



# Royal Solomon Islands Police Force

## Media Release

14<sup>th</sup> April 2025

### **Inaugural 'Women in Emergencies Forum' concluded in Honiara**

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) has successfully hosted the inaugural Solomon Islands Women in Emergencies Forum in Honiara from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

The forum, which aimed at empowering, supporting and uniting women in emergency response roles, was held at the Rove Police Headquarters.

Through workshops, scenario-based learning and facilitated discussions, the forum focused on technical knowledge, values-based leadership and building inclusive and resilient teams.

Fire and Rescue NSW Superintendent, Melissa Spurr, and Qualified Firefighter and Vice President of Women and Firefighting Australasia (WAFA), Melinda McDonald, were the two guest speakers at the forum.

The forum was the first event of its kind for the RSIPF and the first women-in-emergencies forum to be held in the Pacific Islands. The forum was design for females in frontline specialist units and departments that deals with emergencies during crises.

The forum brought over 20 participants from six emergency agencies including the Solomon Islands Meteorological Services (SIMS), National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), St. John Ambulance and WAFA.

The forum is a significant step forward for females working in the emergency services within the Solomon Islands, as it created a space where they discussed their challenges, experiences and opportunities in a sector that is dominated by male.

Superintendent Spurr and QF McDonald engaged with participants in a variety of sessions designed to inspire, educate and build strong collaboration among emergency responders in ways they can be of help to communities during emergencies.

The event started with an encouraging session led by the RSIPF Deputy Commissioner (DC) Operations, Juanita Matanga.

Deputy Commissioner Matanga's session highlighted the importance of gender equality in the workplace, ethical conduct and encouraging RSIPF women to always focus on the RSIPF values to guide their decision-making in the workplace and everyday lives.

She said the forum is important as it promote collaboration among emergency responders during crises to assist the communities they serve.

The forum includes interactive discussions covering a wide range of topics including; leadership in crisis situations, physical and mental health for emergency workers, disaster response and the role of women in community resilience during natural disasters.

A RSIPF officer who participated in the forum, Sergeant Samantha Qoloni, said the forum has provided them an opportunity to engage, share personal stories and form bonds that will help strengthen efforts when responding to future challenges in their respective roles.

"This event has been an inspiring reminder of the strength, dedication and resilience of women in emergency services. It's crucial that we continue to pave the way for future generations of women who aspire to serve their communities in this important area," Sgt. Qoloni said.

The RSIPF Fire and Rescue has continued to benefit from a secondment arrangement between the Fire and Rescue NSW and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) that is delivered here through the RSIPF & AFP Policing Partnership Program (RAPPP).

The RSIPF acknowledged the ongoing support from the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), FRNSW, AFP and RAPPP has made the event a successful one.

**//End//**

<p><b>Media inquiries</b></p> <p>RSIPF Media Unit: 24016 or 23800 Ext 239</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:rsipf.media@rsipf.gov.sb">rsipf.media@rsipf.gov.sb</a></p>	<p>The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) was established in 1954. Its mission is 'To provide a safe and peaceful Solomon Islands by strengthening relationships with the community'. The RSIPF strive to provide efficient and effective policing services for the Solomon Islands and expect RSIPF officers to adhere to the RSIPF values.</p> <p>For ongoing news and information, please go to <a href="http://www.rsipf.gov.sb">www.rsipf.gov.sb</a></p> <p>Follow us on Facebook Page: <a href="http://www.facebook.com/rsipf">www.facebook.com/rsipf</a></p>
--	---