

# Senator Sandra Pierantozzi, a Trailblazer for Palauan Women in Politics

Palau Regional Leadership And Decision-Making

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The Hon Senator Sandra Pierantozzi was Palau's first woman Senator and first woman Vice President. Now she's running for President in the country's November 2016 elections.

Senator Pierantozzi had retired from politics in 2005, but was sworn in once again on 31 December 2015 when she won a special election held after the death of a sitting Senator.

Back in parliament, she chose to attend the PWPP project annual forum for the first time in April 2016.

The event is an opportunity for parliamentarians from the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand to work collaboratively. They can learn from each other, as well as look at finding strategies to overcome the factors that constrain women's political participation.

'These Forums are important for women because a lot of times, especially in the men's world, women are [considered] the homemakers, and that it's always the men that bring in the bread and is responsible for the financial part,' explained Senator Pierantozzi.

The fourth PWPP annual forum was held in April 2016 in Samoa with 60 parliamentarians from 21 jurisdictions, including eight male parliamentarians. This year delegates explored women's economic empowerment.

As a child, after having experienced and witnessed extreme poverty Senator Pierantozzi decided to work hard, stating, 'I am never, ever, ever going to be poor again,' and as a woman in business and politics, she has been committed to supporting women's economic empowerment ever since.

'I do believe that men and women have roles to play in the family as caretakers and nurturers but both have to survive with or without a spouse, so it's very important for women to have small businesses and be able to save money for a rainy day as well as use it for expenses.'

Senator Pieranozzi's confidence in the presidential race is grounded in her belief in gender equality.

'I always know that if he can do it, I can do it, especially intellectually,' she said.

Others believe this of her too. When she asked her supporters why they were urging her to run for President, they told her: 'We want a person who is honest, transparent, accountable, and has integrity. And they say they see that in me and they would like to have a change in government because it has been led by men for so long. Both men and women came to me together.'



Hon Senator Sandra Pierantozzi is a trailblazer for Palauan women in political leadership. She's running for President in the country's November 2016 elections. Photo: Shazia Usman/Pacific Women Support Unit.

*This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2015-2016](#). All values are consisted with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).*

\*This activity is part of a larger program.