

Pacific Women in Leadership

Weekly Digest

MISS SAMOA AS ACTIVISM? USING UNUSUAL PLATFORMS TO BREAK CULTURAL SILENCES



Nine in ten women in Samoa is said to experience violence. With a statistic like that, of my sisters here, only two of them are safe from violence ... And that's emotional and physical violence. These are things that we must uncover and it takes sometimes platforms like this to speak the unspoken – Suluafi Brianna Fruean, Miss Samoa 2024 contestant.

Beauty pageants are quite prolific in the Pacific. In Samoa, Miss Samoa is crowned during the Teuila Festival and is inextricably linked to Samoa's outward facing profile; she appears in all tourism campaigns and during her reign represents the country at various diplomatic meetings.

It's an interesting time for the tama'ita'i Samoa who currently hold the Miss title. Reigning Miss Samoa, Litara Ieremia-Allen, is working alongside Miss Samoa 2023, Moemoana Safa'atoa Schwenke, as Moemoana completes her additional reign as Miss Pacific Islands 2024. At the same time, Miss Samoa 2022, Haylanni Kuruppu, has been selected by the newly formed Miss Universe Samoa executive committee to represent Samoa at the popular international pageant.

-DEV POLICY

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"WE HAVE DEEP HISTORICAL ROOTS," XI TELLS FIAME



President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping told Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mataafa that the two nations have deep historical roots.

The two leaders, one from one of the biggest economies in the world and another from a tiny island nation met at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.

It was a brief meeting in which Xi acknowledged Samoa's contribution towards treating them as equals and pursuing win-win cooperation.

He highlighted that Samoa had set an example for solidarity, collaboration and joint development among Global South countries.

"You are a senior politician from Samoa and an old friend of the Chinese people. You have visited China five times," Xi told Fiame.

"The friendship between China and Samoa has deep historical roots. Over a century ago, many Chinese people went to Samoa to work and live, making many contributions to local development."

Fiame and her delegation started their China state visit early this week. This is her first visit to China as prime minister.

"The visit to the Museum of the Communist Party, once we got off the plane yesterday. What we have seen shows an evolving transformation in China.

-SAMOAN OBSERVER

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN STATISTICS PAINT GRIM PICTURE IN THE PACIFIC



A UN Women report says the prevalence of reported physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence – taking place in the previous 12 months – is 30 percent in Melanesia.

The United Nations organisation for women, UN Women, has released a report on the progress made to advancing gender equality and the empowerment for women and girls.

The report is to inform this month's Asia-Pacific regional intergovernmental review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA).

The BPfA was adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women and covered 12 areas of concern, including women and poverty, education and training of women, violence against women, and women in power and decision-making.

The report said that in Oceania, excluding Australia and New Zealand, the prevalence of reported physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence – taking place in the past 12 months – was 30 per cent in Melanesia, 22 percent in Micronesia and 19 percent in Polynesia. For lifetime prevalence, available data disaggregated by SDG regional groupings suggest the rate for women aged 15-49 years stands at 27 per cent in Asia and 30 per cent in Oceania.

Read Report: [Charting New Paths for Gender Equality and Empowerment: Asia-Pacific Regional Report on Beijing+30 Review](#)

-RNZ PACIFIC

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ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO COVID-19: REPORT FROM FIRST PHASE RELEASED



The report from the first phase of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Covid-19 response has been released, finding that some vaccine requirements were "applied too broadly and remained in place for too long".

This "caused harm to individuals and families and contributed to loss of social capital" and the consequent loss of trust may have hurt the ability to respond to future pandemics, the inquiry said.

Included among the key findings of the report was that the "use of compulsion" – including mandating various public health measures – was one of the "most controversial aspects" of the Covid-19 response.

This included the decision to put requirements around vaccines, described in the report as a "major source of tension and social division", with "strongly held views both for and against their use".

It said that based on the information available in 2021, it was "reasonable" for the Government to issue orders mandating vaccines for specific occupations, such as for border and health workers. The vaccine pass system designed in late 2021, when Delta was the dominant variant, was also described as "reasonable".

But some vaccine requirements were "applied more broadly than originally envisaged" and the case for them became weaker in 2022 once Omicron became the dominant variant. -NZ HERALD

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AFFECTS ONE IN THREE WOMEN GLOBALLY - MITCHELL



Gender-based violence remains a devastating issue affecting one in three women globally.

This was highlighted by KPMG Enterprise National Managing Partner, Naomi Mitchell who says this issue is a pervasive crisis impacting communities worldwide.

She says this frightening statistic is the reason they support the Wear It Black initiative where they wear black every Thursday in a show of solidarity for victims and survivors of violence.

Mitchell says as a firm, they want to stand against gender-based violence as there is no place for it in our communities.

Managing Partner KPMG Fiji Lisa Apted says dressing in black may seem like a small gesture but it is unified teams across the Pacific and Australia.

Apted says there are now more than 16 KPMG offices following KPMG Fiji's lead, and what began as a focus in their Fiji offices has travelled and it has been powerful to see other teams join in and do what they can do to support this important cause.

She adds that she is proud that a passion for creating positive community change has brought teams together, and even more so, that KPMG has committed to making a significant charity donation to three women's shelters in Fiji, PNG, and Australia. -FIJIVILLAGE

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