




PCRN

Pacific Civil
Registrars Network

February 2024

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In-person PCRN meeting

The Pacific Civil Registrars Network will gather in Nadi, Fiji, 26-28 March 2025.

We have registrations from most Pacific countries and over the next week or so those registered will receive travel details.

We also welcome attendance from business and development partners.

If you wish to attend and haven't already registered, please email jeffm@spc.int. More information is available at <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2025/03/pacific-civil-registrars-network-meeting>.

We wish to acknowledge the following business partners who are supporting this event:



Bloomberg Data for Health invests in Pacific

This year will see a significant uplift in the work to strengthen civil registration in our region. This will be enabled through funding from the Bloomberg Data for Health Initiative to the Pacific Community – and includes funding for PCRN activities and for some countries to attend the UNESCAP CRVS Ministerial Conference in Bangkok later in the year.

Also included is funding to fully implement OpenCRVS in three countries – Niue, Cook Islands and one other to be selected. This funding allows OpenCRVS to build marriage, divorce, name change and interoperability modules and add them to the current core platform [already implemented in Niue](#).



Certify Hope: Achieving universal birth registration in Australia

A new report by UNICEF Australia has revealed that thousands of Australian children are going unregistered at birth, limiting their access to services.

The "Certify Hope: Rights from the Start" report estimates that 12,600 children each year are not officially registered. This lack of documentation can hinder access to education, healthcare, and other essential services.

UNICEF Australia has identified several factors contributing to this issue, including parental age, Indigenous background, remote location, and socioeconomic disadvantage.

To address this problem, UNICEF Australia is partnering with Pathfinders to raise awareness, simplify the birth registration process, and advocate for government policies that prioritize universal birth registration.

Please click [here](#) for the report.

Biological girl's birth certificate - 'sex: male' forever

A couple in the UK have been left heartbroken after their newborn baby girl was given the wrong sex on her birth certificate — an error they have been told cannot be fixed.

First-time parents Grace Bingham and her partner Ewan Murray registered their first child, Lilah, at the Sutton-in-Ashfield Registration Office in Nottinghamshire last week, [The Guardian](#) reported.

Papua New Guinea - new law and national ID for electoral process reform

Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, James Marape, has commended Parliament for passing the Civil and Identity Registry Bill, which aims to create a comprehensive registry for births, deaths, marriages, and other vital records. This new law is expected to significantly enhance the accuracy and efficiency of population data collection. The Prime Minister highlighted that the new registry will help address issues such as border security, transnational crime, and law enforcement by providing better access to specific identity information. With improved identity records, the government aims to better manage public services, including education, healthcare, and financial processes, ultimately contributing to the social well-being of the population. Read full article [here](#).

Papua New Guinea has already made significant progress in birth registration, increasing the number of processed birth certificates from 26,000 in 2023 to nearly 78,000 in 2024. UNICEF Papua New Guinea is working to improve birth registration across all 22 provinces. This includes providing mobile registration kits, training staff, and supporting the national CRVS committee. Read UNICEF's blog post [here](#).

Also, PNG is taking significant steps to reform its electoral process. A key component of this reform is the implementation of biometric voting and the strengthening of the National Identification (NID) system.

The government aims to issue NID cards to all citizens by 2025 and introduce biometric voting technology by 2027. Click [here](#) for full article.



'This is my Christmas miracle'

A US man meets his biological family 75 years after being adopted - ['This is my Christmas miracle': Man meets his biological family 75 years after being adopted | RNZ News](#)

Fiji presents at high level event on unlocking the power of civil registration data for effective governance

On the sidelines of the 9th Committee on Statistics in Bangkok, H.E. Siromi Turaga, Minister for Justice, Fiji presented on activities to improve the CRVS system, these include the introduction of financial incentives to encourage timely registration for families registering births and deaths and additional support offered to families during the first year of school.

It was noted that mobile registration units have significantly improved access to CRVS services for remote communities. In addition to that, an Inequality Assessment of the CRVS system has been conducted, leading to recommendations addressing challenges faced by indigenous populations to ensure inclusivity. This is now leading to tailored approaches for these communities. As a result, Fiji reported a 500% improvement in CRVS registrations, with more than half of these being delayed registrations beyond the legally stipulated one-year period.

Vanuatu Adopts National ID as Universal Patient Identifier Across All Provinces

The National ID in Vanuatu is being used as the Hospital Universal Identifier: a single, unique identifier that will replace the various provincial hospital patient numbers currently used across the six provinces. This streamlined approach aims to standardize patient identification and ensure that health records are consistent and easily accessible, regardless of where patients receive care within the country.

The Civil Registry and Identity Management (CRIM) issues the National ID during official registration, with Civil Registrars stationed in provincial hospitals often assigning the ID at birth. In most cases, babies are registered and provided with their National ID before being discharged with their mothers, ensuring they have a universal identifier from birth.

Additional registration points include the Provincial Civil Registration offices, the CRIM National Head Office, and schools at the time of a child's first enrolment. This national initiative enables continuity of care and supports efficient healthcare delivery by allowing patients to be identified uniformly across all provinces. (Photo credit: CRVS Vanuatu)



Pacific's most popular baby names in 2024

An unofficial list of the most popular Pacific languages baby names for 2024 in New Zealand have been revealed, with Kaia topping the girls' list and Malakai leading the boys. Using data from the Department of Internal Affairs, the news agency focused on names associated with Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. [Pacific's most popular baby names in 2024 | RNZ News](#)

New global data on birth registration

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) just released a report showcasing the latest global update on birth registration.

The report, titled "The Right Start in Life: Global Levels and Trends in Birth Registration," reveals that while global birth registration rates have increased from 75% in 2019 to 77% today, millions of children still remain unregistered and invisible to government systems. Over 150 million children under five remain unregistered, leaving them vulnerable and excluded from essential services. Approximately 50 million of these live in Asia and the Pacific.

The report emphasized the need for continued investment in civil registration systems and targeted interventions to reach marginalized communities, ensuring that every child, regardless of their background or location, has a legal identity. Please [click](#) here for the report.



Passport index shows Pacific rankings

In the annual ranking of passports, New Zealand is [5th equal \(able to visit 190 countries\)](#) and Australia 6th equal (189 countries). The Solomon Islands passport has access to 134 countries; Samoa and Tonga have access to 131 destinations; while the Marshall Islands has access to 129.

Tuvalu is in equal 41st place with access to 128 countries, while Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau can visit 124 countries visa-free.

Further down the list is Vanuatu with access to 92 countries; Fiji with 90; Nauru, 89 and Papua New Guinea, 87.

[Passport index shows Pacific Island nations' rankings | RNZ News](#)

New round of funding announced

The Bloomberg Philanthropies: Data for Health Initiative's *Global Grants Program* (GGP) is launching a new round of funding for projects that strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems and promote the analysis and use of high-quality data for public health policymaking.

Eligible applicants include ministries of health and relevant agencies in low- and middle-income countries that have not previously received funding from the Data for Health Initiative.

Candidates can apply for grant periods of up to 15 months with a maximum award amount of \$100,000. The first phase of applications must be submitted between 27 January - 17 February 2025 for screening. Please see [here](#) for details and links to apply.



Global Grants Program



Upcoming meetings:

- **CRVS Gender Data Analysis training** - 3 to 5 March, Nadi, Fiji
- **ANACOD training for Cause of Death statistics** - 6 to 8 March, Nadi, Fiji
- **Pacific Civil Registrars Network meeting** - 26 to 28 March, Nadi, Fiji
- **Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific**, including Senior Officials sessions - confirmed dates 24-26 June, Bangkok,

Thailand

About PCRN

PCRN is an independent network of Civil Registrars in the Pacific, established in 2014 for sharing knowledge, lessons learned and good practice in Civil Registration among practitioners. We foster peer-relationships and support in tackling common challenges affecting the implementation of CRVS systems in the region. We are key participant in the implementation of the [Action Plan for Pacific CRVS](#) and the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Framework on CRVS.

Before the pandemic we met annually (sometimes more often). Significant conferences were held around the topics of Disaster Planning and Response, IT Systems and Cloud Technology, Legal Identity and Security and Improving the Quality of Mortality Data. Our most recent in-person meeting was in March 2023 - [see report](#) - and we met online 31 July 2024 -[event page](#).

More information, including a copy of our strategic plan (needing updating) is available at <https://sdd.spc.int/pacific-civil-registrars-network-pcrn>.



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