



# Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

## Nauru Country Plan Summary

### Background

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) was announced by the Australian Government at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in August 2012. It commits up to \$320 million over 10 years in 14 Pacific Islands Forum member countries. The program aims to improve opportunities for the political, economic and social advancement of Pacific women. *Pacific Women* will support countries to meet the commitments they made in the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration. The outcomes sought by 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 an 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.

*Pacific Women* is managed by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and works with a wide range of implementing partners, including the 14 partner governments, multilateral organisations, international and national non-government organisations, civil society organisations and the private sector.

The *Pacific Women* Support Unit provides technical and administrative services to assist in the management of the program, including planning, delivery and monitoring of activities, research and communications. The Support Unit is based in Suva, Fiji, with a sub-office in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

### Nauru

Nauru is a small island state in Micronesia with a population of approximately 12,500 people. Traditionally, Nauru is a matrilineal society where women have a strong voice at the family and community level but patriarchal values are evident in policy and laws. Gender equality is still considered a new concept. A 2005 situation analysis report supported by UNICEF stated that the voice of women is ignored, and the status of women has been eroded.<sup>1</sup> The report describes Nauruan society as dominated by men and says the social expectation is that women will defer to their husbands and be submissive and supportive. Although large numbers of women are now

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF, Nauru: A Situation Analysis of Children, Women & Youth. [https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/Nauru\\_Sitan\\_Report\\_Latest\\_pdf.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/Nauru_Sitan_Report_Latest_pdf.pdf)



engaged in wage employment, most women still consider their primary role to be wife and homemaker.

Nauru's Constitution affords women formal equality before the law and the National Women's Policy 2014 guides the government's work on gender equality. Nauru acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, becoming a State Party on 23 June 2011.

There are significant health challenges in Nauru. The country has a high rate of non-communicable diseases, high incidence of sexually transmitted infections, the second highest rate of adolescent fertility in the Pacific and inadequate sexual and reproductive health services. Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes often start during youth and life expectancy is amongst the lowest of the Pacific island countries.

## ***Pacific Women Country Plan***

Through *Pacific Women*, the Australian Government has allocated **\$5.1 million over 10 years** (2012–2022) to initiatives supporting women's empowerment in Nauru.

Country Plans are the mechanism through which *Pacific Women* outcomes and activities are planned and agreed between DFAT and counterpart governments, following extensive national consultations. They provide detail on what will be funded and how these funding decisions are made. The first Nauru Country Plan was developed during a design mission that coincided with missions by the Pacific Community and the Asian Development Bank in March 2014. Consultations were held with the Government of Nauru, civil society, district level leaders, local businesses and faith-based organisations. The two-year plan included three activities valued at \$640,000 for implementation during 2014–2016.

A mid-term review of the Nauru Country Plan took place in 2017. The findings from the review noted that there has been an improvement in outcomes, due largely to changes in policy, legislation, referral and supportive systems. The review also identified gaps which have been addressed in the revised Country Plan.

The second Nauru Country Plan (2018–2022) was developed during an aligned mission with UN Women and was finalised in 2018. Australia's Assistant Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston and Nauru's Minister for Education, Health, Home Affairs and Land Management, the Hon Charmaine Scotty jointly launched the Second Nauru Country Plan on 5 September 2018.

Activities under the second Country Plan include engaging a Psychosocial Counsellor through the *Pacific Women* Support Unit to handle cases of domestic violence and prevention. The Country Plan also supports activities to strengthen the role of the health sector in identifying and supporting victims of violence and gender mainstreaming support for DFAT's programs in Nauru.

In addition to *Pacific Women*, DFAT makes an important contribution to gender equality in Nauru through mainstreaming gender outcomes in the aid program, as well as through political, diplomatic and corporate activities.



## Rationale for activities in the Country Plan

The second Nauru Country Plan draws on the findings of the review mission conducted in 2017. The Review found that there have been a number of changes to the Nauruan context since the drafting of the first Nauru Country Plan that affect the design of activities going forward.

### (a) Increasing women's leadership and decision making

In general, men and women in Nauru do not perceive women as leaders, particularly in the political arena. The parliamentary system in Nauru relies on individuals rather than political parties, making it difficult for independent women to put themselves forward for election. Under the Nauru system, candidates are required to develop a campaign, lobby for support among constituents and put together a political platform outlining potential policy changes. Women are rarely provided with the opportunity to develop and demonstrate these skills.

### (b) Improve the response and expanded violence against women support services

An estimated 48 per cent of women in Nauru have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse in their lifetime. The Child Protection and Welfare Act 2016, the *Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act 2017*, the establishment of a police domestic violence unit and the introduction of a safe house and 24-hour domestic violence hotline, have improved legal protection and services for survivors of violence in recent years.

### (c) Enhancing women's agency

During the development of the first Nauru Country Plan, it was clear that gender equality was a new concept in Nauru. With a number of investments made, activities undertaken and changes having come about, it is now clearer where the entry points lie in Nauru to build a foundation for gender equality. The Government of Nauru has announced its intention to create a Gender Mainstreaming Unit in the Office of the President. This Unit will develop a new Gender Policy focused on mainstreaming gender across all Ministries and moving to incorporate gender sensitive budgeting.



**Table 1: Bilateral Activities**

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
<b>Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making</b>		
Increasing women's political participation (UN Women)	Transformational leadership training for potential women candidates, male allies and community representatives; and training on Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and human rights for members of parliament.	\$200,000 (2016–2017)
<b>Outcome: Ending Violence against Women</b>		
Improve the response and services to reduce domestic violence (Ministry of Home Affairs, Health and Education)	Assist the Government of Nauru and other stakeholders to prevent and handle cases of domestic violence through the provision of Psychosocial Counsellor. The outcome of the activity is for women as survivors of violence have access to improved response and support services.	\$510,000 (2018–2021)
Gender Adviser (Consultant)	Providing technical assistance through a Gender Adviser to support Post and partners in Nauru to improve gender mainstreaming and capacity in relation to gender equality activities.	\$179,802 (2017–2021)
Pacific Community Health and Wellbeing Education Project (University of New England)	Funded six staff from the Ministries of Home Affairs, Health and Education to undertake the Diploma in Community Welfare and Wellbeing in order to improve access to qualified counselling in Nauru.	\$594,734 (2015–2017)
Improve the health sector response and services to reduce domestic violence (Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism and Ministry of Health)	Strengthening the role of the health sector to identify and support survivors of violence by training health workers, improving access to counselling services and raising awareness of domestic violence.	\$530,000 (2014–2019)



**Table 2: Regional Programs with Activities in Nauru**

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET <sup>2</sup>
<b>Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making</b>		
Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships Project (Australian International and Community Relations Office, Department of the House of Representatives)	Supported building the capacity of Pacific women parliamentarians and their staff to ensure gender equality issues are better addressed in parliament.	\$2,850,037 (2013–2018)
<b>Outcome: Ending Violence against Women</b>		
Support to the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (Pacific Community)	Focusing on supporting work on ending violence against women, human rights and good governance, RRRT works with Pacific island governments and civil society organisations by providing technical assistance, training and advocating for women and girls to have increased access to justice for domestic violence and to promote and protect human rights commitments.	\$5,750,000 (2015–2020)
UNICEF Pacific Child Protection Program (UNICEF)	Supporting governments in 14 Pacific Island countries to strengthen the protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation.	\$7,000,000 (2014–2018)
<b>Outcome: Enhancing Agency</b>		
Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (Pacific Community)	Conduct stocktakes and support for the strengthening of government capacity to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment into policies, legislation and programs and improve the collection and analysis of data to better track outcomes.	\$3,941,712 (2013–2018) \$5,494,203 (2019-2023)

<sup>2</sup> This allocation is not for Nauru alone but for multiple countries under *Pacific Women*.

