

**Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development
Advisory Board**

Sixth Meeting 2 August 2017 – Port Vila, Vanuatu

Meeting Report

The sixth meeting of the Advisory Board for Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu on 2 August 2017. The meeting was chaired by Ms Marilyn Tahī, Coordinator, Vanuatu Women's Centre. The meeting agenda is at Attachment A.

The objectives of Pacific Women 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 Advisory Board's purpose is to provide advice on the strategic direction of *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 membership of the Board and attendance at the meeting is at Attachment B.

The meeting commenced with an opening prayer by Board Member, Ms Maere Tekanene.

The Chair welcomed the Board members to Vanuatu with a special welcome to Hon Dr Sharman Stone to her first meeting since being appointed to the position of Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls.

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development update

The Board noted the progress of *Pacific Women* presented by Program Director, Tracey Newbury, including the increase in the number of women supported to take on leadership roles at the community, provincial and national level (19,515); number of women who have accessed crisis support services (48,324) and number of women who have accessed financial information and services (6,904).

The Board noted the range of achievements made over the last six months, including research undertaken in Fiji on sexual harassment in the workplace and recommended that the research be replicated in other Pacific countries, with a focus on the public service and tourism sectors. The methodology and definition of sexual harassment needs to be clearly outlined and the findings used to inform policy engagement and advocacy.

The Board agreed that positive change has been observed across the Pacific. There are more partnerships and coalitions and greater coordination between organisations. It was noted that many programs contribute to different achievements, for example the male advocates program of the Vanuatu Women's Centre has positively influenced changes in Church leaders.

The Board discussed the revised Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF). The Board noted the need for a clear narrative and to identify connections with other DFAT programs including health, education and law and justice.

The Board noted progress in developing the Knowledge Management System (KMS) which is a database to store and help analyse program monitoring reports. The Support Unit is working with implementing partners to improve reporting using the KMS.

Pacific Women Three Year Evaluation

The Board discussed the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. While accepting most of the recommendations, the Board disagreed with the recommendation to re-balance funding across the four intended outcomes, noting the importance of responding to violence against women (VAW) as an important mechanism for also achieving improvements in women's economic empowerment and leadership. It was also noted that VAW continued to be a priority in country plans and that few other organisations are providing financial support to this work.

The Board discussed whether the program should consider funding fewer implementing partners and to focus on a smaller number of priorities. It was agreed that the program needs to continue to engage widely, but ensure that stronger connections and cross-learnings are being made between organisations funded by *Pacific Women*. The Board also stressed that connections need to be clear between country plans and national gender policies and plans.

The Board endorsed the conclusion that the program needs to extend its outreach to disadvantaged groups but noted the need to be sensitive to country level attitudes to LGBTI issues to ensure that we minimise backlash against communities.

The Board noted the need for a strong communications strategy with a focus on increasing visibility of the program and its achievements. The Board requested an update on the progress of the website revamp and social media at the next meeting. The Board agreed that it is important for *Pacific Women* to be identified as a coherent program and requested that DFAT internally resolve the issue of whether activities are branded as funded by *Pacific Women*.

The Board considered that its role was clear and that Board members were appointed in their personal capacity and not as country representatives. However, the Board did agree that the role of Board members as advocates for the program should be better developed.

Case study from Vanuatu

Staff from the Australian High Commission in Vanuatu presented on gender equality programs funded through the aid program. The program has four objectives: Building resilient infrastructure and an environment for trade and economic opportunity, including in the productive sectors; Improving early education and essential health facilities; Improving community safety and resilience and Supporting cyclone recovery and reconstruction.

The Roadmaps and Research

The Board noted the progress of this work and commended both the Roadmap and Research Strategy. The Board requested that the links between brideprice and violence against women be added to the list of priority research to be funded.

Pipeline Planning

The Board endorsed the proposed new initiatives including: a comprehensive response to the lack of women in formal political processes; a multi-country approach to working with adolescent girls; an increased focus on violence prevention programs. The Board noted the following principles which will guide programming: responding to evaluation and roadmap findings; increasingly support evidence based programs or innovative pilots that seek transformative change; balancing this with the need for continued funding for services; prioritising outreach to marginalised and vulnerable populations; continuing to build capacity of Pacific organisations and individuals.

The roles and direction of the Advisory Board

The Board requested a number of practical actions:

- advocacy messages be updated, and a new one developed with key messages on *Pacific Women*;
- Board members be advised of upcoming events funded by *Pacific Women*, including people travelling to those meetings who could be briefed by the Board on the program;
- the Board member chair of future meetings should be involved in preparing the program for side visits;
- the Support Unit prepare a program pipeline which includes the start and end date of initiatives;
- expanded engagement with DFAT between meetings on program issues; and
- Board members should be involved in planning for and delivering the country reflection workshops.

It was suggested that PIFS and SPC could work together to identify opportunities to integrate gender considerations into the agendas of relevant regional meetings.

The Board proposed the next Board meeting be held in either Papua New Guinea or Tonga.

Attachment A:

Agenda
Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Advisory Board Meeting
2 August 2017

Venue: Pacific Ballroom 1, Warwick Le Lagon Hotel

Chair: Mrs Merilyn Tahī

9:00 – 10:00 Welcome and Update

- 9:00 Welcome and Introduction: Merilyn Tahī
- 9:10 Summary update on implementation of the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* initiative: Tracey Newbury, Director
- Discussion by Board

10:00 – 11:30 Pacific Women evaluations

- 10:00 Presentation on the findings of the Pacific Women three year evaluation and program evaluations of the SPC Gender Mainstreaming Program and Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships Program: Tracey Newbury, Director and Linda Peterson, *Pacific Women* Support Unit Team Leader
- 10:30 Morning tea
- 10:45 Discussion, responses from Advisory Board and next steps

11:30 – 12:30 Case study from Vanuatu

- 11:30 Presentation on the *Pacific Women* program in Vanuatu

12:30 - 2:00 Lunch – Lagoon Terrace

2:00 - 3:00 The Roadmaps and Research

- 2:00 Presentation on the Pacific Women regional roadmap and progress on research: Linda Peterson, *Pacific Women* Support Unit Team Leader
- 2:30 Discussion, responses from Advisory Board and next steps
- 3:00 Afternoon tea

3:15 – 4:00 Pipeline Planning

- 3:15 Presentation on new initiatives planned within *Pacific Women*: Tracey Newbury, Director
- 3:30 Discussion, responses from Advisory Board and next steps

4:00 – 5:00 The roles and direction of the Advisory Board

- 4:00 Priorities for Advisory Board for the next six months
- 4:30 Reflections on the Meeting and Agreement on the Report
- 4:45 Date and location for next meeting and Wrap Up

5:00 Meeting End

Attachment B: Members of the Advisory Board

Ms Jane Kesno Founder and Chairperson of the PNG Women and Children's Rights Centre and co-founder of Coalition of Public Sector Women in Leadership

Reverend Sereima Lomaloma, Anglican Minister and Ministry Officer, Anglican Diocese of Polynesia & Chairperson of House of Sarah (Fiji);

Ms Savina Nongebatu, immediate past Co-Chairperson of the Pacific Disability Forum (Solomon Islands);

Dr Colin Tukuitonga, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community;

Ms Merylyn Tahi, Coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre (Vanuatu);

Ms Maere Tekanene, former Minister for Education (Kiribati);

Ms Yoshiko Yamaguchi-Capelle, Pacific Young Women's Leadership Alliance (Republic of Marshall Islands).

Ms Sharman Stone (Observer), Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls

Dr Lawrence Kalinoe, Ms Natalia Palu Latu and Ms Lesieli Taviri sent their apologies for this meeting.