

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Initiative Advisory Board

Second Meeting 12 August 2014

Meeting Report

The second meeting of the Advisory Board for the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* initiative was held in Canberra on 12 August 2014. The meeting was chaired by DFAT First Assistant Secretary, Pacific Division, Kathy Klugman. The Agenda for the meeting can be found at [Attachment A](#).

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 *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women)*. The Advisory Board reflects Australia'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 Colin Tukuitonga, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community; Reverend Sereima 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 Meryl Tahi, Coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre; and Hon Maere Tekanene, Minister for Education (Kiribati). Ms Natasha Stott Despoja, Australia's Global Ambassador for Women and Girls, is an observer to the Advisory Board. Dr Tukuitonga was represented at the meeting by Mrs Fekitamoeloa TM 'Utoikamanu. Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa and Ms Meryl Tahi sent their apologies for this meeting.

Key outcomes of the meeting included:

Review of Implementation

Members of the Advisory Board acknowledged the work and early achievements of *Pacific Women*. They noted the size and scale of the program and Australia's commitment to working with women and men in the Pacific to make a difference. The Board heard an update on the achievements of the program and on areas where more work needs to be done. The need to capture and share best practices across countries and sectors was discussed.

- Country Plans completed for 10 countries and developing the second PNG country plan.
- All 14 PIF countries have received some form of support through *Pacific Women*.
- Country Plans for FSM, Palau and Tuvalu will be developed this year.

- Country and Regional Plans total \$57 million and include approximately 60 activities.
- Finalised the Design Document – approved at peer review in July 2014.

The Advisory Board noted that the outcomes which *Pacific Women* seeks to achieve over ten year are:

- Women, and women’s interests, are increasingly and effectively represented and visible through **leadership** at all levels of decision-making.
- Women have expanded **economic opportunities** to earn income and accumulate economic assets.
- **Violence against women** is reduced and survivors of violence have access to support services and to justice.
- Women in the Pacific will have a **stronger sense of their own agency**, supported by a changing legal and social environment and through increased access to the services they need.

The Board re-confirmed the opportunity and responsibility to use *Pacific Women* as a catalyst for transformative change. It was noted that behaviour change is required and that this will take a long time. It needs to start in schools, with changes to curriculum and teacher-training to ensure that young people are able to better manage respectful relationships.

The need to work closely with Pacific island governments and community-based organisations was re-affirmed as a principle of *Pacific Women* and a way of working that is necessary to ensure sustainability.

The Board endorsed the draft interactive map and DFAT will advise the members when it becomes live.

Important themes for implementing Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development.

Sorcery and Witchcraft

The Board discussed the impact of sorcery and witchcraft on women, families and communities. The need to respond on a number of levels, including through legislation, strengthening police response, advocacy and support for victims of violence was discussed. It was noted that while violence relating to accusations of sorcery and witchcraft was predominantly an issue in PNG, other countries in the region also need to address this problem. It is closely linked to other forms of violence against women, particularly community members not assisting individuals who are victimised because they fear the consequence of becoming involved.

Working with Churches and Faith Based Organisations

The Board discussed the need to work closely with faith based organisations noting that they are integral to Pacific life and represent an important mechanism to engage with the communities and to deliver and monitor programs to support women.

In the discussion, the need to ensure that appropriate language is used so that messages resonate with individuals, communities and government was highlighted.

Supporting women with disabilities

The Board discussed the needs of women with disabilities, noting that they are often the most marginalised persons in society. The work of the regional disability forum was applauded and progress at the regional level was also noted. However greater national action is required. There is a need to improve data collection and to ensure that women with disabilities are included, to better identify problems and to track progress.

The voice of young women

It was noted that there is a strong network of young women, which provides a significant resource and can act on behalf of young women in Pacific. The need for improved access to sexual health services and inclusive leadership were priorities for young women. The Pacific Young Women's Leadership Alliance has requested that young women be represented on the Board.

Advocacy Messages

Members of the Advisory Board discussed their role as advocates and welcomed DFAT's commitment to support them in this role, including through regular updates and engagement with DFAT in Canberra and Australian High Commissions in the region. The Board considered draft advocacy messages and supporting facts on: women's leadership; women's economic empowerment; reducing violence against women; peace and security; and responding to myths about gender relations. The Board suggested that the advocacy messages could be converted into pamphlets and other materials that can be used and potentially translated into Pacific languages for accessibility. DFAT will ensure that these materials do not duplicate existing information already in the public domain.

Priorities for the Board

The members agreed to identify advocacy opportunities, particularly during the 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon Day and International Women's Day. DFAT will develop a strategy for White Ribbon Day for Australian Missions in the Pacific and will ensure that Advisory Board members are linked to this strategy.

Targeting key regional meetings including the Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting and the Pacific Islands Forum, was also identified as a priority. There is a need to ensure quality reporting against the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration, and continuing engagement with Pacific Island Leaders.

There could also be an opportunity to engage with the Regional Disability Forum to be held in Solomon Islands in February 2015

It was also agreed that it would be useful for DFAT staff to meet with Board members when they travel within the Pacific.

Terms of Reference and Board Membership

The Advisory Board discussed and endorsed the revised Terms of Reference (refer Attachment B) for the Board. It was agreed to increase the membership to 12 to include women from the private sector and young women, and to hold meetings on an annual basis.

Next Meeting

It is proposed that the meeting will be held in April 2015, preferably in a Pacific Island country. The final date is to be confirmed. It was agreed that where possible Members who are not able to attend are able to participate via teleconferencing, but mindful of the importance of face-to-face Advisory Board meetings.