 Per diems

Volunteers are provided with a modest per-diem during their time on a program activity. The amount varies across and within countries. The rate is calculated based on local cost of living. The per-diem is intended to cover meals (that aren't already covered by accommodation rate or by local partners), drinks and transport in-country and incidentals including transport to and from the airport in Australia (or airport parking) and contribution towards things such as phone calls home, laundry and internet (if not provided in room rate). Volunteers are not required to keep receipts or acquit expenses using the per-diem process, however if they feel that they did not spend all the per-diem required, they are encouraged to reimburse this to Interplast.

If volunteers are left out-of-pocket for expenses which weren't able to be paid directly by Interplast, these will be reimbursed on presentation of receipt. However, these costs must be approved by Interplast before being expended—for example, in a situation where a volunteer must pay an excess baggage fee directly to the airline on check-in.

### 13.4 Customs declaration

Customs declarations and exceptions are required for clinical visits where the team will be carrying medical equipment and supplies on the flight with them. These are required both for 'importing' this kit into the destination country and 'exporting' it out again, as well as 'exporting' it out of Australia, and 'importing' it back home. This is one of the reasons why it is mandatory that Interplast be aware of all medical equipment and supplies being carried by the volunteer team, and why additional items (not included in the Interplast-arranged kit) sometimes cannot be taken. In some countries, drugs and other medications cannot be imported, so these must be sourced locally within that country, in partnership with the local hospital and local personnel, for use by the visiting team.



For the countries which we visit, customs/import requirements vary, but Interplast generally receives an exemption on import/export duties from that country, which is arranged by the Interplast staff team. This exemption is communicated by letter or email from the partner country, and is carried by the volunteer team to show to Customs officials on arrival into their destination country.

A Customs Export Declaration (CED) is an official document issued by the Australian Border Force declaring that the list of consumables carried by the nominated person can be exported from Australia. The Interplast staff team will apply for the CED on behalf of the nominated volunteer within the team who will be responsible for



the kit. Once approved the nominated volunteer must carry a hard copy of the CED to present at customs as requested. Interplast uses a customs broker in Australia to manage this process, one set of documentation is provided to the team prior to travel from Australia (to show on their departure), and another set is sent through via email to the team while they are overseas, to show on arrival back in Australia (this can only be applied for once the kit has been exported).

### 13.5 Excess baggage

Interplast works closely with the airlines to, where possible, obtain waivers for excess baggage charges, to enable volunteers to export/import the team's medical equipment, consumables and drugs required for delivery of the programs. If this is possible, the volunteer mobilisation team will organise this for you. In most cases there is a limit to the amount of excess luggage that can be pre-purchased. The Interplast team will provide specific details related to the program on which you are going, in regards to excess baggage arrangements. Interplast cannot pay excess baggage costs for additional equipment or supplies carried by the team outside the standard, approved Interplast medical and equipment kit, nor for additional baggage of other types, outside of each traveller's standard baggage allowance (usually 23kg).

### 13.6 Arrive in-country

When you arrive in your destination country, you will be met on arrival either by local clinical partners from the hospital, a representative from your hotel, or both. Arrangements will have been made for transfers both for the equipment kit to the hospital, and for the team to their hotel. Depending on arrival times, you may go straight to the hospital first. Upon arrival, the local team will have arranged a welcome briefing for the team.

### 13.7 Transport

For security reasons, in some countries your travel may be restricted, and transport must be organised via the security transportation company. Interplast will advise you well in advance of deployment if this is the case. In most countries, airport transfers and daily transport to and from the hospital will be arranged by Interplast either with the hotel, the hospital, or a combination of both. In a small number of cases, self-driving hire cars will be arranged for the team when this is a better and safer option. In some countries, it is safer, more practical and more cost effective to use the local taxi service. Interplast will advise on which scenario will be relevant for your deployment.

To best mitigate the risk of traffic accidents, we advise journeys to be undertaken during the day where absolutely possible. Where possible, only travel on main highways, never on small or unmarked roads. Allow for additional time to complete journeys, considering possible delays. Interplast asks that volunteers:

Ensure the vehicle is of the appropriate standard (vehicle in good running condition, recently serviced, 4WD if needed) and emergency equipment is appropriate (spare tyre, first-aid kit).

- Ensure you always wear a seatbelt.
- Select an appropriate driver who knows the vehicle, knows the route, able to communicate with traveller/s (no language barrier), is not overtired, is not distracted by mobile phone call while driving etc.

If you are in a situation where you will be hiring a vehicle and driving during your deployment, please note:

- You will be required to hold an international driver's licence (or appropriate driver's licence).
- You must ensure the vehicle is registered.
- You must notify Interplast of your intent to drive/hire a vehicle prior to departure.
- You must understand the road rules, etiquette, and local laws and always wear a seatbelt.

Our insurance policy does not provide cover for vehicle damage or repair so adequate vehicle insurance should be purchased as part of the vehicle hire.

travel and seek alternative transport methods. If travel is in progress, and you are feeling unsafe, it is essential that you ask your driver to immediately modify his driving until a change in vehicle and/or driver can be made. For support and advice, you may contact AIG Travel Assist.

All travel costs related to the project are reimbursed by Interplast upon receipt.

### 13.8 communication aid emergency contact details

All volunteers are to carry a fully charged personal mobile, and a phone charger and local adapter. Please activate global roaming before departure or obtain a local SIM (please ensure you update Interplast and the visiting volunteer Team Leader with your new number). If you will be out of range and uncontactable for a period of time, please ensure you advise the Team Leader. Keep personal contact details and emergency contact details up to date with the Interplast team, and your volunteer team leader. Please keep emergency numbers, key contacts and 24/7 medical emergency numbers easily accessible.

### 13.9 in-country media or communications opportunities

During the visit, the Interplast team may have arranged for a visit from, or to, the Australian Government's Embassy or High Commission, or with local media, to promote the visit and the work of Interplast. We request your support in facilitating this, and in representing our programs. The Interplast team in Melbourne can provide briefing or speaking notes if required, and we request that you advise us of any local publications or media. Please ensure you are aware of key information regarding your particular visit, including how it was funded, so that this can be acknowledged if required.

### 13.10 Visit schedule

The actual schedule of your visit will depend on the nature and scope of the program you are a part of. For a clinical visit, this may include an initial outpatients/consultation clinic day, followed by several days of operating, or for a teaching-only visit, this may include delivery of lectures and workshops. Many visits are a combination of the above. A detailed schedule will be provided to the team ahead of departure, including details of any teaching which has been requested, so team members can prepare accordingly. Visit schedules will be developed in consultation between Interplast, the team leader (and other team members), and local partners. The visit may also include some pre-arranged social and non-clinical opportunities, including meeting with local clinical administrators, representatives of the Australian Government (e.g. Ambassadors/High Commissioners), or with local community groups or donor representatives.





### 13.11 Clinical guidelines

For clinical visits, Interplast volunteers need to adhere to Interplast's Clinical Guidelines, which are provided separately to Interplast volunteers ahead of mobilisation.

### 13.12 In-country debrief

During the visit there may be an opportunity for Interplast volunteers to have a debrief with national hospital counterparts, a representative from the Ministry of Health, Australian Government/DFAT post and/or other relevant parties. The purpose of the debriefing is to promote relationship building and sharing of information. This is an opportunity to discuss visit outcomes, recommendations regarding staffing, training, equipment and hospital operation. This discussion is to be documented in the end of trip report.

### 13.13 Returning home

Team travelling with an Interplast medical equipment kit will be met on arrival in Melbourne by a member of the Interplast team, who will assist with the equipment and accompany you to meet the courier, who will return it to the Interplast warehouse. You'll be advised prior to your travel home who will be meeting you.

For team members who live in other cities, your travel will be arranged back to your home destination. In some rare instances, you may be asked to travel via Melbourne to assist with the equipment kit, if there is not sufficient members of the team already travelling to Melbourne.





## 14. Debriefing and reporting

### 14.1 Post program debriefing

Within a week following your arrival home, you'll be contacted by Interplast's International Program Coordinator for a post-program debrief over the phone (or face to face if you'd prefer). This debrief is an opportunity for you to provide any general or urgent feedback, and will include a series of questions/prompts from the Interplast team member to ensure we gather all the information we need. It's also an opportunity for you to raise any concerns, and to ensure Interplast is aware of any potential or actual incidents which may have arisen during the trip (including clinical incidents, incidents relating to local partnerships, or to the safety of vulnerable people). As this is a 1:1 debrief, you are able to provide feedback which you may not want to include in the broader team reporting. If you have any concerns that you'd like to escalate to the Director of International Programs or Interplast CEO, you can advise the Program Coordinator of this, and they will facilitate this as soon as possible.

### 14.2 Formal program reporting

It is a requirement of volunteer participation in all Interplast programs that all volunteers will contribute to required program reporting in a timely manner. Reporting for programs varies depending on the type and location of a program, but generally involves a team report (to which all team members contribute), as well as patient data, and reporting around training outcomes.

Interplast volunteers are also responsible for collecting feedback from local partners and trainees. Interplast staff will advise of reporting requirements prior to departure, provide the necessary templates and forms, and will follow up with you on return.

Information collected from program reports is utilised in many ways – for reporting of clinical outcomes, to provide feedback back to local partners, and to ensure that challenges, successes, and lessons learned are incorporated into ongoing program planning. Importantly, it is also used for reporting back to Interplast's donors, to 'tell the story' of our achievements in communications materials (newsletters, annual reports, social media etc). While Interplast understands that reporting can take additional time and effort, it is crucial to ensure that our programs can continue into the future, and is absolutely necessary for our broader governance and compliance requirements.



### 14.3 Sharing the Interplast story

Our volunteers are some of our greatest ambassadors – who better to tell our supporters the story of what we achieve, than those who are delivering our programs on the ground. As such, we strongly encourage and support our volunteers to share the Interplast story – whether this be through their own workplace or communities, in their local media, or through groups such as Rotary or Lions. Our volunteers, sharing their story, is also an excellent way of promoting our work to other potential volunteers. Interplast’s Fundraising, Marketing and Communications team can support and assist with this, including through providing materials to share, key talking points and other assistance. From time to time, you may be contacted by the Interplast team and asked to present on our behalf at a function or event. If you initiate or are asked to be involved in an event to represent Interplast, please ensure that the office team are aware of this.



### 14.4 Incident reporting

Any near-misses or actual incidents which take place in the course of delivery of an Interplast activity must be reported to Interplast (and in some cases, others). This includes clinical adverse events (and near-misses), as well as suspected or actual breaches of Interplast’s Child Protection Policy and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy. It also includes incidents relating to the safety and wellbeing of volunteer team members.

Incident reporting forms are available in the Team Manual (hard copy) and provided electronically to the team ahead of the mobilisation. It is essential that these are completed with as much detail as possible, as quickly as possible. Interplast has an obligation to report certain incidents (including those related to the safeguarding of vulnerable people) to its accreditation body within 5 days.

Depending on the nature and severity of incidents, these may also be reported to Interplast’s Clinical Governance Committee and/or Board of Directors, as well as local (in-country) personnel, local (in-country) Police/authorities and Australian authorities including the Police and AHPRA.

### 14.5 Feedback and complaints process

Interplast has a Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy (which is an internal policy for Interplast personnel, including Volunteers), as well as a Complaints Handling Policy (of which scope includes local partners, supporters and the general public). These policies clearly outline Interplast’s processes related to feedback and complaints handling.

Interplast has a number of tools available (including banners and flyers) for volunteer teams to ensure are displayed during the delivery of a program in-country, which explain, in appropriate language, the rights and expectations of clinical beneficiaries and local partners, and how they can provide feedback or make a complaint to Interplast if required.

Complaints regarding someone involved in Interplast’s programs can be lodged by phone, email, letter, or in-person:

**Interplast Complaints Handling Officer**  
**Interplast Australia & New Zealand**  
**RACS Building, 250-290 Spring Street**  
**East Melbourne, VIC 3002**

**Phone:** +61 3 7042 5460

**Email:** [admin@interplast.org.au](mailto:admin@interplast.org.au)

In general, complaints and grievances will be overseen by the Interplast CEO, with other personnel involved as required. If the complaint or grievance relates to the Interplast CEO, it will be escalated to a Board Director or President.

If the complaint relates to child protection or safeguarding of vulnerable people, please refer to the incident reporting process outlined on in the Interplast Child Protection Policy.

## 15. Safety and security

Interplast activities are delivered in countries where the socio-political environment may change unexpectedly or there are risks of natural disasters. By virtue of working in international environments, volunteers are exposed to varying degrees of risk to personal safety and security.

The safety and security of Interplast volunteers is paramount. It is important that you are informed of the safety and security situation in the country you are being mobilised to and that you adhere to and any security directives provided, in order to prevent or manage any security issues that may arise.

### 15.1 Travel advice

Interplast has engaged AIG Travel Guard, as part of its travel and health insurance policy package, to provide a range of comprehensive resources to volunteers to prepare them ahead of travel. This includes access to detailed country reports, outlining security, health and other risks, local contact points and access to a number of security training modules which you can undertake to prepare. Country-specific reports will be provided directly to volunteers as part of their mobilisation preparation, and can also be accessed through the AIG Travel Guard website portal. The AIG Travel Guard website and phone application also have current updates on each country.

Prior to departure and during your deployment, you are required to be updated on the current security advice for your travel destination and sign up for travel alerts via:

- For Australian travellers, this advice can be found at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Smart traveller website: <https://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/>
- For New Zealand volunteers, this advice can be found at the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade's Safe Travel website: <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz>

On occasion and at times of heightened security, you may be asked to restrict your movements, avoid travel to 'Do not travel' zones, check-in your location or abide by a curfew. In case of an emergency, you may need to be relocated or evacuated; you must follow all security directives.

### 15.2 Additional security measures for higher risk countries

For higher security risk locations, volunteers are required to complete a mandatory security briefing session upon arrival, travel in secure transport organised by Interplast, and adhere to other requirements as relevant to that location and the security setting. There may be a curfew or 'do not travel' locations identified. There may also be additional requirements. For example, the team leader may be required to purchase a local SIM card and provide this number to the local security provider. The mobilisation team will provide you with an overview of these additional security and safety requirements prior to departure. For deployments to higher-risk security locations, please also refer to the Country Security Plan which will be provided to all volunteers electronically ahead of deployment, and will be available in hard copy in the Team Manual.



### 15.3 Insurance

Interplast program participants, including staff and volunteers will be covered by a comprehensive travel insurance policy including access to 24/7 medical and emergency assistance via AIG. The Travel and Health Insurance policy provides comprehensive worldwide insurance cover for all volunteers for the duration of your overseas deployment. You will be sent a copy of the insurance policy prior to deployment.

The insurance covers the following items:

- Personal accident and sickness
- Medical and additional expenses and cancellation and curtailment expenses
- Kidnap and ransom/extortion cover
- Personal accident and sickness
- Hijack and detention
- Search and rescue expenses
- Emergency assistance
- Loss of deposits
- Baggage, electronic equipment and money
- Alternative employee/Resumption of assignment expenses
- Personal liability – Rental vehicle excess waiver
- Extra territorial workers compensation
- Missed transport connection
- Political and natural disaster evacuation

Please refer to the AIG insurance policy document for a comprehensive list of inclusions and exclusions in the insurance policy. Please read this document carefully to ensure it meets your needs, if not, you may want to organise additional insurance coverage. Please note that training or participating in professional sports and flying or engaging in aerial activities (other than as a passenger in an aircraft licensed to carry passengers) are not covered by the policy. Note that there are specific exclusions and inclusions related to COVID-19, which are outlined in the policy, and also summarised within Interplast's Program Activity Participant Protocol which you are required to read and sign as part of your preparation.

Please note that any accompanying persons not involved in delivery of the Interplast program are not covered by this policy.

For the purpose of maintaining your safety and security, personal information such as your name, email, passport number and phone number may be shared with a case manager at AIG when required. This is to ensure we can assist you if you require medical or security support during your deployment. Confidentiality will be maintained.

### 15.4 24/7 Support and emergency procedures

Interplast's travel and health insurance provider, AIG, provides an emergency 24/7 support service while you are travelling and overseas – including for medical assistance (including medical care, monitoring, evacuation and referrals), security assistance (including safety advisories, evacuation assistance and 24/7 response) and travel assistance (including to help with lost/stolen luggage, travel documents, consular assistance, interpreting and emergency cash access). Full details of this are provided to volunteers prior to departure.

As part of pre-departure preparation, volunteers should download the AIG Travel Assistance App (Apple and Android) on your smartphone, and register yourself using Interplast's policy number (2300111692). After you register you can also access the full AIG Travel Guard Assistance website, using the same login credentials. The app can be used to call for assistance, locate nearby medical providers, and other tools and services.

The emergency contact number is:

**+60327725641** (reverse charge/collect).

You can also email: **auassistance@aig.com**.

While your first point of contact in an emergency situation should be AIG, volunteers must also advise Interplast as soon as possible of any incident.

### 15.5 Personal safety

As an Interplast volunteer, you must take responsibility for your own personal safety and security. You have a duty to minimise risks to yourself and your team. It is important to follow these safety guidelines. If in doubt you may speak to AIG for profile specific security and safety advice.

- Be cautious, do not engage in conduct that puts yourself or others at risk. If you are in doubt, speak to your volunteer team members and trusted local partners for advice.
- Keep your personal belongings close to you and do not leave them unattended.
- Be aware of culturally appropriate behaviour. Research the local laws, customs, religious beliefs and cultural. Smarttraveller is a great resource. You will also receive a Pre-Trip Travel Advisory from AIG with local information and have access the Assistance App.
- Avoid sensitive political or religious discussions.
- Avoid travelling alone in unfamiliar settings, if you must travel to an unfamiliar location after dark ensure you are accompanied by others.
- Avoid larger gatherings, crowds, protests.
- Be cautious of displays of wealth, do not carry large sums of money with you.
- Apply situational awareness techniques e.g. If you need to withdraw money from an ATM, ensure you do so in daylight, avoid dimly lit locations.
- Do not engage in excessive alcohol consumption, as this will affect your ability to notice warning signs of impending trouble and can increase the likelihood of being targeted for robbery or assault.
- Always carry some form of identification with you and have a copy of your passport, visa and other important documentation with you in case you they are misplaced or stolen. Email a copy to yourself and leave a copy with someone you trust.
- Always keep your team informed of your movements and your expected time of return.
- Report all incidents or events (including near misses) that may affect security and safety in your location.
- If you see a road accident, please do not stop to provide assistance. This presents a risk both to yourself and others you are travelling with. In some countries we work in, a vehicle accidents is staged so that passengers exit their vehicles for a robbery or hijacking to occur.
- If at any stage you have any concerns about your own safety and security, please discuss them with the Volunteer Team Leader and/or Interplast staff.

If you have concerns prior to departure, please also discuss with the Interplast staff team.

## 16. Health and wellbeing

### 16.1 Pre-existing medical conditions

If you have any pre-existing medical issues, you are required to obtain a 'fit to travel' letter from your GP prior to departure, and provide this to Interplast as an attachment to the 'Volunteer Health Information Form' that all volunteers must complete prior to deployment. If you need to make an insurance claim, you will need to provide this letter to the insurer. With a 'fit to travel' letter, you will be best positioned if you need to submit an insurance claim to be considered. Ensure you take enough of any medication you need. Keep medication in the original packaging and carry them in your hand luggage along with the accompanying script.

### 16.2 Vaccinations

It is the responsibility of volunteers to arrange advice about and obtain the appropriate vaccinations prior to departure. Interplast provides each volunteer with general health facts of their country of destination, however, Interplast staff are not able to provide specific medical advice. Interplast recommends that all volunteers speak to their GP ahead of each program, or seek advice from a travel doctor.

Importantly, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to ensure they have obtained all compulsory vaccines for their country of deployment.

### 16.3 Deployment self-care

It is common to experience stress especially when working overseas in a different environment and without your usual support mechanisms. It is important to recognise when you are stressed and implement your own personal stress management techniques. Take care of yourself during your deployment; this may include healthy eating, maintaining exercise (if safe to do so), drinking safe/clean water, limiting the use of alcohol and when possible, get adequate rest.

### 16.4 Medical assistance during deployment

Should you have a medical enquiry, you can call AIG Travel Guard assistance line. AIG Travel Guard have doctors on call 24 hours a day who will assist you with your enquiry and can provide referrals to appropriate medical facilities if required. If you experience a specific illness during your deployment, you can also obtain advice on the best way to manage your medical condition in the location you are working in. It is recommended that you call AIG Travel Guard early in the course of your illness.

### 16.5 Standard and transmission based precautions

Please ensure you are up to date with the [Victorian Health Department's infection control – standard and transmission-based precautions](#) which outlines infection prevention and control using a risk management approach to minimise or prevent the transmission of infection. The two-tiered approach of standard and transmission-based precautions provides a high level of protection to patients, healthcare workers and other people in healthcare settings. There is a section on hand hygiene which mentions the five moments for hand hygiene developed by the World Health Organization. All Australian clinical staff annually undertake mandatory hand hygiene training with Hand Hygiene Australia (HHA) and should have a current Hand Hygiene certificate. Please ensure your training is current prior to departure – Interplast requires that you provide a copy of your current hand hygiene certificate.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) requirements are also outlined in the link above, and cover the correct use of gloves, gowns and aprons, masks, eye protection and face shields for both standard and transmission precautions. For perioperative nurses, please ensure you are up to date with the ACORN Clinical Standards Infection Prevention. You should have access to the latest standards, including Infection Prevention, and



should meet this clinical standard which helps prevent cross-contamination or the transmission of infection to patients, the health care worker, and the environment.

## 16.6 Occupational exposure: Blood and body fluid exposure management process

Please ensure you make yourself aware of the Interplast's process. As with standard clinical practice, every care must be taken to avoid contact with patients' blood and body fluids. (The protocol for 'needle-stick' injury and/or exposure to infectious materials will be included in the PEP (Post Exposure Prophylactic) kit and packed with Interplast's equipment kit).



## 17. Reporting requirements and clinical governance

The visiting Interplast team and the host country clinical team have a responsibility to ensure any activity adheres to the relevant requirements set by Interplast.

You will be provided with further information about the reporting and clinical governance requirements by Interplast during the activity/trip planning and preparation stage including reporting and checklist templates.

Overview of the reporting and clinical governance requirements:

- Visiting Team Terms of Reference – based on the host Ministry of Health's or local partners' request, Interplast staff, in conjunction with the volunteer team leader, will facilitate the completion of an activity plan outlining the trip objectives in cooperation with the host country's clinical representative. This document outlines the activity/trip objectives, patient screening requirements and postoperative care requirements and reporting requirements. This document is a mandatory requirement of host governments in most of Interplast's partner countries.
- Surgical safety checklist (for clinical visits) – this checklist promotes the Australian and New Zealand standards for patient care and has been adapted from the World Health Organisation's (WHO) checklist (2009). This is to be used by all Interplast teams if one is not available in-country. It covers patient consent and surgical safety requirements for patient screening (preoperative and postoperative). This checklist is to be completed for each patient and left in the patients in-country file.
- Operation and consultation records (for clinical visits) – the Interplast team will be responsible for correctly and completely filling in the operation and consultation records during their deployment. The records capture data that is integral to the monitoring of the program, as well as capturing the specifics of each patient. Both records include data disaggregated by age and gender which is required for effective monitoring of Interplast programs and specifically for assessing how programs are reaching marginalised and vulnerable individuals.
- End of trip report – the end of trip report covers all key quantitative and qualitative reporting data required to assess the activity outputs and outcomes. The Interplast team is required to collect data on patients during the visit for monitoring and evaluation purposes, such as assessing possible program impacts and reviewing gender equity across the program. It is the responsibility of the VMT Team Leader to ensure this information is kept confidential throughout the visit and to ensure the end of trip report is satisfactorily completed before submission to the Interplast staff team within two weeks of returning home.
- Incident & Adverse Event report – the Incident report covers off the necessary information for when an adverse event occurs as a result of any clinical intervention provided by the visiting team. The Interplast volunteer team leader is required to immediately report any adverse events and follow up with in-country team ten days after trip completion to discuss any post-operative care queries and to be informed of any adverse events that occurred after the visiting team departed the host country. You will be provided with the adverse events report in your pre-departure email. This report should also be used for any incidents involving the Interplast volunteer team, or concerns related to vulnerable people, including children).



# Thank you.

Interplast would like to thank you once again for your commitment as a volunteer on an Interplast overseas program.

We value your contribution to our vision of quality and accessible surgical care, for all.

We hope you travel safely and look forward to hearing from you upon your return.





## Need to know more?

If you need more information or have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us:



[www.interplast.org.au](http://www.interplast.org.au)



+61 3 7042 5460



[contactus@interplast.org.au](mailto:contactus@interplast.org.au)

