



Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

Nauru Country Plan Summary

Background

Through a 10-year commitment, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) connects more than 170 gender equality initiatives supported by Australia and implemented by over 160 partners across 14 Pacific Island countries.

Pacific Women is one of the largest global commitments to gender equality. It partners with governments, local and international non-government organisations (NGOs), private sector, disabled people's organisations, coalitions and others to improve the political, economic and social opportunities of Pacific women and to end violence against women and girls. Its emphasis is on partnerships and locally-driven development.

Providing technical, knowledge sharing and convening support to the portfolio of partners is *Pacific Women's* Support Unit, working to improve the long-term impact of gender equality projects in the Pacific. The Support Unit's office is in Suva, Fiji, with a sub-office in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

Pacific Women was announced at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in August 2012. It commits up to AUD320 million over 10 years in 14 Pacific Islands Forum member countries.

Pacific Women initiatives respond to the commitments in the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration, while also supporting Australia's Pacific Step-up and its Partnerships for Recovery approach of working together with Pacific partners to address COVID-19 impacts on women, girls and their communities.

The outcomes sought through *Pacific Women* are:

- **Ending Violence against Women:** Violence against women is reduced and survivors of violence have access to support services and to justice.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Women have expanded economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets.
- **Leadership and Decision Making:** Women, and women's interests, are increasingly and effectively represented and visible through leadership at all levels of decision making.
- **Enhancing Agency:** 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.

Since 2012, an estimated 1.22 million Pacific Island women, men and children have been able to access services and information across 14 partner countries through initiatives supported by *Pacific Women*.



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 level and community level but patriarchal values are evident in policy and laws. Gender equality is still considered a new concept. A 2005 situation analysis supported by UNICEF stated that the voice of women is ignored, and the status of women has been eroded.¹ 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 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.

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.

¹ UNICEF, Nauru: A Situation Analysis of Children, Women & Youth.
https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/Nauru_Sitan_Report_Latest_pdf.pdf



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

Whilst developing 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
Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making		
Increasing women's political participation (UN Women)	Provided transformational leadership training for potential women candidates, male allies and community representatives. Trained members of parliament on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and human rights.	\$200,000 (2016–2017)
Outcome: Ending Violence against Women		
Unique Lee Foundational Grant Ending Violence Against Women	Providing foundational support to develop the capacity of an emerging NGO on violence against women in Nauru to effectively design and implement a national domestic violence prevention and response program and establish its governance, management, operational and financial systems.	\$150,000 (2019–2020)
Improve the response and services to reduce domestic violence (Ministry of Home Affairs, Health and Education)	Assisting the Government of Nauru and other stakeholders to prevent and handle cases of domestic violence through the provision of a psychosocial counsellor.	\$510,000 (2018–2021)
Gender Adviser (Consultant)	Supporting DFAT Post and partners in Nauru to improve gender mainstreaming and capacity in relation to gender equality activities with technical advice from a gender adviser.	\$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 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 (PACTAM))	Strengthened 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 ²
Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making		
Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships (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)
Outcome: Ending Violence against Women		
Support to the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (The Pacific Community (SPC))	Supporting work on ending violence against women, human rights and good governance with Pacific Island governments and civil society organisations. Providing technical assistance and training. 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)	Worked across 14 Pacific Island Countries to strengthening protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation.	\$7,000,000 (2014–2018)
Outcome: Enhancing Agency		
Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (The Pacific Community (SPC))	Phase one (completed) conducted stocktakes of Pacific Island governments' capacity to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into policies, legislation and programs and strengthened the collection and analysis of data to better track outcomes. Phase two is supporting Pacific Island countries to adopt evidence-informed policies and legislation that promote gender equality and women's human rights.	\$3,941,712 (2013–2018) \$5,494,203 (2019–2023)

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

