

## Terms of Reference: Senior Clinical COVID-19 Response Adviser, Nauru

### Program / Location Background

**Duration:**

12 months with possible extension

**ARF Classification**

Discipline category C, level 3

**Supervisor/Manager:**

Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services with the day-to-day operations overseen by the Director of Medical Services

**Location:**

Yaren, Nauru

**Performance Management and Reporting Framework:**

The Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services

The Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security (CHS) was established in 2017 to implement the Australian Government's Health Security Initiative (HSI) for the Indo Pacific Region. CHS has since been absorbed by DFAT's Global Health Division.

The Initiative, which is funded through Australia's overseas aid program, aims to inform evidence-based planning, help prevent avoidable epidemics, strengthen early detection capacity, and support rapid, effective national and international outbreak responses. It does this by accelerating research on new drugs and diagnostics, expanding partnerships at the national, regional and global level to strengthen human and animal health systems, and deepening people-to-people linkages that build national and regional health security capacity.

Cardno International Development is supporting the implementation of several activities delivered as part of the HSI across the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

Commencing in 2021, Australia is assisting 18 countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific to access safe, effective and affordable COVID-19 vaccines through the Regional Vaccine Access and Health Security Initiative (VAHSI).

The Republic of Nauru faces significant health issues. There is a general picture of early death and high rates of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and diabetes. Endemic infectious diseases continue to pose a threat to health security with, for example, regular outbreaks of dengue fever. Tuberculosis is a persistent issue. Chronic diseases worsen vulnerability to communicable diseases.

The high rates of non-communicable and persistent infectious diseases are set within the context of a population with high expectations of access to quality health care services. Overseas Medical Referrals place a high burden on the Government's budget. Air links mean that Nauru is only a flight or two away from emerging regional and global health threats, including COVID-19. Low health system capacity limits Nauru's ability to respond to acute public health events and increases vulnerability to threats to its health security.

Australia has an enduring interest in promoting the health of the people of Nauru. Australia is working with Nauru to strengthen its health services and systems and to tackle NCDs. DFAT provides support to Nauru's health sector through bilateral, Pacific regional and global programs. All investments are guided by the Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response 2020-2022 which focuses on three areas: health security, stability and economic recovery. Nauru receives assistance for COVID vaccination through DFAT's CHS, including VAHSI.

In response to COVID-19, Australia has provided Nauru with testing cartridges, medical equipment, PPE, vaccine supplies, priority equipment and is seeking to continue technical advice via a COVID-19 Adviser supporting the Nauru COVID-19 Taskforce. Nauru's ability to tackle NCDs and the strength of its health system underpin Nauru's COVID-19 response. However, COVID-19 has constrained the Ministry of Health and Medical Services' (MHMS) ability to push forward non-COVID reforms and initiatives, with MHMS resources and effort diverted to respond to the pandemic.

### **Objectives of role**

The role of the Senior Clinical COVID-19 Response Adviser in Nauru is to provide ongoing clinical support and guidance for the care and treatment of COVID-19 patients and to build capacity of health workers, with a focus on critical care.

### **Duties & Responsibilities**

The Adviser will undertake the following activities in Nauru:

- Support the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) to implement prioritised key activities in the COVID-19 National Response Plan and the MHMS COVID-19 Clinical Management Guidelines that require clinical skills and input, with a focus on critical care
- Support regular evaluation of the clinical COVID-19 readiness and preparedness across all hospital/health departments
- In liaison with the Senior Public Health COVID-19 Response Adviser, identify any additional support needed for Nauru to undertake COVID-19 preparation and response activities under the COVID-19 National Response Plan and COVID-19 Clinical Management Guidelines, including additional technical assistance, training, including procurement of essential PPE, IPC materials, and medical equipment
- At all times seek to mentor and build capacity of medical and nursing staff, and other health and non-health workers as appropriate, and seek to ensure that inputs build wider health security and health system capacity beyond COVID-19
- Work closely with the Director of Nursing Standards and Policy and the Director of Training and Development to identify and develop training of local counterparts and developing of SOPs and systems to improve clinical management and critical care of patients
- Support the provision of COVID safe clinical care services' across acute care services, in consultation with the Director of Medical Services
- Provide advice and direct support to the Government of Nauru including, where required, supporting internal coordination within relevant government ministries, and external coordination with key development partners (such as Australia, WHO, SPC and other donors).

The terms of reference can be reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate, and a work plan developed and endorsed by Government of Nauru.

For formal line management, this position will report directly to the Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services with the day-to-day operations overseen by the Director of Medical Services.

**The individual will have the following skills:**

- A clinician with critical care expertise in the management of COVID-19 patients.
- Work effectively and proactively in a low-resource setting, across disciplines and at all levels.
- Engage respectfully and appropriately with senior national counterparts, including Cabinet Ministers.
- Communicate clearly and effectively in a cross cultural setting.
- Organise, make appropriate recommendations and facilitate effective decisions.
- Review and interpret published literature related to COVID-19 from reputable sources and lead health agencies, to guide policy decisions.

**Minimum requirements:**

- Medical degree in a relevant discipline and specialist qualifications desirable.
- Evidence of current registration with a recognised national health professional regulatory Board.
- Proven experience working as an accredited critical care doctor or registered nurse in the acute care setting or equivalent experience in health facilities.
- Proven experience supporting senior government officials, working in a multi-disciplinary context, to bring together cohesive, implementable policy and program initiatives.
- Excellent command/highly proficient in spoken and written English.
- Experience of working in the Pacific is preferred.