

TMA

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NEWS

Christian women visit PM to advocate for Pacific women and children

Christian women met politicians to talk about the importance of advocating for vulnerable women and children in the Pacific



A group of Christian leaders met with 45 politicians, including Prime Minister Scott Morrison, to talk about the importance of advocating for vulnerable women and children in the Pacific.

SEPTEMBER 23 2019 More than 40 women leaders from Australian churches and Christian organisations made a historic visit to Canberra on 18 September to raise awareness of the issue of violence toward women and children in the Pacific Islands, and advocate for elected officials to reinforce partnership efforts with the Australian and Pacific churches.



<http://tma.melbournianglican.org.au/news/christian-women-visit-PM-for-pacific-women-and-children-230919>

In the Pacific, nearly 87 per cent of children and one in four adolescent girls across eight countries experience physical violence regularly, and one in 10 experiences sexual violence, according to the recent *Unseen, Unsafe* report compiled by several Australian aid and development NGOs.

The leaders, who represented every mainline denomination in Australia, met with senior ministers and MPs from both major political parties, including Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Alex Hawke, to advocate for policies to support and protect vulnerable women and children in the Pacific. They also met with key members of the crossbench to encourage leadership on Australia's commitment to advocacy for a just world.

“If we're to heed the call to care for our neighbour, we cannot ignore the desperate situations many women and children in the Pacific are facing,” said Kate Harrison Brennan, CEO of Anglican Deaconess Ministries.

“With our unified voice, we hope our meetings encourage our representatives to continue exhibiting compassionate leadership but also to keep crucial issues of justice, like poverty elimination, community development, care for refugees and other crucial concerns, on their agenda.”

Micah Australia – a coalition of churches and Christian organisations which advocates on justice and poverty issues – facilitated the delegation, which included representatives from the Anglican Church, Hillsong Church, the Baptist Church and UnitingWorld, the Uniting Church's international aid partnerships agency.

“Since over 90 per cent of Pacific women are Christian, we're compelled to speak up for them as well as emphasise the importance of churches there as an agent for empowering women,” said the Revd Dr Seforosa Carroll, head of Theological Research for Uniting World.

“It's essential for us to ensure our government's 'Pacific Step Up' policies reflect the voices and needs of the poor, that they are not being forgotten and that women are given a seat at the table.”

Executive Director of Micah the Revd Tim Costello, who will lead the organisation's annual conference Voices for Justice again later this year in Canberra, said this was a chance to unite influential female Christian leaders.

“Too often, the church in Australia is known for advocating for our own rights, rather than the rights of the vulnerable and marginalised. These women, many of them who are on the forefront of social justice issues in our nation, have come to Canberra to advocate solely for the needs of others.”

“This is a significant moment for our nation, with every major church denomination being represented here today. We are at our best when we are unified in giving a voice to the vulnerable, and these women demonstrate that better than anyone else.”

COMMENTS

Jill England

23 Sep 2019

Two things:

Yes, the churches ministering in these areas really need to look carefully at their teaching around the area of marriage. Christian women need to understand that it is never God's will for them or their children to remain in unsafe situations.

Also, there are many women and children from these Islander communities living in Australia and suffering abuse.

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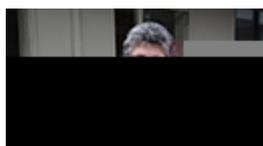
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