

## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

### **New ways of doing business in Fiji for initiatives encouraging gender-equal approaches**

*Monday 19 October 2020 (Suva, Fiji):* Small and micro entrepreneurs, civil society actors, regional partners, government, faith-based and women's groups have come together to share challenges and different ways of doing business in response to the dual crises of COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold.

The two-day Fiji Reflection and Learning Workshop has attracted people from almost 40 initiatives supported by the Australian Government through funding from Fiji Women's Fund and Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*).

Initiatives supported include the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation's COVID-19 response, We Rise Coalition, Transcend Oceania's trauma counselling services post crises, Soqosoqo Vakamarama i-Taukei (Kadavu) cyclone recovery and food security projects and Pacific Rainbow Advocacy Network security planning and alternative livelihoods.

Building on previous years, the workshop is designed to support partners in their work of advancing gender equality in Fiji and the region.

Australia's Counsellor (Development Cooperation), Rochelle White, explained: 'Working towards the achievement of gender equality is a key priority for the Australian Government, and it's one we share with Fiji. Working together on this shared challenge can lead to greater progress towards giving women and men, girls and boys, equal opportunities for everything.'

'This event is important as it goes beyond the exchange of knowledge and practical experiences, to providing invaluable connections between women's groups, coalitions and other partners,' Ms White said.

Manager of the Fiji Women's Fund, Michelle Reddy, said 2020 has been a particularly tough year for many of the Fund's grantee partners who have been at the forefront of the dual crisis response and recovery efforts.

'The event allows the Fund and our grantee partners to share some of the lessons learned and to ensure that locally-led responses are sustainable and appropriate to the needs of the communities that our grantee partners work with,' Ms Reddy said.

'The Fund will also launch the findings of our annual collaborative research paper on good practices used by our grantee partners on the Fund's thematic areas of focus. This year the paper: "*Promising Practices in Preventing and Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls in Fiji*" features the contributions of Rise Beyond the Reef, House of Sarah, Medical Services Pacific and Reproductive Family Health Association of Fiji.

Partnerships Lead with *Pacific Women's* Support Unit, Tara Chetty, said: '*Pacific Women* stands with the Fund, proudly supporting women's organisations and other partners in Fiji, as they work towards women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women, advancing women's leadership and building women's coalitions for change.'

'This workshop is a space for shared learning, drawing on the incredible experience and expertise of our partners in Fiji, so together we can build relationships and movements for change,' Ms Chetty said, adding that partners attending from Fiji are from both national and regional organisations.

This year's event, from 19-20 October, includes three activities at the Grand Pacific Hotel:

- 19-20 October: Annual Reflection and Learning Workshop for grantees and partners

- 20 October, 3-4pm: Panel Discussion on “*Promising Practices in Preventing and Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls in Fiji.*”
- 20 October, 2-6pm: Women Entrepreneurs Business Council ‘Women’s Market’ - a women’s pop-up market at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

The public is encouraged to attend the ‘Women’s Market’ being held on Tuesday afternoon from 4pm, at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

[Ends]

## **Background**

**Fiji Women’s Fund (the Fund)** is an initiative of the Australian Government’s Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) program. The Fund has committed AU\$10.5 million from 2017 to 2022 for funding and capacity development support to women’s groups, networks, and organisations in Fiji to expand and enhance their work on women’s empowerment and gender equality.

**Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*)** connects more than 170 gender equality initiatives funded by Australia and implemented by over 160 partners across 14 Pacific Island countries, including Fiji. It is one of the largest global commitments to gender equality. Providing technical, knowledge sharing and convening support to the portfolio of partners is *Pacific Women’s* Support Unit.

## **Contact details**

### Fiji Women’s Fund

Phone : +679 9214638  
Email : [erica.lee@womensfund.org.fj](mailto:erica.lee@womensfund.org.fj)  
Website : [www.fijiwomensfund.org](http://www.fijiwomensfund.org)

### *Pacific Women* Support Unit

Phone : +679 331 4098 or 777 9097  
Email : [Jacqui.Berrell@pacificwomen.org.fj](mailto:Jacqui.Berrell@pacificwomen.org.fj)  
Website : [www.pacificwomen.org](http://www.pacificwomen.org)