

MEDIA RELEASE



MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Hon Julie Bishop MP

MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE PACIFIC

Senator The Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells

25 November 2016

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Today marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Ending violence against women and promoting gender equality are priorities of the Australian Government and a key part of our foreign policy and overseas aid program, especially in the Pacific.

Violence against women is a significant human rights violation that has a profound impact on its victims, on communities, and society as a whole. More than 60 per cent of women surveyed in the Pacific have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.

Today we announce that the Government will provide \$6 million to the Vanuatu Women's Centre, continuing our support for the provision of counselling services, community awareness and legal advocacy programs through to June 2021. Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Ms Natasha Stott Despoja AM, is visiting Vanuatu this week to meet the organisations and individuals who are working with us to counter gender inequality.

We also release the second [progress report](#) on *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* (Pacific Women), Australia's flagship regional gender equality program, which shows how Australian aid is making a difference for women and girls across 14 Pacific Island countries.

Through *Pacific Women*, the Government is helping to eliminate violence against women, promote women's economic empowerment, increase women's leadership and improve women's access to services. Over the past year, we have helped 9,320 women and children access crisis support services, 4,669 women take on leadership roles and 1,224 women access financial information and services.

Today also marks the start of [16 Days of Activism to End Gender Based Violence](#), a global campaign to raise public consciousness about unacceptable violence perpetrated against women and girls.

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