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The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

# Empowering women and girls

**The human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean–Asia Pacific region**

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

December 2015  
Canberra

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# Contents

Foreword .....	ix
Membership of the Committee .....	xiii
Membership of the Human Rights Sub-Committee .....	xv
Terms of reference .....	xvii
List of abbreviations .....	xix
List of recommendations .....	xxvii
<b>1 Background .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Conduct of the inquiry .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background to the inquiry.....</b>	<b>3</b>
The Indian Ocean–Asia Pacific region .....	3
Empowering women and girls—an Australian foreign policy priority .....	5
Previous work of the Committee .....	7
<b>Barriers to enhancing the human rights of women and girls.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Structure of the report .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2 Human rights of women and girls and the role of the law.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Human rights .....</b>	<b>13</b>
International treaties and agreements .....	15
Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals.....	18
<b>Domestic laws .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Current legislative frameworks .....	22
Enforcement of laws and the role of social norms and customary law .....	36
Police and security services .....	43
<b>What is working for change? .....</b>	<b>47</b>

---

Committee comment.....	52
Recommendations .....	54
<b>3 Violence against women and girls .....</b>	<b>57</b>
An epidemic of violence .....	58
Reliability of data on sexual violence .....	62
Types of violence in the region.....	65
The costs of violence against women and girls.....	81
Australian efforts to combat gender violence .....	83
What needs to be done .....	90
Committee comment.....	93
Recommendations .....	96
<b>4 Women and girls in war, conflict and disaster zones.....</b>	<b>99</b>
War and conflict .....	99
International prohibitions .....	100
Women and conflict in the region.....	104
Australian efforts .....	109
Justice, reparation and women's involvement in conflict resolution and peace processes.....	115
Refugee women and girls.....	118
Disasters and gender-based violence.....	120
Gender sensitive disaster relief and reconstruction.....	123
Committee comment.....	127
Recommendations .....	129
<b>5 Health, reproduction and amenities.....</b>	<b>131</b>
The importance of good health.....	132
Health challenges for women and girls.....	132
Reproductive health .....	133
Violence and health.....	141
Conflict zones and refugees.....	144
Nutrition and child health.....	146
Disease .....	151
Disability.....	154

Sanitation and infrastructure .....	157
<b>Achievements to date .....</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Programs that work .....</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Committee comment.....</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>6 Education and the rights of girls.....</b>	<b>173</b>
Education as a right.....	174
The value of education .....	177
Global progress.....	179
<b>The Indo–Pacific region.....</b>	<b>180</b>
The Pacific region .....	182
East Asia.....	184
South and West Asia.....	185
<b>Educating girls—the obstacles.....</b>	<b>187</b>
Socio-cultural expectations .....	188
Early marriage age and school retention.....	189
Economic factors.....	191
Child labour and exploitation .....	193
Safety and security.....	195
Infrastructure and access.....	197
Curricula and gender.....	198
<b>Improving girls’ access to education .....</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Committee comment.....</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>7 Women and leadership .....</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>Women as leaders and agents of change.....</b>	<b>208</b>
Women and girls leading at local level.....	210
Women leading in the corporate sector.....	213
<b>Women in government and decision-making bodies.....</b>	<b>216</b>
Women in national legislatures .....	216
Women in local government.....	221
Women in the public sector .....	222

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Women in the court system.....	224
Women’s leadership through women’s organisations and networks .....	226
Parliamentary leadership programs .....	230
<b>Affirmative action measures .....</b>	<b>233</b>
Quotas and reserved seats .....	234
The importance of male leadership on change .....	236
<b>Committee comment.....</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>8 The economic empowerment of women.....</b>	<b>243</b>
International instruments .....	243
An economic case for women’s human rights .....	244
Women at work in the region .....	247
Women as primary producers .....	250
Women in business and market activities .....	253
<b>Barriers to participation .....</b>	<b>255</b>
Attitudes to women and work .....	256
Access to banking services.....	258
Microfinance and social business development .....	260
Infrastructure development .....	263
Training and upskilling .....	264
Women and girls as carers and unpaid family workers .....	264
<b>Women and the global economy .....</b>	<b>266</b>
Mining and agricultural development.....	268
Trade agreements and obligations.....	269
<b>The growth of outmigration.....</b>	<b>271</b>
Moderating the impacts.....	274
<b>Committee comment.....</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>9 Gender in Australia’s aid and diplomacy.....</b>	<b>281</b>
Diplomatic efforts.....	281
Australia’s Ambassador for Women and Girls.....	284
<b>Australia’s aid program .....</b>	<b>288</b>

Gender 'mainstreaming' across the aid program.....	294
<b>Effectiveness of Australia's aid program.....</b>	<b>300</b>
Flagship gender programs .....	308
<b>Work of other Australian agencies .....</b>	<b>316</b>
Australian Federal Police .....	316
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research .....	317
Attorney-General's Department.....	317
<b>10 Improving Australian programs .....</b>	<b>323</b>
Proving what works .....	323
Data on program effectiveness .....	323
Better co-ordination and information sharing.....	327
Long term programs.....	330
<b>Future directions for Australian aid .....</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>Recommendations from the non-government sector .....</b>	<b>336</b>
Working with local communities .....	339
The focus of the Aid Program.....	340
The aid budget .....	342
Committee comment.....	343
Better co-ordination across the region .....	345
Recommendations .....	347
<b>Appendix A—List of Submissions .....</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>Appendix B—List of Exhibits .....</b>	<b>357</b>
<b>Appendix C—Public Hearings .....</b>	<b>367</b>

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1.1	Countries eligible for Australian ODA located within the Indo–Pacific region .....	4
Table 6.1	Cost of disparity between girls and boys education in the Indo–Pacific.....	181
Table 6.2	Australia’s ODA on education across the region 2013–14.....	201

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 5.1	Under 5 Mortality by Region (deaths per 1000 live births) .....	147
Figure 9.1	2013–14 DFAT’s ODA by Region, investments that identify gender equality as an objective (%).....	291
Figure 9.2	Proportion of Australian Government aid commitment that focuses on gender equality by sector, 2010–11 to 2011–12 .....	292



## Foreword

The Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon Julie Bishop MP has declared the promotion of the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in Australia's region to be 'a personal passion'.<sup>1</sup> It is a passion that is shared by members of the Committee and we hope that this report will be a practical contribution to Australia's efforts to support the advancement of the human rights of women and girls across the Indo-Pacific region.

The scope of the terms of reference for the inquiry were extremely broad, nothing less than an examination of the human rights circumstances of women and girls across a vast region that includes six of the world's ten most populous nations, with countries as different in size and character as China, Afghanistan, and Nauru. Not surprisingly the Committee faced considerable challenges in attempting to cover the diversity of the region and the great range of issues that impact on the human rights of women and girls.

The report has endeavoured to capture the breadth of the evidence. In particular, this report draws upon the submissions and evidence from the Australian Government, especially the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, together with non-government organisations and academic experts working in the fields of human rights and development.

Reflecting the balance of evidence received, the report has a greater focus on the human rights issues in countries in Australia's immediate region, especially the South Pacific, and in countries that are significant recipients of Australian development assistance. The Committee still sought to cover, as far as possible, the full diversity of the challenges faced by women and girls across the Indo-Pacific region and to that end drew upon a range of publicly available reports and studies. However, the availability of reliable data, or lack thereof, emerged as a significant issue.

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1 The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 'The New Aid Paradigm', Speech, June 2014 <[foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2014/jb\\_sp\\_140618.aspx](http://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2014/jb_sp_140618.aspx)> viewed 17 November 2015.

The Committee has made a number of recommendations concerning the need for further research to underpin future policy and development assistance programs, and the need for better co-ordination and sharing of data between organisations working on these important issues.

What did emerge in evidence was that the circumstances of hundreds of millions of women and girls across the Indo-Pacific region are dire, blighted by violence, poverty, and exclusion from economic, social and political participation.

Many countries have made great progress in advancing the human rights of women and girls, especially in recent decades as international awareness and scrutiny of these issues has grown. However, more than six and a half decades after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a great deal more progress must be made for women and girls to be truly considered as equals.

In this regard, this report should not be seen as singling out any particular country or group of countries for criticism or judgment. Rather it is an effort to describe the extent and depth of problems across the region and to look at ways in which governments, communities and non-government organisations can work together to make further progress in protecting and improving the lives of women and girls, empowering them for the benefit of all.

Evidence received by the Committee documented nothing less than an epidemic of violence experienced by women and girls in many nations, perhaps most notably, but by no measure exclusively, in South Asia and the South Pacific.

In highlighting this problem in other countries, the Committee does not seek to diminish or ignore the scale of violence and abuse against women and girls in Australia. On the contrary it is the Committee's view that this is a common problem that demands urgent action across the entire region.

Violence perpetrated against women and girls because of its nature, its embeddedness in cultures and social attitudes, as well as its different triggers, represents an ongoing and deep-seated challenge. The diversity of the Indo-Pacific region also presents a major challenge for the implementation of development assistance programs to address this problem. However, as Oxfam Australia observed to the Committee, 'Violence is not inevitable, and it is preventable.'<sup>2</sup>

The Committee acknowledges the efforts made by the Australian Government in seeking to combat violence through diplomatic means, including: the advocacy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Ambassador for Women and Girls, former Senator Natasha Stott Despoja; through international fora and government to government dialogues; and through programs that advocate for political and legislative change, such as the Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund.

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2 Oxfam Australia, *Submission 13.1*, p. 2.

However, the Committee has recommended an intensification of efforts and the development of new programs that take into account both the cultural and social diversity of the region, and the insights of further research to identify the most effective responses.

Similar challenges are evident in relation to health, education, economic participation and the involvement of women in community decision-making and political life more broadly. Across these areas there has been progress, but much remains to be done, and in some areas urgent action is required to ensure that hard won gains are not reversed or lost.

The Committee's recommendations consequently span a large range of issues and government programs, and underline the need for a broad and sustained commitment of resources.

There are no easy solutions for any of the problems discussed in this report and all of them require a preparedness by policy makers to commit to programs that are likely to deliver substantial progress over decades rather than years, and in some cases perhaps only through intergenerational change.

That said the long term benefits are potentially significant. Quite apart from the importance of respecting and enhancing the human rights and life opportunities of individuals, greatly reducing domestic violence and improving educational and economic opportunities for women and girls will bring substantial economic and social benefits to the countries in the region. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs has observed, 'when women are able to actively participate in the economy, and in community decision-making, everybody benefits.'<sup>3</sup>

The Committee would like to thank all of the non-government organisations, academics and individuals for generously donating their time, effort and resources to make submissions and appear at public hearings or private briefings. The Committee also thanks the Australian Government agencies, as well as the foreign governments and their representative forums that provided submissions or gave evidence, in particular the governments of Afghanistan, Mauritius, Vietnam, Timor-Leste, and Sri Lanka. The range of information, expertise and experience that was available to the Committee was invaluable to the production of this report.

The Committee would especially like to thank the staff and students of Auburn Girls High School in Sydney which hosted two days of public hearings on 21-22 August 2014. The Committee was very pleased to have this opportunity to 'bring Parliament to the people' and the question and answer session with students that accompanied the public hearings was particularly enjoyable. Members of the Committee heard the views of articulate young women who may

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3 The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 'The New Aid Paradigm', Speech, June 2014, viewed 17 November 2015.

well be future community leaders and, to judge by some of their challenging questions, perhaps think about entering political life themselves.

As Chair of the Human Rights Sub-Committee, I would like to thank my predecessor Mr Luke Simpkins MP, and my other colleagues on the Committee who have worked collaboratively, and engaged closely with this inquiry.

The Hon Philip Ruddock MP  
Chair  
Human Rights Sub-Committee



## Membership of the Committee

**Chair**            The Hon Teresa Gambaro MP

**Deputy Chair** Mr Nick Champion MP

**Members**        The Hon Bob Baldwin MP  
(from 19 October 2015)

The Hon Michael Danby MP

The Hon David Feeney MP

Mr Laurie Ferguson MP

The Hon Alan Griffin MP  
(from 4 December 2013 until 5 September 2014)  
(from 10 February 2015)

Mr Alex Hawke MP (until 12 October 2015)

Dr Dennis Jensen MP

Mr Ewen Jones MP (until 11 November 2015)

Mr Craig Kelly MP

The Hon Richard Marles MP

Mr Andrew Nikolic AM, CSC, MP

The Hon Melissa Parke MP  
(from 3 September 2014 to 10 February 2015)  
(from 24 June 2015)

Mr Keith Pitt MP  
(from 19 October 2015)

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(until 24 June 2015)

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(from 22 September 2014)

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(until 12 October 2015)

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**The Hon Bruce Scott MP**

**Mr Luke Simpkins MP**  
(until 22 September 2014)

**The Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP**

**Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP**

**Mr Nickolas Varvaris MP**  
(from 9 September 2015)

**Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens**  
(until 30 June 2014)

**Senator Peter Whish-Wilson**

**Senator Nick Xenophon**



# Membership of the Human Rights Sub-Committee

**Chair** Mr Luke Simpkins MP  
(until 22 September 2014)

The Hon Philip Ruddock MP  
(from 22 September 2014)

**Deputy Chair** Senator Anne McEwen

**Members**

Mr Nick Champion MP

Senator the Hon Lisa Singh

The Hon Michael Danby MP

Mr Laurie Ferguson MP

The Hon Teresa Gambaro MP

The Hon Alan Griffin MP  
(from 4 December 2013 until 3 September 2014)  
(from 11 February 2015)

Mr Ewen Jones MP  
(23 June 2015 until 11 November 2015)

Ms Melissa Parke MP  
(from 24 September 2014 to 10 February 2015)  
(from 24 June 2015)

Mrs Jane Prentice MP  
(from 24 September 2014)

The Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP  
(from 4 December 2013 until 3 September 2014)  
(until 9 September 2015)

Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP

# Committee Secretariat

Secretary	Mr Jerome Brown
Inquiry Secretary	Ms Sonya Fladun
Senior Research Officers	Dr Emma Banyer Ms Loes Slattery
Research Officer	Mr Nathan Fewkes
Administrative Officers	Mrs Dorota Cooley Ms Karen Underwood



## Terms of reference

### **Inquiry into the human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean–Asia Pacific region**

The Committee will inquire into the human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean–Asia Pacific region. The Committee will consider the following issues during its inquiry:

- The barriers and impediments to enhancing the human rights of women and girls in the Indian Ocean–Asia Pacific region, especially regarding the impact of family and sexual violence, women’s leadership and economic opportunities;
- The achievements to date in advancing women and girl’s human rights in these key areas;
- The implications for economic and social development in the Indian Ocean–Asia Pacific region of promoting women and girls’ human rights;
- The effectiveness of Australian programs to support efforts to improve the human rights of women and girls in the Indian Ocean-Asia Pacific region.





## List of abbreviations

ACWF	All China Women's Federation
AAPTIP	Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons program
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ACIAR	The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
ACMC	Australian Civil Military Centre
ACWC	ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADDC	Australian Disability and Development Consortium
ADF	Australian Defence Force
ADG	Attorney-General's Department
ADRs	Aggregate Development Results
ADS	Australian Development Scholarship
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANCP	Australian NGO Co-operation Program

ANP	Afghanistan National Police
ANU	Australian National University
AO	Order of Australia
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation
APHEDA	Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad
APRP	Afghanistan Peace and Reconciliation Program
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUD	Australian dollar
AVI	Australian Volunteers International
AWARD	African Women in Agricultural Research and Development Program
BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
CDHS	Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey
CEDAW	<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CHWs	Community Health Workers
CRI	Children's Rights International
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations
CRR	Centre for Refugee Research
CWLA	Catholic Women's League Australia
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
DBE	Dame of the British Empire

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DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	Department for International Development
EDGE	Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project
EFA	Education for All
EPSP	Economic and Public Sector Program
EVAW	Ending Violence against Women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FCA	Family Court of Australia
FRIEND	Foundation for Rural and Integrated Enterprises and Development
FRUs	Family Response Units
FSV	Family and sexual violence
FWCC	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLASS	Gender, Leadership and Social Sustainability Research Unit
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPV	Human Papillomavirus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
IDG	International Deployment Group

IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
IPEC	International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
ISRHR	International Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (Consortium )
IWDA	International Women’s Development Agency
JSCAFDT	Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
KiriCAN	Kiribati Climate Action Network
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAMPU	Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan – Empowering Indonesian Women for Poverty Reduction
MCC	Male Champions of Change
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEDEP	Micro-enterprise Development Program
MFMV	Medicines for Malaria Venture
MP	Member of Parliament
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MVAWG	Male violence against women
NAP	National Action Plan
NAP-GBV	National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence

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NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODE	Office of Development Effectiveness
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Pacific Women	Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative
PEKKA	Perempuan Kepala Keluarga – Women Headed Household Empowerment Program (Indonesia)
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PICTA	Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement
PICTs	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
PLP	Pacific Leadership Program
PM&C	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPDP	Pacific Police Development Program
PSO	Public Solicitors Office
PWPP	Pacific Women’s Parliamentary Partnerships Project
PYWLA	Pacific Young Women’s Leadership Alliance
RLC	Regional Learning Community
SANAM	South Asian Network to Address Masculinities

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEPI	Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality
SGBV	Sexual and gender based violence
SGP	Strongim Gavman Program – ‘Strengthening Government Program’ (PNG)
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SRSP	Sarhad Rural Support Programme
SSGM	State, Society and Governance in Melanesia
STIs	Sexually Transmissible Infections
TB	Tuberculosis
TPP	Trans Pacific Partnership
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	The United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	The United Nations Children’s Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
USAID	United States Aid
USD	United States Dollar

USP	University of the South Pacific
UWA	University of Western Australia
VAW	Violence against women
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIBDI	Women in Business Development Incorporated
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPS	Women, peace and security
WPSAC	Women, Peace and Security Academic Collective
YWAM	Youth With a Mission
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association





# List of recommendations

## Human rights of women and girls and the role of the law

### Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that Australia's diplomatic efforts continue to encourage legislative change to enhance the situation for women and girls, and to build the capacity of legal entities to enforce laws and ensure access to justice for women and girls. Specific areas that should be addressed include building a well-developed understanding of the needs of women and girls in:

- policing and law enforcement;
- courts and legal aid; and
- legal advice and advocacy services for women and girls.

### Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise aid investment in relevant local women's legal aid organisations, advocacy bodies and law reform commissions in the Indo-Pacific region where laws that disadvantage women and girls are in place.

### Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government encourage the Australian Courts to expand their investment in the work of making the registration of marriages and births more accessible in Indonesia; and expand its efforts to pursue similar work where it can facilitate reform in other countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

#### Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- encourage the Afghan Parliament to enact and enforce the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women; and
- provide diplomatic, technical and administrative support for the implementation of the law.

#### Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- expand its support efforts for increasing the number of women recruits into police forces in the Pacific Island countries, including Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands;
- help increase and retain the number of female recruits to the Afghan police force, law enforcement roles and public services, while supporting efforts to provide sufficient protection for these recruits; and
- increase support for improved professional standards for law enforcement professionals, prosecutors and judicial officers, including gender sensitivity training throughout the region.

### Violence against women and girls

#### Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government take every opportunity:

- to engage with governments in the Indo-Pacific region, including at regional fora, to highlight the extent of violence against women and girls, the persistence of the problem, and its consequences; and
- to press other governments to enact and enforce laws that protect the human rights of women and girls, in particular in relation to sexual and gender-based violence, especially under-age and forced marriage and marital rape.

#### Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that, in light of the evidence showing continuing and pervasive violence against women and girls across the Indo-Pacific region, the Australian Government:

- facilitate targeted and co-ordinated research (including gathering national prevalence and incidence data, as well as quantitative and qualitative surveys of community attitudes), legal reform, and

programs directly aimed at community attitudes that are tolerant of violence against women and girls; and

- consider increasing funding for activities to combat violence as a proportion of Australia's development assistance budget, as well as commit to the provision of resources for the long term.

#### Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- continue to support existing programs that partner with governments, non-government and community organisations, and faith-based organisations which:
  - ⇒ deliver education with a particular focus on boys and adolescents, to promote understanding of consent, healthy sexuality, and respectful relationships; and
  - ⇒ make use of technology to expand the reach and engage young people.
- explore ways to extend programs addressing violence, such as those being run by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, and linking to similar initiatives operating in Australia and other countries across the region; and
- review work being undertaken in Australia and overseas to address gender-based violence to identify programs of best practice that are culturally appropriate for countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

### Women and girls in war, conflict and disaster zones

#### Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- adopt the proposals made in the 2014 Second Annual Civil Society Report Card: Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security; and
- encourage governments in the region, which have not already done so, to prioritise the approval of national action plans for UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

#### Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work to ensure that Australian responses to disasters and humanitarian crises factor in the unique and additional needs of women and children, by ensuring:

- that all plans, toolkits and guidance documentation for humanitarian and disaster relief include a requirement to take into account the unique needs and vulnerabilities of women and children, and guidance on how this can be achieved; and
- humanitarian responses funded by the Australian Government model gender-sensitive processes, and avoid additional harms to women and children.

## Health, reproduction and amenities

### Recommendation 11

In light of the continuing high levels of maternal mortality, unsafe abortions, and infant and child ill health in many parts of the Pacific and Timor-Leste, the Committee recommends that the Australian Government maintain funding and support for reproductive health programs, including obstetric and gynaecological services, across the Indo-Pacific region with an increased focus on the Pacific and Timor-Leste. In particular, the Australian Government should:

- work in partnership with non-government organisations and Pacific Island authorities to increase funding to maternal and reproductive health programs in the Pacific region;
- support improved provision of timely and high quality sex education in the Pacific region by providing support to Pacific leaders and health ministers in implementing the program of work in sex education these leaders endorsed in 2014; and
- maintain a strong strategic focus on maternal mortality in the design and delivery of aid programs in Timor-Leste and the Pacific.

### Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise funding for services that address the immediate needs of survivors of sexual and physical violence in the Indo-Pacific region. These services should be holistic, incorporating:

- accessible, timely and affordable treatment for physical injury;
- accessible, timely, affordable and culturally sensitive counselling and trauma relief;
- legal and justice services, including timely collection of evidence for prosecution;
- counselling and appropriate assistance for pregnancies and diseases arising from sexual assaults; and

- support to prevent further exposure to violence, such as through the provision of safe emergency accommodation.

#### Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise work with governments in the Indo-Pacific region, non-government organisations, and the scientific research community for the development of effective, low cost, accessible medicines to treat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, with a focus on disadvantaged women and children in the region.

#### Recommendation 14

To support women and girls with disabilities, who are ‘doubly disadvantaged’, the Committee recommends that:

- all programs funded or supported by the Australian Government that seek to address violence against women and girls are designed with the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities taken into account in the design phase;
- all women’s health and reproductive rights programs supported by the Australian Government take into consideration the needs of women and girls with disabilities and seek to ensure these women and girls are included – and not adversely affected – by the programs; and
- work to support women and girls with disabilities in the Indo-Pacific region remains a priority for the Australian Government, and is included in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Country Plans.

#### Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the Australian aid program retain a focus on ensuring that clean water, and access to satisfactory sanitation and hygiene, especially in schools, underpins development initiatives.

#### Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise providing culturally appropriate, hygienic and safe sanitation facilities for women and girls, and that:

- all Australian Government funded humanitarian relief responses, including refugee settlements and disaster relief shelters, provide culturally appropriate, hygienic and safe sanitation facilities; and
- all education programs designed to keep girls in school address the issue of sanitation facilities; providing facilities that can be adequately maintained and serviced locally.

#### Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government support culturally appropriate, community-driven programs that provide sanitary products for girls and women to allow them to remain engaged in work and education during menstruation.

#### Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that Australian Government agencies working in the Indo-Pacific region take advantage of opportunities to partner with faith based networks where they play a major role in delivery of health care services and care support.

### Education and the rights of girls

#### Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government maintain its support for increasing primary school enrolments generally, and gender parity in enrolments specifically, across the Indo-Pacific region where the levels of female enrolment remain low.

The Committee also recommends that Australian funding and programs in education should include a particular focus on the most disadvantaged communities; notably, children with disabilities, and disadvantaged ethnic minorities.

#### Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increasingly target aid funding towards girls at the secondary and tertiary levels, by:

- providing additional funding that focuses on secondary school enrolment and completion initiatives for adolescent girls in key countries in the region;
- increasing support to programs designed to encourage more young women to complete tertiary qualifications throughout the region; and
- supporting research and programs designed to address the gap between educational attainment and employment/economic opportunities for women in the Indo-Pacific region.

### Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government seeks to address the quality and character of education in the region, including through:

- supporting government bodies and local education advocates who are working to change the curricula and methodology in teaching to promote gender equality; and
- offering to provide expertise in drafting gender-sensitive, culturally appropriate resources for schools, particularly in the Pacific, and/ or funding the development of such expertise in-country.

## Women and leadership

### Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise girls' and women's leadership and political participation, and integrate these as a priority across the aid program.

### Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government should:

- increase support to organisations such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, which are able to focus on co-ordinating the priorities of countries in the region to address the needs of women and girls;
- take a stronger stance in the protection of high profile women and organisations advocating for the human rights and empowerment of women and girls;
- fund women's advocacy organisations working in the Indo-Pacific region where women leaders are most at risk;
- continue to support capacity building in parliaments, the judiciary, and accountability bodies in the region to support women's promotion into leadership roles; and
- advocate at an international level to promote women's empowerment for leadership as a priority goal within the global development agenda.

### Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increasingly promote women's leadership at all levels of government, in business and the public sector, through flagship gender programs such as the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative, and trial pilot models in other countries of the region, which:

- provide opportunities for women candidates to train and gain leadership skills at all levels of government, including by investing in partnerships with parliamentary and political studies and research centres;
- foster research, networking and mentoring opportunities across the professions, public sector and business in partnership with governments, peak bodies, the private sector and civil society, with some targeted to engage young women;
- promote women's leadership under country plans, through relevant Memoranda of Understanding, and in contracts with private sector partners and non-government organisations; and
- conduct gender analysis and develop individual and longitudinal assessment criteria to better assess outcomes of scholarships and leadership mentoring programs to increase aid effectiveness.

#### Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to develop and invest in gender awareness components in programs targeting male leaders, including:

- through international parliamentary visits, delegations and exchanges, and as an adjunct to the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships and other regional leadership initiatives; and
- by supporting 'champions for change' initiatives as community outreach through local leadership bodies, organisations and faith-based groups as part of the women's leadership empowerment agenda.

### The economic empowerment of women

#### Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government take a lead role in promoting women's economic development as a key part of the international human rights agenda for the empowerment of women and girls, by:

- advocating through international fora for an increased investment in women's economic empowerment;
- promoting gender centric approaches to women's economic development in key sectors, for example, the agricultural sector through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and other relevant regional bodies;
- engaging in bilateral, regional and international negotiations to implement obligations and promote ratification of existing

international labour instruments, harmonising migration and domestic laws, and regulating fees and charges on remittances to better protect migrant workers in a region-wide solution to outmigration.

#### Recommendation 27

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increase:

- overall Official Development Assistance (ODA); and
- the proportion of ODA allocated to economic and productive sectors in the Indo-Pacific region in which women are predominant, as a key component of its gender mainstreaming commitments, including by investment in:
  - ⇒ research and programs supporting leadership and female empowerment in agriculture and key employment sectors for women;
  - ⇒ whole of community and local empowerment models, with a focus on changing social attitudes and values to support women's economic empowerment, and on innovative literacy and 'second chance' training programs for women; and
  - ⇒ development of infrastructure to reduce women's household burden and appropriate childcare solutions in partnership with Governments, non-government organisations and the private sector, and promote this through country development plans and development contracts.

#### Recommendation 28

The Committee recommends that, in negotiating international and regional trade, mining and other development agreements, the Australian Government:

- have recourse to available research and data on the gendered impacts of this development to ensure it maximises opportunities for both men and women;
- require this research where it does not exist; and
- deploy relevant research and data to refine and inform programs developed with the purpose of supporting women's economic empowerment across the Indo-Pacific region.

## Improving Australian programs

### Recommendation 29

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- lift the percentage of total Official Development Assistance that is 'primarily' focussed on women and girls from the current five per cent level to between at least eight and 10 per cent over the next five years, particularly as a proportion of aid to the Pacific region;
- focus its limited investments and gender expertise on large-scale, long-term (10 years or more) programs designed directly for women's empowerment in key countries, using the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development program as a model; and
- focus its investments on programs that directly build local capacity through supporting local women's organisations.

### Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government introduce a requirement that all Official Development Assistance programs, regardless of their OECD Development Assistance Committee gender rating, must 'do no harm' to women and girls. Programs must be screened to ensure they will not:

- further entrench women's disempowerment;
- result in unintended violence against women and girls or leave women and girls more vulnerable; or
- disadvantage specific sectors of the population of women and girls, including women and girls with disabilities or those from ethnic minorities.

### Recommendation 31

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increase both the percentage and overall number of staff at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) who receive training in gender-sensitive programming, including staff located in Canberra, with the aim of ensuring all staff who play a role in the design and implementation of Official Development Assistance programs have the ability and confidence to apply good practice gender analysis. The Committee further recommends that DFAT:

- introduce to the Department's performance management system a formal requirement for such training to be completed by staff engaged in providing development assistance;

- increase the number of male members of staff participating in this training; and
- report on a) the numbers of staff trained, and b) the percentage of the workforce trained, in the Department's Annual Report.

#### Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government take steps to improve data collection and reporting on gender outcomes in aid and diplomacy, by:

- introducing enhanced collection and reporting of qualitative data to measure cultural and attitudinal change, such as changes in attitudes towards the roles and status of women and girls;
- requiring the collection of, reporting and utilisation of baseline data on the status and experiences of women before programs begin so that the efficacy of programs can be measured against that data;
- supporting nations in the region to collect and publish gender-disaggregated data, especially with regard to poverty, health, education and experiences of violence;
- supporting organisations such as UN Women and Oxfam in their provision of 'hubs' of knowledge, data and resources on women and girls around the world.

#### Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government build upon the good work of Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls by:

- providing further resourcing for the work of Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls; and
- supplementing the role through the additional appointment of a 'Male Champion' for women and girls.

