
**INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO THE
PRIORITIES OF PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND THE
PACIFIC REGION**

SUBMISSION

JULY 2024

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
DEFENCE AND TRADE**

INTRODUCTION

IWDA is an Australia-based organisation, resourcing women's rights organisations primarily in Asia and the Pacific, and making our own contribution to global feminist movements. We are proud of our long-lasting partnerships with women's rights organisations in the Pacific. We currently partner with 15 organisations in the Pacific, who are based in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, and Vanuatu. IWDA can support the Committee to connect with these leading women's rights organisations and advocates to participate in hearings, on request.

We are pleased to present this submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's inquiry into Australia's response to the priorities of Pacific Island countries and the Pacific region.

Listening to, understanding and responding to the priorities of diverse Pacific voices is a critical priority for Australia's approach to the region. This submission provides a feminist analysis of areas relevant to the Terms of Reference of this inquiry, drawn from the priorities of feminist organisations and movements in the region.

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Ensure government-to-government relationships are complemented by the voices of diverse civil society, including women's rights and feminist organisations, LGBTIQ+ organisations and Organisations of People with Disability (OPDs).

Recommendation 2: This inquiry should hold multiple in person hearings in different locations across the Pacific to facilitate a diversity of civil society voices.

Recommendations 3: Commit at least 5% of ODA to be delivered through women's rights organisations (CRS Sector Code 15170), prioritising core, flexible and multi-year funding mechanisms.

Recommendation 4: Maintain and grow Australia's investments in gender data broadly, and particularly in individual-level, gender-sensitive measurement of and multidimensional poverty, including resourcing coalitions across government and civil society to support uptake and use.

Recommendation 5: Apply a 'do no harm' approach as a minimum standard to Australia's trade and investment with the Pacific, and move towards comprehensive feminist analysis of all economic policy, in consultation with diverse Pacific women.

Recommendation 6: Australia should work with multilateral creditors, bilateral creditors and private sector to agree on mechanisms to address current and future debt crises, such as by establishing an automatic mechanism for debt service suspension following a natural disaster or other shock, developing a global approach to debt relief and restructuring for heavily indebted countries.

Recommendation 7: Commit to a 75% reduction in Australia's emissions by 2030 (based on 2005 levels) in the next round of Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commitments in 2025.

Recommendation 8: Urgently phase out all domestic and international funding for fossil fuel subsidies.

Recommendation 9: Take immediate steps to meet Australia's \$4 billion annual fair share of climate finance before 2025, and commit an additional, initial contribution of \$100m to the Loss & Damage fund.

Recommendation 10: Demonstrate climate leadership by supporting Pacific Island Countries' call for an ambitious NCQG beyond 2025 – in line with the trillions of dollars needed to support mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage – which can be scaled up in future years in line with need.

Recommendation 11: Allocate \$300m over 4 years to establish a gender-transformative climate adaptation fund, ensuring that Australia's climate finance is accessible to Women's Rights Organisations working at the intersection of gender equality and climate justice.

Recommendation 12: Explore new funding mechanisms which advance an approach to decolonise partnership, taking steps to minimise the inherent power dynamics and amplify the strengths of local partners.

Recommendation 13: Rebalance Australia's approach to risk and compliance, recognising that under investment in local WROs and feminist movements, who are the most effective partners on gender equality, is a critical risk in itself.

Recommendation 14: Invest in the capacity of DFAT to actively manage tailored partnership arrangements.

1. PACIFIC WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND FEMINIST MOVEMENT PRIORITIES

This section addresses TOR 1 of the Inquiry:

1. Identify the key priorities for Pacific Island countries and the Pacific region.
 - a. Evaluate the key concerns and aspirations of Pacific nations regarding their economic, environmental, and social development.
 - b. Examine the role and capability of Pacific regional architecture and agencies, including in the delivery of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific, and the contributions of external partners to regional development and stability.

1.1 Support the participation of diverse Pacific voices in determining Pacific priorities

The Australian Government's primary relationships with Pacific Island Countries and regional mechanisms naturally occurs at the government-to-government level. While Pacific governments play an important role in the democratic system in terms of representing the priorities of the region, it is equally important for Australia to engage with civil society – including women's rights and feminist organisations, LGBTIQ+ organisations and Organisations of People with Disability (OPDs) – to ensure a diversity of views is informing Australia's approach to supporting the economic, environment and social development of the Pacific. This is particularly important given women's political representation in the Pacific is amongst the lowest in the world at just 6.9%.¹ This means government-to-government dialogue is often missing critical perspectives.

We welcome the Committee's plan to consult with representatives from the region, and encourage the Committee to travel to and hold hearings in multiple locations across the Pacific in order to facilitate access to the inquiry for diverse groups. This is critical to avoid privileging the views of stakeholders based in central locations over others.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the work of women's rights organisations is demanding and under-resourced, leaving them with limited capacity to engage with consultations from international partners. This is exacerbated where partner governments such as Australia have shown mixed results in terms of acting on the feedback provided in previous consultations and inquiries, undermining confidence that participation will lead to tangible results.

To ensure organisations are resourced to participate in consultations such as this one, the Australian Government should increase core, flexible, long-term funding to women's rights organisations and movements.² These groups currently receive less than 0.5% of Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA), based on the OECD DAC CRS Sector Code 15170.³ Raising this to just 5% would make a significant contribution to shifting the dial on gender equality outcomes, and ensure diverse Pacific women's voices can be elevated and shared with partners like Australia.

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Recommendation 2: This inquiry should hold multiple in person hearings in different locations across the Pacific to facilitate a diversity of civil society voices.

Recommendations 3: Commit at least 5% of ODA to be delivered through women's rights organisations (CRS Sector Code 15170), prioritising core, flexible and multi-year funding mechanisms.

1.2 Build from existing articulations of women's rights and feminist movement priorities for the Pacific

Respecting the time and expertise of women's rights and feminist movement actors means engaging with the priorities they have already determined. This section summarises recent platforms and priorities which have been collectively determined by Pacific feminist movements.

¹ (Interparliamentary Union 2024)

² (Miller and Jones 2019; Office of Development Effectiveness 2014) p 32-34.

³ (OECD 2022)

The Pacific Feminist Forum is a space for women's rights activists and feminist movements across the region to acknowledge, recognise and celebrate achievements, in order to re-energise themselves to drive transformative change across the Pacific.⁴ Participants at the inaugural Pacific Feminist Forum in 2016 created and endorsed the *Charter of Pacific Feminist Principles*, which sets out collective principles that are key to the work of Pacific Feminists.⁵ The 2nd Pacific Feminist Forum in 2019 produced the *Pacific Feminist Charter Action Plan*, which builds on the *Charter* and sets out a collective pathway for action.⁶ The 3rd Forum held in 2023 built on 11 National Feminist Forums (held in: Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Palau, West Papua, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, New Caledonia, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Fiji, and Samoa) to ensure representation of voices from across the region. It produced an outcomes statement outlining 40 years of Pacific feminist organising, and making detailed recommendations against 8 priority areas.

Box 1: Priorities of the 3rd Pacific Feminist Forum Outcome Statement: Pacific Feminist Strategies for Liberation: An Urgent Call to Action⁷

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence and violence against women and girls in all their diversities

- Pacific women's representation deficit, and toward decision-making and leadership
- Climate justice, disaster response, ecological and biodiversity protection
- Indigenisation, Decolonisation, Resistance and Independence Struggles
- Indentured labourers, Girmitya, Blackbirders and descendants
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Transformative Pacific feminist resourcing
- Information, media and communication

The full text of the Outcomes Statement is included at Annex B

In the lead up to Women Deliver 2023 – one of the largest, multisectoral conferences in the world focusing on advancing gender equality – the Oceanic Pacific region hosted two convenings in Pacific Harbour, Fiji and Melbourne, Australia. The Oceanic Pacific Regional Outcomes Statement – collectively negotiated and agreed by participants – identifies 12 priority themes for those working for gender equality across the region.

Box 2: Priorities of the Oceanic Pacific Regional Outcomes Statement⁸

- Indigenous solidarity
- Climate justice
- Decolonisation
- Cultural sovereignty and self-determination
- Leadership and representation
- Resources for women's rights
- Care work and economic justice
- Gender-based violence
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Backlash
- Intersectionality
- Gender data and evidence

The full text of the Outcomes Statement is included at Annex B

⁴ (Fiji Women's Rights Movement 2023)

⁵ (Pacific Feminist Forum 2016)

⁶ (Pacific Feminist Forum 2022)

⁷ (Pacific Feminist Forum 2023)

⁸ (State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing 2023)

1.3 Improving gender data to better inform Pacific economic, environmental, and social development priorities

A fundamental barrier to determining the economic, environmental and social development priorities of the Pacific – particularly for women and girls – is the way in which their circumstances are rendered invisible through data. As the world moves increasingly towards data-driven decision-making, existing data on poverty and inequality hides, rather than illuminates, gendered experiences.

The drivers of the problem are multiple, spanning both technical and political dimensions. At the technical level there are four, main issues:⁹

1. **Measurement of poverty at the household, rather than the individual, level.** This means that data can only estimate the total number of people in poverty, based on the number of people living in households that, as a whole, are poor. This makes it impossible to accurately disaggregate data to show how poverty varies by factors such as gender, age, ability or the intersection of these.
2. **Information about household circumstances usually collected from a single individual, typically the 'head of household', often a man.** This means we are treating a single individual as a proxy for all others in the house and assuming even distribution of resources, dramatically undercounting inequality within the household. Leading economist Ravi Kanbur suggests that a one third of global inequality can be found within the household and is being hidden by household level measurement.¹⁰
3. **Poverty measurement tends to focus on money,** which is an important – but not the only – component of poverty according to those experiencing it. A multidimensional approach to poverty measurement is more in line with the need to identify critical factors for individuals' survival, livelihoods and dignity.
4. **Most measures focus on factors that women and men have in common and exclude factors that are particularly relevant to women.** Areas of life such as access to contraception and menstrual hygiene management are excluded from the common understanding of poverty and inequality, discounting the significant economic costs and life implications linked to access, or lack thereof for those who menstruate or can become pregnant.

Data that hides the circumstances of individuals is both a denial of rights and a constraint on the realisation of rights, because it renders some rights holders invisible to duty-bearers. Household level measurement of poverty should not be considered a sufficient basis for decision on policy, programs or resource allocations.

Instead, we need to move towards individual-level, gender-sensitive and multidimensional approaches to measurement at scale. The Australian Government has been a leader in investing in this type of innovation since 2008, including supporting use of the current iteration of the tool, Equality Insights.¹¹ Maintaining this leading role in gender data innovation is vital, and there remains ample scope to increase resourcing to grow the accessibility of this alternative data across the region; build progressive Coalitions to move towards the above-mentioned political consensus, and progress rights-based evidence as a foundational element of rights-based policy, programming and resource allocation.

Recommendation 4: Maintain and grow Australia's investments in gender data broadly, and particularly in individual-level, gender-sensitive measurement of and multidimensional poverty, including resourcing coalitions across government and civil society to support uptake and use.

⁹ (Crawford et al. 2021)

¹⁰ (Kanbur 2016)

¹¹ (Equality Insights and IWDA 2022)

Case study: Pacific leadership for individual-level gender data

IWDA's Equality Insights tool has been used to implement the first national, individual-level, gender-sensitive, phone-based measurements of multidimensional poverty in the Pacific region. These studies were conducted in Tonga (in partnership with the Tonga Statistics Department and in collaboration with the Tonga Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Division) and the Solomon Islands (in partnership with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, and Honiara-based research organisation Dignity Pacific) in 2022.

Equality Insights is an individual-level, gender-sensitive measure of multidimensional poverty that can be disaggregated to show how poverty varies for different groups based on gender, age, disability status, and other demographic characteristics. Equality Insights Rapid – a shorter version of the survey suitable for phone-based administration – was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equality Insights findings in the Solomon Islands illustrate the gendered division of labour by revealing how men and women are engaged in paid and unpaid work. For example, 52% of men and only 32% of women report having worked for pay in the previous seven days. However, women spent much more time on unpaid work and care than men, regardless of their paid work status - around 70% more.

The survey also captures dimensions of life that are missed by other poverty measures, such as access to menstrual hygiene management products. For people who menstruate, this indicator can have a critical impact on health, as well as economic and social activity. In Solomon Islands the survey found that 38% of people who had menstruated in the last year reported that they had not always had enough sanitary products to meet their needs.¹² With more than a third of the sample reporting some deprivation in this area, policy makers have a critical insight into foundational barriers faced by women.

Because data is collected from individuals, it can also paint a picture of how multiple personal characteristics, such as gender and age can come together to create unique impacts. For example, in Tonga, experiences in the dimension of *safety* were gendered, where women were significantly more likely to meet deprivation thresholds than men. An important finding, in and of itself. However, when examined by gender *and age*, the data reveals that young women were significantly more deprived in safety. 26% of women aged 18-29 experienced unwanted behaviours in public at least sometimes, compared to 14% of women ages 30-59 and 6% of those 60+.¹³ There were also differences by location, with a higher proportion of people living in rural areas experiencing some level of deprivation compared to those in urban areas (37% and 18% relatively).¹⁴

Conducting these studies in partnership with local government ensures that data is timely and can inform national, regional and international reporting, as well as policy development processes. Close partnership with local civil society in the Pacific similarly ensures that once data is available, it can be utilised for accountability with governments and donors to provide a more accurate picture of the support required.

Australia has been a leader in investing in methodological innovation to improve gender data. Implementation of Equality Insights Rapid in the Pacific demonstrates the importance of measurement innovation, and the power of partnership, in strengthening the availability and use of gender data.

¹² (Touzeau and Carroll, n.d.)

¹³ (Touzeau and Carroll, n.d.)

¹⁴ (Carroll et al. 2023) pp 44

2. FEMINIST PRINCIPLES FOR AUSTRALIA'S TRADE, INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE PACIFIC

This section addresses TOR 2 of the Inquiry:

2. Assess Australia's engagement in the Pacific and alignment of initiatives and policies with the identified priorities of Pacific Island nations.
 - a. Evaluate Australia's current efforts in supporting the Pacific in areas such as trade, investment, infrastructure development, security and capacity building that enhance Australia's position as a partner of choice for the Pacific family.
 - b. Identify opportunities for enhanced regional economic integration and mobility.

2.1 A feminist approach to trade and investment policy

Trade and investment policies that do not account for the complexities of women's participation in the formal economy risk entrenching gender inequality. In all countries, gender inequality has clear social and economic implications; in the Pacific, these play out in culturally and contextually specific ways.

Women and men are often integrated very differently into formal and informal economies, with men tending to dominate well-paid jobs, management positions and entrepreneurial activities, while women are disproportionately represented in insecure and part-time work, in the informal economy, and in lower paid industries traditionally considered 'feminine', such as the service and care industries.¹⁵ Women are also largely responsible for vital unpaid care and domestic work.¹⁶ Research conducted using an earlier model of the Equality Insights tool described in the previous section, looked at unpaid work in areas of high poverty prevalence in Fiji and found that 82 per cent of women regularly do unpaid household work, which may include cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, looking after children or other household members, fetching water and cooking fuel, compared to just 11 per cent of men.¹⁷

Understanding the gendered nature of economic participation is critical to ensuring trade and investment policies do no harm. In many cases around the world, trade liberalisation has exacerbated existing gender inequalities and worsened women's economic and social status.¹⁸ As export-oriented industries benefit from trade and become more attractive, women are often pushed out of these industries into lower waged work.¹⁹ Furthermore, unless wider efforts are made to address the gender inequalities that shape women's lives, it cannot be assumed that formal employment opportunities will translate into improvements in overall well-being or wider empowerment.

This underscores the importance of wide consultation with diverse women's rights organisations to determine the gendered risks and opportunities of Australia's approach to trade and investment with the Pacific. Applying a 'do no harm' analysis to ensure trade agreements do not worsen gender equality or outcomes for Pacific women and girls should be a mandatory minimum for Australia's approach. Over time, this should move towards a comprehensive feminist approach to trade and investment policy, where policies are designed to not only minimise harm, but to advance gender equality in line with the priorities of those currently most impacted by gendered inequality.

Recommendation 5: Apply a 'do no harm' approach as a minimum standard to Australia's trade and investment with the Pacific, and move towards comprehensive feminist analysis of all economic policy, in consultation with diverse Pacific women.

2.2 Feminist perspectives on debt and economic sovereignty

Historically, the pressure to reduce debt has led governments to adopt 'austerity measures', which cut or privatise essential services; this poses significant risks for nations' ability to provide social protection and public services. The impacts of austerity policy are felt more strongly by women, as care responsibilities shift from the state to the home, and those in precarious socio-economic positions fall further through the cracks.²⁰ Research in the UK found that since 2010, women had borne 86 per cent of the cost of austerity policies imposed by the British Government in the wake of the global financial crisis.²¹ During the Asian Financial crisis (1997-99), cuts

¹⁵ (Carnegie 2019)

¹⁶ (Carnegie 2019)

¹⁷ (IWDA 2020)

¹⁸ (Kabeer 2018) pp. 759-789.

¹⁹ (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2016)

²⁰ (Gender and Development Network 2018); (OECD 2007), pp 237

²¹ (Stewart 2017)

to the Indonesian health budget saw a fall in the number of antenatal and postnatal check-ups and an increase in unattended births.²²

Across the Pacific, debt levels skyrocketed during COVID-19 but have begun to improve post-pandemic (despite remaining concerningly high in Fiji at 83% of GDP).²³ However, climate change is projected to increase debt distress in the region, as countries turn to unsustainable loans in order to rebuild from disasters, and adapt to climate impacts.²⁴

Australia's economic cooperation with the Pacific must safeguard the economic sovereignty of Pacific Island Countries, by ensuring that economic agreements – including loans – do not undermine domestic revenue sources. As a key middle power, Australia should use its expertise in multilateral negotiation to push for the establishment of debt suspension or cancellation mechanisms, for example linked to climate induced disasters, as a critical element of freeing up domestic revenue to support critical services and climate resilience.²⁵

Recommendation 6: Australia should work with multilateral creditors, bilateral creditors and private sector to agree on mechanisms to address current and future debt crises, such as by establishing an automatic mechanism for debt service suspension following a natural disaster or other shock, developing a global approach to debt relief and restructuring for heavily indebted countries.

²² (Stavropoulou and Jones 2013), pp 21

²³ (World Bank 2024)

²⁴ (Strachan, Yan, and Gamarra 2022)

²⁵ (Strachan, Yan, and Gamarra 2022)

3. PACIFIC FEMINIST PRIORITIES FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

This section response to TOR 3:

3. Assess Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation responses in the Pacific.
 - a. Evaluate Australia's climate support and initiatives aimed at mitigating climate change and assisting Pacific nations in adapting to its impacts.
 - b. Evaluate Australia's role in supporting Pacific nations during natural disasters and national emergencies, including pandemics.
 - c. Identify opportunities for enhanced regional economic integration and mobility.

3.1 Re-establishing Australia's credibility on climate change by phasing out support for fossil fuels

The existential threat posed by climate change is consistently identified as an urgent priority across Pacific governments, regional mechanisms and civil society. The 2018 *Boe Declaration on Regional Security* of the Pacific Islands Forum identifies climate change as “the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific.”²⁶ This has been reaffirmed through Pacific Island Forum (PIF) communiques since, most recently in November 2023 and the 52nd PIF Communique.

Global heating, for which Pacific countries are minimally responsible, has caused significant loss and damage to communities and livelihoods.²⁷ Women and girls face disproportionate climate risks as a result of discriminatory gender norms and structures. For example, changes to natural resources increase the labour demands of gendered activities such as subsistence farming and collecting food, fuel and water.²⁸ Financial stress and lack of access to the necessities of life can exacerbate intimate partner violence, while exposing women to greater risk of sexual assault as they have to travel greater distances to source food and fuel.²⁹

Pacific leaders across government and civil society have called on countries like Australia to take responsibility for its role in climate change by drastically cutting emissions and ending subsidies to fossil fuels. This includes the *Port Vila Call for a Just Transition to a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific* – endorsed by Ministers and officials from seven Pacific Island Countries – which highlights the need for a “Fossil Fuel Free Pacific and a global, just and equitable phase out of coal, oil and gas.”³⁰

Ahead of the next renewal of Nationally Determined Contributions to emissions reduction in 2025, the Climate Council has recommended that Australia adopt an emissions reduction target of 75% below 2005 levels by 2030, a figure which “balances the need to limit warming as far as possible and with the highest probability of success, with the maximum rate of emissions reductions that we believe is now possible for Australia.”³¹

A critical source of Australia's continued failure to reduce emissions is in the continuation of policies that prop up the coal industry, such as the provision of floor prices and loans, totalling \$14.5 billion in 2023–24.³² Additionally, joint research by Jubilee Australia and ActionAid Australia has estimated Australia's indirect funding to fossil fuel projects in the region (via funding provided to Multilateral Development Banks) at over \$800 million between 2015-2020.³³ Australia should use its role as a shareholder in MDBs to shift their lending practices away from fossil fuel projects, in line with the *Port Villa Call*.

Recommendation 7: Commit to a 75% reduction in Australia's emissions by 2030 (based on 2005 levels) in the next round of Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commitments in 2025.

Recommendation 8: Urgently phase out all domestic and international funding for fossil fuel subsidies.

²⁶ (Pacific Islands Forum 2018)

²⁷ (IPCC 2018)

²⁸ (Terry 2009) p 3

²⁹ (Castañeda Carney et al. 2020)

³⁰ (Government of Vanuatu and Government of Tuvalu 2023)

³¹ (Climate Council of Australia 2024)

³² (Campbell et al. 2024)

³³ (Wiset 2023)

3.2 Contributing Australia's fair share of climate finance

In addition to taking steps to reduce Australia's contribution to climate change, we also have an obligation to provide climate finance to 'low-income countries' under the Paris Agreement. Leading organisations have assessed Australia's fair share of the global climate finance goal to 2025, based on our wealth and historical responsibility, at \$4 billion per year.³⁴ Australia's official commitment is much lower: \$2 billion spread over a 5-year period from 2020-25. Data from DFAT reporting puts Australia's climate finance at \$571 million in ODA (rising to \$619 million when including non-ODA grants and loans) in 2022-2023, just 15% of our fair share.³⁵ Of this, approximately 47% is dedicated to the Pacific.³⁶

In addition to finance for mitigation and adaptation, Pacific Island Countries have been calling for support to address the irrevocable loss and damage already being caused by climate change. A global Loss and Damage Fund was finally established at COP27, and an initial round of USD 700 million in pledges made at COP28 in 2023. However this figure represents just 0.2% of the global call for USD 100 billion per year towards Loss and Damage.³⁷ In line with estimates of Australia's fair share contribution, IWDA calls for Australia to make a contribution of \$100 million to this fund in 2024-25.³⁸

COP29 will represent a key opportunity for Australia to demonstrate its support for Pacific Island Countries' priorities, through the negotiation of a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG). Global climate finance needs beyond 2025 have been estimated at between USD 1.4 to USD 2.8 trillion per year for mitigation,³⁹ and USD 215 to 387 billion for adaptation, in 'low-income countries'.⁴⁰ Supporting Pacific Island Countries in their call for an ambitious NCQG that matches the scale of the challenge is a critical test of Australia's climate leadership, and will determine our credibility as the potential host of a Pacific COP in future years.

Recommendation 9: Take immediate steps to meet Australia's \$4 billion annual fair share of climate finance before 2025, and commit an additional, initial contribution of \$100m to the Loss & Damage fund.

Recommendation 10: Demonstrate climate leadership by supporting Pacific Island Countries' call for an ambitious NCQG beyond 2025 – in line with the trillions of dollars needed to support mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage – which can be scaled up in future years in line with need.

3.3 Prioritising feminist climate solutions and ensuring accessibility of finance to WROs

While climate finance is required at scale to meet urgent and growing needs, it is also important to ensure that it is accessible to a wide range of actors to ensure mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage funding can respond to the needs of diverse groups. Most climate finance is inaccessible to local civil society organisations in the Pacific, especially WROs, due to a combination of the scale of funding compared to organisational size, the extensive compliance requirements, an overreliance on technical solutions over community-based approaches, and an unwillingness to fund feminist and indigenous solutions.

Pacific feminists have called for "feminist-informed climate policies and actions that acknowledge unpaid care work, redistribute resources and acknowledge systemic gender and power inequalities."⁴¹ Australia should support local WROs to advocate for, and implement, feminist climate action by establishing a fund of \$300 million over four years – delivered through core, flexible and multi-year grants to diverse women's rights organisations working at the intersection of gender equality and climate justice.

Recommendation 11: Allocate \$300m over 4 years to establish a gender-transformative climate adaptation fund, ensuring that Australia's climate finance is accessible to Women's Rights Organisations working at the intersection of gender equality and climate justice.

³⁴ (Hardefeldt et al. 2022)

³⁵ (DFAT 2024c) pp 26

³⁶ (DFAT 2024a) calculated from data on pp 35

³⁷ (Lakhani 2023)

³⁸ (IWDA 2024)

³⁹ (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2022)

⁴⁰ (United Nations Environment Programme 2023)

⁴¹ (Pacific Feminist Forum 2023)

4. DECOLONISE AUSTRALIA'S APPROACH TO PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PACIFIC

This section response to TOR 4:

4. Strengthen People-to-People Links and Partnerships including through well designed development programs.
 - a. Explore opportunities to enhance people-to-people links, cultural exchanges, and educational partnerships between Australia and the Pacific to maximise local and community development outcomes.
 - b. Assess the effectiveness of Australia's aid programs and partnerships in promoting genuine community development, good governance, and capacity building for partners in the region.
 - c. Consider ways in which the Australian community can be more engaged with and have a better understanding of Australia's international relations and in particular the official aid and development program in the region.

4.1 Pacific feminist movement priorities for decolonising Partnership

As outlined in earlier sections, it is critical for Australia to consider the priorities that Pacific feminist women's rights organisations have already shared. *Creating Equitable South-North Partnerships: Nurturing the Vā and Voyaging the Audacious Ocean Together* is a landmark research project conducted in 2020 by Oceanic Pacific Indigenous Researcher 'Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki.⁴² In this report, 35 leading Pacific Island women outline their priorities for equitable partnership with Global North actors, based on experiences over the past 30 years:

- Nurturing the Vā (space) that relates:
 - o Global North organisations and WROs to develop integrative partnerships based on equality, diversity and inclusivity
 - o Shared values and standards between Global North organisations and WROs
- Decolonise development practice and shared power:
 - o Co-creation, co-design, co-responsibility and co-accountability between Global North organisations and WROs
 - o Global North organisations to develop feminist policy or national feminist foreign policy
- Contextual sensitivity
 - o Global North organisations to re-educate, learn and understand about the local context
 - o Global North organisations to embrace Indigenous and decolonised ways of accessing, sharing, documenting and building knowledge
- Enable Global South power, agency and autonomy
 - o Global North organisations to advocate for sustainability
 - o Global North organisations to validate existing knowledge of WROs and women's rights actors support continuing knowledge making

Responding to these priorities shared by Pacific women will require DFAT to rethink its approach to 'localisation', which is currently heavily driven by DFAT at the expense of local actors' priorities. The recently released *DFAT guidance note on locally led development* includes welcome commitment to partnerships based on shared values, mutual respect and trust, and acknowledges the importance of civil society organisations in "delivering services, reaching and advocating for vulnerable groups, demanding stronger governance and accountability, working on difficult or sensitive policy issues, and addressing multidisciplinary policy problems in partnership with government, the private sector and development partners," especially in contexts of shrinking civil space.⁴³ It acknowledges that "Locally led approaches do not translate into 'one size fits all' solutions," and that "flexible funding and innovative delivery models" can be considered.

⁴² (Guttenbeil-Likiliki 2020)

⁴³ (DFAT 2024b)

However, many of the approaches described in the guidance note imply that consultation with local actors is sufficient to ensure localisation; in fact, consultation should be the bare minimum of good development practice. Further, the guidance note fails to meaningfully engage with the need to reconceptualise risk in order to better enable locally-led development, stating:

“DFAT’s Risk Appetite Statement for the Australian International Development Program recognises that local partners are best placed to identify local challenges and propose feasible solutions to drive change in their communities. It acknowledges that shifting more ownership, decision making authority and implementation responsibilities to local partners may expose us to different implementation risks than experienced with other partners.”⁴⁴

However the only approach proposed to achieving this outcome is to work with local partners to “strengthen their capacity to implement and meet policy requirements,” with no consideration given to the appropriateness or necessity of these requirements in all contexts. While some minimum standards are important to maintain in order to ensure Australian Government-funded work does no harm, and confidence in the International Development Cooperation Program can be maintained, there is significantly more scope to tailor risk and compliance requirements and rebalance them away from an overwhelming focus on institutional- and fiduciary-focused risk. Doing so would better enable Australia’s International Development to account for the risks which follow from the underfunding of feminist civil society, which include democratic backsliding, poorer economic performance and the undermining of women’s rights, all of which run counter to Australia’s interests.⁴⁵

Beyond the guidance note, DFAT’s approach in recent years demonstrates a concerning trend of requiring local organisations to receive direct funding, regardless of whether they may prefer to receive funding through intermediaries who can provide support on meeting the extensive compliance requirements, thereby freeing up their own staff to work on core business of advancing women’s rights. Far from responding to Pacific women’s calls to decolonise South-North partnership, this approach risks imposing a donor driven agenda and replicating patterns of power and coloniality.⁴⁶

This is the difference between localisation, which continues to operate the same system with different players, and decolonisation, which focuses on changing the system itself. This is critical to avoid localisation targets becoming a blunt instrument, whereby local actors are required to take on direct funding in order to meet donor objectives, regardless of their preference. Where local actors do want to receive funding directly this should be facilitated, alongside concerted efforts to transform risk and compliance in a way that opens up the potential for more direct funding between DFAT and Global South actors. Regardless of modality, funding to WROs should always cover core costs (not just program costs), and be provided in long term and flexible ways to allow them to engage in adaptive planning with confidence. This will require a complementary investment in DFAT’s capacity to manage tailored risk profiles and funding mechanisms.

Recommendation 12: Explore new funding mechanisms which advance an approach to decolonise partnership, taking steps to minimise the inherent power dynamics and amplify the strengths of local partners.

Recommendation 13: Rebalance Australia’s approach to risk and compliance, recognising that under investment in local WROs and feminist movements, who are the most effective partners on gender equality, is a critical risk in itself.

Recommendation 14: Invest in the capacity of DFAT to actively manage tailored partnership arrangements.

⁴⁴ (DFAT 2024b)

⁴⁵ (Chenoweth and Marks 2022)

⁴⁶ (Guttenbeil-Likiliki 2020)

**ANNEX A: 3RD PACIFIC FEMINIST FORUM OUTCOME STATEMENT:
PACIFIC FEMINIST STRATEGIES FOR LIBERATION: AN URGENT CALL
TO ACTION**



Pacific Feminist Strategies for Liberation: An Urgent Call to Action

The 3rd Pacific Feminist Forum took place from 8-10 May 2023 in Pacific Harbour, Fiji. The Forum brought together over 150 feminists in all our diversity¹ from 17 Pacific countries that are part of the Global Majority, and including Australia, New Zealand and other observers. The forum took place against a backdrop of closing civil and organising space for women and girls in all their diversities. There is global and local backlash against human rights and dignity, gender justice and women's human rights. There are attempts by right-wing and fundamentalist movements working for increased patriarchal control and denial of bodily autonomy. There is a profound shift in the current social, economic, ecological and climate landscape. The situation is dire as economic and non-economic loss and damage rises in the Pacific region and globally, but the political will is not yet enough to make the change we need to protect ourselves, other species and the living Planet. We will work to change this for ourselves and all the generations coming after us.

We are resolute. We, as Pacific feminists, reject coloniality, patriarchy, misogyny, ableism, heteronormativity, fossil-fuel based capitalism and extractive development. We continue to work for liberation, balance and justice on all territories, for all. We include and are in solidarity with Indigenous peoples of the Oceanic Pacific whose bodies, communities and territories remain sovereign. We call for decoloniality and liberation for all people. We recognise ongoing resistance struggles of Indigenous, Girmitya, Blackbirded, colonised and other people living on occupied land and call for balance, nonviolence and justice, including on our bodies, land, ocean, waterways, global Commons and the Living planet. We stand with all women with disabilities, vulnerable and marginalised groups recognising the significant discrimination and environmental barriers hindering their socio-economic participation.

¹ From here on when we mention women and girls, we refer to specific identities and needs of women, girls, lesbians, bisexual, queer and trans-diverse people, intersex people, fa'afafine, leiti, gender nonconforming people, ethnically diverse women and girls, Francophone women, diaspora women, Indigenous women, women living in occupied and colonised territories, migrant women and girl women with disabilities, sex workers, women living with HIV and AIDS, widows, women living in rural and remote areas, young and older women and women throughout the life cycle, heterosexual women, women in sports, women in non-traditional roles and industries, women from faith-based communities, women in creative industries, women in the informal sector, women in private sector, micro, small, medium enterprises, and more.

There is a creative strong feminist movement ever-rising in the Pacific and globally, so our convening could not be more timely. We are together, strong and strategic in our proposals. This document prioritises strategies, as we have already raised core Pacific feminist concerns in 2016 and 2019.

The third Pacific Feminist Forum builds upon the first and second Pacific Feminist Forum Outcomes and ongoing movement building across diverse feminist spaces since 2016. The [inaugural Pacific Feminist Forum](#) convened over 100 Pacific Feminists where we created the [Charter of Pacific Feminist Principles for Pacific Feminists](#) as **an endorsed, common set of collective principles to guide feminist organising and movement building**. The Charter is a living document intended to guide our analysis and practice and to be clear on our **non-negotiables as a feminist movement**.

The second Pacific Feminist Forum of over 150 Pacific Feminists established a Charter Action Plan to reflect our commitment to the Charter principles, and set forward collective pathways to build solidarity, strengthen resistance and join feminist struggles in revolution. The Action Plan underscored **solidarity** as a practice, centres **resistance** to colonial, capitalist and criminalising forces and believes in the power of **revolution** to imagine safe, collective and liberated futures.

Pacific feminists will endeavour to work with Governments, partners and each other in urgent, deeper and wider ways. We have a collective will to survive and thrive as Pacific women, girls, gender diverse people, indigenous feminists and feminists from large Oceanic peoples.

National Forums, Regional Networks and Communities of Practice:

The Pacific feminist movement is over 40 years old. Pacific feminists have built knowledge, infrastructure and processes over decades. The regional Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women (PWNAVAW) has been a catalyst and leadership incubator for most work on sexual and gender based violence in the region since the 1990s. Today it operates in 16 Pacific countries and advocates, trains, innovates and sets standards on the prevention and response to gender based violence, with the Secretariat based at the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. This is one early example of the many ways that Pacific feminists have built the road as we walk it. We continue to build diverse programmatic initiatives, campaigns, coalitions, networks as part of an energetic, creative and engaged social movement of Pacific feminists.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Pacific feminists in diverse, interconnected ways. Overnight, movement was restricted and existing inequities and injustices widened and worsened. Pacific feminists persisted to re-configure, re-shape and re-imagine movement building and activism against a landscape of shifting realities. National Feminist Forums were co-convened by diverse feminist and intersectional organisations in 11 countries in an effort to practise the principles set out in the 2016 Charter and the 2019 Action Plan. Each National Feminist Forum in the lead up to the third Pacific Feminist Forum, engaged activists, community members and diverse organisations across multiple days distilling into a National Outcomes Statement. Through this approach, more feminists and community members were able to engage in dialogue and prepare strategies. These forums strengthened alliances and partnerships toward a stronger Pacific feminist movement. The National Feminist Forums took place in: Papua New Guinea, West Papua, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Fiji, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Tuvalu and Palau. National outcome statements called for:

- Those with direct lived experience and feminist activists and community members across traditional, grassroots, indigenous identities to be valued as experts and leaders.
- Increasing safe spaces for intergenerational dialogue, leadership and healing.
- Prioritising tailored, safe, competent services and social floor protections for frontline communities and communities living at the intersections of oppressions.
- Basic housing and living standards for women and girls in all their diversity to live a life of dignity.
- Demilitarisation and deregulation.
- Unapologetic advocacy and upholding of SRHR, freedom from violence, economic justice and leadership.
- Acknowledging and valuing our rich histories, cultures and traditions and how they steer and guide our path.
- Among many other local, national, regional and global Calls for Action.

There are many Pacific feminist networks, coalitions and alliances that over the decades have contributed to our collective work. The Pacific Feminist Community of Practice (PacFemCOP) is a regional example of strategic movement-building, knowledge-sharing and engagement of over 50 organisations across 10 Pacific countries. Seven freeschools have been held and are now shared [online](#), and over 35 resources and tools are being gradually uploaded to share with the feminist movement on issues from climate crisis, SRHR, PIDSOGIESC and intergenerational leadership, to effective public campaigning and advocacy at the Commission on the Status of Women, UNFCCC and much more. Others include the Pacific Feminist SRHR Coalition, We Rise Coalition, Pacific Islands Feminist Alliance for Climate Justice, PICAN Working Group on Gender Justice, Women, Peace and Security Network, Shifting the Power Coalition, and the many other Pacific feminist coalitions, networks and organisations.

Global and regional legal frameworks, comprehensive measures and norms:

Pacific Feminists reaffirm the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and reiterate that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Optional Protocols and other conventions and treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Declaration on the Right to Development, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, Universal Periodic Reviews, United Nations Convention Against Corruption, United Nations Convention Against Torture, UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security [1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019)] provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realising gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal, equitable and inclusive enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, throughout their life course.

Pacific feminists reaffirm our commitment to implementation of the [2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration](#) (PLGED), the 2023 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (currently undergoing revitalisation), the [Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights](#) 2019-2030 (PPA) and the Outcomes and Recommendations from the [14th](#)

[Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 7th meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women](#) (2021) et al. They must be fully linked, inclusive, resourced, implemented, accountable and responsive to the realities of all women and girls across the Pacific.

Originally endorsed in 2012 at the Pacific Leaders Meeting, the PLGED committed leaders to implementing specific national policies that progress gender equality especially in the areas of **gender-responsive government programs and policies, decision-making, economic empowerment, ending violence against women and health and education**. A decade on, the Pacific Island Forum is reviewing and revitalising these commitments ahead of the 2023 Leaders meeting. Consultations have taken place across all PIF member states inclusive of government and civil society. The Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) provides a roadmap for achieving gender equality and embracing the well-being of women and girls in all their diversity. The roadmap specifically calls for the **implementation of national, regional and international gender equality commitments including the PLGED and SDGs**. The Triennial Outcomes and Recommendations present detailed, granular recommendations across priority areas and cross-cutting themes in order to progress national actions and operationalize regional commitments (including PLGED, PPA and Sustainable Development Goals).

In this time of complex, interlinked human rights and development challenges for Pacific feminists and our communities and in order to strategically move on the regional and global developments outlined above, feminists will use the Pacific Feminist Charter and Action Plan and this document to design effective feminist strategies to ensure the safety of ourselves, other species and this Living Planet.

Pacific feminists call for the following:

On preventing and responding to gender-based violence and violence against women and girls in all their diversities:

Pacific women and girls experience twice the global average rates of gender based violence (GBV) and violence against women and girls (VAWG). It is a gross human rights violation wielded by individuals, communities, states, laws and institutions. It must end. Gender-based violence has no place in our societies, culture, faith or traditional spaces. It has damaging impacts on survivors, families, communities and societies. Women and girls lose their lives, suffer health problems of many kinds, including mental health, and acquire disabilities because of violence. Women and girls in all our diverse identities and life experiences disproportionately experience gender-based violence including violence perpetrated by our intimate partners, family members and institutions. Gender-based violence spans across physical, emotional, economic, sexual and coercive control violations with an increasing interplay of technology-facilitated violence that span digital and real-world experiences of violence and threats to safety. It stops the achievement of development justice. Gender-based violence is rooted in patriarchy, in a belief in the superiority and control by men and boys of others in society including women and girls. It affects all layers and dimensions of society from interpersonal to systemic. It harms everyone, enables and norms toxic and limited forms of masculinity for men and boys including an inability to be their true, authentic selves.

On strategy, the Pacific feminist movement strongly recommends:

- A root cause analysis and systemic preventative approach to address gender-based violence where we acknowledge patriarchy is perpetrated in conjunction with ableism,

homophobia, transphobia, ageism, racism, extractive capitalist exploitation and other forms of systemic oppressions in our homes, public spaces, work places, institutions and services;

- Holistic, gender-just, short, medium and long term services (including economic and financial, health, police, justice, social protection, education, child care, housing, basic need/infrastructure) for women and girls in all their diversity to prevent, address, respond to and recover from GBV/VAWG;
- We reiterate our support for the global, vetted WHO methodology on the collection of VAWG-related data in research, prevalence studies and routine GBV Administrative Data/Information Management systems, in order to do no harm and uphold a survivor-centered approach;
- All GBV/VAWG related data must follow core standards on sex, age, SOGIESC and disability disaggregated data to ensure accurate trends analysis, budgets, policy and decision-making;
- We reaffirm the PWNVAW's Regional Counselling Guidelines and Competencies as the framework to utilise for any GBV/VAWG counselling, based on its evidence-base, tailored approach;
- We reaffirm that ***all work*** on GBV/VAWG is work that operates in humanitarian and disaster spaces - they are not siloed and separate;
- We require a multi-sectoral approach on prevention and response to GBV/VAWG with coordination and resourcing across all aspects;
- Urgent action to address linked human rights violations including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and GBV/VAWG where we see an erosion of bodily autonomy and increased control over our bodies, criminalisation of sex work and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), in addition to the lack of survivor-centered, rights-based SRHR and GBV/VAWG services for survivors in all their diversity;
- Explicit attention and resourcing to address specific forms of gender based violence and discrimination, including action to prevent impunity and increase resourcing and policy will to address homophobic and transphobic violence; sorcery and witchcraft accusations; violence against women with disabilities; violence against girl child and children; rape and sexual assault; technology-facilitated gender-based violence; non-access and control of contraception and SRHR; decriminalisation and pro-choice right to legal abortions; and bodily autonomy and integrity, and more;
- Urgent action to address women's labour, including paid and unpaid care, domestic and communal work, and to recognise, reduce, redistribute, represent, reward and reconfigure (5 Rs) societies and States to address this issue urgently in feminist informed domestic and foreign policies, in order to guarantee the rights to decent work, to rest and to leisure of all women and girls. We demand labour rights. Unpaid work is work;
- Change laws, policies and practices that allow for institutions to perpetrate gender inequality and GBV/VAWG and ensure they are feminist informed including: services for people with disabilities, health care facilities, schools, social floor, social protection and infrastructure, and child welfare services;
- Raise the alarm and the urgency to address, resource and prioritize a holistic response to sexual violence against girls and boys and youth of diverse PIDSOGIESC;
- Raise the alarm and the urgency to address the linkage between GBV/VAWG and climate crisis, including approaches and plans to mitigate the effect of disasters;
- Raise the alarm and use the Pacific Feminist Forum as a regional platform to speak out against militarisation and GBV/VAWG in the Pacific;

- Strengthening existing and creating new referral pathways for service delivery, especially in rural, maritime areas, and address the gap in quality, timely, affordable and evidence-based health care and safety options for rural women survivors of GBV;
- Ensuring viable, survivor-centered and rights based education and economic opportunities for women and girls in all their diversity to ensure safe pathways to prevent and recover from violence and to live with dignity;
- Prioritise and substantially resource transformative prevention solutions that are home grown, evidence-based, rights based and based on feminist principles. We need comprehensive approaches to stop violence before it starts in all spaces with learning and knowledge exchanges on what is already working to prevent GBV/VAWG;
- Prioritise age-appropriate, contextualised and affirming comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for all ages in and out of school with the explicit involvement of feminist organisations, grassroots networks and civil society organisations to steer, guide, train and inform life-saving information that can save children's lives. Ensure that all efforts include affirming discussions around gender diverse, queer and transgender bodies;
- Meaningful engagement of men and boys based on a rights-based, feminist approach aligned with local, best practice from Pacific feminists (such as the [Warwick Principles: Best Practices for Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls in the Pacific](#)), in a manner that remains accountable to and does not displace the feminist movement and diverse women and girls and the vision of embracing positive, diverse masculinities and an end to patriarchy;
- Ensure the accountable implementation of gender-based violence/VAWG commitments and recommendations to address gender-based violence for States and key stakeholders as outlined in the [2022 Regional Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Services Symposium Outcomes Document](#) and the [14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women](#);
- Ensure national implementation and accountability of laws and policies, such as the Family Protection Acts, that protect the safety of survivors;
- Conduct a regional review of national GBV/VAWG legislation to better understand how gender neutral language in this legislation impacts the safety, well-being and rights of survivors.

On Pacific women's representation deficit, and toward decision-making and leadership:

Historically, women have been underrepresented in Pacific and global politics, and this has resulted in policies and laws that do not adequately reflect the needs and interests of all Pacific women and girls, throughout their life course, and gender diverse people.

In accordance with the Pacific Feminist Forum Principles, ICCPR and CEDAW, Pacific feminists commit to ensuring that the leadership of State institutions, CROP agencies, organisations and networks in our region are co-led, managed and represented by diverse Pacific women. Patriarchy has a hold on many policies and the ways that leadership is practised. In order to transform leadership in the region, there must be clear steps forward.

We recognise the existing and potential leadership of women of all ages and intersectionalities, within and beyond the State. We reiterate that 76% of all global unpaid care work (and 80% in Asia and the Pacific) is done by women (2019, ILO) but this is not reflected in any Pacific local government, national legislature and regional leadership arrangements. **Feminists demand that Pacific Leaders and decision-makers** must create an enabling environment for Pacific women and gender diverse leaders from grassroots communities and civil society to take up

substantive, formal leadership in mainstream political parties, and throughout all areas of Pacific societies.

A measure of gender and political leadership success will be the endorsement of the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED), 50% representation of women leadership in local government, national legislature, regional CROP agency leadership and in Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting. Women's constituency voices must be heard if democracy is to thrive and serve the needs and aspirations of all citizens.

On strategy, the Pacific feminist movement strongly recommends:

- Recognition, knowledge sharing, engagement and resourcing of smaller, upcoming community and grassroots-led organisations, ensuring inclusion in all major national, regional and global development and human rights initiatives;
- Recognise the efforts and contributions of smaller, community and grassroots-led organisations in leadership;
- Explicitly ensuring inclusion of Pacific women from high poverty, urban informal settlements, rural, maritime and remote island communities in all national and regional development and human rights processes;
- Affirmative action, including Temporary Special Measures (TSM) and Permanent Specific Measures (PSM) includes implementation through constitutional change, legislative and policy reform, as required. These are permanent until altered Legislative reform to address historic and systemic barriers to women's participation in politics through affirmative action. Pacific feminists can provide technical assistance and input on affirmative action, TSM and PSM;
- Participation of feminist civil society women leaders in regional and intergovernmental processes, including Pacific Women Leaders Forum and Pacific Leaders Forum, with input into roundtables and panels, side events and shadow reporting;
- Practising intergenerational, intersectional leadership in all national and regional political spaces;
- Facilitation and support for the entry of feminists and women human rights defenders into local, national and regional decision-making processes, including by ensuring that political party mechanisms guarantee co-leadership of women, and gender justice through zebra lists, minimum of 1 of 3 party positions held by women and legislative requirements for women's representation;
- National legislative and policy reform so that as per long-agreed Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action a minimum of 30% of national legislative seats are held by Pacific women. Our longer aim is for 50% of national legislative positions to be held by Pacific women by the end of the Global 2030 Agenda.

On climate justice, disaster response, ecological and biodiversity protection:

Climate injustice poses the greatest immediate, urgent, existential threat to all communities in the Pacific and globally. Climate crisis disproportionately impacts women and girls in all their diversity and persons of diverse PIDSOGIESC. This exacerbates existing socio-economic disparities and inequalities, including between urban, rural and maritime areas, and undermines long-term resilience and economic justice. The Pacific is experiencing recurrent, frequent and increasingly severe extreme weather events and disasters.

The science is clear that use of fossil fuels is responsible for the climate emergency and that the threat is urgent, and global. This is a crisis driven by the greed of an exploitative fossil fuel industry and its enablers. Further, the linked climate, economic and ecological crisis is a symptom of coloniality, corporate interest, geopolitics of the military industrial complex, agribusiness and capitalist growth paradigms. These systems are patriarchal and oppress all women and girls, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, minorities and those marginalised in societies, with all Global Majority countries and communities. As acknowledged in the Suva Declaration (2015) and Port Vila Call (2023), it is unacceptable that Global Minority countries and companies are still planning on producing more than double the amount of fossil fuels by 2030 than the world can burn to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

In 2009, Global Minority countries agreed to mobilise US\$100 billion per year by 2020. This deadline was then extended to 2025 when it was not met, with a view to setting a new global climate finance goal by 2025. At the time, Global Minority countries hailed this as a real commitment that would ensure that Global Majority countries in the global south were also able to tackle climate change. However, this goal has never been achieved and even the initial amount isn't predicted to be met until 2023, if even then. The huge global climate finance gap is further highlighted by the disproportionate impacts felt by Global Majority countries including Pacific Small Island States, which have contributed the least to climate crisis and have the fewest resources to address climate related loss and damage, adaptation, mitigation, technology development and transfer, localisation, finance and more as agreed in the Paris Agreement, a minimum multilateral agreement toward climate justice, that anyway is to be ratcheted up every 5 years, including the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender.

Feminists call for an urgent move to social, economic, ecological and climate systems that place gender just human rights, care, wellbeing, health, social provisioning, peace and human security at the centre of our lives and societies.

On strategy, the Pacific feminist movement strongly recommends:

- Protecting ourselves, our Vanua, Wansolwara and Moana, other species and the living Planet by working toward a Fossil Fuel-Free Pacific and a global urgent, just, and equitable phase-out of coal, oil, and gas;
- Strongly rejecting and fighting the proposal of Japan to release 1.3 million tonnes of treated nuclear wastewater into the Pacific ocean. The claims that this is safe, are scientifically unfounded and we will resist this for ourselves and our Wansolwara (the Pacific as one ocean and one people);
- Adopting a Pacific Island Forum Leaders Declaration for a Just Transition to a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific as soon as possible, that empowers the Pacific to spearhead the unqualified, global, just and equitable phase out of coal, oil and gas production in line with global temperature goal of below 1.5°C, including at the UN Secretary General's climate summit in September 2023, at COP28, and beyond;
- Joining the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance and urging major oil and gas producers to join the Alliance, through committing to halting all new licensing rounds for oil and gas, and setting a Paris-aligned end date for production;
- Calling for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and leading the creation of a global alliance to negotiate a new Treaty to govern the end of fossil fuel expansion, equitable phase out of fossil fuels, and a global just transition;
- Committing to transparently disclose our fossil fuel investment and projects, and demand that all other governments do the same, including through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and Global Registry of Fossil Fuels;

- Rejecting inadequate, commodified, dangerous and false solutions and terminology such as nuclear energy, fracking, carbon-trading, “nett zero”, “unabated” or “inefficient” that creates loopholes for fossil fuel producers and enablers, major carbon polluters and carbon emitters;
- Advancing feminist-informed climate policies and actions that acknowledge unpaid care work, redistribute resources and acknowledge systemic gender and power inequalities;
- Advocate for and prioritise climate financing decision making and implementation spaces at national, regional and global levels that are accessible and responsive to the needs of all women and girls and their communities; free of red-tape and bureaucracy in order to increase accessibility and equity for women, girls, activists and human rights defenders; and support the closing of gender inequities and discriminatory practices;
- Initiatives that centralise human rights, gender justice and resilience of all Pacific women and girls to impacts of climate crisis, disasters and biodiversity loss, and addressing rising economic and non-economic loss and damage;
- Substantively investing in state and aid commitments to UNFCCC Gender National Focal Points to maximise attention and resources on gender and climate crisis at local and national levels and to increase reporting at regional and global levels;
- Substantively investing in urgent action on the nexus between gender and climate change, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity protection, building and strengthening inclusion of all women and girls and gender diverse people in climate action leadership, stopping fossil fuel and moving to safe, renewable and low emissions economies;
- Calling for gender just, inclusive, people-centred, and accessible multi-hazard early warning systems (MHEWS) and evacuation facilities;
- Recognition that climate justice includes: preventing and ending all GBV/VAWG and discrimination and a demonstrated commitment to development justice and degrowth strategies, housing rights, relocation strategies, economic justice, SRHR, agroecology and food sovereignty, water and sanitation rights, health justice (including menstrual hygiene), digital and technology access, biodiversity/forests/oceans and more;
- Increased representation and decision-making power of women and girls in all their diversity in climate leadership and decision-making forums, including decision-making on displacement protection, internal relocation and relocation beyond national boundaries;
- Ensuring that all women and girls have more opportunities to engage with work toward low emissions and energy democracy, and safe, climate resilient transitions within their Pacific Island countries and that their needs are centred in this transition;
- Climate solutions, interventions, social benefits and mitigation measures are gender transformative to ensure that all our efforts to address climate do not further exacerbate and widen inequalities for women and girls in all their diversity;
- Affirming, prioritising and fast-tracking of the UN General Assembly's consensus decision of 29 March 2023 to call on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to issue an [Advisory Opinion](#) on the human rights and legal obligations of States regarding climate change;
- Forward authentic, accountable conversations and actions with Pacific Island Leaders, governments and climate stakeholders on economic and non-economic [loss and damage commitments, including the fund for vulnerable communities, from COP 27](#) and their operationalization across Pacific countries and contexts;
- Ensure that any effort to address loss and damage acknowledges both economic and non-economic loss and damage effects.

Indigenisation, Decolonisation, Resistance and Independence Struggles:

Pacific feminists resist all forms of oppression across the region with a clear analysis that patriarchy and the oppression of women and girls is a key tactic in colonial and imperial approaches and legacies. Pacific feminists including Indigenous women human rights defenders are at the helm of self-determination movements, such as in West Papua, Kanaky New Caledonia, Bougainville, First Nations people of Australia and others; and demilitarisation movements call for accountability from nuclear testing and waste disposal; deep-sea and land-based mining, and call for decoloniality, indigenisation and reclamation of culture, language, values and ways of life, among others.

Both decolonisation and re-indigenation are essential for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Decolonisation is necessary to dismantle the patriarchal and Eurocentric systems that perpetuate gender inequality and to create space for Pacific Indigenous women and girls to assert their rights and participate fully in decision-making processes. Re-indigenisation is necessary to reassert and value the unique knowledge, skills, and perspectives that Indigenous Pacific women and girls bring to communities and societies and to empower them to shape their own futures based on their own values and priorities.

Past and present acts of colonisation and coloniality, capitalist economics and imperialism colour Pacific daily life. The struggle for decolonisation and independence in the Pacific spans reclamation of land and resources, fighting for the right to exist, political freedom, decolonizing culture and institutions, calling for reparations, calling for collective healing, combatting extractive industries and trade, and resisting violent militarisation and securitisation.

The UN Declaration on the Right to Development is clear that States shall take resolute steps to eliminate the massive and flagrant violations of the human rights of peoples and human beings affected by situations such as those resulting from apartheid, all forms of racism and racial discrimination, colonialism, foreign domination and occupation, aggression, foreign interference and threats against national sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity, threats of war and refusal to recognise the fundamental right of peoples to self-determination.

Pacific feminists are clear that colonial power systems and structures operate within and through development and humanitarian aid apparatuses. Global Minority, Western and/or hegemonic States and institutions have proliferated a rhetoric of "localization" that simplifies a nuanced process of transformative power (re)distribution that runs the risk of depoliticisation on, increasing backlash and diluting agency of women in the Global Majority.

We reject past and present militarism and the Military Industrial Complex and call for women, peace and security and transformative gender-just peacebuilding, mediation and human security to be at the core of all development and human rights goals. We note that the Pacific remains a region of geopolitical and strategic significance, where several countries create and sustain military bases and presence of personnel. We call for the withdrawal of active troops and foreign militaries. We reject foreign militaries in countries training security forces and facilitate occupations. Pacific countries are places of arms and military equipment sales and exchanges who utilise our land and our oceans as training grounds and proxy spaces for conflict. This shuts down civic space, displaces communities internally with detrimental effects on communities, women and girls in all their diversity due to military activity.

On strategy, the Pacific feminist movement strongly recommends:

- Co-creation of a Pacific map of military and economic occupation and presence across the region to document our experiences and plan for resistance and action;
- It is urgent to defund and demobilise troops and military activities that have current and historic presence in the Pacific;
- Pacific feminists firmly believe in the right and self-determination to define our identities and name our lived experiences including identities of diverse transgender, queer, gender non-binary, femme and women-identified bodies, including Pacific Indigenous identities such as Mahu (Hawai'i and Tahiti), Vaka sa lewa lewa (Fiji), Palopa (Papua New Guinea) Fa'afafine and Fa'atama (Samoa) Akava'ine (Rarotonga), Fakaleiti (Tonga), Fakafifine (Niue) and more;
- Any decolonisation effort requires the equal and meaningful leadership of Pacific feminist movements and nothing short of a fight for solidarity to the highest levels of engagement, including the International Court of Justice (ICJ), UN and other global legal and human rights arenas and processes of redress;
- Any decolonisation effort, movement or action recognizes the fight for comprehensive women's rights and bodily autonomy and uplifts women's rights in tandem with the fight for human rights and self-determination;
- Full recognition and valuing of women, girls and gender non-binary people as human rights defenders, freedom activists, experts and leaders in spaces on women, gender, peace and security;
- Practice and create radical, safe spaces to decolonise our minds and our identities.
- Advocate for a power shift with development partners, UN agencies, and funders to not dilute, displace and commodify feminist movements and calls to action;
- Regional commitments and solidarity from Pacific Leaders, CROP and UN Agencies must support the political freedom and status of colonised and occupied Pacific territories and increase recognition at global United Nations level.

Indentured labourers, Girmitya, Blackbirders and descendants

Acknowledging the realities and history of Indentured labourers, Girmitya, Blackbirders and descendants is an important part of acknowledging the complex and painful colonial history of the Pacific region that displaced millions under colonial rule and the extraction of labour from Global Majority communities.

On strategy, the Pacific feminist movement strongly recommends:

- Acknowledgement and education: The first step is to acknowledge the existence and the impact on people who have suffered indentured and forced labour in the Pacific. This can be done through vocational and formal education, such as including this history in school curriculums and museums, and creating public awareness campaigns;
- Commemoration: A monument(s) or memorial(s) can be erected in honour of the indentured labourers. This can serve as a reminder of contributions and sacrifices, and it can also be a place for families and communities to come together to pay their respects.
- Cultural events: Organising cultural events that showcase the traditions and heritage of indentured labourers can help to keep legacies alive. These events can include music, dance, and food, and can be open to the public;
- Reparations: Reparations can be made to the descendants of indentured labourers who were subjected to poor working conditions, low wages, and human rights abuse. This can include financial compensation, access to education and healthcare, and other forms of support;

- Inclusion in history: Including the stories of indentured labourers in the official historical records of the Pacific can help to ensure that their contributions are recognized and honoured for future generations. This can include oral histories, written accounts, and other forms of documentation;
- Inclusion of seasonal workers: Justice initiatives for those workers who are seasonal, short-term workers.

On sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR):

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are human rights. They are essential for sustainable development because of their links to gender equality and women's wellbeing, impact on bodily autonomy and integrity, sexual decision making, maternal, newborn, child, and women's health throughout the life cycle, and their roles in shaping future socio-economic and ecological sustainability, development and climate justice. Yet, progress towards fulfilling SRHR for all has been stymied because of weak political commitment, inadequate resources, persistent discrimination against women and girls, and an unwillingness to address issues related to sexuality openly and comprehensively.

Women and girls with disabilities continue to be left behind when accessing health services, including mental health, as well as sexual and reproductive health services and information. This leads to discrimination exacerbated through attitudinal barriers and the lack of awareness of service providers. Women with disabilities experience discrimination and lack of access to appropriate medical care throughout pregnancy, during and post birth due to stigma and lack of understanding of their specific needs.

On strategy, the Pacific feminist movement strongly recommends:

- Regional and national commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights in its full formulation (SRHR);
- Resource, revive and support a regional advocacy platform for SRHR, including the Pacific Feminist SRHR Coalition, to give visibility to and advocate for our rights;
- Reaffirm the practice of bodily autonomy and integrity and the principles outlined in our PFF Charter to give agency to women and girls in all their diversity;
- We cannot wait. We call to urgently advance national efforts to resource a health workforce, commodities, treatments, health facilities and community health approaches that provide the full spectrum of SRHR and women's health services including preventative care across the lifespan (nutrition, NCD prevention etc), family planning/contraception, safe abortion care, preventative and treatment care for cancers, care for all women and girls across the lifespan including older women, maternal, neonatal and newborn health, health care for people of diverse PIDSOGIESC, sex workers, women and girls living with HIV and women and girls with disabilities and others;
- Implementation of State services that focus on a women's right to bodily autonomy, integrity and right to choose;
- Calling for actions beyond the health sector, including with attitude and behaviour change, to change social norms, laws, and policies to uphold human rights with regards to SRHR;
- In reiterating the Outcomes of the first Pacific Feminist Forum, feminists recommit to decriminalisation of sex work, abortion and homosexuality in all countries of the Pacific;

- Calling for comprehensive government and multi-stakeholder action to uphold bold sexual and reproductive health and rights across the women's health spectrum, inclusive of abortion rights and rights-based care for PIDSOGIESC, disability and others;
- Reiterating the need for service providers to receive disability sensitisation training, including on maternal health services, mental health interventions, sexual and reproductive health and rights and more. There is a need for informational training and resources to be made available for women and children with disabilities in the region.
- Calling for dialogue and sensitisation of faith-based and religious groups throughout the Pacific towards an understanding of SRHR;
- Call for comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for everyone (reiterated from our call for strategies in GBV/VAWG) within and linked to the health sector;
- Ensure integration of civil society within all SRHR services, work and actions.

Transformative Pacific feminist resourcing:

The need for transformative approaches to funding autonomous Pacific feminist and women's organising, as well as gender responsive and transformative funding for all aspects of Pacific development justice, is clear. The need for the Pacific Feminist Fund was obvious, and now launched here at the 3rd Pacific Feminist Forum.

A new fundraising and resourcing approach is required to hold the States and other duty bearers accountable to women's human rights and human rights commitments. There are trust and relationship issues contributing to a toxic funding environment, and the donor-women's rights organisation relationships are often unbalanced and uni-directional. Funders often wield their power despite lacking contextual awareness and these need urgent correction, and recognition of local expertise and knowledge. Pacific women, including feminist and heterodox expertise, are generally under-recognised, under-used, and under-paid.

On strategy, the Pacific feminist movement strongly recommends:

- We must see Pacific women and girls developing and leading all resource mobilisation, aid and funding mechanisms and institutions, expressly including grassroots and local community leaders and activists in all their diversity and viewing their knowledge and community connections as valued expertise. This includes feminist, participatory and trust-based funding models and a move from old-style, coercive and bureaucratic funding models;
- Ensuring that traditional and feminist funders resource feminist, PIDSOGIESC, disability led groups and women human rights defender groups to support core costs, deliver service provision, advocacy, policy influence, mobilisation and organising;
- Ensuring maximum resources to support national movement building and organising for National Feminist Forums as needed and in preparation for regional PFFs, Pacific Feminist Forums held every three years and related areas of work for gender justice and women's human rights and empowerment;
- Resource mobilisation to advance feminist, gender justice work for mainstreaming, coordination, strategy and innovation;
- Ensuring resources are directed at women's autonomous organising and those organisations with widest Indigenous, grassroots and local constituencies and influence;
- Acknowledging the launch of the first Pacific Feminist Fund on 5 May 2023 and calling for urgent and sufficient capitalisation of feminist trust-based, accessible funds for autonomous women-led social movements and organisations, as a demonstration of solidarity and acknowledgement of historic responsibility and common but differentiated

responsibility for consequences of coloniality and colonisation, imperialism and extractive capitalism and climate related loss, damage and relocation;

- Amplifying the voices and participation of Pacific Women's Organisations (PWO) and Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) in setting policy and funding decisions. PWOs and DPOs are uniquely placed to connect with the millions of women living across the region and help them build more secure and sustainable lives for themselves and their children. However, PWOs need support and resources to do this in a flexible manner, allowing them to strengthen voice and leadership in their community, country and region;
- Resourcing women's funds to support grassroots organising, as well as national, regional and international efforts to ensure women, girls and trans people are able to influence the building, implementation and realisation of human rights agendas at global, regional, national and local levels. Invest in national and regional women's funds to unlock their ability to find new sources of funding for feminist organising for grass-roots mobilisation and advocacy for social justice at all levels;
- Collaborating with other funders to support direct funding for women, girls and transgender organising;
- Moving away from extractive, capitalist practices including land grabbing, deep sea mining, deforestation, mining and extractive industries as a way to support resource mobilisation;
- Ensuring that the Pacific Resilience Fund has a minimum urgent \$1.5 billion funds earmarked for gender, climate, DRR and biodiversity protection initiatives, and ensuring that these funds include arrangements specifically for indigenous, grassroots and feminist autonomous and Women Human Rights Defender networks, including small, medium, participative and trust based funding for local and national groups.

On information, media and communication

The majority of Pacific mainstream media continue to reinforce gender-based social norms, behaviours and attitudes towards women and girls. Women and girls in all their diversities continue to face challenges and barriers with access, participation and representation in both offline and online information and media, and new and emerging technologies of communication. Pacific feminists are cognisant of the growing pressure to legally censor access and distribution of information through media which can undermine freedom of the media in all its forms and freedom of speech of which women and girls will continue to be disproportionately impacted and affected by. Pacific feminists acknowledge the critical need to work with media in all its forms across the Pacific to ensure that the participation, representation and voices of Pacific women and girls is supported and promoted.

On strategy, the Pacific feminist movement strongly recommends:

- We must continue to reinforce Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action: strategic objective J.1 Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication and strategic objective J.2 Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media;
- Explicit attention and funding to support Pacific feminists training with mainstream media to address patriarchal and negative stereotypical gender roles and responsibilities in newsrooms, programming and content;
- National legislative and policy reform on information, media and emerging communication technologies must take into account the impact on women and girls, particularly those living in remote and rural areas with very little access to information and communication technologies;

- We reaffirm the findings of the recent studies conducted on Pacific Women in the Media (ABC) and call for urgent actioning of the key recommendations.

Pacific feminists are clear that this document and strategies are an urgent set of work that must be actioned NOW. Pacific feminists are determined to ensure that our analysis, voices, action, solidarity within and through movements, representation and inclusion in all development and human rights in the Pacific is clear and united. Pacific feminists continue to work in autonomous, feminist movements and with others to repair and restore planetary boundaries, toward liberation, balance, nonviolence and justice on all Pacific territories, including bodies, air, land, ocean, waterways, global Commons and the Living Planet.

Endorsements:

The participants of the third Pacific Feminist Forum, 8-10 May, 2023, Pacific Harbour, Fiji.

Ends.

ANNEX B: WOMEN DELIVER OCEANIC PACIFIC REGIONAL OUTCOMES STATEMENT



Women Deliver 2023

Oceanic Pacific Regional Outcomes Statement

In the lead up to Women Deliver 2023, the Oceanic Pacific region hosted two Women Deliver convening events. The first was in Pacific Harbour, Fiji, on 11 and 12 May 2023, and the second in Melbourne, Australia, on 6 and 7 June 2023.¹

We gathered at the events to discuss gender justice and human rights in the Oceanic Pacific region. We represented and embodied women, girls and gender diverse people in all our diversities. The events allowed people that work for gender equality in the region to determine the region's priorities. We will take these priorities to the Women Deliver 2023 Conference in Kigali, Rwanda, which will take place on 17 to 20 July 2023.

This statement was prepared and endorsed by the Oceanic Pacific Regional Committee. It is a broad summary of the outcomes documents produced at each regional convening event. This statement reflects the diverse individual and collective experiences and insights of the participants and will guide our regional delegation's participation at Women Deliver 2023. We identified 12 priority themes for our region (in no particular order).

Women Deliver 2023 is an opportunity for those working towards gender equality in the Oceanic Pacific region to engage strategically in this global arena. The priorities below centres Pacific Nations, and voices of First Nations and diaspora communities in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. It also builds on Oceanic Pacific gender equality efforts.

Priority themes

Indigenous solidarity

It should be a non-negotiable that First Nations² women have a say in decisions that affect them. From the community level to the national level. First Nations women are not homogenous. First Nations women bring a wealth of diverse knowledges, perspectives and experiences from communities and countries, including

¹ The Women Deliver Oceanic Pacific convening event in Pacific Harbour, Fiji, gathered 36 people and included Women Deliver Oceanic Pacific Regional Committee Members, civil society activists, allies and observers. The Women Deliver Oceanic Pacific convening on 6 and 7 June 2023 on Wurundjeri Country in Melbourne, Australia, gathered 360 people, including Women Deliver Oceanic Pacific Regional Committee Members, government representatives, gender equality sector and women's organisations, civil society activists and other stakeholders from philanthropy, business and academia.

² We use the term First Nations to capture all First Nations groups across our diverse region. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Nations people of Australia.

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matrilineal knowledge (knowledge passed down by mothers), and the role women play in families and communities. First Nations women know what their community needs and aspirations are. But we need resources to do the work, and to organise across communities and share knowledge. We recognise how important some mechanisms are to achieve First Nations gender justice and equality, and initiatives such as the national framework for action that will follow the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Summit in Australia in May 2023.³

Climate justice

The Pacific is at the frontline of the climate crisis. It is at the centre of worsening disasters and biodiversity loss, and threats to our ocean. These are all made worse by the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 and the long-term effects of conflict in some places.

All work on women's human rights and gender equality must consider humanitarian, disaster, development, peace and post-conflict contexts. Our lived experiences, countries and peoples are not just 'projects', 'issues' or 'parts of a program cycle'.

We acknowledge that some groups experience compounding discrimination and distress associated with climate disasters. Such groups include LGBTQIA+ people, people with disabilities, and women and communities that live in remote places. Our feminist work must consider the connections between:

- climate and ecological justice
- disaster risk reduction
- sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)
- gender-based violence (GBV)
- unpaid care
- other gender equality work.

Decolonisation

Decolonisation is structurally a gendered and feminist issue. We need a massive shift from unequal colonial practices to those based on power-sharing and reimagining, co-design, co-creation, co-responsibility and co-accountability. This is critical to develop fair partnerships and empowered relationships with the Oceanic Pacific, including Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. We must move away from tokenistic inclusion and pursue authentic structural and societal change towards decolonisation. We all need to take action. We need to remove barriers to participation and decision-making for First Nations women to enable genuine self-determination.

Cultural sovereignty and self-determination

For Pasifika diaspora, multicultural and First Nations communities (of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand), there is a priority need to address systemic racism and enable spaces for marginalised communities to reclaim cultural sovereignty, identities and voices to ensure greater agency over decisions. This includes acknowledging connections to land and water, cultural practice and continuation of culture.

Leadership and representation

Progress towards gender equality in the Oceanic Pacific is being slowed by structural barriers and underlying social, cultural and economic barriers. We must adopt a range of legal, social and political measures to:

- ensure women, in all their diversity, can take part in decision-making and leadership positions, at local, national, regional and international levels, and in public and private spheres

³ [Summit Communique | Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

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- address the low representation of women in political leadership across the Oceanic Pacific region
- enable fair representation of First Nations women in Aotearoa New Zealand and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Australia, and for women with intersecting identities across the region.

Resources for women's rights

We need gender responsive and transformative funding for gender equality and all aspects of Pacific development justice. This includes funding and resourcing autonomous feminist and women's organising.

We know that women are underrepresented in spaces where we make decisions about funding. Yet, organisations and movements led by women and gender diverse people are often the ones on the ground working to solve complex issues. Feminist funding is about disrupting power and putting resources into the hands of the people most affected by the problem. Gender-responsive budgeting must be flexible, trust-based, long-term and participatory. We need to embed accessible, intersectional, multi-sectoral, community-led and self-determined approaches in long-term funding processes to allow a sustainable culture of sharing and recognising the importance of knowledge, networks and people.

Care work and economic justice

It is important to consider unpaid care, domestic and communal work in the context of advancing gender justice and human rights. Unpaid care prevents full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the economy and in broader society. Men and faith-based individuals must engage with reforms and we need legislated responses to protect and compensate care work.

We will meet the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)⁴ target to 'recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through providing public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and promoting shared responsibility within the household and the family.'

Gender-based violence

Pacific women and girls experience twice the global average rates of gender-based violence and violence against women and girls (GBV/VAWG). First Nations women in Australia are 32 times more likely to end up in hospital because of family violence, and 11 times more likely to die from assault than non-Indigenous women in Australia.⁵ Women and girls with disabilities also experience much higher rates of GBV/VAWG.

It is a human rights violation by individuals, communities, states, laws and institutions. It must end. GBV has no place in our societies, cultures, faiths or traditional spaces. It has damaging effects on survivors, families, communities and societies. Gender inequality is the key driver of GBV. We must challenge attitudes that lead to violence, or that use culture to foster violence.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are human rights. SRHR are essential for sustainable development because of:

- their link to gender equality and women's wellbeing
- the impact on bodily autonomy and integrity, sexual decision-making, maternal, newborn, child and women's health throughout life
- their roles in shaping future socio-economic and ecological sustainability, development and climate justice.

⁴ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁵ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Wiyi Yani U Thangani: Securing our rights, securing our future report*, AHRC, 2020, accessed 7 June 2023. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/wiyi-yani-u-thangani>

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SRHR education and services must be accessible for all. Young people, women with disabilities, trans women and gender diverse people face compounded barriers to SRHR access, equity and agency. We recognise the recent backlash and erosion against SRHR is gendered.

Backlash

There is clear global and local backlash against human rights, dignity and gender justice. This global backlash is powerful and organised. We need to work together, inside and outside institutions and structures, to stop the erosion of women's human rights. We need strong regional commitments and solidarity from Pacific leaders, Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and UN agencies to address any backlash against gender equality and women's rights.

Intersectionality

We acknowledge that intersectionality is a strength, and we celebrate the diversity of voices across the Oceanic Pacific region. We need to:

- embed intersectionality and diverse lived experience in all areas and structures
- understand issues with an intersectional lens to install effective long-term solutions
- elevate youth voices and involve youth in decisions that affect them by creating space for them.

Gender data and evidence

Gender disaggregated data includes specific and detailed information about women, girls and gender diverse people. Gender data is crucial for transformative action, including across the priority themes in this Statement. Gender disaggregated data enables us to:

- measure and define issues with accuracy
- identify gaps
- inform decision-making
- ensure accountability.

There are still significant gaps in collecting and accessing gender disaggregated data. We need urgent action to address data gaps and data accessibility. We need to use data to amplify our lived experience. We need to ensure that decision-makers and policy-makers use it, while also prioritising inclusion and safety through data collection. We must invest in Indigenous data sovereignty so community-led organisations can collect and analyse their own data.

To receive this document in another format, email women.deliver@dffh.vic.gov.au
<women.deliver@dffh.vic.gov.au>.

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In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

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