

Scoping Study on Women's Leadership and Decision-making

Management Response

August 2017

Summary

Australia is committed to advancing women's leadership and decision-making in Solomon Islands.

The Scoping Study on Women's Leadership and Decision-making provides useful guidance to help inform future Australian investment, advocacy and engagement in this area within Solomon Islands. In particular, it contains many recommendations across the breadth of Australia's operations in Solomon Islands.

Australia has already commenced work to progress some recommendations and will continue to progress others where it is practical and feasible to do so. We see particular value in mainstreaming efforts to facilitate women's leadership and decision-making across our existing programs alongside modest, targeted investments focused solely on women's leadership and decision-making. We are also supportive of efforts to build the capacity of Solomon Islands Government to take forward its own work on women's leadership and decision-making.

This management response outlines how Australia will take forward the recommendations contained within the Scoping Study. Where recommendations are not practical or feasible, they have been identified as such.

Background

Gender inequality is a significant development challenge in Solomon Islands, with high rates of gender-based violence, limited women's economic empowerment and few women in leadership and decision-making positions. For example, just one of fifty Members of Parliament is a woman, and there are only four females of one hundred and seventy two Provincial Members across the country.

Australia has a strong focus on progressing gender equality in Solomon Islands. The bulk of Australia's investments in gender equality have been focused on ending violence against women and women's economic empowerment. While there have been investments in women's leadership and decision-making funded through regional and global investments and mainstreamed through our sectoral programs, this has been undertaken in a largely ad hoc manner.

In late 2016, Australia commissioned a Scoping Study on Women's Leadership and Decision-making in Solomon Islands. The Scoping Study was commissioned with a view to informing future Australian investment, advocacy and engagement. The intent was for the scoping study to promote a holistic and coordinated approach to supporting women's leadership and decision-making in Solomon Islands across the different spheres of Australia's operations.

A three-person team was engaged to conduct the Scoping Study. The team conducted two in-country missions to Solomon Islands, including provincial travel to Choiseul and Western Provinces. Extensive consultations were held with Solomon Islands Government, civil society, the private sector and Australian High Commission staff.

The Scoping Study on Women's Leadership and Decision-making was finalised in December 2016. Twelve recommendations are contained within the document, which cover the breadth of Australia's operations in Solomon Islands. The recommendations and DFAT's response are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Scoping Study on Women in Leadership and Decision-making recommendations and DFAT’s Management Response

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
1. INCLUDE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ACROSS ALL DFAT WORK	Mostly Agree.	
Make WIL an explicit, intentional, intended outcome wherever possible.	<p>Australia agrees that women’s leadership and decision-making should be mainstreamed across our work in Solomon Islands, including through our aid program, political engagement and corporate management. Australia will make women’s leadership and decision-making an explicit, intentional, intended outcome where ever possible.</p> <p>We will work with Australian Defence Force and Australian Federal Police to identify opportunities to promote women in leadership and decision-making.</p>	Relevant program managers, with support from the Gender Equality Team in cooperation with the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Federal Police
Include at least 30% women and men on all committees / panels / boards and introduce indicators and targets to reflect this participation.	<p>Australia is committed to advocating for at least 30 per cent women’s representation on all committees, panels and boards in Solomon Islands. Australia will determine which committees, panels and boards we are able to influence, and commence advocacy.</p>	Relevant program managers
Support training for committee and board members to ensure effective participation. (Note, this would be for both men and women).	<p>Australia will consider training for committee and board members in Solomon Islands where feasible and where the greatest impact can be made. Due to the large number of committees, panels and boards supported by DFAT, training for every committee and board member is neither practical nor cost effective. Where boards are managed by our partners, Australia will advocate on the need for training.</p>	Relevant program managers

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
Ensure that individual women and women's groups are consulted in program design and any DFAT funded consultations.	Australia agrees that individual women and women's groups should be consulted in program designs and any Australian funded consultations in Solomon Islands. Sensitive and considered consultation with women and women's groups will be included in all program design plans. Including a gender equality/social inclusion expert in any design team is a current commitment of the Honiara Post Gender Equality Action Plan.	Relevant program managers
Identify, promote and support male champions in different sectors across DFAT; advisers in line ministries; and DFAT supported programs, who in turn should also encourage men in their respective line ministries to become male champions.	Australia recognises the importance of male champions. Australia will focus efforts to promote male champions within Solomon Islands Government and Solomon Islands society, rather than within DFAT or advisor cohorts.	Political Team and relevant program managers
Promote women's leadership and decision-making within DFAT's media strategies across different aspects of posts operations.	Australia agrees that women's leadership and decision-making can, and should, be promoted through our media engagement in Solomon Islands. Australia has already committed to progress this as part of the Honiara Post Gender Equality Action Plan.	Media Team
Include gender equality performance indicators in the Terms of Reference for TA advisors.	Australia agrees that gender equality performance indicators should be included in the Terms of Reference for all technical assistance positions in Solomon Islands. Australia has already committed to progress this in the Honiara Post Gender Equality Action plan. Due consideration will be given to women's leadership and decision-making in the drafting of these Terms of Reference.	Relevant program managers

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
2. <i>Leverage political diplomacy initiatives</i>	Mostly Agree	
High-level visits to include messaging on WIL	<p>Australia is committed to using our political engagement and public diplomacy work to promote gender equality, including women’s leadership and decision-making.</p> <p>It is already a commitment in the Honiara Post Gender Equality Action Plan for all high-level visits to include a focus on gender equality, including women’s leadership and decision-making. Australia agrees that this will continue. Australia will also ensure strong representation by Solomon Islands women in all events and meetings organised and facilitated by Australia in Solomon Islands.</p>	Visit and Event Coordinators
Bring women leaders from Australia who have struggled in their journey to become leaders, such as those from indigenous, ethnic minorities, refugee or immigrant backgrounds.	Australia will be mindful of opportunities to bring women leaders from Australia as a means to promote women’s leadership and decision-making.	Political Team

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
<p>During Defence Cooperation visits by vessels, include media interviews with high ranking women defence officers, including naval officers.</p>	<p>During the recent events to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal, Australia hosted a roundtable with women from Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, Correctional Services Solomon Islands, US military, New Zealand and Australian Defence Forces. The roundtable provided an opportunity for women working in support of security and stability to share their experiences, and strategies for overcoming obstacles.</p> <p>We will work with the Australian Defence Force to identify future opportunities as part of Defence Cooperation visits to Solomon, as well as Australian Naval ship visits and Defence Operational visits to advance women’s leadership and decision-making.</p>	<p>Political Team and Gender Equality Team, in cooperation with the Australian Defence Force</p>
<p>Bring male champions from other Pacific Island Countries to Solomon Islands, such as the Prime Minister of Samoa who enabled TSM legislation to be enacted enabling reserved seats for women in the Samoan Parliament.</p>	<p>Australia will be mindful of opportunities to bring male and female champions from other Pacific Island Countries to Solomon Islands as a means to promote women’s leadership and decision-making.</p>	<p>Political Team</p>
<p>Include Solomon Island women in high-level delegations, such as those to visit Australia (such as in Special Visits program).</p>	<p>Australia agrees to consider gender equality in Solomon Islands nominations for the Special Visitors Program, and any other similar opportunities as they arise, such as the Australia Awards Fellowships.</p>	<p>Political Team and visits and event coordinators.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
<p>DFAT support women’s media organisations such as Vois Blong Mere Solomon and Women in Media Solomon Islands to promote messaging on WIL and women’s stories.</p>	<p>Australia sees value in supporting women’s media organisations to promote messaging on women’s leadership and decision-making. Australia already supports Vois Blong Mere Solomon Islands through the Let’s Make our Families Safe program.</p> <p>Australia has also made a commitment to promote gender equality, including women’s leadership and decision-making through our media engagement and public diplomacy initiatives as outlined in the Honiara Post Gender Equality Action Plan. Australia agrees to continue this approach into the future.</p>	<p>Gender Equality Team and Public Diplomacy Team</p>
<p>3. Support Solomon Islands Government to effectively mainstream gender</p>	<p>Agree.</p>	
<p>Support a Gender Adviser at Director Level in the Ministry of the Public Service¹ to work with Gender Focal Points (GFP) to enhance their capacity working across SIG. The Gender Adviser will have the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support mainstreaming of the national Gender Equality and Women’s Development (GEWD) policy across SIG; • Assist with developing gender work-plans and relevant gender-budgeting analysis with each Ministry; • Provide capacity building and TA to Gender Focal Points and the MWYCFA; 	<p>Australia is in discussions with the Ministry of Public Service (MPS) on support for a Gender Advisor position within the Solomon Islands Government.</p> <p>Australia will also pursue a number of other opportunities to progress women’s leadership and decision-making in the public sector, leveraging investments in the governance sector as well as broader investments and engagement with SIG. This may include human resources management, discussion of gender equality in high-level fora, and including women on panels and boards.</p> <p>The <i>Solomon Islands-Australia Aid Partnership</i>, signed on 29 June 2017, recognises gender equality and empowering women and girls as critical to addressing the barriers to economic growth and poverty reduction in</p>	<p>Governance Team</p> <p>Aid Program commitment</p>

¹ The Chairman of the Public Service Commission and the Permanent Secretary for MWYCFA agree that this position would be best placed in the Ministry of Public Service

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<p>including capacity building to Gender Focal Points to assist their Permanent Secretaries to respond effectively to their performance appraisal gender indicators;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist to institutionalise gender equality measures in Public Service Recruitment such as by ensuring gender balance on panels where possible, and maintaining sex-disaggregated data on applicants by gender; • Build capacity to advance policy and manage programs on women’s leadership and decision-making across SIG by creating networking and possible mentoring opportunities for women in middle/senior management in public service; • Undertake gender audits for different Ministries of the SIG; • Conduct an analysis on gender discriminatory policies and practices within the Public Service; • Identify male champions in the public service and provide support and training to them and work closely with DFAT advisors within their respective ministries to promote male champions in their ministries. 	<p>Solomon Islands. This includes a joint commitment to ensuring women’s full effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.</p>	

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
<p>4. Support MWYCFA to progress work on women’s leadership and decision-making</p>	<p>Agree.</p>	
<p>Support a position in MWYCFA to take a lead role in developing and delivering training on decision-making and leadership at community and provincial levels, working closely alongside other MWYCFA staff, especially women’s economic empowerment. Duties of the post-holder will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake training and capacity development within the Ministry and work with provincial Women’s Development Division (WDD) staff; • Post-holder to take the lead in reviving the WISDM coalition, working towards affirmative action measures, in partnership with SINCW and CSOs; develop a work-plan and seek funding to implement; • Assist MWYCFA to implement relevant areas of GEWD policy; • Promote linkages with CSOs working in this area to strengthen existing programs. 	<p>The Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs is a key stakeholder in efforts to facilitate women’s leadership and decision-making. Australia is supportive of any efforts to help build MWYCFA’s capacity in this space.</p> <p>Australia will support technical assistance within MWYCFA focused solely on women’s leadership and decision-making to help build capacity and contribute to positive outcomes. The proposed duties are a useful starting point. However, the final roles and responsibilities of this position will be subject to approval by MWYCFA.</p>	<p>Gender Equality Team</p>

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
5. Support gender equality in education and training	Partly agree	
<p>Support TA to MEHRD to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise and implement MEHRD’s gender equality in education policy. • Contribute to the Public Service Gender Advisor in the study on gender discriminatory policies and practices but within the MEHRD. • Revive/reinforce effective career guidance previously provided by schools to mentor and support female students who have high performance in traditionally male dominated study fields to pursue further studies in those areas. 	<p>The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has submitted its draft gender equality in education policy to the Education Board for approval. Australia will monitor progress and continue advocacy for finalisation of the policy.</p> <p>As noted above, Australia is in discussions with the Ministry of Public Service (MPS) on support for a Gender Advisor position within the Solomon Islands Government</p> <p>Australia has not supported career guidance in schools to date, and will be unable to in the future noting the Education Support Program has finite funding. However, Australia will consider options to mentor and support female students to succeed in male dominated fields through our Skills for Economic Growth program.</p>	Education Team and Governance Team
Contract a short-term consultant to develop a reader with course notes on women and leadership and decision-making for the USP school leaders’ course	Australia is providing funds to the current University of the South Pacific leadership program. However, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development manages the contract and procurement. Australia will request MEHRD to consider women’s leadership and decision-making within the course.	Education Team

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<p>Support TA to SINU to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a curriculum review of courses at SINU to seek entry points for WIL. <p>Work with SINU staff to integrate proven pedagogies that enhance girls' learning and improves the self-esteem and confidence of girls.</p>	<p>Australia is supporting reviews of some curricula at SINU through our Skills for Economic Growth program. Australia will consider women's leadership and decision-making as part of this process, including to improve young women's learning in these courses.</p>	<p>Skills Team</p>
<p>Enhance the current work on skills development by making basic courses on gender awareness and decision-making and leadership a component of training at pilot Rural Training Centres (RTC)²</p>	<p>Australia will advocate for gender equality to be considered during the development and revision of curriculum for courses in selected priority areas at pilot Rural Training Centres.</p>	<p>Skills Team</p>
<p>RTC to train female students in sanitation skills such as installing water tanks and water systems to empower them to make decisions in regard to RWASH activities in their own communities.</p>	<p>The selection of courses to support for development through the skills for Economic Growth program is based on labour market analysis and extensive consultation with local stakeholders. The Skills for Economic Growth program will undertake efforts to ensure equal participation of men and women in WASH courses in provinces where WASH skills are identified as a high priority.</p>	<p>Skills Team</p>
<p>Amend scholarships policy to allow for distance learning and study at the Solomon Islands campus of the University of the South Pacific.</p>	<p>Scholarships policy is determined by Canberra. At present, distance study is not supported. There is currently no scope to change this, noting the practical considerations behind the policy position.</p>	

² Note: this intervention is aimed at all RTC students as it may prove difficult to separate males and females. Young males can develop gender sensitivity through this training. All young people need to be empowered to make sensible decisions, for example around sexual and reproductive health.

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
Work with stakeholders to develop and deliver appropriate training for school board members to raise their confidence.	Australia agrees that training for school board members would be beneficial. Australia will work to progress this recommendation as opportunities arise, including through advocacy with partners.	Education Team
<i>6. Support for literacy training for out-of-school women and girls</i>	Partly agreed.	
Support literacy training as a component of other DFAT supported programs to augment WIL aspects and to scale-up effectiveness.	Australia already supports the development of literacy skills in a number of programs. We fund Save the Children’s Literacy Boost and support three Australian volunteers who are working to improve literacy across Solomon Islands. This support is complemented by other skills and tertiary education programs and the provision of financial literacy training to adults through Women's Economic Empowerment programs. However the main avenue of our support for education and literacy is the substantial budget support we provide to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development. This is strengthening the education system and helping achieve literacy improvements for girls and boys. There is still great need for this support and currently no scope to reduce it in order to invest in additional literacy programs.	Education Team, Skills Team and Economic Team

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
7. Enhance women’s leadership and decision-making through private sector engagement and economic growth	Mostly agree.	
Convene networking opportunities for women working in the private sector to provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and to provide relevant training.	Australia recognises the importance of networking opportunities in promoting women’s leadership and decision-making. In December 2016, a professional women’s network, Solomon Islands Professional Network for Women (SIPNET) was launched in Solomon Islands with Australian funding. The Network will provide opportunities for informal mentoring for professional women of all backgrounds, as well as the opportunity for professional women to “be” a mentor for women leaders of the future. Australia will provide ongoing support to SIPNET.	Economic Team
IFC and SICCI to develop model sexual harassment and maternity leave policies and advocate for all SICCI members to adopt into their company policies.	The International Finance Corporation is working closely with the private sector (including the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry) to develop anti-bullying and family violence policies. Maternity and childcare policies will be considered in due course.	Economic Team
Support training for mentors in the private sector in parallel with leadership and management opportunities for women employees.	As mentioned above, SIPNET will provide opportunities for informal mentoring for professional women of all backgrounds, as well as the opportunity for professional women to “be” a mentor for women leaders of the future.	Economic Team
Encourage SICCI to include WIL as an intended outcome of Component 1 of its work.	Women’s leadership and decision-making will be a key component of Australia’s advocacy with the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and other peak business bodies, such as the Solomon Islands Women in Business Association (SIWIBA).	Economic Team / Gender Equality Team

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
<p>IFC and SICCI to encourage businesses to adopt the Women’s Empowerment Principles or She Works Partnership.</p> <p>IFC and SICCI to encourage and mentor potential male champions in the private sector.</p>	<p>Australia will continue to promote the Women’s Empowerment Principles and She Works Collective throughout our engagement with the private sector. Key partners, including IFC, will be encouraged to do the same.</p> <p>Australia will consider opportunities to mentor male champions in the private sector through the IFC program.</p>	Economic Team
<p>WIL to become an explicit objective for savings clubs supported by the Pacific Financial Inclusion Program and other Australian supported savings clubs, such as WARA.</p>	<p>Australia agrees women’s leadership and decision-making should be a more explicit objective of savings clubs supported with Australian funding. Australia will seek to ensure this is the case for all new funding arrangements. An opportunity to bring these two objectives into alignment will present during the design of the Pacific Financial Inclusion Program, Phase III, in late 2017.</p>	Economic Team
<p>Encourage SIWIBA to work with provincial women in business organisations such as the Gizo Women in Business Association.</p>	<p>Australia sees value in encouraging SIWIBA to work with more closely with Gizo Women in Business Association (GWIBA). Australia will commence discussions with the SIWIBA Board to promote better collaboration and partnership with GWIBA in 2017. We can also make this a more explicit objective in any future funding agreements with SIWIBA.</p>	Economic Team
<p><i>8. Enhance training for women in public and private sectors</i></p>	<p>Agree.</p>	
<p>APTC to adapt Certificate course on leadership and management specifically for women in public and private sectors. Provide scholarships for women with leadership capability and potential to undertake APTC leadership courses.</p>	<p>Australia recognises the importance of training to facilitate women’s leadership and decision-making. Australia is supporting Solomon Islands women working in the private sector to undertake a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management through the IFC Empowering Women in the Private Sector program. Australia is also supporting women in the public and community sector in Honiara, Auki and Gizo to undertake the same training. The training is being delivered by APTC.</p>	Gender Equality Team and Economic Team

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
<i>9. Support health sector to enhance women’s leadership and decision-making</i>	Partly Agree.	
The proposed Gender TA for the Ministry of Public Service can be utilised to integrate WIL into MHMS operational and program areas, including encouraging women to apply for senior positions in the MHMS; providing them with support and training to undertake roles effectively.	Australia will look for further opportunities to progress women’s leadership and decision-making in the health sector. In particular, Australia will work closely with MHMS and development partners to progress women’s leadership and decision-making through human resources management of the health workforce, noting that human resources decisions rest with Solomon Islands Government.	Health Team
MHMS to systematically collect sex-disaggregated data in the core indicator set	MHMS already collects some sex-disaggregated data as part of its Core Indicator Set. Some indicators, such as those measuring numbers of communities, cannot be sex disaggregated. However, Australia will work with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) to identify a select number of indicators for which collecting sex-disaggregated data would be most useful and advocate for increased sex-disaggregation over time.	Health Team
All boards and governance mechanisms of MHMS should have equal numbers of women members.	Australia will advocate for boards and committees in the Solomon Islands health sector to include a minimum of 30 per cent women’s representation where able and feasible. However, it is recognised that some key committees are position-based, and that Australia will have limited influence over these.	Health Team

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
RWASH: strengthen gender indicators to reflect women's participation in decision-making for example, number of women included in Management and Maintenance Committees; the number of women trained in the installation, repairs and maintenance of water and sanitation systems.	Australia will work with MHMS to progress women's leadership and decision-making in the RWASH sector, including through collection of data and advocacy for a minimum of 30 per cent women's representation on RWASH Management and Maintenance Committees.	Health Team
10. Support for young women leaders	Partly Agree.	
Support YWCA to revive its mentoring program as a follow up for Rise Up! Alumni.	Australia recognises the importance of mentoring to promote women's leadership and decision-making. The Australian funded World YWCA initiative Mobilising Young Women's Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific is supporting mentoring of young women, including in Solomon Islands.	Gender Equality Team
Seek partner to offer the Transformational Leadership Training to promising female leaders in secondary schools (through UN Women).	Australia will not be in a position to support transformational leadership training in secondary schools.	

Recommendation	Response	Responsibility
11. Support to Political Parties Integrity Commission and Electoral Commission	Agree.	
<p>Provide TA to strengthen functioning of PPIC and Electoral Commission so that they can focus on priority areas of work including WIL activities.</p> <p>Initiate and strengthen women’s lobbying coalitions by providing a safe space to foster togetherness, share resources and build leadership.</p>	<p>The Australian High Commission will continue to support the Political Parties Integrity Commission and Solomon Islands Electoral Commission through the multilateral Strengthening Electoral Systems Program and our bilateral program. We are reviewing delivery modality for both programs this year, which gives us the opportunity to focus objectives more on women’s leadership and decision-making activities, including towards initiating women’s coalitions. We are also working on the launch of a Women’s Network later in the year that would have a focus on leadership and politics.</p>	Political Team
12. Support for women, peace and security	Partly Agree.	
TA proposed for MWYCFA (in Intervention 4) to support implementation of the National Action Plan on WPS	Australia is committed to supporting Solomon Islands to develop and implement its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Australia funded technical assistance to support MWYCFA to develop the Solomon Islands National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Australia will provide further technical assistance to assist MWYCFA with implementation of the National Action Plan.	Gender Equality Team
DFAT to consider provision of TA to MNURP, possibly through UNDP to undertake tasks such as recruiting and training of female Peace Building Officers of the MNURP	Women played a key peacebuilding role both during and after the tensions and Australia would support seeing that role continue. Solomon Islander women and the Solomon Islands Government would need to take the lead on working through how this might work, especially post RAMSI. Through the UN Peace Building Fund, we are supporting the UNDP to deliver a number of peace building and reconciliation projects, many of which focus on the role and leadership of women.	Political Team