

Commissioner RSIPF

Launch of the RSIPF Gender Strategy 2019-2021

IWD 2019 Theme: #Balance for Better.

IWD Solomon Islands Theme: Think equal, build smart, innovate for change. Today we want to do this inside the RSIPF.

Statistics: The RSIPF has approximately 1460 officers across all provinces. There are currently **344 female officers which is 24% of the workforce.**

Opening remarks:

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) is a beacon for social justice, fairness and community safety in Solomon Islands. We are the institution that the people of this nation most expect to uphold and represent the principles of human rights, gender equity, integrity and fairness because we are perhaps the most visible instrument of Government, the law and justice to many in our community.

The people of Solomon Islands place their trust in us to be an ethical organisation and to stand up for what is right and fair. People seek our help at their times of greatest need.

To keep earning this trust, our organisation must continue to grow as a modern and professional police force.

Snapshot

In 2016, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands assisted us with a study into gender equality issues within the RSIPF.

The report made a number of recommendations, one being the creation of a framework to address the changes needed within the RSIPF to improve gender equality.

Other recommendations included better gender awareness training, improvements to our systems and procedures to be fairer and more transparent and an anti-harassment/anti-bullying campaign.

Why

We learned that our workplace has not always been fair and female police officers have faced, and continue to face, disadvantage.

We cannot accept this any longer, nor take the status quo for granted. To do so, would be to settle for less than the women of the RSIPF, both present and future, deserve.

Our policing women are courageous, knowledgeable and committed and we must do more to ensure they are afforded the same opportunity as men to serve their nation with pride.

So, after many months of research, consultations and hard work, I am pleased to announce that the RSIPF has created the *RSIPF Gender Strategy 2019-2021* which we are proud to launch here today.

The RSIPF Gender Strategy 2019-2021 is our new framework for accelerating change for gender equality in the police force. We believe that by improving gender equality within the RSIPF, we are actively and positively building a stronger police force and contributing to a better Solomon Islands.

Through this strategy we will strive to be a more cohesive police force that is strong, professional and has the confidence of the community.

The purpose of our strategy is simple, yet powerful:

We will improve gender equality to create a workplace that actively supports and values women in all aspects of policing to build a strong and professional police force for all officers.

This does not mean that any police officer – woman or man – is more valuable than the other. Rather, this strategy aims to actively transform the RSIPF into a more inclusive workplace which offers fair and equitable opportunities for both women and men to make a difference.

It is about recognising equally the unique talents and skills of all police officers and the roles they play in our mission and the safety and security of our nation.

In fact, we are aiming to be leaders in advancing the role of women in policing across the Pacific region and in doing so we will improve our policing services for the community and do more to prevent gender based violence

If we make the RSIPF better for our women officers; we make the police force better for all Solomon Islands women. We can keep women in this country safer.

So what is in the Strategy?

We have identified four key focus areas, each with tangible actions we will take to achieve the goals of the Strategy.

Key Focus Areas

- **Systems**
 - We will develop, monitor and enforce policies and processes which remove obstacles to full participation of women in the workplace.
 - We will work harder to attract more women to a career in policing.
 - We will improve human resource policies and take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination.
- **Leadership**
 - We will provide RSIPF officers with better access to female role models.
 - We will develop senior leaders who support gender equity and inclusion
- **Capability**
 - We will ensure female Officers are provided opportunity to develop the skills and confidence for progression in their careers.
 - We will work to make promotions and training courses fairer and more accessible for women.
- **Advocacy**
 - We will strengthen and maximise support mechanisms for female police officers, including through supporting the Women's Advisory Network and creating a network of male champions who support and promote gender equity in the RSIPF.

These are just some of the ambitious goals we have set for ourselves.

This is a big program of change for the RSIPF, but it is an important one. As a modern, 21st century police force, we have to lead from the front and stand up for what is right.

While we have much to do under this new strategy, it is important to know that we have already made many positive steps in the right direction.

We have increased the number of females being recruited into our Police Academy, we have worked to achieve better gender balance on promotion panels, and last year, our first female officer was deployed overseas to the United Nations as our contingent commander.

The RSIPF is already heading in the right direction.

At this juncture I want to thank and congratulate the women of the RSIPF, the WAN, our RSIPF executive, especially our senior male role models, and our partners from the Australian Police Development Program and the New Zealand Police Support Program. Without your support we would not have come this far and made so much progress.

While we are here today to celebrate International Women's Day, we must keep looking forward in advancing gender equity.

Advocacy, an inclusive mindset and tangible action are needed from all of us.

Gender equality is not a women's issue. It is an issue for all. Men need not fear gender equality – we should stand up for it.

Because gender equality is a human rights issue. It is an issue of fairness and it is essential for communities to develop and thrive.

As Commissioner of Police, I am proud today to launch the *Royal Solomon Islands Police Force Gender Strategy 2019 – 2021*. Today is my 3rd International Women's Day here Solomon Islands and with my amazing police women. It will also probably be my last so I hope I can start us on a path of change that my other senior RSIPF officers can continue

In this strategy, we commence a path towards building a stronger and more just police force.

We are making a **commitment** that the future RSIPF will be more diverse, more responsive and more capable of meeting the expectations of our nation.

We are making a **promise** that the future RSIPF will be a better role model for future generations.

We are making a **plan** to be leaders in advancing equity for women across government and society.

Today, I commit our organisation to work together to build a more inclusive workplace and a stronger and more capable RSIPF. In doing so, we will become a brighter beacon of social justice, fairness and safety for our community.

Tagio Tumas