

# Pacific Women's Leadership Dialogue – 25 November

Regional

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The role of the business community in addressing violence against women and supporting survivors, was the focus of the Pacific Women's Leadership Dialogue at the Sheraton in Nadi on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Themed Ending Violence Against Women is Everyone's Business, the Dialogue was hosted by Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls Ms Natasha Stott Despoja, who spoke on the increasing rates of violence of against women around the Pacific region including Australia.

"The issue of violence against women is an appalling human rights violation which severely limits women's social, economic and politically participation. No one country has got it right when it comes to gender equality. Even in Australia, one in three women, over the age of 15 has experienced some form of physical assault. Violence against women has a qualitative and quantitative impact on each and every member of our community. It's everyone's business and responsibility to eradicate it and that includes the business community," said Ms Stott Despoja.

The Dialogue involved around 20 representatives from the private sector and civil society organisations and was an opportunity for stakeholders to hear from Pacific leaders. Samoa's Lemalu Sina Retzlaff spoke about her experiences as a business woman and advocate on ending domestic violence. The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's Coordinator Ms Shamima Ali, shared statistics on the Centre's recent released National Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Fiji. She also discussed the work she and the Centre have been undertaking on domestic violence around Fiji and the region. Ms Greenta Vienna Tome spoke about her work in palm oil companies involving business women in the Solomon Islands. All three leaders, including other stakeholders, affirmed the importance of private sector involvement in addressing gender inequalities.

A background paper was prepared for the dialogue on [Private Sector Response on Violence Against Women](#). It documents how violence against women impacts upon both the State and the private sector, and explores strategies used by the private sector to assist in the response to eliminate violence against women.