

# Improving legal frameworks to support birth and death registration

## SOLOMON ISLANDS



The Solomon Islands Government recognises the importance of CRVS and is making progress towards establishing a robust national system. Their vision is:

**“To improve the lives of Solomon Islanders through a robust, accessible and sustainable CRVS system that provides complete, timely information to support good public policy.**

This will be achieved through  
Ensuring the system is adequately resourced; Serving the entire country;  
**Supportive appropriate legislation;** and Standardised data collection.”

(2013 National Stakeholder meeting)

### CRVS in the Solomon Islands

Existing legislation requires both births and deaths to be registered, but access to registration in the Solomon Islands is very limited. Less than 25% of all births are registered, and only a very small proportion of deaths are formally registered.

The Solomon Islands currently have a parallel system, with legislation allowing local magistrates to complete a legal declaration for a birth or death. However, the information collected is not standardized between this and the formal registration processes, and no central collation or reconciliation of the data is undertaken.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services collects a count of births, and a “notification” of deaths through their monthly reporting system from health centres. However, medical certificates are only provided for deaths at the hospitals, although not all deaths in hospital have a medically certified cause of death.

*One of the key challenges for CRVS in the Solomon Islands has been access to registration – which has resulted in a parallel legal process operated through local magistrates*

### Access to registration is improving

In 2007, just 20 births were formally registered but by June 2014, more than 35,000 people legally had their birth registered.

15 additional “satellite service centers” in health facilities have been opened to provide more access to registration.



*Ongoing improvements in registration coverage require legislation that provides a supportive framework for a well-functioning Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system.*

### Assessment and Law Reform

- The Solomon Islands CRVS committee, with the support of BAG partners, undertook a comprehensive assessment of their CRVS system.
- The assessment identified a range of legal issues that may need reform.
- The national CRVS committee is working with the Law Reform Commission to review how legislation could be amended to improve CRVS.

#### Key legal issues included:

- the need for clear legislation making birth and death registration compulsory, and
- clarification of roles and responsibilities.

#### Other issues included:

- ensuring identity processes (such as elections and passports) are linked to birth and death registration.

**Next Steps:**  
Prioritization of improvements for a national CRVS improvement plan is scheduled for early 2015.

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