

Influencing Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Through Film

[Vanuatu](#) [Ending Violence Against Women](#)

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Project Name: Talemaot

Project partner: Wan Smolbag Theatre

Total funding: \$260,000

Funding timeframe: 2016-19

Wan Smolbag has been performing issues-based theatre in Vanuatu since 1989. Through its theatre performances, films and television series, the group is in a unique position to influence community attitudes. The Australian aid program's [Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development](#) initiative supports Wan Smolbag to create drama that encourages understanding and positive behaviour change towards gender equality.



A scene from the film Talemaot. Photo: Wan Smolbag Theatre.

Wan Smolbag launched the film Talemaot in May 2017 and hopes it will provoke discussions that lead to positive change. The film raises awareness about rape and it generated strong reactions from both women and men at its preview at Wan Smolbag's Annual General Meeting.

The project was developed after a correctional services officer asked Wan Smolbag to work with violent sexual offenders. During the workshop with the prisoners, Wan Smolbag staff heard women blamed for the rapes that had been committed.

‘In the film we hear some of the excuses men make about rape... the woman was out at night on her own, she was wearing the wrong clothes, or she wanted sex,’ says the film’s Director, Peter Walker.

Talemaot aims to dispel these beliefs. It focuses the audience’s attention on the effect that rape has on a survivor’s life and challenges public perceptions on rape and victim-blaming. The film also features information about the referral pathways available for women and girls experiencing physical and sexual violence.

This type of drama is not easy to make and impacts deeply on the cast and crew. Helen Kailo found it difficult to perform the rape scene in Talemaot, but was determined to tell her character’s story.

‘Men need to understand this’, she says, ‘they need to feel the pain and fear women go through’.

Wan Smolbag hopes that this film will help women who have been raped talk to other women and help men understand what rape does to women.

** This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2016 – 2017](#). All values are consistent with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).*