

# **Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Initiative Advisory Board**

**First Meeting 10 April 2013**

## **Meeting Report**

The first meeting of the Advisory Board for the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* initiative was held in Canberra on 10 April 2013. The meeting was chaired by AusAID Deputy Director General, James Batley. The Agenda for the meeting can be found at [here](#).

The Advisory Board is comprised of eminent Pacific Island women and men.

The Advisory Board's purpose is to provide advice on the strategic direction of the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* initiative. The Advisory Board reflects AusAID's commitment to a Pacific-led response to improving the opportunities for political, economic and social advancement of Pacific women. The members of the Advisory Board are also advocates on gender equality in the Pacific.

Members of the Advisory Board are: Ms Andie Fong Toy, Deputy Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; Dr Lawrence Kalinoe, Secretary Department of Justice and Attorney-General (PNG); Ms Jane Kesno, former head of the PNG Office for Women; Dr Jimmie Rodgers, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community; Reverend Seremia Lomaloma, Anglican Minister (Fiji); Hon Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, Minister of Justice and Courts Administration (Samoa); Ms Savina Nongebatu, immediate past Co-Chairperson of the Pacific Disability Forum; Ms Marilyn Tahī, Coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre; and Hon Maere Tekanene, Minister for Women, Community and Social Development (Kiribati). Ms Penny Williams, Australia's Global Ambassador for Women and Girls, is an observer to the Advisory Board. Dr Kalinoe and Ms Nongebatu sent their apologies for this meeting.

Profiles of Advisory Board members can be found [here](#)

Key outcomes of the meeting included:

### *Strategic Direction of the Initiative*

Members of the Advisory Board endorsed the strategic direction of the initiative and AusAID's approach to early implementation of activities. In doing so, the Advisory Board supported:

- The central importance of Pacific women and men, as individuals, groups and coalitions in driving indigenous change.
- The important role AusAID can play as a catalyst in supporting gender equality through extra financing of local efforts and improving the knowledge and evidence base for positive change.

## *Review of Implementation*

The Advisory Board noted the progress made since the initiative was launched at the 2012 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting. Board members welcomed AusAID's commitment to a country-led process through the allocation of the majority of funding to the country level. The Board also noted progress, in particular:

- The completed country plans for Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Cook Islands, which include activities to be funded this financial year. The Board noted that all country work plans would be completed by the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in September 2013.
- Multi-country activities, including:
  - the UN Women's improving produce markets program which will be expanded in PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu.
  - the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Program, launched in February, to support current Pacific women MPs, Pacific Parliaments and Parliamentary staff.
  - a Business Coalition for Women, which is being developing with the International Finance Corporation. The coalition will be a partnership between Australian and Pacific business to improve the environment for women as employees in Pacific business, as members of senior management and as business owners and operators.
- The piloting of a Pacific gender equality website to provide a knowledge exchange for innovation, evidence and analysis on gender equality in the Pacific.
- Further consultations with Pacific Island women and men on the regional design and management structure of the initiative in recognition of the importance of drawing from the experience of existing programs across the Pacific to effectively address gender inequality.

## *Important themes for implementing the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative.*

The Advisory Board agreed on important themes for the future work of the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative*:

- The importance of balancing the work of the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* initiative with both government and non-government organisations and individuals, recognising that all are required partners to effect sustained change.
- The need to work at the institutional level with governments; political and leadership groups including Councils of Chiefs; civil society groups; and membership-based organisations, including churches; and the private sector.
- The need to balance support for activities at the national and local levels.
- The importance of working with men across all focus areas of the initiative and as champions for change. Advisory Board members recommended that

AusAID revise the Key Result Area 2<sup>1</sup> of the Delivery Strategy to include a reference to men.

- The need to maintain the momentum generated at the 2012 Forum, including:
  - through effective reporting by countries on their progress against the Leaders' Declaration; and
  - AusAID widely communicating across the Pacific region on the progress of *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development*.
- The need to improve the evidence base on constraints to gender equality to ensure effective programming and to strengthen advocacy efforts, including on the economic impact of gender violence.
- The importance of measuring progress and identifying indicators of success, including measuring changes in community attitudes and perceptions of gender equality by women and men.

### *Advocacy Messages*

Members of the Advisory Board discussed their role as advocates and welcomed AusAID's commitment to support them in this role, including through regular updates and engagement with AusAID in Canberra and Australian High Commissions in the region. The Board considered a set of draft advocacy messages and supporting facts on: women's leadership; women's economic empowerment and reducing violence against women. The Board agreed on a core set of advocacy materials to be further developed over the coming two months.

### *Terms of Reference*

The Advisory Board discussed and endorsed the Terms of Reference (found [here](#)) for the Board.

### **Next Meeting**

It is proposed that the meeting will be held in October 2013, preferably in a Pacific Island country. The final date is to be confirmed.

### **Background**

Gender equality remains a significant development challenge for many countries in the world – including those in the Pacific. Nations are unable to reach their full potential when half of their citizens are excluded from important leadership and economic opportunities. But we know that change is possible.

*Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* is a 10 year, \$320 million initiative aiming to improve the political, economic and social opportunities of Pacific women. The initiative, announced by the Australian Prime Minister on 29 August at the Pacific Island Forum Leaders' meeting, will support gender equality through

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<sup>1</sup> KRA 2 is "Strengthened women's groups and coalitions for change."

partnerships with Pacific governments, civil society organisations, local advocacy groups, the private sector, and multilateral, regional and United Nations agencies.

The initiative will support Pacific-led activities in three key areas:

- Improving women's leadership and decision-making opportunities
- Increasing economic opportunities for women
- Reducing violence against women and expanding support services.