

# Director of Clinical Services Meeting

## Réunion des directeurs des services cliniques

SPC/HEALTH/DCS/Virtual Meeting

Information Paper N° 11

### **BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP IN PACIFIC ISLANDS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES**

16 – 17 August 2023, Time: 12.00-3.00pm FJ Time; virtual meeting



#### **Pacific Paediatric Association (PPA) Meeting Report**

##### **PPA Executive Committee Members (2023-2025)**

- President – Dr Ilisapeci Vereti Tuibeqa (Fiji)
- Secretary – Dr Ashvini Krishna (Fiji)
- Treasurer- Dr Miriama Thaggard (Fiji)
- Executive Committee – Dr Asena Tuiketeti (Fiji), Dr Thyna Orelly (Vanuatu), Dr Steven Lumasa (Solomon Is), Dr Mele Pomale (Tonga)

## 1. BACKGROUND

The Pacific Paediatric Association (PPA) was established in 2012 by Paediatricians in the Pacific with the mission to advance health and wellbeing of children in the Pacific Region. The collegial network of Pacific Paediatricians, and support of our sponsors, made possible the Pacific Paediatric Association's Biennial Conference that took place in Fiji from April 20<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.

With the conference theme of: "Building Child Health Capacity in the Pacific" the PPA was able to advocate for and highlight regional child health priorities including the importance of the first 1000 days of life, early childhood development, child protection, opportunities for child health research, building team resilience and developing training/career and research pathways for Pacific doctors and allied health professionals aspiring to a career in child health.

With the support of the major sponsors, the vision of the committee, which was to bring together evidence based, with up-to-date scientific knowledge on the above critical areas and to facilitate collaborations between government and non-government organizations future plans, was made a reality.

### Objectives

With the main aim of facilitating exchange of knowledge and build collaborative networks between Pacific Paediatricians and overseas colleagues, the PPA sought to:

1. Advocate for the rights and needs of children and young people in the Pacific.
2. Support development of services for children and young people in the Pacific region.
3. Strengthen training and research opportunities for Pacific Paediatricians and trainees.

### Participants

This conference was much larger than the inaugural conference held in 2018. With a hybrid set-up, a total of seventy-eight individuals from 10 countries registered for the conference. The face-to-face event was attended by seventy-two people and included Pacific paediatricians and trainees; nursing, public and allied health colleagues, partner/sponsor representatives; key Fiji Ministry of Health personnel; and child health researchers from Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand. Due to work pressures and an influenza epidemic in Samoa, many Pacific colleagues were not able to attend in person and were able to attend the meeting virtually.

The table below lists the number of registered participants by country.

Country	Number of registered participants
Vanuatu	1
Tonga	2
Solomon Islands	1
Samoa	1
Nauru	1
Kiribati	1
Fiji	31
East Timor	1
Aotearoa-New Zealand	16
Australia	15
Online/virtual	6

### Pre-Conference

To value-add to the PPA Biennial Conference, a 3-day Child Protection workshop for nurses and doctors from 7/13 Pacific Island Countries was conducted to both inform and build capacity to recognize, report and respond to aspects of Child Protection. This training was facilitated by Dr Dimitra Tzioumi, Child Protection Specialist Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, NSW; and Dr Reapi Mataika, Paediatric ICU, SCUH, QLD, Australia. A report of the Child Protection Training is attached as Annex 1.

### PPA Conference Proceedings

The 3-day conference began with the Fijian National Anthem, a dedication conducted by Dr Lisi Tikoduadua and a traditional Fijian welcome ceremony and dances that set the tone for the conference. A copy of the conference program is attached as Annex 2 and daily rapporteur summaries can be found here [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-734WU\\_SFi8CNUO6W23OPsnAUB4xXT2R?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-734WU_SFi8CNUO6W23OPsnAUB4xXT2R?usp=share_link) But below is an overview of the conference proceedings.

1. Day 1 focused on Regional Child Health Priorities and Pacific Research
2. Day 2 focused on Enhancing child health, child protection and Aotearoa Indigenous and Pacific research.
  - a. The PPA AGM, to the elections of the new Executive Committee was held at the end of Day 2. The new executive committee of PPA is listed as Annex 3.
  - b. Day 2 concluded with the Conference Dinner and Awards night for the best research presentations and featured a surprise fashion show by emerging local fashionist, Epeli Tuibeqa with his recently known "Kuiviti" Collection. A list of awards and awardees can be found as Annex 4.

- c. At the Conference Dinner, the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services' Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Clinical Practice Guideline (NICU CPG) 2023 was launched by Dr Owen Sinclair, President-elect of the Aotearoa-New Zealand Paediatric Society.
3. Day 3 focused on Building Resilience and training pathways. This included presentations and panel discussions by regional Pacific child health partners and patient-advocacy groups.
    - a. The Conference concluded with an "Isa lei" cocktails on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, which was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed.

#### **Conference Presentation Awards**

- Best Poster – Dr Joseph Tigarea
- Best Trainee Research – Dr Ashvini Krishna
- Best Senior PhD Research – Dr Joseph Kado
- Best Junior PhD Research- Dr Sainimere Boladuadua
- Best Team Research – RHD Programme ( Jyoti Mani, Ilikena Malo, Jima Kailawadoko)
- Best Child Advocacy Award – Erini Tokarua

## **2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

### **2.1. Next PPA Biennial Conference**

Most participants expressed great interest and anticipation of the next bigger and better scientific conference. The newly elected PPA executives requested that the next symposium be still held in Fiji to consolidate the Association further, before taking it to other Pacific venues, and this motion was supported by attendees.

### **2.2. Concluding remarks**

With the support of our sponsors, attendees and organizers agreed that the conference was an *overwhelming success*. It created a platform for the Pacific Paediatricians to extend networking with regional partners to improve the clinical and research capacity of the child health workforce in the Pacific.

## **3. CHALLENGES**

The newly elected PPA Executive Committee have been set a challenging agenda by members and attendees to build on the success of this conference. Some of the key agenda items include:

1. To facilitate and advocate for improved coordination between partner-collaborator institutions, professional organizations and Pacific Ministries of Health to develop local capacity, provide "niche" training and training opportunities to optimize and extend current child services.

2. To advocate for, promote and facilitate research partnerships between the Pacific countries and partners to respond to locally identified child health research priorities.
3. To advocate for improved capacity building opportunities for Pacific doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to meet the demands of the region.

#### 4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

##### 4.1. Recommendations for governments:

- Support for PPA
- Support for Child Health initiatives in the region

##### 4.2. Recommendations for development partners:

- Partnership of donor countries, agencies, sponsors and the PPA collaborating with Pacific Ministries of Health to better equip our people to meet the child health demands/needs and trainings in the Pacific.
- Partnership within countries for PPA goals

These challenges can only be achieved by partnership with donor countries, agencies, sponsors and the PPA collaborating with Pacific Ministries of Health to better equip our people to meet the child health demands of the Pacific.



Fiji Paediatric Clinical Service