

# First Nations foreign policy: Strengthening Australia-PNG Ties

Outcomes from the 2023 Lowy Institute Australia–PNG Network  
Emerging Leaders Dialogue

16–20 October, Cairns / Gimuy



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NETWORK

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**Convenors:**

Mihai Sora, Project Director of the Australia-PNG Network  
Dr Jessica Collins, Research Fellow in the Pacific Islands Program

**Design and photography:**

Josh Goding

The Australia-PNG Network acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners of the land on which the 2023 Emerging Leaders Dialogue was held, the Djabugay; Yirrganydji; Bulwai, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji; Mandingalbay Yidinji; Gunggandji; Dulabed and Malanbara Yidinji; Bundabarra and Wadjanbarra Yidinji; Wanyurr Majay; Mamu and NgadjonJii peoples. We extend this respect to all elders past and present, and other First Peoples within the region.

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## Executive summary

Incorporating First Nations perspectives into Australia–Papua New Guinea engagements has the potential to transform and elevate relations between our two countries. The active involvement of First Nations Australians in diplomatic roles, particularly with PNG, ensures that foreign policy and development programs are culturally sensitive and inclusive.

In 2023, the Australian Government established the Office for First Nations International Engagement led by the Ambassador for First Nations People, Justin Mohamed. The Ambassador’s role in international forums is to represent the diverse cultural values and perspectives of Indigenous Australian communities, taking Australia’s Indigenous identity to the world. This approach champions a new model of international relations grounded in mutual respect and understanding.

Indigenous-led initiatives in international trade and business can be a transformative force. Collaborative platforms for Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs from both Australia and PNG would not only strengthen economic ties but also empower Indigenous communities and women. This type of empowerment is key to fostering sustainable economic growth that honours and preserves cultural heritage.

In education, integrating historic and geographic ties between Australia and PNG into curricula would cultivate early cultural understanding and respect. Digital technology is a vital tool in enhancing access to education and service delivery, especially in healthcare, where it broadens the scope for professional development and improves healthcare delivery in remote areas.

Healthcare strategies that facilitate the exchange of knowledge between Australian and PNG mental health experts, tailored as culturally appropriate and rooted in community-based practices, would contribute to addressing the unique mental and physical health challenges faced by Indigenous communities.

Sports diplomacy is a powerful mechanism for fostering cultural exchange, economic development, unity, and health awareness. Annual sports events and shared training camps between Indigenous Australian and PNG teams would create new platforms for cultural dialogue and building community ties.

Addressing the shared challenge of climate, environment, and disaster response is where collaborative approaches blending traditional ecological knowledge with scientific research would have a huge impact across borders. Such an approach aims to create effective adaptation and resilience strategies for communities most vulnerable to climate impacts and extreme weather events.

Incorporating Indigenous knowledge and leadership across these and other sectors would redefine Australia–PNG relations. This focus underscores the importance of collaborative, culturally informed approaches that respect and honour the rich heritage and wisdom of Indigenous communities in both countries. It marks a significant shift towards more inclusive and sustainable practices in diplomacy, trade, education, health, sports, and environmental sustainability.

Civil society, the business community, and educational institutions will be the drivers of building closer First Nations ties between our two countries. But the convening power and support of both the Australian and PNG governments for these efforts are crucial to their success.

The recommendations identified by the emerging leaders represent a comprehensive approach to strengthening Australia–PNG relations by harnessing the power of Indigenous knowledge, cultural exchange, and mutual respect. The Dialogue acknowledges the diverse and rich heritage of both nations and proposes a path forward that is inclusive, sustainable, and beneficial for both Australian and PNG communities.

### Key recommendations:

1. Enhance Indigenous participation in diplomacy and development, ensuring that First Nations perspectives, knowledge and leadership are core to building and maintaining closer ties.
2. Foster Australia–PNG Indigenous business ties, with a special focus on empowering Indigenous women in business, through forums, mentorships, and innovation grants.
3. Co-design climate adaptation strategies that integrate traditional knowledge systems from both Indigenous Australian and PNG communities with scientific expertise.

A full list is included in the Recommendations section.



## About the Emerging Leaders Dialogue

Twenty young and emerging leaders from Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Australia gathered in Cairns from 16–20 October for the 2023 Australia–Papua New Guinea Emerging Leaders Dialogue.

The Dialogue is the annual flagship event of the Australia–Papua New Guinea Network, a Lowy Institute project supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which aims to build links and understanding between Australia and PNG.

The program opened with a discussion led by Australia’s inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People, Justin Mohamed. Over the following five days, participants explored the theme of First Nations Foreign Policy, focusing on development and human security issues relevant to PNG and Australia. Session themes spanned from defence to sports, media, arts, and culture. Activities included an Indigenous cultural tour in Mandingalbay, and site visits to Indigenous art galleries, the Performing Arts Centre, and James Cook University. The Lowy Institute also co-hosted a business reception with Tradelinked Cairns–PNG–Pacific, bringing the local and regional trade community together with the emerging leaders.

The group discussed the Australia–PNG defence relationship, including issues of sovereignty, treaties, and self-determination, with Australian government and military officials, before being given a tour of the Norship shipyard (Pacific patrol boats maintenance) and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Training College (for Pacific mariners).

A panel discussion with sporting stars gave an opportunity to discuss the role of sport in building ties and supporting community development. On the final day, a media session with a Cairns-based First Nations journalist and the ABC’s International Development department focused on media’s role in regional development and women in news and sport. This media discussion was followed by a practical demonstration of “MoJo” – mobile journalism – and a video journal session for each participant to reflect on the week.

Participants considered how Australia can draw from its diverse and rich First Nations history, connections, and identity to improve the Australia–PNG relationship. The role of partners such



as the Australian government, businesses, and community organisations was central to the discussions. The group explored the First Nations theme from the perspectives of sovereignty, history, culture, meaningful connectivity, cultural literacy, development, defence, and gender. Participants developed recommendations for the Australian and PNG governments and the business community, with the goal of improving links between the two countries.

This outcomes report is a summary of the discussions held. All participants contributed to the compilation of this report. Notes have been provided on a non-attributable basis.

Mihai Sora, Project Director of the Australia–PNG Network, and Dr Jessica Collins, Research Fellow in the Pacific Islands Program, convened the Dialogue.



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## Indigenous diplomacy and development

**“First Nations Australians and Papua New Guineans share histories, trade, values and culture that elevate the relationship to a profound level.”**

Cross-cultural exchanges are both beneficial and essential for effective diplomatic engagement. Despite the rich diversity within Australia’s First Nations communities, there are untapped opportunities to enhance the sharing of values and interests with PNG. Ideally, this should be led by First Nations people themselves, in partnership with the Australian government.

A prime avenue for such exchanges is through the role of Australia’s First Nations Ambassador. This ambassador should be a key participant in official visits to PNG and the wider Pacific region, alongside the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for International Development and the Pacific. Additionally, there should be an increase in the involvement of Indigenous Australians in development programs in PNG, allowing them to share their unique insights and experiences with development initiatives from Australia. It is important to create more opportunities for First Nations individuals to partake in diplomatic missions in ways that reflect Indigenous leadership styles and practices.

All levels of Australian diplomacy, regardless of their rank, would greatly benefit from participating in First Nations cultural awareness programs before their assignments in PNG. The goal is to empower non-Indigenous Australians to engage with and competently address Indigenous issues within their diplomatic roles. Complementing this, the Australian government could offer reciprocal cross-cultural awareness programs to PNG diplomats and public servants assigned to work in Australia.

A key example of effective Indigenous diplomacy is the Torres Strait Treaty. This complex yet forward-thinking agreement defines the maritime boundaries between PNG and Australia and protects the ways of life of the traditional inhabitants in the Torres Strait. Its mechanisms for dispute resolution, resource management, and trade regulation serve as a global exemplar of successful Indigenous foreign policy. This treaty balances the preservation of ancient cultural, migration, trade, and social connections with the safeguarding of crucial resources.

## Trade and business

**“The potential for First Nations–PNG business partnerships is immense, offering opportunities to build local supply chains and enhance skills.”**

The traditional trading practices between the Torres Strait Islands of Papua New Guinea and Australia have been dynamic for centuries. Currently, this relationship is bolstered by formal agreements such as the Papua New Guinea–Australia Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership (CSEP), which articulates a joint economic vision. In 2020, bilateral trade exceeded AU\$6 billion, with Australia’s investment in PNG reaching approximately AU\$26 billion in 2022.

Government agencies such as the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and PNG’s Ministry of International Trade and Investment are pivotal in facilitating and expanding this trade. Yet challenges persist in accessing international markets. The appointment of Australia’s First Nations Ambassador could be a strategic move to enhance First Nations trade, offering a guided pathway for more seamless business interactions between Australia and PNG.

While numerous conferences and forums exist for Australian and PNG businesses, including First Nations business trade fairs in Australia, a significant gap remains. There is no major platform dedicated to connecting Australian First Nations businesses with their PNG Indigenous counterparts. Establishing such a platform could be transformative, fostering new business partnerships and referrals, connecting entrepreneurs with advisory services and government procurement officers, and facilitating networking opportunities. These interactions can help share ideas and experiences, and inspire future entrepreneurs. Importantly, such a forum should include a specific focus on Indigenous women’s economic empowerment.

Organisations such as the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), in collaboration with the PNG government, are working to promote economic growth in PNG through sustainable practices in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry. These efforts enhance market access and services, although biosecurity challenges persistently impede trade with Australia. Investing in stronger biosecurity measures and supply chain enhancements could significantly improve and deepen trade relations between the two nations.



## Economic development

“Economic development must pave the way for genuine economic empowerment, especially for Indigenous communities.”

Historically, Australia’s First Nations peoples established robust trade networks with their PNG neighbours, facilitated by their geographical proximity. Today, this connection endures, particularly between the Torres Strait communities and PNG. The Torres Strait Treaty, a pivotal agreement, delineates seabed jurisdiction and allows for freedom of movement of traditional inhabitants for traditional activities as defined under the Treaty.

The economic development challenges faced by Indigenous groups on both sides of the Torres Strait are distinct, yet there exist shared opportunities and valuable lessons. These can be leveraged to economically empower Indigenous communities in both nations, particularly in sectors such as extractive industries, entrepreneurship, and agriculture

The extractive industry — a significant economic driver in both Australia and PNG — presents complex challenges. In PNG, issues such as government incapacity, revenue distribution, corruption, inequality, and conflict hinder communities from

reaping mutual benefits. The government’s increased stake in mining projects further complicates this dynamic. Similarly, in Australia, ongoing complexities around land and cultural heritage rights, including entitlement to economic benefits, remain unresolved. The Australian mining industry has had to become more responsive to Indigenous communities, particularly following incidents such as the destruction at Juukan Gorge, which sparked significant public outcry.

This evolving relationship between mining companies, governments, and Indigenous communities globally can offer insights for smaller communities in PNG. These communities often face a power imbalance in land use negotiations. Providing specialised technical and legal support could enhance their ability to negotiate effectively with corporations and the government. Additionally, bolstering civil society organisations in Australia and PNG through funding and partnerships can ensure that obligations are met, and community interests are advocated for when necessary.

With the PNG government’s growing involvement in mining, the prompt operationalisation of PNG’s Sovereign Wealth Fund will mitigate losses and secure the economic future of rural communities. In Australia, mining companies could explore establishing similar wealth funds for Indigenous groups, channelling resources into education, business development, training, healthcare, and other critical areas of community development.

“As a business owner I try to be a role model to other Indigenous people in Port Moresby.”

With up to four-fifths of PNG’s population engaged in an informal market dominated by subsistence living, the challenge to fostering Indigenous entrepreneurship is evident. The scarcity of private sector jobs limits career opportunities for the youth.

In contrast, Australian First Nations entrepreneurship is on the rise, buoyed by investments from philanthropic groups and government support. These initiatives are empowering First Nations businesses and entrepreneurs to expand nationally and internationally. Programs such as First Australians Capital illustrate this success, offering a variety of financial products to support high-potential Indigenous businesses.

PNG could benefit from adopting a similar model. A possible investment source is the Financing Funds of the Sovereign Wealth Fund, designed to support the government’s development and investment objectives with more adaptable operational guidelines. Investing in successful businesses that facilitate international trade not only boosts market confidence but also opens the door for further business investment. Such initiatives provide tangible examples and inspiration, which the PNG government could promote among its citizens to stimulate similar entrepreneurial growth.

### Torres Strait Treaty

Signed in 1978 and entered into force in 1985, under international law the Torres Strait Treaty is regarded one of the most progressive and creative solutions to a complex boundary problem. Defining the maritime border between Australia and PNG, the Treaty protects traditional ways of life on the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ) and provides subsidiary management arrangements for commercial fisheries. The TSPZ allows Torres Strait Islanders and coastal Papua New Guineans to move freely (without passports or visas) around the Zone, supporting traditional practices including trade.

There is a Torres Strait Treaty Liaison Office on Thursday Island and a PNG Border Liaison Office on Daru Island. Collective mechanisms also exist to maintain positive implementation of the Treaty, including a Traditional Inhabitants Meeting and Joint Advisory Council (an advisory body formed by Australia and PNG officials and traditional inhabitants), which ensures traditional inhabitants are consulted on matters concerning them. JAC reports are submitted to the foreign ministers of Australia and PNG.

## “Gaining access to competitive international markets relies on knowledge exchange of traditional and modern farming techniques.”

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme allows Pacific Islanders, including those from PNG, to work temporarily in Australia. Participants often find employment in agricultural sectors such as farming or in meatworks. This not only provides essential income through remittances and savings for their communities but also fosters a vital exchange of skills and knowledge.

The PALM scheme plays a dual role. It is a source of capital, which can be pivotal for starting businesses back in PNG. More importantly, it becomes a conduit for knowledge transfer and skill enhancement, especially for rural farmers looking to upgrade their farming practices and market competitiveness.

However, the recruitment process in PNG faces challenges. To optimise the benefits of this scheme, the PNG government

needs to enhance support for its workers. This includes ensuring they are passport-ready by improving access to biometrics and medical panel facilities and providing alternative identity verification methods where traditional forms are insufficient. Investment in agencies and service providers across PNG’s four regions (Southern, Highlands, Momase, and New Guinea islands) is necessary. There is a pressing need to invest in national identification, passport, and police check agencies to expedite processing times.

On the Australian side, there is scope to increase the number of medical panel physicians and biometric collection centres to streamline the application process for PNG workers.

Aside from the PALM scheme, expanding the scope of recruitment agencies to focus on placing high school and university graduates in professional roles could yield significant benefits. The success of programs such as the 3 Emus Indigenous Recruitment Program and CareerTrackers in Australia and PNG underscores this potential. Facilitating connections between alumni of these placement programs from both countries can enhance professional opportunities and strengthen bilateral relations, fostering a robust, mutually beneficial partnership.

### First Australians Capital

First Australians Capital provides resources to potentially high-value Indigenous businesses, including professional business support and services, networking, and financial capital. The model aims to create an economy led by First Australians, by supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs to succeed and economically empowering them in the process. First Australians Capital is an ecosystem of partners eager to support the growth of the Indigenous economy, providing links between investors and investees.



### 3 Emus Indigenous Recruitment

3 Emus Recruitment, an Indigenous-owned recruitment agency based in Canberra, specialises in connecting Indigenous job seekers with leading businesses and organisations across Australia committed to diversity and inclusion. Registered with Supply Nation, Australia’s database of Indigenous businesses, the 3 Emus core mission is to bridge the gap between talented Indigenous Australians and the corporate world, aligning Indigenous people with suitable career opportunities alongside personalised support, interview preparation and career advice. 3 Emus Recruitment also partners with other Indigenous businesses to provide workplace cultural competency training, ensuring inclusivity and respect of Indigenous cultures.

The agency has successfully placed numerous Indigenous candidates in fulfilling roles across various sectors, contributing significantly to the economic empowerment and representation of Indigenous Australians in the workforce. Looking ahead, 3 Emus Recruitment aims to expand its network, creating more opportunities for Indigenous participation in the Australian labour market. Their vision is a future where Indigenous Australians are active participants and leaders in diverse industries, leveraging their unique insights and experiences.







## Defence

“Defence partnerships have better outcomes with more input from both nations.”

Australia and PNG share a longstanding defence history, tracing back to the Second World War when Papuan and New Guinea units served in the Australian Army and Royal Australian Navy. This historical relationship has evolved into a close collaboration in contemporary times, encompassing regional stabilisation, peacekeeping, combatting illegal fishing and transnational crime, disaster relief operations, and support for major national projects.

The defence relationship is strategic and remains a priority for both nations, particularly given their significant contributions to regional security. The Defence Cooperation Program (DCP), Australia’s largest such initiative, is instrumental in this partnership, focusing on enhancing PNG’s defence capabilities. It supports the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) through investments in personnel, equipment, and infrastructure.

A key feature of this cooperation is the annual “Olgeta” joint training exercises, which bring together defence personnel from both countries for shared training experiences. In 2023, a notable development saw PNGDF members embedded within an Australian regiment for the first time during the Talisman Sabre exercises, allowing them to gain exposure

to varied training techniques and capabilities.

The DCP extends beyond joint exercises, encompassing education and training for PNGDF personnel, capability and infrastructure investments, and governance and personnel support. Advisory and liaison roles within the PNGDF and the PNG Department of Defence are also part of this program. In 2024, PNGDF’s Colonel Boni Aruma was appointed Deputy Commander of Australia’s 3rd Brigade, the highest ranking appointment for a PNGDF officer in the Australian Army.

The year 2023 also marked the signing of a comprehensive Bilateral Security Agreement between PNG and Australia. This agreement spans traditional areas such as defence, policing, border and maritime security, and extends to non-traditional spheres including cybersecurity, climate change, gender-based violence, and critical infrastructure.

To further enrich this defence relationship, it would be beneficial to involve a greater number of PNG officers and soldiers in the North-West Mobile Force (Norforce). Such participation would not only strengthen bonds between Indigenous Australian and PNG soldiers but also offer valuable cross-cultural experiences and skills exchanges. Involving Indigenous Norforce personnel in training exercises in PNG could deepen these interconnections and broaden mutual understanding through shared learning and experiences in diverse environments.

## Education

“The education goal is about quality, access, and learning about each other.”

A noticeable imbalance exists in the mutual understanding between the people of Papua New Guinea and Australia. While many in PNG, especially children, possess a considerable awareness of Australia — with some even familiar with the Australian national anthem or children’s shows such as Play School from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) — the reciprocal knowledge in Australia is limited. Notably, there is a lack of educational content in PNG schools about First Nations history and connections with PNG, and similarly, Australian educational programs rarely cover the significance and history of Australia’s nearest neighbour.

To bridge this gap, it is crucial for both Papua New Guineans and First Nations Australians to gain a deeper appreciation of their shared historical and cultural connections. Embedding Australia’s historical and geographical ties to PNG in the Australian school curriculum, and vice versa in PNG — with particular emphasis on the shared history of the Torres Strait Islands — is a step towards this understanding. Monitoring formal and informal educational institutions to ensure they include and respect cross-cultural values is also essential.

A practical initiative such as an episode of Play School dedicated to celebrating PNG’s culture and language would symbolise to young viewers the connections between

the two countries and their Indigenous populations. Moreover, government-to-government exchanges of lessons, evaluations, and experiences regarding development successes and challenges could immensely benefit the progress of Indigenous communities in both nations.

“There is a wealth of untapped potential in Papua New Guinea for education, training, and upskilling programs that can be formally recognised within the educational system.”

PNG has a growing need for more technical and trade schools. This presents an opportunity for funding and support from the Australian government, aimed at enhancing the skillset of PNG’s workforce, including women. To be most effective, these training programs should directly link to job opportunities in both PNG’s and Australia’s markets, much like the work done at CareerTrackers, where graduate students are connected to internship and other workforce opportunities. Prioritising tools and equipment provision, comprehensive training and assessment, and formal certification will be key areas of focus.

## CareerTrackers

CareerTrackers is dedicated to empowering pre-professional Australian Indigenous university students. By connecting students with employers for paid, multi-year internships, CareerTrackers facilitates career advancements, with more than 80 per cent of participants securing full-time employment shortly after graduation.

Over a decade, CareerTrackers has supported over 3000 internships, establishing a strong alumni network of more than 1000 Indigenous professionals across diverse industries. This network represents individual success stories but also marks a collective stride towards inclusive professional environments.

Expanding its successful model across the Torres Strait, CareerTrackers PNG connects undergraduate students in PNG with similar multi-year paid internships with leading employers. This initiative aims to equip them for success in their studies, careers, and as future community leaders.

Both in Australia and PNG, CareerTrackers is an agent of change, fostering diversity in the workplace and championing Indigenous talent. Its commitment to professional development and empowerment is creating a more equitable future where Indigenous skills and perspectives are valued and celebrated.

**“The New Colombo Plan is — in my opinion — severely underutilised in both the scholarship and mobility programs.”**

Such initiatives could support Australia’s Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, which requires semi-skilled workers ready for employment, as well as Australia’s key sectors, for example the construction sector, which currently needs skilled tradespeople. Additionally, identifying work placements in Australia could offer practical learning opportunities, fostering long-term workforce exchange.

Incorporating an education coach or mentor in PNG schools could also be instrumental. They would provide guidance and awareness about further education and training pathways, helping students navigate their academic and professional journeys.

Leveraging digital technology in education and training pathways is another viable approach, even in low digital literacy and bandwidth environments. For instance, blended learning pedagogies have been effective, as demonstrated by the Kumul Helt Skul online learning program, which notably improved healthcare worker competencies in resource-limited settings.

PNG schools with sporting facilities should be encouraged to support and integrate sports programs. These programs could serve as feeder systems for nationally recognised sports institutions, further broadening the scope of educational and professional development opportunities.



The New Colombo Plan (NCP) is designed to support Australian undergraduates in their studies and internships across the region, offering rich opportunities in study, internships, mentorships, language training, and alumni engagement. The 2024 NCP scholarships have made commendable strides, including a record number of First Nations scholars (16 out of 150, more than ten per cent) and the appointment of a First Nations Fellow, Pacific Fellow, and National First Nations Ambassador.

Despite these advances, the engagement with PNG under the NCP has been minimal. In its decade-long history, only a handful of scholars — merely six out of more than 1000 — have selected PNG as their destination. The experience of the most recent NCP Scholar in PNG, who prematurely left the program due to challenges including inadequate support, underscores the need for improvement. To encourage more Australian students to choose PNG, it is essential to address concerns regarding their security in PNG effectively. Additionally, promoting and bolstering existing ties with PNG’s academic institutions and the private sector is crucial.

Learning from the experiences of past PNG–NCP scholars could provide valuable insights. Understanding their challenges and successes would inform better support structures for future scholars, ensuring their safety and enriching their academic and cultural experiences in PNG.





## Health

“An Indigenous view of health integrates physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being with a deep connection to culture, land, family, and community.”

In PNG, mental and physical health, particularly among perinatal women, is an increasingly pressing issue. Yet access to health experts is limited for a large portion of the population. Exchanges between First Nations mental and physical health professionals in Australia and their Indigenous counterparts in PNG could be instrumental in sharing approaches to balancing the demands of modern life while staying rooted in traditional culture.

There is also potential for mutual learning in addressing inequities regarding health service access. Australian programs aimed at improving both physical and mental health outcomes in rural Indigenous communities can provide valuable insights for PNG, which faces similar challenges in delivering services to remote areas. Conversely, Australian health strategies could benefit from PNG's unique experiences. The PNG government should collaborate with First Nations health experts, including rural and remote health academics, to enhance these strategies based on evaluations of past and ongoing projects.

Encouraging collaboration between professional health bodies such as the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association and the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives with PNG counterparts (such as the National Doctors Association) could further enrich this exchange. Supported by the Australian government, these partnerships could facilitate training and professional development opportunities. Additionally, providing more opportunities for PNG healthcare professionals, especially those in the early stages of their careers, to participate in Australian medical conferences and dialogues would be beneficial.

Organisations such as Australian Doctors International, which partners with PNG health services to strengthen the health system and provide rural care, could use additional funding. This would allow them to expand their operations and include specific roles for First Nations healthcare professionals.

Australian aid for public health programs in PNG should incorporate cultural safety and awareness. For instance, discussions on female sexual and reproductive health should ideally be led by female healthcare workers. Engaging communities to understand Indigenous health concepts can aid in co-designing effective health service interventions.



## Culture and values

“Culture and values shape identity on the global stage – vital for advancing First Nations foreign policy.”

The role of Australia's First Nations Ambassador is central in recognising and representing the diverse cultural values and perspectives of Indigenous Australian communities in international forums. This role is about more than representation; it is about bringing the depth and diversity of Australia's Indigenous identity to the world stage.

Understanding the aspirations for sovereignty and self-determination within Indigenous communities is crucial. Both the Australian and PNG governments should facilitate more opportunities for Indigenous individuals to advocate on Indigenous issues, especially in global forums such as the United Nations.

Increasing the participation of First Nations Australians in the development sector can foster a sense of cultural connection and solidarity. Leadership by Indigenous people in development and diplomacy can strengthen ties between nations, leading to development initiatives that are both effective and culturally sensitive.

Collaboration between Papua New Guineans and First Nations Australians can harness their collective knowledge and resources towards shared objectives, promoting sustainable development grounded in shared cultural values. Initiatives such as the Pacific–Australia Youth Association exemplify the power of bringing together young leaders who share a vision and values based on connection, understanding, and community.

Australian government funding could enhance Indigenous participation in regional cultural events such as the Melanesian Arts and Culture Festival, creating opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural exchanges.

Educational and employment programs, supported by Australian funding, enable Indigenous people to connect over shared culture and values. Here, the First Nations Ambassador could play a crucial role in bridging different cultures.



## Sport

“Sport has transformative power, uniting nations and unlocking economic empowerment and cultural exchange.”

The Pacific Games, a cornerstone event for Pacific Islands nations, expanded its horizon by including Australia and New Zealand in the 2015, 2018, and 2023 games, albeit in selected sports where Pacific nations excel. An innovative approach for Australia could be to field a First Nations squad in future games, providing Indigenous Australian athletes with greater exposure to elite sports.

Establishing mentorship programs led by accomplished retired Indigenous athletes can be crucial in supporting emerging Indigenous sports talent. These programs can help young athletes balance the rigours of competing at an elite level with maintaining a connection to their cultural heritage.

Using sports events as platforms for mental health awareness can foster understanding and emphasise the importance of support in athletic circles.

Institutionalising annual matches between Indigenous Australian teams and PNG’s national teams in sports such as the National Rugby League and Australian Rugby Union, complemented by joint

training camps, can deepen connections between athletes with Pacific Islands and Indigenous backgrounds. Government funding to regionally broadcast these events would amplify their impact.

Facilitating Papua New Guineans’ participation in Australian sports tournaments can raise the standard of sports in PNG, providing motivation and aspiration for athletes. Streamlining visa processes for sportspeople is a practical step towards this goal.

Both governments and sports funding bodies should consider greater investment in a range of international sports, such as soccer, rugby union, cricket, and Australian Football League (AFL). These sports not only offer career and leadership opportunities but also serve as vital platforms for discipline, youth engagement, and community building. Civil society programs such as the Gymbox community health initiative can strengthen the international relationship at a grassroots level, alongside bringing locally-led development to communities.

### Gymbox: Empowering communities through fitness and sports diplomacy

Gymbox, a pioneering community health initiative, is transforming rural PNG by providing access to fitness facilities housed in 20ft shipping containers. These Gymbox units create a vibrant ecosystem that supports sports diplomacy, entrepreneurship, and innovation. The program caters to coaches, schools, teams, and athletes, contributing significantly to national sports federations in athlete training and preparation.

More than just fitness, Gymbox is a platform for promoting behavioural and societal change. Its aim extends beyond physical health, encompassing broader objectives such as addressing gender-based violence and fostering inclusive communities through its pilot 10 Million Strong leadership program. The program’s innovative approach in leveraging sports as a tool for social progress has been impactful, driven by a goal of empowering one million youths by 2050.

Looking to broaden its reach, Gymbox aspires to extend its services to Australian First Nations communities. This expansion could open avenues for cross-cultural exchange and collaboration, spurring innovation in community and school sports development. By integrating health, sports, and societal goals, Gymbox exemplifies how fitness initiatives can be pivotal in community empowerment and cultural engagement.





## Climate, environment, and disaster response

“Ecological knowledge, passed down through generations, can enhance climate and environmental programs.”

A First Nations approach to climate change, disaster response, and environmental policy needs to be collaboratively designed with Indigenous communities. This approach aims to bridge Western scientific methods with Indigenous knowledge. For instance, integrating First Nations knowledge of wildfire management into PNG communities can provide innovative and culturally grounded solutions.

Establishing mechanisms for continuous dialogue, consultation, and decision-making is crucial. These mechanisms should honour Indigenous cultural protocols and practices. First Nations communities in Australia and PNG disproportionately experience the impacts of climate change, weather events, and environmental degradation. Sharing cultural approaches to sustainability, adaptation, and mitigation strategies can unite First Nations communities with Papua New Guineans, fostering resilience and providing education on climate response and sustainability.

In PNG, carbon programs can adversely affect traditional communities, leading to land tenure conflicts and issues with equitable benefit-sharing. High-integrity

initiatives backed by Australian and PNG governments should prioritise social and environmental safeguards, respect for Indigenous rights, and community involvement in decision-making.

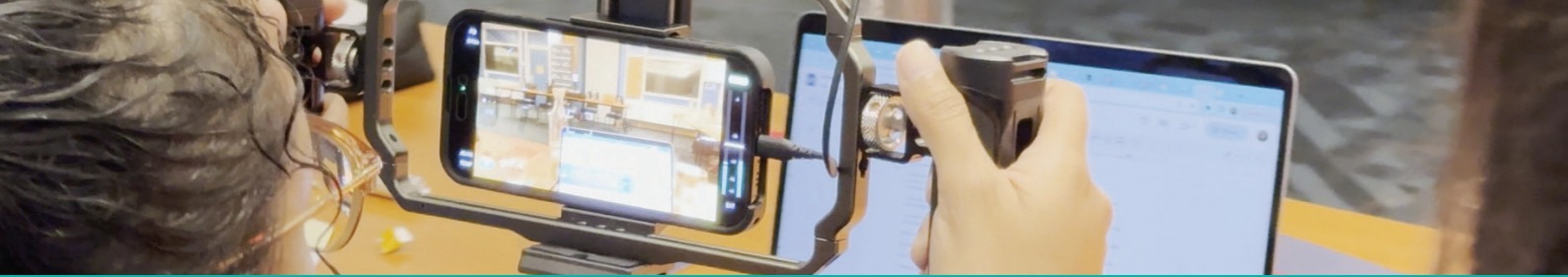
Involving private companies such as Ok Tedi Mine Limited (OTML) and Ok Tedi Development Foundation (OTDF) as consultative partners in the Torres Strait Treaty could enhance the protection of the marine environment, fauna, and flora in the Protected Zone.

Support for the ongoing hosting, data-sharing, development, and maintenance of geographical and demographic datasets is essential for understanding regional climate changes. Australian organisations such as the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) should enhance collaboration with regional bodies such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to improve knowledge-sharing and integration with PNG and broader First Nations communities across the Pacific.

The success of traditional owner and ranger programs in Australia can be a model for PNG. Australian support for ranger programs in PNG, such as in Western Province and Kokoda, demonstrates the potential for expanded dialogue and training opportunities in community resource management, environmental protection, and biosecurity. Events and conferences where PNG rangers can share insights and learn from Indigenous Australian ranger programs would be invaluable for exchanging traditional knowledge and practices.



Visit to Mandingalbay Authentic Indigenous Tours



## News and media

“Sharing stories through media means Indigenous voices are heard and experiences better understood.”

Radio is widely listened to in PNG. Cairns has a First Nations radio station. Connecting the two on a weekly co-hosted show, broadcast in both jurisdictions, would build understanding of the issues facing both communities. Connecting through stories and conversation would tighten people-to-people links.

Following on from the success of the FIFA Women’s World Cup in Australia 2023, more programs should be available to First Nations and PNG women to build their skills in sport commentating and media broadcasting. The opportunities for leadership in traditionally male-dominated industries would bring social dividends beyond career development.

## Traditional knowledge

“Traditional knowledge can bring alternative perspectives to foreign policy discussions.”

In the realm of environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource management, there is a need for Australian policymakers to actively involve First Nations consultations in the policy design process for PNG.

Such an inclusive approach would ensure that the policies are not only effective but also culturally sensitive and respectful of Indigenous perspectives.

Collaboration between Indigenous Australian and PNG communities is vital in the context of climate change adaptation. Strategies that blend traditional knowledge systems, local practices, and scientific expertise can lead to the development of more resilient and sustainable futures.

These collaborative efforts should be aimed at harnessing the best of both traditional and modern knowledge systems to address environmental challenges.

Cultural diplomacy can be further enhanced through cultural exchange programs and initiatives that promote the sharing of traditional knowledge and practices between Australia and PNG. These exchanges serve not only as a bridge between the two cultures but also as a platform for mutual learning and understanding.

Strengthening partnerships between educational institutions in Australia and PNG is another key area.

Such collaborations can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and contribute to the documentation of traditional knowledge systems. Exploring practical applications for the digitisation of traditional knowledge can benefit both nations, ensuring that these rich cultural heritages are preserved, accessible, and actively used in contemporary contexts.





# Recommendations

## Indigenous diplomacy and development

1. Include First Nations Australians in diplomatic exchanges in PNG, alongside the Australian government. The First Nations Ambassador should join official visits, where appropriate.
2. Engage Indigenous Australians in international development programs in PNG, using their knowledge of domestic initiatives.
3. Require all Australian diplomats to complete First Nations cross-cultural awareness training before postings.
4. Promote the Torres Strait Treaty's dispute mechanisms and resource management rules as a model of successful Indigenous foreign policy.

## Trade and business

5. The First Nations Ambassador should lead trade connections between Indigenous communities in Australia and PNG.
6. Establish an Australia–PNG Indigenous business forum to connect entrepreneurs and facilitate trade, mentorships and innovation grants.
7. Prioritise Indigenous women's economic empowerment at the Australia–PNG business forum.
8. Strengthen biosecurity and supply chains to assist PNG farmers in accessing Australian agricultural markets.

## Economic development

9. Share lessons from Australia's experience with Indigenous communities and mining companies with PNG communities facing similar negotiations.
10. Use successes from Australia's experience as a blueprint for advancing relations between PNG communities, mining companies, and the government.
11. Operationalise PNG's Sovereign Wealth Fund to safeguard the economic future of rural communities.
12. Develop community wealth funds in Australian Indigenous communities for local development.
13. PNG government should invest in high potential Indigenous businesses, possibly using the Financing Funds of the Sovereign Wealth Fund.
14. Facilitate better access to Australian business visas and improve PNG's passport system.
15. Expand the number of medical panel physicians and biometric collection centres in PNG.
16. Increase recruitment agencies in Australia and PNG focusing on professional employment for Indigenous graduates.

17. Enhance the defence relationship by involving more PNG officers in Norforce and facilitating more joint training exercises.

## Education

18. Embed Australia's historical and geographic connection to PNG in the Australian school curriculum.
19. Produce a PNG special episode of ABC's Play School to celebrate PNG's diverse and shared Indigenous cultures.
20. Share lessons on development successes and failures between Australian and PNG governments to benefit Indigenous communities.
21. Fund technical and trade schools in PNG, linking trades to job opportunities.
22. Identify work placements in Australia for practical learning and workforce exchange.
23. Expand digital online learning programs such as Kumul Helt Skul to enhance healthcare education.
24. Promote sports programs in PNG schools as feeders for nationally recognised institutions.
25. Address in-country security concerns and improve support for New Colombo Plan scholars to encourage more Australian students to study in PNG.
26. Promote New Colombo Plan advantages and partnerships with PNG institutions.
27. Draw on feedback from past New Colombo Plan PNG scholars to improve the program.
28. Ensure education institutions are inclusive of cross-cultural values.

## Health

29. Facilitate exchanges between First Nations mental health experts in Australia and PNG.
30. PNG government collaborate with First Nations health professionals on remote service delivery projects.
31. Increase opportunities for PNG healthcare professionals to attend Australian medical conferences.
32. Embed cultural safety in Australian public health programs, such as female-led discussions on reproductive health.
33. Expand funding for organisations such as Australian Doctors International for rural healthcare in PNG.

## Culture and values

34. Promote collaborative sustainable development projects between Papua New Guineans and First Nations Australians.
35. Increase Indigenous participation in Pacific regional cultural events through Australian funding.
36. Use educational and employment programs for cultural connections.
37. Ensure Australia's First Nations identity is represented in diplomatic engagements in PNG.
38. Advocate for more Indigenous participation in forums such as the United Nations.
39. Encourage First Nations Australians' involvement in the development sector.
40. Enhance collaboration for sustainable development through initiatives such as the Pacific–Australia Youth Association.

41. The First Nations Ambassador acts as a cultural bridge in educational and employment programs that bring Pacific people to Australia.

### Sport

42. Enter a First Nations squad in the Pacific Games to foster sporting engagement.

43. Develop mentor programs led by retired Indigenous athletes.

44. Use sports events to discuss mental health and promote support networks.

45. Institutionalise annual matches between Indigenous Australian and PNG national teams.

46. Streamline visa processes for Papua New Guinean athletes participating in Australian events.

47. Invest in regional sports events to create opportunities and connect communities.

48. Collaborate with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to integrate sports into educational and social change programs.

### Climate, environment, and disaster response

49. Co-design climate and environmental policies with First Nations communities, respecting Indigenous knowledge.

50. Educate First Nations communities about climate change impacts and adaptation strategies.

51. Share cultural approaches to environmental sustainability between First Nations and Papua New Guinean communities.

52. Ensure carbon programs in PNG prioritise social and environmental safeguards.

53. Include the business community in environmental protection discussions under the Torres Strait Treaty.

54. Support data-sharing initiatives to understand the social and geographic impacts of climate change in the region.

55. Expand dialogue and training opportunities between ranger groups for environmental management.

### News and media

56. The Australian government fund co-hosted radio shows facilitating conversation between First Nations and PNG broadcasters to build understanding between communities.

57. Provide more sports commentating and media broadcasting skill development programs for First Nations and PNG women.

### Traditional knowledge

58. Incorporate First Nations consultations into PNG environmental policy development.

59. Foster cultural diplomacy through exchange programs sharing traditional knowledge.

60. Partner Australian and PNG educational institutions for knowledge exchange and digital preservation of traditional knowledge.

## Participant biographies



**Alice Tamang**

Alice is a Dharug woman with extensive experience working with First Nations communities across regional and remote locations. She is the Indigenous Programs Manager at the Australian Volunteers Program and advises internationally as Managing Director of Connecting Cultures International. Alice focuses on equitable inclusion and community development. At the Australian Volunteers Program, she facilitates connections between cultures and empowers individuals and communities to share knowledge and enhance cultural understanding. She is passionate about creating avenues for respectful and meaningful dialogue, providing equitable engagement between Australia and the Pacific. Alice is committed to amplifying First Nations voices and leadership in development and diplomacy.



**Allan Sarago-Ah Kee**

Allan is a Consultant at Ernst & Young (EY) in Perth, on the Infrastructure Advisory team. Prior experience includes policy development and research in the government sector. Allan contributes to organisations such as Australia's Department of Education, Wesfarmers, and Accenture. His expertise and interests focus on sustainable change, with regard to education, human rights, and poverty alleviation. Allan is a First Nations man from Far North Queensland. His personal background gives Allan a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities concerning infrastructure, Indigenous affairs, and sustainable development. Allan collaborates with stakeholders to create innovative solutions and drive positive change in the communities he serves.



**Anita Togolo**

Anita is a Bougainvillean-Australian woman, born in Bougainville and based in Canberra. She is an anthropologist, employed as senior consultant at ERIAS Group, an Australian firm specialising in environmental and social impact assessment and management consultancy in energy, resource and infrastructure sectors. Anita was a founding managing director of an Indigenous-owned recruitment consultancy, 3 Emus Recruitment. Her doctorate attained at the Australian National University focused on Indigenous entrepreneurship and landowner businesses in Papua New Guinea's mining sector. Anita also worked in Central Australia with at-risk Indigenous Australian youth. She is passionate about sustainable outcomes for Indigenous peoples impacted by extractive resource development.



## Participant biographies



### Anna-Liza Mopio-Jane

Anna-Liza has a diverse background in sports, counselling, and professional speaking. With over twenty years' experience in the sports industry, Anna-Liza is a former elite athlete, sports administrator, events coordinator, and athlete wellbeing advocate. She represented Papua New Guinea in swimming at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, three Commonwealth Games, and five World Championships. As an accredited counsellor with the Australian Counselling Association, Anna-Liza works with athletes and high performers, empowering them to achieve success alongside mental health and wellbeing. She is a passionate speaker who delivers engaging keynotes on the importance of prioritizing mental health and well-being.



### Anthony Stewart

Anthony is the Digital Content Manager in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's (ABC) International Services Team. His career began as a cadet with ABC News, evolving into a broadcast journalist across Australia. For the past four years, he has focused on covering the Pacific Islands, transitioning from a journalist to a digital content manager. Notably, he spearheaded the development and launch of ABC Pacific, a digital brand aimed at engaging audiences across the Pacific Islands. His team creates content to connect with audiences in Papua New Guinea, a crucial demographic for ABC International Services.



### Bethanie Harriman

Bethanie is a freelance journalist and producer currently contributing to The Guardian Australia, covering Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Pacific region. With over a decade of experience, he has an extensive background in PNG, having previously served as the PNG Producer for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and worked with PNG's national television station, EMTV. Bethanie has covered a broad spectrum of subjects, including political developments, elections, violence, natural disasters, sports, and developmental challenges. Bethanie's unique perspective comes from having immersed himself in PNG's political landscape to understand government agendas, leadership dynamics, and PNG's diverse population and development journey.

## Participant biographies



### David Poulton

David is an International Development Consultant focussed on climate change adaptation and resilience, disaster risk reduction, and social inclusion programs throughout the Asia-Pacific region. He provides technical and project management support for clients including the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Council of Regional Organisations for the Pacific (CROP) Agencies, multilateral institutions, international governments, and non-government organisations. David is of proud Dhanggati heritage, and is Co-Founder of the Association of First Nations Australians in Development (AFNAD), providing a culturally safe platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders working in Australia's international development sector.



### Dylan Male

Dylan is an Agricultural Scientist, who is passionate about using science and local knowledge to improve food security. Dylan is completing his PhD candidature at the University of Melbourne. His work is supporting a traditional owner group to develop one of their Indigenous food plants into a modern-day crop. Dylan first travelled to Papua New Guinea in 2019 as a New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholar, where he undertook his Honours research and a semester exchange at Unitech, alongside an internship with Wafi-Golpu Joint Venture. Dylan is interested in how we can better harness initiatives, such as the NCP, to benefit the Australia-PNG relationship.



### Irene Semos

Irene is an academic at Divine Word University in Papua New Guinea. She focuses on the teaching, learning and research of public health leadership and training. Irene has a PhD that applies Melanesian ways of knowing, being and doing to the curriculum of health workers. Her PhD research provides the opportunity for leadership and knowledge exchange within the areas of Indigenous research, contextualizing public health, gender and development, and the politics of Melanesia. Irene was the lead organiser and Chairperson of the Diwai Post Election Women's Forum, focusing on the experiences of women in the 2022 national elections.

## Participant biographies



### Jenna Hawes

Jenna is the Project Manager for International Development at Ninti One Limited, where her work focuses on First Nations participation in Australia's international development program. Jenna is experienced in working in a technical advisory and project management capacity with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the private sector and the not-for-profit sector in Australia and throughout the Asia Pacific region. By working on PNG-based programs over the past 18 months, she has developed a strong passion for continuing the strong cultural connections between First Nations Australians and Papua New Guineans. Jenna holds a Bachelor of Development Studies from the University of Newcastle and has completed short term study in India and South Korea.



### Kembol Kaikipae

Kembol has over eight years' work experience in business development, consulting, and marketing. He focuses on trade, investment, and education opportunities and partnerships between Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG). Kembol works with a range of stakeholders, including government and donor agencies, industry associations, the private sector, and education providers. He is currently contributing to the development and implementation of the Austrade strategy and business plan for PNG and the Pacific region. Kembol is passionate about connecting Australian businesses with opportunities in PNG, attracting international investment, and promoting Australia's education services to PNG and Solomon Islands.



### Langa Kopio

Langa is Assistant Secretary for the Economic Policy Branch with Papua New Guinea's (PNG) Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM), and Head of the Open Government Partnership Secretariat, PNG. His Assistant Secretary role involves the coordination of the formulation, review, and implementation of PNG's Economic and Development Policies. As the Head of Open Government Partnership (OGP) Secretariat, PNG, Langa coordinates the formulation and implementation of the six Cluster Commitments of the OGP National Action Plan 2022-2024. The focus of the OGP is to promote transparency, accountability, integrity and making government responsive to citizens' needs.

## Participant biographies



### Lesley Wengembo

Lesley completed a Bachelor of Fine Art at the National Art School, Australia (2021). He competed four times in the Archibald Prize and was twice a finalist in the prestigious Brisbane Portrait Prize (2020 and 2023). Lesley was raised in the Port Moresby suburb of Morata, which houses one of the city's largest squatter settlements. Growing up in this environment led him to find art: Lesley found painting fascinating and a means to escape his reality. In recent years his work focused on hyper-realistic portraiture, mainly capturing Indigenous faces dressed in traditional attire. He says: "as a contemporary Indigenous artist, I try to capture an essence of what is still alive today and is expressed through their faces, before it dies out".



### LizMary Saga

LizMary is Managing Director of PNG Creative & Cultural Promotions, a social enterprise aiming to preserve and promote Papua New Guinean cultural heritage through an annual Oceania Cultural Festival in Cairns. As a cultural exchange program, LizMary is providing a platform for cultural ambassadors to act on behalf of Indigenous communities in Australia and PNG, to help them gain international exposure at the Festival. Bringing together stakeholders including from the tourism, arts and culture industries, traditional custodians of lands in Cairns, and relevant government authorities, the program will help modernise PNG arts and culture to meet the demands of international markets.



### Philip Asing

Philip is a geoscientist from Papua New Guinea (PNG), born and raised in PNG. He graduated from the University of PNG in 2012, majoring in geology, and has since been working in the mining industry for over a decade. He is currently employed by Newcrest Mining Limited at Lihir gold mine, as Technical Services Superintendent. Philip is experienced in change management and operational improvement, with an interest in arts, history, and culture. He is passionate about human rights and supports non-profit organisations to deliver services in rural communities of PNG. Philip has volunteered with the YWAM Medical Ship (based in Townsville, Queensland) to deliver donations and medical supplies to remote areas of the southern region and western province of Papua New Guinea.

## Participant biographies



### Rebekah Ilave

Rebekah has led programs across technology, social enterprise and international development sectors for the past five years. She is currently Program Coordinator for Catalpa International, a non-government organisation bringing fit-for-purpose digital solutions to development programs across the Indo-Pacific. Through her work Rebekah has found cultural safety and responsiveness key to successful implementation. She is interested in applications of technology that incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing while improving service delivery, particularly in climate change, governance, education, and health. Rebekah is fond of hiking and singing songs in different languages (sometimes at the same time).



### Renee Mero

Renee is Supply Chain Excellence - Local and Indigenous Content Lead for Shell's QGC business, focused on developing Queensland's onshore natural gas reserves. Her passion to make a difference in the lives of others led her to found Project Yumi, a not-for-profit organisation that strives to enhance the quality of education and healthcare in Papua New Guinea. Over the last seven years, Project Yumi has saved over one and half million quality resources from landfill and impacted over 50,000 Papua New Guinean lives. Holding a Bachelor of Education, Renee began her career with Education Queensland as a primary school teacher.



### Tahina Booth

Tahina is the Founder of the Grass Skirt Project (GSP), a pioneering organisation addressing gender-based violence in Papua New Guinea through sports and wellness initiatives. A former tri-international elite athlete in rugby league, Olympic weightlifting, and powerlifting, Tahina brings a unique blend of sports expertise and social advocacy. She serves on Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Pacific Women Lead Governance Board, overseeing a \$170 million investment into gender equality. Key programs under her leadership include the Hevea Cup & Wellness Expo, Gymbox, and the 10 Million Strong pilot leadership program, each aimed at fostering community development, gender justice, and individual empowerment.

## Participant biographies



### Torres Webb

Torres is an environmental scientist, published author, and advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. He focuses on culture, education, sustainability, and economic development. Torres worked previously with the Australian Fisheries Management Authority as a Land and Sea Ranger in the Torres Strait and is currently an Indigenous Research Projects Advisor at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). His work specialises in community engagement, facilitation and partnerships delivering multi-stakeholder scientific projects – work for which he is globally renowned.



### Victoria Kamen

Victoria is a Registered Nurse/ Midwife with 12 years' experience within the healthcare industry. Currently working for Queensland health in rural Queensland and as General Practice Nurse in northern Brisbane, Victoria is an advocate for cultural safety. She has a strong passion for Indigenous healthcare specifically in rural and remote Australia, which transcends to PNG where her roots are. This led to co-founding Bridging Beyond Boundaries in Australia and PNG. Victoria is also an upcoming entrepreneur in PNG culture and tourism, starting her own business with her sister and mother this year – PNG Handcraft Collection – focusing on 'giving back' to locals whilst promoting and preserving culture.

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