

Women and leadership

- 7.1 The inquiry's terms of reference required the Committee to examine women's leadership across the Indo-Pacific region.
- 7.2 Women's empowerment as leaders is a priority goal or 'pillar' of Australia's aid policy, together with supporting women's economic empowerment and combating violence against women.¹
- 7.3 This chapter provides an overview of the progress that women have made in obtaining leadership roles in the Indo-Pacific region. Based on evidence, this chapter examines:
- the opportunities and barriers affecting women's participation in leadership roles at local level, in their homes and villages, and in the business and corporate sector;
 - the representation of women in national and local governments and in decision-making bodies, in the public sector and the courts system, and the implications for the human rights of women and girls in the region;
 - building leadership skills, including the importance of having female role models for girls, and the role of women's organisations, parliamentary programs and candidacy training in promoting women's political participation; and
 - recommendations for enhancing women's equality, considering the extent to which 'special measures' such as quota systems enhance opportunities for women in leadership, and discussion of the role of male leadership in supporting of attitudinal change.

1 Ms Harinder Sidhu, First Assistant Secretary, Multilateral Policy Division, Department of Foreign Affairs, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 17 June 2014, p. 1.

Women as leaders and agents of change

- 7.4 Harvard University Professor Amartya Sen, a leading development economist, identified a connection between women's leadership and their social and economic empowerment. He argued that:

Nothing ... is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political, economic, and social participation and leadership of women.²

- 7.5 The Asia Foundation observed that:

Across the Indian Ocean-Asia Pacific region, women continue to struggle to be elected and appointed to positions of leadership. Discriminatory attitudes – held by both women and men – that give preference to men consistently disadvantage women and undermine women's leadership in the public and private domains. As a result, women encounter fewer opportunities to develop their campaign and leadership skills, and cultivate the relationships and networks that are often critical to any individual's ability to run for office and lead effectively.³

- 7.6 The World Bank Group's report *Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity* (2014) advocates for 'voice and agency' in all spheres of society as key foundations for women's empowerment:

Agency is the ability to make decisions about one's own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution, or fear. The ability to make those choices is often called empowerment.⁴

To have a voice is to be a citizen. Having a voice means having the capacity to speak up and be heard and being present to shape and share in discussions, discourse, and decisions. Full and equal participation requires that everyone have a voice.⁵

- 7.7 According to this study, these two factors combine to underpin women's potential as decision makers and agents of social change:

2 Dr Jeni Klugman, *Exhibit 76: Answers to Questions on Notice – J Klugman et al, Voice and Agency, Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity*, World Bank Group, 2014, p. 156 (copy)

3 The Asia Foundation, *Submission 57*, p. 4.

4 Dr J Klugman, *Exhibit 76: 2014, Box 1.1 'What is Agency'*, p. 13.

5 Dr J Klugman, *Exhibit 76: 2014*, p. 155.

Participation in decision making enables women to voice their needs and challenge gender norms in their community – individually and collectively.⁶

7.8 The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action and United Nations Security Council resolutions provide universally accepted benchmarks and a clear global framework for women’s ‘voice and agency’.⁷ In particular, Part II article 7 of the CEDAW supports women’s rights to:

- To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
- To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
- To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.⁸

7.9 Dr Jeni Klugman referred to the CEDAW as an important catalyst to women’s global activism, noting:

If we look at particular reform episodes, it is often the case that local collective action plays an important role – women’s NGOs [non-government organisations] mobilising sometimes around a particular incident, sometimes around calls for the government to follow up on their international treaty obligations.⁹

7.10 Women’s political engagement was also highlighted under 2015 Millennium Development Goal 3, which promotes gender equality and women’s empowerment. Women’s representation in national parliaments is a key performance indicator.¹⁰

6 Dr J Klugman, *Exhibit 76*: 2014, p. 155.

7 Dr J Klugman, *Exhibit 76*: 2014, p. 1.

8 Article 7 (a), (b) and (c) in UN (United Nations) Women, *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, in Six parts <www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article16> viewed 5 August 2015.

9 Dr Jeni Klugman, Private capacity, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 2.

10 UN Fact Sheet: *Millennium Development Goals Beyond 2015*, Goal 3, *Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women* <www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Goal_3_fs.pdf> viewed 15 October 2015.

7.11 Statistics from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) show that, at 1 February 2014, 21.7 per cent of all parliamentarians were women.¹¹ While female representation in parliaments globally has doubled over the last two decades, women's participation in the Indo-Pacific region, especially at the political level, is for the most part below the global average.¹² The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) advised:

Men are overrepresented in formal politics in almost every country in the region, especially in its upper reaches. Less than one-fifth of all cabinet positions are held by women and women are also missing from the judiciary and labour unions. This inequality does not change as countries develop and become wealthier: between 1995 and 2009, globally the number of female parliamentarians only increased from 10 per cent to 17 per cent.¹³

Women and girls leading at local level

7.12 The YWCA Australia argued that there is a demographic imperative for young women, in particular, to take on greater leadership roles on gender equity and human rights in the region:

The Asia Pacific region is home to over 700 million young people, which is 45 per cent of the world's youth. These young people will soon become leaders and decision makers with the potential to shape the future and contribute to sustainable development and the realisation of human rights. In our view, it is therefore critical for young women to be supported to build and exercise leadership in their lives and communities and advocate for their rights.¹⁴

7.13 However, Dr Susan Harris Rimmer of the Australian National University's (ANU) Gender Institute advised that the barriers to gender equality remain significant:

11 Dr Lesley Clark, Director, PacificPlus Consulting, *Submission 30*, p. 2; and see UN Development Programme (UNDP), *MDG3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women, Progress Report*, viewed September 2015.

12 The Pacific region, for example, had only 4.6 per cent of parliamentary seats held by women at June 2015. Ms Kerry Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 2.

13 DFAT, *Submission 27*, p. 14.

14 YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association), Australia, *Submission 65*, p. 1.

They basically relate to a whole lot of intersecting deprivations that mean that women have no time, or agency or material wellbeing to claim certain public spaces.¹⁵

7.14 A number of submissions discussed the gender divide in many cultures which continues to marginalise women's voices in their communities.

7.15 Austraining International cited the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development submission to the Beijing+20 Asia Pacific Regional Review, which maintained:

In the Asia Pacific region, women remain consistently and systematically excluded from participation and decision-making at all levels, starting at home and extending to the highest level of government. The region is still far from achieving gender parity, exacerbated by the fact that many women are still constrained by the patriarchal dichotomy of a "public" and "private" sphere.¹⁶

7.16 Referring to research in Fiji, Dr Nicole George of the Women, Peace and Security Academic Collective (WPSAC) described how this male/female dichotomy restrains women's ability to voice views about matters such as violence at village level:

... the vast majority of women stated that it was also unusual, and potentially unsafe, for them to speak publically at local settlement or village meetings. This made it difficult for them to draw attention to these problems and initiate any positive action at the community level that might increase their safety. One woman summed up this feeling of marginalization and political powerlessness stating "our experiences are just our own".¹⁷

7.17 In contrast, DFAT suggested that when women are empowered to exercise leadership they can dramatically improve the welfare of their families and their communities.¹⁸

7.18 The Asia Foundation cited research in India which found that the gender of leaders at the village level impacts on the types of policies that are given priority: having a woman in leadership was more likely to result in higher

15 Dr Susan Harris Rimmer, Director of Studies, Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, Australian National University (ANU) Gender Institute, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 23 September 2014, p. 7.

16 Austraining International, *Submission 67*, p. 4.

17 Dr George, University of Queensland, in Women, Peace and Security Academic Collective (WPSAC), Monash University, *Submission 15*, p. 5.

18 DFAT, *Submission 27*, pp. 13-14.

investments in clean drinking water, childhood immunisation and a reduced gender gap in education.¹⁹

- 7.19 The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) advised of a new global development focus on ‘women as agents for change’ in agriculture.²⁰ ACIAR drew the Committee’s attention to an ACIAR-sponsored series of community workshops with smallholders in the Baiyer Valley and Kerevat area of PNG. The project highlighted the value of ‘two-way learning’ and providing opportunities for local community leaders to ‘reconsider and re-evaluate existing social relations that had mostly been taken for granted.’²¹ Women project leaders stated at the program’s conclusion:

[In the past] Men were the bosses and leaders in the community. Things have changed and ladies are now leading [us] to almost everything in the community and men in [this community] have realised their leadership roles.²²

- 7.20 CARE Australia recommended its Women’s Empowerment Framework to support women and girls’ rights and leadership. Within this whole of community model, CARE argued that targeting the private/familial sphere is crucial to ensure girls’ domestic burdens are reduced and that they can more actively participate in public life.²³

- 7.21 Oaktree and ChildFund Australia described successes under their girls’ leadership and empowerment programs.²⁴ Oaktree advised that:

Giving students small opportunities such as participating in school councils and talking to their local commune leaders – empowers them and increase[s] their sense of self worth.²⁵

19 The Asia Foundation, *Submission 57*, pp. 6–7.

20 Ms Vikki Wilde, Director, African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) at the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) in Accra, Ghana, July 2013, speech cited in Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), *Submission 44*, p. 4.

21 ACIAR, *Supplementary Submission 44.1*, B Pamphilon, K Mikhailovich, L Simeon and B Chambers, ‘Two-Way Learning: Key Gender Lessons from Participatory Community Workshops with Smallholders in the Baiyer Valley and Kerevat Areas of Papua New Guinea’, in G Hickey, ‘Socioeconomic Agricultural Research in Papua New Guinea,’ *ACIAR Proceedings 141*, 2013, PNG, p. 102.

22 ACIAR, *Supplementary Submission 44.1*, Link to ‘Two-Way Learning...’ in G Hickey, ‘Socioeconomic Agricultural Research in Papua New Guinea,’ *ACIAR Proceedings 141*, 2013, PNG, p. 112.

23 CARE Australia, *Submission 54*, p. 11, and see p. 7 for leadership integration under the Women’s Empowerment Framework in PNG.

24 Oaktree, *Submission 11*, p. 5; ChildFund, *Submission 2*, pp. 5–6.

7.22 ChildFund reported on its Child and Youth Participation Project:

... in Laos, girls have been able to participate in sport for the first time which has increased their confidence, leadership skills, and ability to voice their opinions with parents and duty bearers. Girls' participation in these activities has had positive impacts on the social development of the community, as the community has shifted its attitudes towards girls and women and now sees the importance of valuing their participation in society. Girl leaders are also acting as positive role models for other girls in their communities.²⁶

7.23 Submissions also discussed the utility of internet and community radio to communicate messages to girls and young women on leadership:

- The *ChildFund Connect* education project uses multimedia tools to promote girls' confidence, improve leadership skills, and promote school participation in Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste.²⁷
- The YWCA's *Safe. Respected. Included. Connected and Skilled* community radio strategy builds leadership skills among young women across PNG and the Pacific Islands.²⁸ The YWCA also runs the Rise Up! Young Women's Leadership Program on the Solomon Islands.²⁹
- The Australian National Committee for UN Women's Pacific Young Women's Leadership Alliance (PYWLA) Secretariat supports online dialogue, among other services, to inform and support young women to participate in government and leadership roles.³⁰

Women leading in the corporate sector

7.24 International consulting and project management firm Coffey International identified women's absence from leadership roles as one of

25 Oaktree, *Submission 11*, p. 5.

26 ChildFund Australia, *Submission 2*, p. 5.

27 ChildFund Australia, *Submission 2*, p. 6.

28 YWCA Australia *Submission 65*, p. 8, and see YWCA, *Safe. Respected. Included. Connected. Skilled: 2011–2014, Pacific Young Women's Leadership Strategy*, and, pp. 8, 19, <[www.unicef.org/pacificislands/YWCA_PYWLS_-_final\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/YWCA_PYWLS_-_final(1).pdf)> viewed August 2015.

29 YWCA Australia, *Submission 65*, p. 7. For detail see YWCA *Supplementary Submission 65.1, Part 2: YWCA, Rise UP! Young Women's Leadership Program Executive Summary Evaluation Report 2013*, p. 3.

30 Australian National Committee for UN Women, *Submission 10*, p. 3.

the key impediments, along with resources, accountability, and technical expertise, to advancing 'women's rights in the region.'³¹

- 7.25 Evidence referred to the low global average for women on corporate boards,³² with women in senior management positions at just 24 per cent.³³ By comparison, women in some parts of the Indo-Pacific region are better represented at corporate level. DFAT advised that East Asia, for example, has a higher number of women in management relative to other developing regions and the world average.³⁴
- 7.26 There was discussion in the evidence about the ways in which women's participation in leadership at corporate level could be increased. Microfinance was cited by DFAT as an important support for women's movement into decision-making roles as owners or operators of micro, small and medium enterprises.³⁵
- 7.27 Micro-financier Grameen Bank advised how the bank's female empowerment model had achieved a majority of women among its 8.5 million borrowers, 5.5 million of whom are shareholders. Under proportional measures, eight of the 11 board members are women.³⁶
- 7.28 The ANU's Dr Harris Rimmer advocated for targets, quota systems and male 'champion for change' models to create a positive culture for women's promotion in the business sector.³⁷ Ms Maiava Visekota Peteru spoke of advances in Samoa, which has a tradition of female leadership, with many women as business owners or joint owners of businesses.³⁸
- 7.29 DFAT considered that one method to encourage women's participation as female entrepreneurs, business leaders and employees would be:

Strengthening formal and informal country or regional women in business networks and forums [as this] can provide the space and

31 Coffey International, *Submission 90*, p. 2.

32 Dr J Klugman, *Exhibit 78: Answers to Questions on Notice*—L Beaman, E Duflo Rohini Pande and P Topalova, 'Female Leadership Raises Aspirations and Educational Attainment for Girls: A Policy Experiment in India', *Science Magazine*, Vol. 335, no. 6068, 2012 p. 1.

33 The ANU Gender Institute also notes that for G7 nations the average is only 21 per cent, *Submission 63*, p. 7.

34 DFAT, *Submission 27*, p. 16.

35 DFAT, *Women's Leadership: Evidence Review*, ODE, March 2014, pp. 23–24, viewed September 2015.

36 Mr Prometheus Siddiqui, Project Officer, Grameen Bank Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 20.

37 Dr Harris Rimmer, ANU Gender Institute, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 23 September 2015, p. 6.

38 Ms Maiava Visekota Peteru, Private capacity, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 7 May 2015, p. 28.

opportunity for women to participate and influence economic policy, legislation and regulations.³⁹

- 7.30 Ms Dimity Fifer of Australian Volunteers International (AVI) noted that in relation to women's support networks:

We take for granted the sort of professional and personal network – formal and informal – mechanisms that we have here in Australia. I think it is absolutely imperative that we enable women to take part in such mechanisms overseas to ensure that they are able to contribute and to increase their numbers.⁴⁰

- 7.31 Ms Fifer suggested that Australia invest in regional networking opportunities for women professionals and trial sectoral pilots with women in academia and finance sectors through the Pacific Women's Leaders Network.⁴¹

- 7.32 Abt JTA, a private development partner in aid delivery, also advocated for professional networking to open up opportunities and build capacity among local women leaders:

While investing in individual women leaders (including through scholarships) is critical, Australia can help them establish coalitions and networks to support and sustain them throughout their careers and lives.⁴²

- 7.33 The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) also emphasised the value of funding scholarships and training, with a focus on women and girls to enhance their leadership skills in commerce and management.⁴³

- 7.34 Coffey International advised that it manages eight Australian Awards programs. Its submission identified a need for gender targeting in the award program design, with extra support for the professional advancement of women awardees on return from study.⁴⁴ The firm considered that skilling up senior decision makers would support accountability on gender equality outcomes. Donors and implementing partner organisations could also be encouraged to adopt this approach,

39 DFAT, *Submission 27*, p. 21.

40 Ms Dimity Fifer, Executive Officer, Australian Volunteers International (AVI), *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 3 November 2014, p. 4.

41 Ms Fifer, AVI, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 3 November 2014, pp. 4–5.

42 Abt JTA, *Submission 59*, p. 7.

43 Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS), *Submission 17*, p. 7.

44 Coffey International, *Submission 90*, p. 7.

and accountability encouraged through Memoranda of Understanding and in contracts.⁴⁵

- 7.35 The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) focused on evaluation, recommending that stakeholders funded under Australian leadership programs should:

... [r]eport on outcomes by utilising longitudinal tracking mechanisms to capture the extent to which the projects and programs are contributing to positive changes in the short, medium and long term.⁴⁶

Women in government and decision-making bodies

- 7.36 According to the World Bank, greater representation of women in national and local government can influence both policy considerations and budget allocations.⁴⁷ The Bank further argues that:

Women's political participation can positively affect the range of policy issues considered and prioritized, can influence the types of solutions proposed, and can enhance perceptions of government legitimacy.⁴⁸

- 7.37 This section considers evidence on the current levels of women's representation in parliaments across the region and at local government level. Also discussed are responses to women's increased representation in the public service, and the role of women in the courts in protecting the human rights of women and girls.

Women in national legislatures

- 7.38 DFAT referred to the combined cultural and systemic obstacles to women's participation in political life across the Indo-Pacific region, including:

45 Recommendation 5, Coffey International, *Submission 90*, p. 2.

46 ACFID, *Supplementary Submission 25. 1*, p. 7.

47 'In a poll of members of parliament from 110 countries conducted between 2006 and 2008, female parliamentarians were more likely to prioritize social issues such as child care, equal pay, parental leave, and pensions; physical concerns such as reproductive rights, physical safety, and gender-based violence; and development matters such as poverty reduction and service delivery', in Dr J Klugman, *Exhibit 76: 2014*, p. 162.

48 Dr J Klugman, *Exhibit 76: 2014*, p. 154, and see discussion at p. 155.

... the pervasiveness of masculine political cultures, the view that politics is men's work, electoral systems that are not gender-neutral and women's lack of access to election campaign financing.⁴⁹

7.39 Submissions to the inquiry discussed the low levels of representation of women at national government level, while also noting the global context. In the Asian region, for example, 18.7 per cent of members of parliament are women,⁵⁰ which is not far behind the global average. Conversely, as the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) pointed out, while this is better than the Pacific and the Arab States, it is still lower than every other region of the world including Sub-Saharan Africa.⁵¹

7.40 A number of governments advised the Committee of advances for women's representation at national level following introduction of gender equality strategies.⁵² For example:

- The High Commissioner of Sri Lanka reported 'a catalytic impact on advancing gender equality in the country'.⁵³ A supplementary submission cited a suite of programs aimed at improving women's political participation, and noting Sri Lanka's leadership by a female head of government for 21 of the last 50 years.⁵⁴
- The Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam, HE Pham Binh Minh, advised of progress under the National Strategy on Gender Equality and Advancement of Women, with 24.4 per cent of deputies in Viet Nam's 18th National Assembly (2011–2016) being women; the second highest representation among ASEAN countries. Women also hold senior leadership positions in the National Assembly as Vice Presidents, Ministers and Deputy Ministers.⁵⁵

7.41 The submission from Ms Rebecca Lim and colleagues noted the range in female representation in national parliaments across the Asia Pacific

49 DFAT, *Submission 27*, p. 14.

50 International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), *Submission 32*, p. 15.

51 IWDA, *Submission 32*, p. 15.

52 See Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, *Submission 45*; Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Minister's Office, *Submission 75*; High Commission of the Republic of Mauritius, *Submission 46*; Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, *Submission 78*; and the High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, *Submission 79*.

53 His Excellency Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe, the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 25 November 2014, p. 1.

54 The High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, *Supplementary Submission 79.1*, pp. 1–2.

55 Also see the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2011–2020 and the National Program on Gender Equality for 2011–2015, in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, *Submission 78*, pp. 4, 5.

region, with Sri Lanka at 5.8 per cent in a single chamber parliament; India at 11.4 per cent in the Lower House and 11.9 per cent in the Upper House; Indonesia at 18.9 per cent in the Lower House and Timor-Leste at 38.5 per cent in a single chamber parliament.⁵⁶

7.42 ANU Research Fellow in Pacific Politics Ms Kerryn Baker advised that the Pacific has one of the lowest levels of women's participation in political processes in the world, noting:

... the region is home to four of the six countries in the world with no women in their lower or only house of parliament. Women make up just 4.6 per cent of parliamentarians in independent Pacific countries.⁵⁷

7.43 The ANU Gender Institute pointed out that PNG's very low representation of women, with only 2.7 per cent of seats in the National Parliament, contributes to this low regional level.⁵⁸

7.44 SPC referred the Committee to studies of the impact of South Pacific electoral systems in reducing women's chances of election in the region, with the conclusion that majority electoral systems are generally more favourable to men than women.⁵⁹

7.45 Ms Baker also referred to the stagnation in female representation in the Pacific region relative to the rest of the world, with recent elections showing no improvement.⁶⁰ She considered that proportional representation would probably improve this result for women.⁶¹

7.46 Dr Lesley Clark, Director of PacificPlus Consulting observed:

56 Ms Rebecca Lim, Ms Felicity Mashuro, and Ms Louise Woodley (Rebecca Lim *et al*), *Submission 70*, p. 4-5, citing Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in National Parliaments* (1 April 2014) at <www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

57 For detail, see Table 1, Assessment at 22 June 2015, in Ms Kerryn Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 2.

58 Australian National University (ANU) Gender Institute, *Submission 63*, p. 3.

59 Research by J Fraenkel, *The Impact of Electoral Systems on Women's Representation in Pacific Parliaments: A Report Conducted for the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat by the Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development & Governance*, 2007, cited in Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), *Submission 24*, p. 24.

60 The Pacific Island nations still make up half of the number of countries without women in parliament even though the world rate has halved over 10 years. In recent elections in the Solomon Islands (November 2014), Tonga (November 2014), and Bougainville (May-June 2015) women's representation respectively stagnated, decreased to zero, and increased slightly. See Ms Kerryn Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 1.

61 Ms Kerryn Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 3.

The majoritarian electoral systems most commonly used in the Pacific region also intensify the competition between men and women and are recognized as making it more difficult for women to be elected, as compared to Proportional Representation systems.⁶²

- 7.47 WPSAC's Dr George highlighted the importance of increasing women's representation to ensure issues such as the high incidence of violence in the region are addressed.⁶³
- 7.48 There was also discussion of factors that have or can promote women's political participation in the region. Professor Jacquie True of Monash University referred to politics in parts of the Asia-Pacific region as 'family-run enterprises that enable elite women's participation but serve as major barriers to that of non-elite women'.⁶⁴
- 7.49 The ANU's Ms Baker observed that in Pacific island countries, women parliamentarians:
- ... tend to be relatively highly educated, often with degrees from overseas institutions, including Australian universities. They tend to come from public service backgrounds, usually teaching, and have a history of community involvement, including leadership positions with church or women's groups. In some cases, high public profiles have led to political careers ... In others, however, campaigns were fought (and won) on the basis of more grassroots community involvement ... They are also likely to come from politically connected families. The importance of family connections is evident in the numerous women candidates who have been successful in by-elections triggered by the death or resignation of a male relative.⁶⁵
- 7.50 Ms Baker further noted that although 'many cultural traditions in the Pacific Islands region encourage and perpetuate respect towards women,'⁶⁶ some values and customary practices may contribute to

62 Dr Lesley Clark, Director, PacificPlus Consulting, *Submission 30*, p. 2.

63 Dr George in WPSAC, *Submission 15*, p. 5.

64 Professor Jacquie True, Monash University, in WPSAC, *Submission 15*, p. 4.

65 Ms Kerry Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 4.

66 Practices such as the matrilineal land ownership systems found throughout the region, and traditional practices wherein women's endorsement is necessary for a man to become a community leader. Ms Kerry Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 3.

women's absence from public decision-making and debate.⁶⁷ In Samoa, for example, a person can only stand for parliament if they have a matai title, and 'women make up only one in ten matai', while in Tonga, 'there are nine parliamentary seats reserved for nobles which can only be occupied by men'.⁶⁸

- 7.51 Ms Peteru, a former member of the Samoan Parliament, noted the importance of matai status and being involved in government for the empowerment of women:

Once you hold a matai title, and if you are involved in the government, the attitude is more like you are a chief. Of course they see that you are a woman, but it is not so much to do with that. People consider your position and the title itself and your involvement and the potential to contribute.⁶⁹

- 7.52 Ms Peteru also noted that Samoa had ratified CEDAW in 1994 and since then 'there have been many good developments in Samoa in regard to the advancement of the status of women', including the formation of a Ministry for Women's Affairs which:

... worked closely with non-governmental organisation towards the advancement of women on many fronts – not only in the development of rural activities, such as the weaving of fine nets, which are a highly prized commodity in our country, but also on the elimination of violence against women and the increase of members of parliament in parliament.⁷⁰

- 7.53 Ms Peteru further advised that:

In 2013, our Parliament passed the Constitution Amendment Act in which there was a quota for 10 per cent of parliamentary seats should be allocated for women members of parliament. We have a legislative assembly of 49 members. At the moment there are only two members of parliament. We have not at any time had more than five women members of parliament in one parliamentary session.⁷¹

67 Limiting values include 'gender stereotypes and a perception that politics is "men's work"', Ms Kerry Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 3.

68 Ms Kerry Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 3.

69 Ms Peteru, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 7 May 2015, p. 31.

70 Ms Peteru, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 7 May 2015, p. 28.

71 Ms Peteru, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 7 May 2015, p. 28.

- 7.54 SPC argued that while the Australian Government's Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative program has made progress for women's leadership across the region:

... in other programs ... we would argue that there has not been sufficient dedication and acknowledgement of human rights issues, specifically around the role of women and girls in decision-making processes and implementation.⁷²

Women in local government

- 7.55 A number of submissions drew attention to the disparity between support for gender equality at national level, and the impacts of the low representation of women in local government and provincial bodies.⁷³ It was argued that higher levels of representation at local level could provide opportunities to support positive change.⁷⁴

- 7.56 The SPC advised that Pacific women are better represented in local politics than at the national level:

If elected and appointed positions in local government are combined across the region (excluding the territories), there are over 7000 positions, an estimated 7.5% of which are held by women. If Papua New Guinea is excluded, there are over 900, of which an estimated 5.9% are held by women.⁷⁵

- 7.57 The SPC further observed that while this representation may remain tokenistic, local level election provides an important opportunity for women's leadership 'to raise awareness of gender issues, to involve women in making decisions concerning their basic living conditions, and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities'.⁷⁶

- 7.58 In contrast, the ANU's Ayu Wahyuningroem noted that while 'more women take important roles in politics and decision-making' in Indonesia, female empowerment in that country, is undermined at local level by culturally traditional regional authorities.⁷⁷

72 Referring to climate change by example, Mr Mark Atterton, Deputy Director, Regional Rights Resource Team, Human Rights program, SPC, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 35.

73 See below, for example, Appendix A, ANU Gender Institute, *Submission 63*, p. 11.

74 SPC, *Submission 24*, p. 25.

75 SPC, *Submission 24*, p. 25.

76 SPC, *Submission 24*, p. 25.

77 Appendix A: Ayu Wahyuningroem, 'Briefing on Women's Rights in Indonesia', ANU Gender Institute, *Submission 63*, pp. 11-12.

In regional autonomy context, where local governments have more authority to rule their own territories and local citizens, there are no less than 342 discriminatory policies against women's rights. In these places, local authorities justify their control, restriction and criminalization of women by using religion and morality arguments.⁷⁸

- 7.59 Ms Alzira Reis, Chief Executive Officer of the Alola Foundation, advised of a similar situation in Timor-Leste where women's national parliamentary representation has increased from 27 per cent to 38 per cent (at 2012), but only two per cent of local leaders from over 422 villages are women.⁷⁹ Alola's Australian Director Ms Nicole Bluett-Boyd advised that male domination at local level has resulted in poor responsiveness to female victims of domestic violence.⁸⁰
- 7.60 There were, however, reports of advances for women. Banteay Srei advised that in Cambodia a gender mainstreaming policy has contributed to a rise in women's representation in local level governance structures. Women held 30 per cent of appointed positions in village leadership and positions in Commune Councils, and the numbers of women in provincial and district councils had increased. There were also 214 women 'appointed as vice-governors for provincial and district administrations'.⁸¹

Women in the public sector

- 7.61 While the public sector is an important employer of women in Pacific island countries, most women are reported to occupy 'lower level positions.'⁸²
- 7.62 Coffey International advised of work done with the Australian Government under the Economic and Public Sector Program (EPSP) to improve gender targeted outcomes under government programs in PNG. As part of the EPSP, a Senior Women in the Public Sector Research Group

78 Appendix A: ANU Gender Institute, *Submission 63*, p. 11.

79 Ms Alzira Reis, Chief Executive Officer, Alola Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 43.

80 Ms Nicole Bluett-Boyd, Director, Alola Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 43.

81 Banteay Srei, *Submission 51*, p. 5.

82 Dr Priya Chattier, *Submission 55*, p. 5; SPC, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, 'PNG Men Champion Gender Equality' <www.pacificwomen.org/news/png-men-champion-gender-equality/> viewed 23 September 2015. Dr Chattier further notes that 'men outnumber women in paid employment outside the agricultural sector, approximately twice as many men than women.'

was established under the directorship of Dame Carol Kidu, and programs developed to coach, mentor and train women, and to encourage younger women to consider leadership roles in the public sector.⁸³

- 7.63 There were other reports of advances for women across the Pacific. Ms Peteru estimated that about 15 per cent of CEOs in the public service and in ministries of government in Samoa are women.⁸⁴
- 7.64 The SPC recorded anecdotal evidence of progress for women in senior roles in Pacific public administration, and a good representation of women in the sector in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau and Tuvalu. However, the submission also advised that this has coincided with reports of ‘high levels of harassment’ of women, attributed to the ‘renewed attention to women in decision-making and violence against women’.⁸⁵
- 7.65 The slow progress of women in public sector leadership and employment in some countries of the region was raised in several submissions. For example, the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality in Timor-Leste noted that while the Timorese civil service has more than tripled in size since 2001, the participation of women in the civil service declined from 25 per cent in 2001 to 21 per cent in 2013.⁸⁶
- 7.66 Banteay Srei commented on the comparatively low representation of women, at 34 per cent, in the public service in Cambodia, noting a need to support structural and attitudinal reforms as ‘existing women leaders still have limited capacity to effectively influence decisions and policies for a more gender equitable society’.⁸⁷
- 7.67 Banteay Srei recommended the Australian Government prioritise bilateral engagement with the Cambodian Government to address structural barriers to women’s representation in all appointed and elected roles. This could include approaches to address unequal responsibilities for unpaid care and gendered perceptions of leadership.⁸⁸
- 7.68 The SPC suggested more research and discussion to promote women’s participation in the public service, potentially involving public service commissions and regional training institutions, such as through the

83 Coffey International, *Submission 90*, pp. 10–11.

84 Ms Peteru, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 7 May 2015, p. 28.

85 SPC, *Submission 24*, p. 25.

86 Secretary of State for Promotion of Equality, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, *Submission 45*, p. 3.

87 Banteay Srei, *Submission 51*, p. 5.

88 Banteay Srei, *Submission 51*, p. 5.

University of the South Pacific which runs public-service training program supported by Australia.⁸⁹

- 7.69 The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) called on the Australian Parliament to annually review the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration Reports produced by the Forum Leaders to promote compliance.⁹⁰
- 7.70 The Institute of Human Security and Social Change took the view that all Australian government assisted measures should respond to the different needs of men and women, and demonstrate effective outcomes for both.⁹¹
- 7.71 Austraining International raised the possibility of requiring quotas to open opportunities for women across government departments specifically in leadership positions, suggesting in-country legislation could mandate a percentage of positions.⁹²

Women in the court system

- 7.72 The promotion of women in the judiciary and as local court officials was raised in evidence to the Committee as an important support to women's empowerment and the realisation of their human rights in the region. Dame Carol Kidu spoke of advances for women in PNG under a program which had increased the number of women on the bench:

The female magistracy has increased enormously. With our focus program even the number of female judges has increased and, hopefully, will continue to increase. I found that this whole focus area with the magistrates and also with female prosecutors and people that with that type of support, dare I say, they have done things that perhaps our male colleagues might not have done. The female public prosecutors, after the passage of the amendments to the rape act and things like that, they took it on themselves to produce a book ... There is a taking up of ownership once they see leadership, yes. Women at the local level in the magistrates courts, hopefully, will make a big difference because before they were very male dominated.⁹³

89 SPC, *Submission 24*, p. 25.

90 PIFS, *Submission 17*, p. 7.

91 The Institute for Human Security and Social Change, *Submission 41*, p. 3.

92 Recommendation in Austraining International, *Submission 67*, p. 5.

93 Dame Carol Kidu DBE, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 3 February 2014, p. 3.

7.73 Chief Justice the Hon. Diana Bryant and Executive Officer Ms Liesha Lister of the Family Court of Australia (FCA) advised of FCA training and mentoring programs for regional judicial and community leaders, being conducted under the Australian Leadership Fund to assist participants to 'understand the way courts can reduce barriers to women accessing the courts to deal with family violence issues'.⁹⁴ The Chief Justice reported, however, that decreases in the foreign aid budget meant that: 'We now have to do more with less'.⁹⁵ Funding is currently being sought to ensure family court judges from the Pacific and PNG can attend the forthcoming international Family Justice conference in Sydney.⁹⁶

7.74 The AVI referred to the Diploma in Leadership, Governance and Human Rights at the University of the South Pacific which aims to inspire and empower the region's future leaders:

The diploma meets a recognised need for knowledgeable people in the areas of leadership, governance and human rights. The curriculum acknowledges the tensions between custom and modern outlooks on human rights, including the rights of women and young people. Financial support and scholarships for the diploma specifically target women and other under-represented groups in Pacific Island communities.⁹⁷

7.75 The Divine Word University's Chancellor Father Jan Czuba saw considerable benefits in programs to support women victims of domestic violence at district level courts:

What could immediately be done is to provide special training at district level in the provinces for maybe a district court or something like that so a female could go there, testify and get support. Because quite often they will not go to the provincial town because it is too far. The husband will find out before she gets to the provincial town, she will be stopped and may be beaten more. I think in these two areas there are issues which could be immediately addressed by providing expertise and training at the

94 The Hon Diana Bryant, Chief Justice, and Ms Liesha Lister, Executive Officer, Family Court of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 23.

95 Chief Justice Bryant, Family Court of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 27.

96 Commonwealth and Common Law International Family Justice Conference Chief Justice Bryant, Family Court of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 29.

97 AVI, *Submission 43*, p. 6.

district level and by having a district court, which is more objective, to look at human rights and female rights.⁹⁸

Women's leadership through women's organisations and networks

7.76 Role modelling was highlighted in evidence as an important way to build women and girls' confidence to lead and to more actively engage in household and community decision-making. As the Centre for Social Change explained, 'girls need positive female role models in positions of leadership, so that they too can envision themselves in similar positions'.⁹⁹

7.77 Oaktree highlighted the benefits of its local partnership model to create opportunities for mentoring and role modelling for girls:

... we have also found that local leadership is particularly useful for the young girls' we work with as they can easily seek mentoring and advice from local project staff and trained local leaders who understand their language and needs.¹⁰⁰

7.78 Youth With A Mission (YWAM) sails an Australian funded medical and training ship to remote parts of PNG.¹⁰¹ Dr Sarah Dunn reported on the positive impacts of these visits on local women:

We have had some really stunning feedback about the role modelling ... The community come and the LLG [Local Level Government] president will speak, and then our representative will speak, and that will be a woman ... we have had a lot of strong feedback saying: "That's incredible. You've had a woman speak in front of all those men ... Sailing into a place with a woman captain is a huge statement. Without having to have a placard, it is a huge practical statement."¹⁰²

7.79 Dr Jeni Klugman referred to the results of her research showing positive impacts for girls' status and aspirations following the introduction of reserved positions for women on village councils in India:

A 1993 law reserved leadership positions for women in randomly selected village councils. Using 8453 surveys of adolescents aged

98 Father Jan Czuba, Vice Chancellor and President, Divine Word University, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 8.

99 Centre for Social Change, *Submission 48*, p. 2.

100 Oaktree, *Submission 11*, p. 6.

101 The Hon Mike Reynolds, Australian Patron, YWAM Medical Ships Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 18 June 2015, p. 1.

102 Dr Sarah Dunn, Partner Relations and Field Strategy, YWAM Medical Ships Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 18 June 2015 p. 5.

11 to 15 and their parents in 495 villages, we found that, relative to villages in which such positions were never reserved, the gender gap in aspirations closed by 20% in parents and 32% in adolescents in villages assigned a female leader for two election cycles. The gender gap in adolescent educational attainment was erased, and girls spent less time on household chores.¹⁰³

7.80 Dame Carol Kidu referred to a young Fijian woman, an aspiring politician, as a model for the future, noting the woman's view: 'That time is nearly over' for the 'three stools' of male power – the councillor, the government official and pastor – in community decision-making.¹⁰⁴

7.81 In evidence to the inquiry, women's organisations and networks were also cited as key vehicles for women to develop and exercise leadership skills. The IWDA observed:

Women's organisations play a vital role in enabling those without power, status and rights to have a voice and advocate for basic rights. Women's rights organisations are instrumental in strengthening women's ability to realise their rights in practice, and informing policy making, and holding governments accountable over the long term.¹⁰⁵

7.82 Rebecca Lim and colleagues referred to bodies such as the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP) which work at country level to close the gap between member states' compliance and their obligations under the CEDAW, and at global level, for example, to enhance the effectiveness of treaty bodies such as the Gender Equality Architecture Reforms and Human Right Council.¹⁰⁶

7.83 Professor True referred to the potential of women's activism through local organisations as an alternative to formal representation within the region, observing:

There are significant obstacles to women's equal political participation in the Indo-Pacific but some encouraging signs [are] coming from the region. For example, women's mobilization about electoral systems and politics through political parties, civil society, and church and other religious organizations can build alternative pathways for their political representation.¹⁰⁷

103 Dr J Klugman, *Exhibit 78*: 2012, p. 1.

104 Dame Carol Kidu, Private capacity, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 3 February 2015, p. 14.

105 IWDA, *Submission 32*, p. 15.

106 Rebecca Lim *et al*, *Submission 70*, p. 6.

107 Professor True in WPSAC, *Submission 15*, p. 4.

- 7.84 The GLASS Research Institute referred to the work of Rede Feto in Timor-Leste. This organisation provides training, information, support and opportunities for high level advocacy through an annual National Women's Congress to a national network of 24 affiliated women's rights groups.¹⁰⁸
- 7.85 Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA reported that, in Melanesia, women's only groups are vital preparation for mixed gender political activity:
- Findings indicate that women-only community groups (including church, NGO supported and locally organised groups) were an important form of economic and political empowerment for women, and as an intermediate step toward greater participation in mixed sex collective action groups ...¹⁰⁹
- 7.86 Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA also suggested that collective action by women has the potential to bring about changes in women's leadership and influence within communities, while minimising conflict in the process.¹¹⁰
- 7.87 DFAT's Ms Sally Moyle, Acting Assistant Secretary and Principal Gender Specialist, Human Rights and Gender Equality Branch, commented further on the utility of women's groups to nurture change in culturally sensitive areas such as gender empowerment. She advised:
- For example, in the Pacific, for many years now we have funded a select group of women's organisations that were, for a long time, voices in the wilderness. But they were working with the communities to build the constituents for change and so that they could bring the pressure to government themselves. We knew that, from the community, women were expressing the needs for the things that we were proposing.¹¹¹
- 7.88 DFAT's submission also cited evidence supporting the view that women in many Pacific countries prefer holding leaders to account and having a voice in decision-making fora, to taking on formal leadership roles.¹¹² In this regard, the IWDA also noted research indicating the importance of

108 'Women's Leadership, Case Study: Women's Movement in Timor-Leste', in GLASS Research Unit, *Submission 7*, p. 15.

109 Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA, *Submission 68*, p. 17.

110 Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA, *Submission 68*, p. 17.

111 Ms Sally Moyle, Acting Assistant Secretary and Principal Gender Specialist, Human Rights and Gender Equality Branch, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 17 June 2014, p. 6.

112 DFAT, *Submission 27*, p. 17, and see Footnote 47, referring to the recent review of the Pacific Leadership Program.

young women's organisations like the YWCA and church-based youth groups to promote women's leadership in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Bougainville, Tonga and Samoa.¹¹³

7.89 However, the Institute for Human Security and Social Change suggested that the lack of a cohesive feminist movement or network across the Pacific region remained a problem:

While there are many relatively small disparate women's groups in the Pacific, the lack of a cohesive movement constrains their policy engagement and political influence.¹¹⁴

7.90 The Institute recommended the Australian Government focus on providing opportunities for women and men to participate in regional fora, and mobilise existing funding to support women and girls gain a collective voice through active coalitions and networks across the region.¹¹⁵

7.91 Ms Elaine Pearson of Human Rights Watch emphasised the importance of empowering local civil society groups and women's rights activists to advocate for public discussion of human rights issues in Burma, Indonesia, Brunei,¹¹⁶ and in Afghanistan.¹¹⁷ Amnesty International's Ms Sophie Nicolle supported this view.¹¹⁸ She recommended the Australian Government should: 'directly invest in the empowerment of women's organisations to allow their voices to be heard.'¹¹⁹

7.92 The IWDA noted that in 2012 only 0.67 per cent of Australia's 'total sector allocable aid' was invested in women's equality organisations. The Agency recommended that 'the Australian Government should significantly increase its funding of women's organisations in the Indian Ocean-Asia-Pacific regions'.¹²⁰

7.93 The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) referred to the 58th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women which

113 IWDA, *Submission 32*, p. 15.

114 The Institute for Human Security and Social Change, *Submission 41*, pp. 1-2.

115 Recommendations 2 and 6, in the Institute for Human Security and Social Change, *Submission 41*, pp. 3, 4.

116 Ms Elaine Pearson, Australian Director, Human Rights Watch (HRW) *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 August 2014, p. 4, and see HRW, *Submission 19*, *passim*.

117 Ms Pearson, HRW, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 August 2014, p. 8.

118 Ms Nicolle, Amnesty International, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 August 2014, p. 8.

119 Ms Nicolle, Amnesty International, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 August 2014, p. 4; and see Amnesty International, *Submission 74*, pp. 16 and 17 for recommendations in support of women's groups and human rights defenders.

120 Recommendation 16, in IWDA, *Submission 32*, pp. 16, 17.

encouraged governments to increase resources and support for local, national, regional and global women's and civil society organisations. The AHRC suggested the Australian Government could 'further support and focus needs ... on the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls, including the protection of the rights of women human rights defenders'.¹²¹

Parliamentary leadership programs

- 7.94 DFAT advised that Australia provides mentorship and training for women aspiring to leadership roles within the Pacific region, most prominently under the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women) initiative.¹²²
- 7.95 The Pacific Women's initiative is an integrated program promoting women's political, economic, social empowerment and quality of life across 14 Pacific Island countries.¹²³
- 7.96 DFAT advised that two key initiatives for women's leadership advanced under the program are:
- the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Project (PWPP), which works to 'facilitates dialogue, mentoring and training between Australian and Pacific Islands women MPs and parliamentary staff to improve the capacities of parliaments to address gender equality issues'; and
 - the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) which works 'to strengthen women's leadership and women's groups and coalitions to work politically to influence change and demand better policies and programs.'¹²⁴
- 7.97 The Department of the House of Representatives reported on the activities conducted under the PWPP, which began in 2013 and will run until 2017. The Department advised:
- In broad terms its purpose is to build the capacity of women Members of Parliament in the Pacific, their institutions, and their staff, so that gender equality issues are better addressed by parliaments.¹²⁵

121 The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), *Submission 21*, p. 2.

122 DFAT, *Supplementary Submission 27.2*, p. 25.

123 DFAT, *Supplementary Submission 27.2*, p. 25.

124 DFAT, *Supplementary Submission 27.2*, pp. 26–27.

125 Clerk of the House of Representatives, Australian Parliament, *Submission 92*, p. 1.

- 7.98 The Department's submission described dialogue activities conducted over 2013-14, including parliamentary exchanges, conferences and regional fora involving a broad spectrum of Members and staff from parliaments across the Pacific region.¹²⁶
- 7.99 DFAT's documentation of PWPP events recorded agreement on a ten point strategic plan to advance gender equality in Pacific parliaments as a key outcome of the Clerks' retreat held in August 2014.¹²⁷
- 7.100 The Department of the House of Representatives further advised that, at the time of writing, the major activity conducted in 2015 had been the annual Forum held in Suva over April and May, and hosted by the Parliament of Fiji. The Forum focused on family violence and was attended by 63 participants from the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Australia and New Zealand.¹²⁸
- 7.101 The Department also noted that:
- ... challenges and lessons continue to be learnt. Despite the great goodwill and generous approach to the project by all participants in its activities, there are undeniable challenges, some of general application, and some more particular to the Pacific context.¹²⁹
- 7.102 A particular success highlighted by the Department was the PWPP Project Learning Program on gender equality in Pacific parliaments:
- The program is designed to help members of parliament, both men and women and particularly first-time members, to understand the systems and procedures of their parliaments, so that they are well-placed to make full use of them. The program comprises five modules exploring gender equality in parliament (on culture and leadership, politics and parliament, parliamentary procedure, making equality work, and the practicalities of political life in the Pacific).¹³⁰

126 Clerk of the House of Representatives, Australian Parliament, *Submission 92*, pp. 2-4. Fora held in Sydney (9-10 February 2013), Nuku'alofa, (Tonga 19-21 July 2014), and a Clerk's retreat in Katoomba (29-31 August 2014); for detail see DFAT *Supplementary Submission 27.3: Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Outcomes Statements*.

127 DFAT, *Supplementary Submission 27.3: Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Clerk's Retreat Katoomba, NSW, Australia 29-31 August 2014 Outcome Statement*, pp. 1-2.

128 Clerk of the House of Representatives, *Submission 92*, pp. 3-4.

129 Clerk of the House of Representatives, *Submission 92*, p. 6.

130 Clerk of the House of Representatives, *Submission 92*, pp. 6-7.

7.103 Dr Clark of PacificPlus Consulting saw merit in continuing support for the PWPP, while also advocating for a greater focus on support for women's political leadership. He noted:

I recently provided a report to the UNDP Pacific Centre to assist them to develop their 2014-2017 strategy to increase women's political leadership. The mapping of activities in the Pacific region revealed that there is very little work being undertaken with political parties, yet they play a vital role in many Pacific countries both inside and outside parliament in supporting the increased political leadership of women.¹³¹

7.104 Dr Clark recommended funding the work of the Centre for Democratic Institutions and reinstating funding to the Australian Political Parties for Democracy Program to support engagement between political parties, women candidates and MPs, and to increase political representation of women in the Asia Pacific region.¹³²

7.105 DFAT noted a range of small to larger scale leadership investments around the Pacific region, including a leadership evaluation in PNG with the World Bank, and a partnership with the University of Queensland to promote electoral education and candidate training.¹³³ Further afield, the Department highlighted work in Indonesia under the flagship development program MAMPU (Empowering Indonesian Women for Poverty Reduction) which has provided leadership upskilling opportunities for over 15 000 women to gain confidence to speak in public and be leaders in their communities.¹³⁴

7.106 The Committee was also advised of a wide range of political leadership development programs being delivered regionally by other agencies.¹³⁵ The Asia Foundation, in particular, reported extensive work over two decades through its Women's Empowerment Program.¹³⁶ The submission advised of leadership and candidate training for women conducted at national and local level with a focus on training, networking, legislation

131 Dr Leslie Clark, PacificPlus Consulting, *Submission 30*, p. 6.

132 Recommendations 3 and 4. Dr Leslie Clark, PacificPlus Consulting, *Submission 30*, pp. 6-7.

133 Funded over 2013-16 and 2015-16 respectively, DFAT *Supplementary Submission 27. 3: Table: 'Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development – Regional and Bilateral Activities: Contracted Activities'*.

134 DFAT, *Supplementary Submission 27.2*, pp. 43-44.

135 For example, the Saviya Development Foundation (SDF) in Sri Lanka, in Rebecca Lim *et al*, *Submission 70*, p. 7 and Oxfam in Zimbabwe, Oxfam Australia, *Submission 13*, p. 11; IWDA in Myanmar, *Submission 32*, p. 16.

136 Headquartered in San Francisco, the Foundation has offices in 18 countries in the Asia Pacific region and Washington, DC. The Asia Foundation, *Submission 57*, p. 1.

drafting and budget analysis in a sequence of activities and events held in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Thailand, Mongolia and Indonesia.¹³⁷

- 7.107 The Australian National Committee for UN Women's submission reported on its investment in training of women candidates in Pacific Island countries under a suite of initiatives, including successful leadership pilots in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. It advised:

UN Women's programs have shown that relatively small investments, when effectively targeted and designed with substantial input from communities, and particularly women in the communities, provide robust and sustainable returns ...¹³⁸

- 7.108 The Committee for UN Women requested additional funding to expand program delivery, including for new services under the Advancing Gender Justice in the Pacific project to provide ongoing professional support to strong candidates and women elected to Pacific governments at national, provincial and/or municipal levels.¹³⁹

Affirmative action measures

- 7.109 The ANU Gender Institute noted that the CEDAW provides for affirmative action to support women's political participation, which may include:

... temporary special measures designed to accelerate de facto equality such as quotas in employment, education, financial services and politics to overcome historical barriers.¹⁴⁰

- 7.110 Part 1, Article 4 of the CEDAW states:

Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures

137 The Asia Foundation, *Submission 57*, pp. 4–5.

138 Australian National Committee for UN Women, *Submission 10*, p. 3 and *Supplementary Submission 10.1*, p. 2.

139 Australian National Committee for UN Women, *Supplementary Submission 10.1*, pp. 1–3.

140 ANU Gender Institute, *Submission 63*, p. 8.

shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.¹⁴¹

- 7.111 Dr Klugman observed that quotas are increasingly deployed to promote women into higher level positions more broadly – in the corporate world and in science as well as politics, noting:

Policy-makers hope that quotas will have long-term effects on women's labor market outcomes over and above the immediate impact on leaders' gender balance, because the first women who become leaders may shape both parents' and children's beliefs about what women can achieve, through their policies and/or through a direct role model effect.¹⁴²

- 7.112 The ANU's Ms Baker suggested CEDAWs 'special measures' can 'significantly alter the face of power in male-dominated political systems'.¹⁴³

Quotas and reserved seats

- 7.113 As noted in the section on national parliaments above, a number of countries have introduced participation targets as an incentive to promote female representation in political parties and the public sector. The potential to leverage women's representation in government using quota and reserved seat systems was a subject of much commentary in the evidence.¹⁴⁴
- 7.114 The Asia Foundation advised that gender quotas for candidates and reserved seats had secured women's representation in 33 per cent of seats in local government in India, and in the National Parliament of Timor-Leste and in Nepal's Constituent Assembly, with 38.5 per cent and 33.2 per cent of seats respectively held by women.¹⁴⁵ Professor True reported success using 'gender quotas and reservations' at national and local levels in Afghanistan, Mongolia, New Caledonia, and the non-independent

141 CEDAW Part 1, <www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#part2> viewed 23 September 2015.

142 Dr J Klugman, *Exhibit 78*: 2012, pp. 1–2.

143 Ms Kerry Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 6.

144 See for detail, Ms Kerry Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 5 and below.

145 Asia Foundation, *Submission 57*, p. 4.

territories of French Polynesia.¹⁴⁶ GLASS research in Bangladesh also supported the effectiveness of quotas.¹⁴⁷

7.115 DFAT advised that it is currently working with individual governments in the Pacific region to support legislation for reserved seats.¹⁴⁸ The Department also recorded the implementation of quotas and related measures in the region to date:

- in June 2013, the Samoan Parliament amended the Constitution to reserve five out of the 49 parliamentary seats for women electoral candidates;
- in May 2013 the Parliament of Vanuatu amended the Municipalities Act to reserve one seat in every ward for women; and
- [q]uotas have also been used in an attempt to increase women's representation at the sub-national level in Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu and Samoa.¹⁴⁹

7.116 The ANU's Ms Baker analysed the relative effectiveness of the various mechanisms used in the Pacific region: party list quotas, reserved seats, and the 'safety net' system. She concluded that the party list quota deployed in the French Pacific has had the most dramatic impact, noting that reserved seats can be seen as a constraint rather than an incentive. She cited the Samoan 'safety net system' as a possible alternative, as the measures only activate if women's representation does not meet the set threshold.¹⁵⁰

7.117 In evidence to the Committee Ms Peteru described the Samoan reserve system method, noting it has wide support within government and across the community:

We are not aiming for just five women, because we have 45 members in the parliament. Ten per cent means that five women will be chosen. The process as to how they will be chosen is first. They will run with all the other candidates in the election. When the results are out, if no women are elected on the first past the post count, then, the electoral officer will choose the five women

146 Professor True in WPSAC, *Submission 15*, p. 4.

147 GLASS Research Unit, *Submission 7*, p. 16.

148 Ms Tracey Newbury, Director, Gender Equality and Disability Inclusiveness Section, Pacific Regional Branch, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 17 June 2014, p. 5; see also DFAT *Supplementary Submission 27*. 3: Table: 'Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development – Regional and Bilateral Activities: Contracted Activities'.

149 DFAT, *Submission 27*, pp. 16–17.

150 Ms Kerryn Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, pp. 4–5.

who ran in the election who have the highest percentage vote within their own constituencies.¹⁵¹

- 7.118 Ms Baker suggested '[w]here special measures are not politically viable, candidate training and voter awareness can also result in greater women's representation.'¹⁵²

The importance of male leadership on change

- 7.119 Measures to harness the influence of supportive men in leadership roles were explored during the inquiry, with 'male champions of change' initiatives being cited as useful to promote acceptance of women's empowerment across the region.¹⁵³
- 7.120 Program Director for Male Champions of Change, Ms Janet Menzies, provided evidence to the Committee on Australia's Male Champions of Change (MCC) model. She explained that the MCC recruits male leaders – Australian and international corporate leaders, senior public servants along with 'CEOs of all the sports clubs [such as] AFL, swimming, tennis and others' – to drive change for female empowerment with women peers, gender experts and employers.¹⁵⁴ Ms Menzies advised that the MCC had attracted strong international interest when launched at the UN women's empowerment conference in March 2015.¹⁵⁵
- 7.121 The SPC's Mr Romulo Nayacalevu considered that the concept could work well in the Pacific nations, where hierarchy and position is important. He reported on a successful workshop using a Samoan rugby side as 'champions for change' on domestic violence which was attended by the chiefs, the matai and church leaders.¹⁵⁶
- 7.122 Dame Carol Kidu, reflecting on changing attitudes in PNG, recalled a conservative parliamentary colleague whose modern ambitions for his daughters were suggestive of the shift:

... there was one very outspoken highlands man, and highlands is regarded as being very male chauvinistic and male dominated. He

151 Ms Peteru, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 7 May 2015, p. 30.

152 Ms Kerry Baker, Research Fellow, Pacific Politics, ANU, *Submission 93*, p. 6.

153 Dr Harris Rimmer, ANU Gender Institute, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 23 September 2015, p. 6, Centre for Social Change, *Submission 48*, p. 2.

154 Ms Janet Menzies, Program Director, Male Champions of Change, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 7 May 2015, pp. 12–14.

155 Ms Menzies, Male Champions of Change, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 7 May 2015, p. 14.

156 Mr Romulo Nayacalevu, Senior Human Rights Adviser, Regional Rights Resource Team, Human Rights Program, SPC, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 40.

stood up and made a brilliant speech. He said: "I have only daughters. I want my daughter to have equal opportunity, to stand in this parliament like I do."¹⁵⁷

- 7.123 The SPC's Ms Neomai Maravuakula agreed that having supportive males at parliamentary level is crucial, given very low female representation:

We need these male champions because, if legislation is being tabled through parliament, we need these champions in those positions. I think it is important to be raising awareness with them so that they are clear about the issues and so that they themselves are able to lobby within those spaces.¹⁵⁸

- 7.124 However as Dr Clark observed:

... until male leaders at all levels commit to introducing and implementing policies and legislation that will lead to real changes in the current cultural and institutional environment the progress will continue to be very slow.¹⁵⁹

- 7.125 The SPC submission noted that, despite high level support for women's empowerment among male political leaders, this is not being implemented as practical policy commitments.¹⁶⁰ For example in relation to leadership in the Council of Regional Organisations (CROP):

CROP agencies do not, in general, prioritise human rights and gender equality. None are led by women, only three have women in executive roles, and women fill less than half of all management positions. Just two have full-time gender positions, with relatively small and restrictive annual budgets. None of the other CROP agencies have gender and human rights experts among their staff, nor is this expertise involved in high-level planning and policy discussions and gender and human rights perspectives are not systematically mainstreamed into sectoral policies and programmes. Despite long-standing gender commitments through mechanisms like the CROP Gender Strategy (1998, revised 2005), implementation has been extremely weak and there are no monitoring or accountability systems in place.¹⁶¹

157 Dame Carol Kidu, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 3 February 2015, p. 8.

158 Ms Neomai Maravuakula, Human Rights Officer, Regional Rights Resource Team, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 6 May 2015, p. 40.

159 Dr Lesley Clark, Director, PacificPlus Consulting, *Submission 30*, p. 3.

160 See discussion SPC, *Submission 24*, pp. 16–17.

161 SPC, *Submission 24*, p. 18.

- 7.126 The SPC suggested that a high level collective commitment from members of the CROP and from all development partners would be critical to ensure gender equality is enshrined as a core. The Secretariat also recommended that all regional mechanisms, including the Pacific Framework for Regionalism, must have specific measurable gender equality goals and should involve the participation of relevant experts to drive necessary reforms.¹⁶²

Committee comment

- 7.127 While there are positive developments discussed in evidence indicating that women's participation as decision makers is improving, in many countries women and girls still face significant resistance to their participation as decision makers, both at home and in the broader community.
- 7.128 The Committee was impressed by work being done by government agencies such as ACIAR, church agencies and non-government organisations that have focussed on promoting women and girls' empowerment and agency for leadership, including at the local level. The Committee supports investment in these models, and in innovation which encourages acceptance of community transformation at home and in the village.
- 7.129 During the inquiry, the Australian Government's cross regional work under the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women) initiative, and the Empowering Indonesian Women for Poverty Reduction (MAMPU) program in Indonesia, was widely commended for providing culturally attuned opportunities for women to build skills for leadership. Despite this range of work, however, it was suggested to the Committee that a more distinct focus on, and investment in, leadership measures is required.
- 7.130 The important role that women's organisations, such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, play in defending women's rights and training local women as agents of change across the region was a reiterated theme. DFAT, for example, referred to its reliance on these organisations to drive change in sensitive areas such as gender policy.

¹⁶² SPC, *Submission 24*, p. 18.

- 7.131 Support for women's advocacy groups to assist women taking first steps into public life is clearly important. The need for investment in these organisations and networks is further highlighted by the suggestion that in some countries across the Indo-Pacific region, women's organisations are the focus of violence and attacks.
- 7.132 The persistently low level of representation of Pacific women in national and local government, and in Pacific regional bodies, is of concern to the Committee. The problem carries across the Indo-Pacific region, where chronically low levels of female representation at local and provincial levels in some nations appear to undermine women's human rights, access to justice, and political and social participation.
- 7.133 The Committee notes that DFAT is supporting work to enable more women to run for parliaments in the Pacific region, and that work being done at national government levels under the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Program and the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) appears to be well received. Noting the Pacific region is a development priority, the Committee considers that programs could be trialled to provide opportunities for women candidates to train and gain leadership skills at all levels of government, which may include partnership arrangements with parliaments, political studies departments, or parliamentary research centres across the region.
- 7.134 Measures to promote women in leadership in the public sector and business are also a priority. The Committee sees merit in proposals to build cross-regional professional development programs and networking opportunities, particularly for young professionals. There is potential to develop these programs as part of the broader strategy developed under the PLP and, in other parts of the region, to model specific schemes on approaches adopted through MAMPU, which uses regional expertise and networking to advance programs.
- 7.135 There is also potential to develop a broader inter-regional parliamentary engagement which promotes the advantages of women's social and economic empowerment in the course of parliamentary exchanges, visits and fora under the international programs run by the Australian Parliament.
- 7.136 Finally, an important point made during the inquiry was the need to ensure that male leaders in the region are sympathetic to and supportive of women and girls' advancement; that they will validate and not deprecate the effectiveness of women who achieve decision-making roles in their parliaments and communities.

Recommendations

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise girls' and women's leadership and political participation, and integrate these as a priority across the aid program.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government should:

- increase support to organisations such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, which are able to focus on co-ordinating the priorities of countries in the region to address the needs of women and girls;
- take a stronger stance in the protection of high profile women and organisations advocating for the human rights and empowerment of women and girls;
- fund women's advocacy organisations working in the Indo-Pacific region where women leaders are most at risk;
- continue to support capacity building in parliaments, the judiciary, and accountability bodies in the region to support women's promotion into leadership roles; and
- advocate at an international level to promote women's empowerment for leadership as a priority goal within the global development agenda.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increasingly promote women's leadership at all levels of government, in business and the public sector, through flagship gender programs such as the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative, and trial pilot models in other countries of the region, which:

- provide opportunities for women candidates to train and gain leadership skills at all levels of government, including by

- investing in partnerships with parliamentary and political studies and research centres;
- foster research, networking and mentoring opportunities across the professions, public sector and business in partnership with governments, peak bodies, the private sector and civil society, with some targeted to engage young women;
 - promote women's leadership under country plans, through relevant Memoranda of Understanding, and in contracts with private sector partners and non-government organisations; and
 - conduct gender analysis and develop individual and longitudinal assessment criteria to better assess outcomes of scholarships and leadership mentoring programs to increase aid effectiveness.

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to develop and invest in gender awareness components in programs targeting male leaders, including:

- through international parliamentary visits, delegations and exchanges, and as an adjunct to the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships and other regional leadership initiatives; and
- by supporting 'champions for change' initiatives as community outreach through local leadership bodies, organisations and faith-based groups as part of the women's leadership empowerment agenda.

