

Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Mid-Term Evaluation

Management response

The Australian Government has supported the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) since 1989. The goal of FWCC is to work towards the elimination of violence against women in Fiji and the Pacific region. FWCC provides counselling services, community education, advocacy and accommodation for women in Fiji. It also provides support to other crisis centres through a regional program of training and mentoring to strengthen efforts to end violence against women. FWCC is the Secretariat of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women (PWNAVAW).

DFAT commissioned an independent evaluation of its support to FWCC in January 2025. The evaluation sought to: assess FWCC's progress towards the End-of-Program Outcomes over the period from July 2022 to November 2024; assess the effectiveness and efficiency of FWCC in delivering services in accordance with the DFAT funding agreement; and compile lessons and considerations for the potential extension of the current agreement with FWCC for up to two years (September 2026-2028) and for future work.

The evaluation made 11 recommendations. The recommendations, DFAT's management response, are outlined in table 1 below.

KEY FINDINGS

The review found that:

1. FWCC has made strong progress towards the achievement of women's empowerment (EOPO1), including in rural and remote areas (EOPO3).
2. Inclusion and equitable access to services by marginalised groups remains a challenge but current efforts should yield medium-term results.
3. There is limited penetration of FWCC's services in Indo Fijian and Muslim communities.
4. FWCC staff have a strong professional understanding of the way in which support services lead to women's empowerment, but data is not adequately captured and reported upon.
5. FWCC has been a major contributor/influence on the development and review of laws, policies and protocols that promote women's rights in Fiji and the Pacific region (EOPO4).
6. FWCC has had a moderate influence on service providers, leaders, community members and duty bearers to implement laws and policies (EOPO2, EOPO6).
7. The Mid-Term Evaluation was unable to assess the extent to which Regional Network members and partners used best practice in their prevention and response to Violence Against Women (EOPO5).
8. FWCC's MEL system is a sound mechanism to demonstrate achievement of key deliverables, to facilitate decision-making and continuous improvement.
9. FWCC's demand-responsive and context-specific approach resulted in frequent budget deviations.
10. FWCC's governance and management arrangements meet standards.
11. FWCC's personnel are skilled and experienced.
12. DFAT Suva Post needs more support from DFAT Canberra gender teams and from the SURGE panel.

Table 1: Independent evaluation recommendations and DFAT management response

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Action Plan
Recommendation 1 A key consideration for extension of the current agreement with FWCC is for DFAT to enter into a partnership agreement with the Centre focused on the achievement of shared, strategic outcomes. The transfer of funds would still be still managed via a Complex Grant Agreement, but a voluntary Strategic Partnership Arrangement (SPA) establishes the framework for both the provision, and receipt, of donor funds over time.	DFAT, MFAT/ FWCC	Agree	DFAT will seek to work with FWCC to develop a non-legally binding, high-level partnership agreement (that is separate from grant agreements). This agreement would need to be informed by a partnership brokering exercise to negotiate 'ways of working' between FWCC and DFAT. We will work on the specifics of the proposed arrangement from September 2025 (this timing is based on FWCC's availability to engage in partnership brokering). Any future funding arrangements between FWCC and DFAT would be established via DFAT's International Development (ODA) Contributions (Grants) Policy and subject to Australian Government budgetary appropriations.
Recommendation 2 Despite the challenges DFAT faces in entering into medium-term funding agreements, a SPA can legitimately express DFAT's intent to maintain core funding to FWCC to achieve strategic outcomes over the medium to long term, subject to budget availability. Grants may still be provided for shorter-term periods under the auspices the SPA.	DFAT	Agree	As above
Recommendation 3 In order to better manage budget variations, all future grant agreements should include a provision to allow FWCC to shift underspends between budget lines through an email exchange. However, DFAT would still require relevant paperwork as supporting documents.	DFAT	Noted	This recommendation will be considered in the context of the development of any future grant agreements, and will be subject to approval by DFAT's Development, Procurement, Agreements and Systems Branch.
Recommendation 4 AHC, Suva needs more support from Canberra to engage with CSOs and with the evidence on EVAW, in order to improve understanding and collaboration. There are resources available within the DFAT Canberra Gender teams and from the SURGE Panel. More opportunities should be made available for Post to access this support to strengthen their own work.	DFAT Pacific Gender and Culture Section DFAT Gender Equality: Strategic Budget and Investment Section	Agree	DFAT (Suva Post and Pacific Gender and Culture Section) will seek to access specialist expertise to facilitate our engagement with FWCC. This includes linkages with the DFAT's (led by Canberra) forthcoming expansion of support for preventing and responding to VAW through support for crisis support centres, and partnership brokering in relation to the proposed Strategic Partnership Agreement (recommendation 1).

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Action Plan
Recommendation 5 There is scope for FWCC Counsellors to systematically record their professional judgements about where a (de-identified) survivor sits in terms of her own empowerment process, over time. This could be done using existing reporting formats and processes.	FWCC Research Team	Agree in principle	We agree in principle, noting that the recommendation is to FWCC. DFAT will explore options with FWCC for potential technical support to its monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system.
Recommendation 6 Given the critical role that police play as front-line responders to victim/survivors, and given Australia's policy commitment to EVAW domestically and internationally, there is scope for the AHC, Suva to engage in policy dialogue with GoF (potentially during the next of Senior Officials Meeting) to allow FWCC to recommence GBV training for police recruits, possibly with a specific budget allocation to support this work.	Director, Fiji Section, Fiji and Vanuatu Branch	Noted	Through our Vuvale Partnership, we will continue to engage in conversations and policy dialogue on ending violence against all women and girls. However, decisions regarding Fiji Police Force's focus, including around recruit training, are for the Fiji Government and relevant agencies. We suggest Suva Post lead on engagement with this work.
Recommendation 7 There is scope for using secondary analysis of existing FWCC data to establish the evidential link between the provision of support services and women's empowerment. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the percentage of new survivors presenting to the centres who go on to seek repeat counselling · the correlative relationship between numbers of repeat sessions and numbers of DVROs issued, cases filed, separations, jobs, independent accommodation secured, etc 	FWCC Research Team	Agree in principle	We agree in principle, noting that the recommendation is to FWCC. DFAT will explore options with FWCC for potential technical support to its monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system.
Recommendation 8 There are opportunities for FWCC to make minor changes to existing reporting templates to improve the capture of qualitative data on the achievement of specific stages of empowerment by survivors (refer 5 above) and on attitudes and behaviour changes of service providers/duty	FWCC Research Team	Agree in principle	We agree in principle, noting (as above) that the recommendation is to FWCC. DFAT will explore options with FWCC for potential technical support to its MEL system, including reporting templates.

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<p>bearers following FWCC training. This qualitative data could be analysed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. identify the links between numbers of repeat clients and achievement of specific stages of empowerment ii. present (de-identified) aggregate data on the percentage of FWCC clients progressing along the road to empowerment at a given time; iii. present aggregate data on behavioural and attitude changes resulting from community mobilisation workshops and training of duty bearers 			
<p>Recommendation 9 More systematic monitoring of the extent of attitudinal change of males following CE training could aid in FWCC's efforts to communicate the nature and effectiveness of its community-level prevention work.</p>	FWCC Research Team	Agree in principle	We agree in principle, noting (as above) that the recommendation is to FWCC. DFAT will explore options with FWCC for potential technical support to its MEL system.
<p>Recommendation 10 The M&E system does not currently attempt to link performance data to financial data. Any attempt to do this, even in a limited way, would be beneficial to the Management Collective to inform their decision-making processes, advocacy and resource mobilisation efforts.</p>	FWCC Research Team and Administration Team	Agree in principle	<p>We agree in principle, noting (as above) that the recommendation is to FWCC. DFAT will explore options with FWCC for potential technical support to its MEL system.</p> <p>DFAT has also commissioned a comprehensive due diligence assessment of FWCC, which will consider issues around resource mobilisation and financial sustainability.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11 Given that more than one-third of funding to Fiji women's crisis centre is regional funding for regional activities, there is a need to gather evidence about the effectiveness and efficiency of this work.</p>	DFAT (Suva Post and PGS)	Agree	DFAT agrees and will work with FWCC to jointly explore opportunities for potential MEL support. We will also explore potential evaluative opportunities around FWCC's regional work i.e. a future mid-term or end-of-program evaluation incorporated into the next phase of regional support to FWCC in the forthcoming regional design.