



# Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

## Solomon Islands 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.

### Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands is the third largest country in the Pacific and currently ranks 156 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index.<sup>1</sup> Despite being resource rich, most women and men have limited access to resources and there are poor health and education outcomes and financial hardship. The Solomon Islands Government has national policies on Gender Equality and Women's Development 2016–2020 and Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls 2016–2020. The Solomon Islands Government launched a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in May 2017. This is the first National Action Plan in the Pacific. Progress has been made

<sup>1</sup> Human Development Index 2016, United Nations Development Programme, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SLB>.



by the Solomon Islands Government, development partners, the private sector and non-government organisations to support women and reduce inequality, but there is still significant work to be done.

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

Through *Pacific Women*, Australia has committed **\$34.8 million over 10 years** (2012–2022) to advance the status of women in Solomon Islands.

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 Solomon Islands Country Plan 2013–2017 identified a portfolio of activities in the areas of women’s economic empowerment and ending violence against women. In addition, it built on Australia’s partnership with the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) through support for institutional strengthening and worked to support the design and monitoring of Australian-funded programs to better respond to the needs of women and girls.

An independent review of the Solomon Islands Country Plan in March 2017 found evidence of achievements in all outcome areas. Particularly noteworthy were achievements in reducing violence against women through work at the community, provincial and national levels and in mainstreaming gender equality across economic, justice, health and political sectors. The Second Country Plan is under development.

The Solomon Islands Country Plan also recognises the important contribution that the Australian High Commission in Honiara makes to gender equality through mainstreaming gender outcomes in the aid program as well as through political, diplomatic and corporate activities.

## **Rationale for the activities in the Country Plan**

Australia’s investment in gender equality in Solomon Islands aligns with, and responds to, Solomon Islands Government priority areas in relation to gender equality. The Solomon Islands Country Plan invests Australian funding where it will have significant impact, taking into account existing gender equality activities in Solomon Islands, building on strong relationships, capitalising on the long-term nature of *Pacific Women* and being open to trying new approaches and learn from them.

### **(a) Increasing women’s leadership and decision making**

Women are under-represented in national and provincial level politics. The *Political Parties Integrities Act* 2014 introduced a 10 per cent quota for women in political parties. This offered some formal recognition by government of the need to increase the number of women in parliament. However, because political parties are not the norm in Solomon Islands and given there are exceptions allowed by the Act, this legislation is unlikely to make a substantial difference over the course of the next few national elections.

Women are also under-represented in senior positions in government. In 2010, women held around 30 per cent of positions in the top three levels of government.<sup>2</sup> A survey of Solomon Islands State Owned Enterprises found that whilst 75 per cent of them had women on their boards, women accounted for less than 15 per cent of board membership.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Solomon Islands Government, 2013, *CEDAW Solomon Islands initial to third periodic report*, p41.

<sup>3</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, undated, *Report on the Survey of Women’s Representation on SOE Boards in Forum Island Countries*, p9.



Women are well represented in the leadership of civil society organisations and, in this role, have been successful in driving change. However, the National Council of Women, which provides an important function for coordinating and representing women's organisations and provincial and ward councils of women, appears to lack the capacity to reach its potential due to a lack of financial and human resources.<sup>4</sup>

### **(b) Increasing economic opportunities for women**

Almost equal numbers of women and men in Solomon Islands are in the workforce, (62 per cent and 63 per cent respectively)<sup>5</sup> but women in Solomon Islands earn almost half that of men.<sup>6</sup> The Economic Intelligence Unit ranks Solomon Islands 124 out of 128 countries in terms of women's economic opportunity.<sup>7</sup> Out of the seven Pacific Island countries assessed, it ranks sixth, above only Papua New Guinea.<sup>8</sup>

Women work in sectors without formal work arrangements and protection and seven per cent of women are engaged in vulnerable jobs (compared with 54 per cent of men) meaning that they are more exposed to risks such as floods, drought or market fluctuations.<sup>9</sup> Even in urban areas, women are less likely than men to be in wage jobs. More than twice the number of men than women are in paid employment,<sup>10</sup> with men accounting for almost 75 per cent of the national income from wage jobs.<sup>11</sup>

The government's primary strategy for increasing women's economic empowerment is the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls 2017, which was developed with assistance from *Pacific Women*. The strategy focuses on the priority areas of gender mainstreaming in the resource sector, financial inclusion, support for women's business associations, legislation for micro-banking, equal employment opportunities in the formal sector and security of land and property ownership rights for women. It also promotes applied research and knowledge sharing and institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs.

### **(c) Reducing violence against women and expanding support services**

The Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study 2009 provides a comprehensive account of the situation for women in Solomon Islands regarding their experience of family violence. It revealed that violence against women is normalised and severe, with 37 per cent of women being sexually abused before the age of 15, most often by a male acquaintance.<sup>12</sup> Approximately two-thirds of women aged between 15 and 49 reported having experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner.<sup>13</sup>

The Solomon Islands Government gives recognition to the need to reduce and respond to family violence through the recently updated National Policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls 2016 to 2020. The policy has three guiding principles: recognition of women's rights (including recognition of diversity and special recognition of women and girls in remote locations), partnership

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p12.

<sup>5</sup> National Statistics Office, 2014, *2009 Population and Housing Census Report on Gender*, Solomon Islands Government, p65.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, *Human Development Indicators 2015*, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GDI>

<sup>7</sup> Economic Intelligence Unit, 2012, *Women's economic opportunity 2012*, The Economist, p8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p17.

<sup>9</sup> National Statistics Office, 2014, *2009 Population and Housing Census Report on Gender*, Solomon Islands Government, p67.

<sup>10</sup> National Statistics Office, 2015, *Solomon Islands 2012/13 Household and Income Expenditure Survey, National Analytical Report (Volume 1)*, Solomon Islands Government, p68.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p40

<sup>12</sup> Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2009, *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study*, p87.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p3.



and recognition of international and regional commitments. It establishes five priority outcomes relating to holistic prevention strategies, legal frameworks, access to services, accountability of perpetrators and national commitment and coordination.<sup>14</sup>

The passing of the *Family Protection Act 2014* and the *Penal Code (Amendment) (Sexual Offences) Act 2016* introduced a new legal environment for ending violence against women and girls in Solomon Islands. The *Family Protection Act* criminalises violence against family members, using a broad definition of domestic violence to include physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse. It imposes penalties for perpetrators and gives the Magistrates' Court and authorised justices the jurisdiction to make protection orders and interim protection orders. It also requires that police and health services aid people affected by domestic violence.<sup>15</sup>

#### **(d) Enhancing agency**

Acknowledging the importance of MWYCFA and valuing the partnership between the Government of Australia and the Solomon Islands, the Country Plan includes ongoing assistance to the MWYCFA. Through activities designed to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry, expected outcomes include the development of a national strategy on the economic empowerment of women and assistance to the MWYCFA as it promotes gender mainstreaming in the Solomon Islands Government in line ministries such as health and education.

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, undated, *National Policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls 2016 to 2020*, Solomon Islands Government.

<sup>15</sup> *Family Protection Act 2014*, [www.paclii.org](http://www.paclii.org).



**Table 1: Bilateral Activities**

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
<b>Outcome: Leadership and Decision making</b>		
Emerging Leaders Training (Australia Pacific Technical Coalition)	Providing training that aims to develop the competency of individuals working as emerging leaders in a range of contexts. It has a particular emphasis on developing effective relationships in the workplace and managing operational plans.	\$159,303 (2018)
Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in Solomon Islands (SECSIP) Phase II (United Nations Development Program)	Dedicated activities to support female candidates in the 2019 National elections. (Part of a \$3,000,000 SECSIP II program).	\$460,000.00 (2018)
Leadership Skills for Women (Australia-Pacific Technical Coalition)	Provided leadership and management training to female mid-level Solomon Islands managers to enhance their leadership, decision making and management skills. Participants included women working in civil society organisations in Malaita Province, Western Province and Honiara.	\$245,000 (2017–2018)
<b>Intended Outcome: Economic Empowerment</b>		
Empowering Women is Smart Business (International Finance Corporation)	Improving market governance, management, infrastructure and access to financial services to increase women's economic empowerment and ensure markets are more sustainable, accessible and safe for women vendors.	\$2,445,074 (2016-2019)
Innovative Approaches to Increasing Women's Access to Markets (World Bank Group)	This research assessed the constraints to, and effective measures for increasing women's participation and productivity in agricultural value chains in Solomon Islands. It is connected to the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program, but its findings can also support other programs, for example Markets for Change.	\$200,100 (2016–2018)
Do No Harm: Understanding the Relationship between Women's Economic Empowerment and Violence against Women in Melanesia (Australian National University and International Women's Development Agency)	Understanding the Relationship between Women's Economic Empowerment and Violence against Women in Melanesia.	\$170,532 (2016–2018)
Markets for Change (UN Women)	This project aims to ensure the marketplaces (Honiara Central Market, Gizo and Auki markets) in rural and urban Solomon Islands are safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory environments, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The project is part of a regional \$18 million	\$1,280,946 (2014–2019)



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
	initiative working regionally in three countries in the Pacific – Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands.	
Support to Solomon Islands Women in Business Association (Solomon Islands Women in Business Association)	Supporting Solomon Islands Women in Business Association as the key organisation for women in business in Solomon Islands to promote, develop and empower women's participation in the private sector.	\$719,552 (2014–2018)
<b>Outcome: Ending Violence against Women</b>		
Community Channels of Hope Phase 3 (World Vision Solomon Islands)	Working with churches and community leaders to positively transform people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours regarding gender relations to reduce violence against women.	\$3,106,000 (2018–2022)
Responding to violence against women in Solomon Islands (International Women's Development Agency)	Providing core funding, technical support and capacity building to the Christian Care Centre and Family Support Centre, two key organisations providing emergency shelter, first aid, counselling and legal advice services to survivors of violence in Solomon Islands.	\$2,950,000 (2017–2020)
Red Cardim Vaelens (Live & Learn Solomon Islands)	Worked with selected sports clubs in Honiara and Auki to address gender-based violence through sports.	\$557,810 (2015–2017)
Youth alcohol and violence reduction against women and children (Save the Children)	Worked with young people to address causes of gender-based violence.	\$800,000 (2015–2017)
Let's Make our Families Safe (Solomon Islands National Council of Women, Vois Blong Mere, International Women's Development Agency, Pacific Leadership Program, Oxfam Australia and IOD PARC)	Providing support to existing and new community level action to prevent violence from happening in the home; and help to establish coalitions between the civil society groups, services providers, churches and government agencies that are working to prevent family violence. (Phase 2 (2018–2022) is currently being designed).	\$5,536,137 (2014–2018)
Channels of Hope for Gender (World Vision Solomon Islands)	Working with churches and community leaders to positively transform people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours regarding gender relations to reduce violence against women in 30 communities across two providence.	\$2,880,000 (2013–2018)



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
Christian Care Centre (Christian Care Centre)	Support to host a strategic workshop.	\$8,575.25 (2013)
<b>Outcome: Enhancing Agency</b>		
Gender Equality Program Support (Solomon Islands Resource Facility)	Supports the Women's Development Division at the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs to progress outcomes in accordance with its key policies, the Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy, Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls Policy and the National Action Plan in Women, Peace and Security.	\$946,327 (2016–2019)
Social Development Adviser (Consultant)	Provided technical assistance through a Social Development Adviser who worked with DFAT staff to improve gender considerations in planning, programming, monitoring and learning of all Australian-funded aid programs in Solomon Islands.	\$200,000 (2014)
Recognising shared interests of Australia and Solomon Islands in the advancement of gender equality (Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs)	Strengthened the capacity of Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs to progress priority outcomes in accordance with its Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy, the Ending Violence Against Women Policy and the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan.	\$450,827 (2013–2016)



**Table 2: Regional Programs with Activities in Solomon Islands**

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET <sup>16</sup>
<b>Intended Outcome: Leadership and Decision making</b>		
Shifting the Power Coalition (ActionAid Australia, femLINKpacific, Pacific Disability Forum, Nazareth Centre, Transcend Oceania, Talitha Project, YWCA PNG, YWCA Samoa, Vanuatu Young Women for Change, Vois Blong Mere, ActionAid Vanuatu)	This project seeks to ensure diverse Pacific women's voices provide leadership in disaster planning and response at all levels with tangible outcomes around diverse women leaders in six countries having increased capacity to engage in disaster coordination mechanisms and influence decision making; documentation of their needs and capacities in crises to contribute to evidence based disaster planning; and establishment of platforms to strengthen diverse Pacific women's voices in regional forums to influence policy and decision making.	\$895,000 (2018–2021)
Support for Women's Groups and Coalitions (Pacific Leadership Program)	Funding for Pacific Leadership Program's adaptive leadership training for women leaders and coalition members to support them to develop new skills and perspectives to progress initiatives, build a support base and overcome barriers to change. Support also contributed to research in Samoa and Solomon Islands and a CEDAW campaign in Tonga.	\$433,963 (2015–2017)
Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships Project (Australian International and Community Relations Office, Department of the House of Representatives)	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>Intended Outcome: Ending Violence against Women</b>		
Gender Equality Theology – Institutional Transformation (UnitingWorld)	This program focuses on utilising the Gender Equality Theology methodology to support and drive Institutional Transformation within partner churches and participating organisations by challenging and shifting traditional gender theologies and then reviewing church policies to align them with new gender equality theologies. This is anticipated to lead to establishing procedures including responsible codes of conduct for leaders and members and response mechanisms for situations of violence that respect the rights of women and that promote and act in accordance with the protection laws within each country.	\$1,895,768 (2018–2021)
Women's Crisis Centre Programs to Eliminate Violence against Women in Fiji and the Pacific (Fiji Women's Crisis Centre)	Supporting the regional program funds a portion of Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's activities. These include activities with a regional focus including: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's Regional Training Program; the Male Advocates Program; and the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women.	\$2,250,000 (2016–2020)

<sup>16</sup> This allocation is not for Solomon Islands alone but for multiple countries under *Pacific Women*.



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET <sup>16</sup>
Support to the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (Pacific Community)	Funding to provide policy advice, technical support and training on human rights, elimination of violence against women, governance, democracy and the rule of law. Partners include governments, regional organisations and civil society organisations.	\$5,750,000 (2015–2020)
Partnering Women for Change (Uniting World)	Supporting work with churches to ensure that women, girls and people living with disabilities have increased safety and well-being in their homes, communities and churches.	\$370,000 (2015–2018)
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)
Pacific Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Women)	Supported civil society organisations and governments to prevent violence and provide services for survivors of violence, including for counselling, paralegal aid, shelter and referral services. The Fund also strengthened the capacity of organisations working to end violence against women through training in advocacy, law reform, women's human rights, community education and counselling services.	\$1,500,000 (2014–2017)
<b>Intended Outcome: Enhancing Agency</b>		
Last Taboo Research (WaterAid, Burnet Institute and the International Women's Development Agency)	This research aims to undertake formative research in three Pacific countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) on barriers to women and girls' effective menstrual management, and potential impacts on their participation in education and income generation.	\$500,000 (2016–2017)
Partnerships for Health and Rights: Working for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all in the Pacific (International Planned Parenthood Federation)	Supporting the expansion of access to sexual and reproductive health services in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea <sup>17</sup> , Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.	\$3,000,000 (2015–2022)
Gender Equality and Climate Change in the Pacific (The protection and Pacific (ProPa) Network)	The Networks' mandate includes raising awareness of the nexus between gender equality and climate change, and generating more informed decision making in this space to ensure women's voices influence decision making, and that climate agreements implemented in a gender-responsive way in the Pacific.	\$500,000 (2015–2017)
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>17</sup> Papua New Guinea included in phase two from 2019-2022

