

Pacific Women Advisory Board Meets to Discuss Progress

Regional

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Pacific Women Advisory Board. Back (L-R): Dr Colin Tukuitonga (SPC), Ms Natalia Palu Latu (Tonga), Ms Frances Adamson (DFAT Secretary), Reverend Sereima Lomaloma (Fiji), Mrs Merilyn Tahu (Vanuatu), Ms Natasha Stott Despoja (Observer, Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls – outgoing) and Mr Sione Tekiteki (representing Ms Andie Fong Toy – PIFS). Front (L-R): Ms Yoshiko Yamaguchi (RMI), Ms Savina Nongebatu (Solomon Islands) and Ms Maere Tekanene (Kiribati). Absent: Hon Fiamé Naomi Mata'afa (Samoa), Ms Andie Fong Toy (PIFS), Dr Lawrence Kalinoe (PNG), Ms Jane Kesno (PNG) and Ms Lesieli Taviri (PNG). Photo: DFAT, Canberra.

The [Advisory Board](#) of Pacific Women held its fifth meeting in Canberra on 10 November 2016.

The Advisory Board provides advice on the strategic direction of Pacific Women and reflects Australia's commitment to a Pacific-led response to improving the opportunities for political, economic and social advancement of Pacific women. It comprises 12 eminent women and men from across the Pacific – Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Members work across a wide range of areas – government, bureaucracy, private sector and civil society – and are strong advocates for gender equality in their own communities. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Pacific Community (SPC) are also represented on the Board. Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls is an observer to the Board.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Colin Tukuitoga, Director-General of SPC. Members had the opportunity to hear about progress on key direction setting pieces of work undertaken in 2015-2016. These included: the [Pacific Gender Research Scoping Study and Workshop](#); a review of counselling services in the Pacific focused on ending violence against women, and the Pacific Women roadmap that will guide future investments in the three outcome areas of the program and developments in relation to monitoring and evaluation. They welcomed the opportunity to provide feedback on this work, commended the work of the program and strongly recommended sharing research and learning products widely.

Members also had an opportunity to meet with the Hon Julie Bishop, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs; Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Australia's Minister for International Development and the Pacific; the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and key DFAT officials.

Minutes from the meeting can be accessed [here](#).