



# Pacific Sports Partnerships

Communications impact briefing  
October 2018



*Talented Tongan teenagers who show aptitude at other sports are being introduced to swimming.  
Image credit: ABC - Aaron Kearney*

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*Cover photo: Mighty Meris - Members of the PNG Orchids rugby league team ahead of their historic first international match.  
Image credit: ABC - Aaron Kearney*



*Proper bats and balls have replaced mango tree sticks and rolled up newspaper.  
Image credit: ABC - Aaron Kearney*

## Introduction

ABC International Development was the communication partner for Pacific Sports Partnerships, Australia's flagship sport for development project in the Pacific (2015-18).

As part of the Pacific Sports Partnerships (PSP), ABC International Development produced multi-media coverage of sport for development in the Pacific and designed and delivered sports journalism and communications training and support across nine countries in the region. This report provides a summary of the outcomes and impact of the communication activities implemented as part of PSP.

# Background

The Australian Government's Pacific Sports Partnerships (PSP) Program facilitates the growth and development of sport across the Pacific region as part of Australia's sports diplomacy strategy. The strategy focuses on the goals of connecting, developing, showcasing and sustaining new and existing channels of sports support, sports industry partnerships and international sports networks.

Through PSP, Australia supports activities to address primary risk factors associated with non-communicable diseases, particularly physical inactivity, and addresses inequalities experienced by women, girls and people living with disability. The goal of PSP is to strengthen sports-based cooperation through the development of sports partnerships. The three objectives of PSP were:

- **Increased levels of regular participation of Pacific Islanders, including people with disability, in quality sport activities;**
- **Improved health-related behaviours of Pacific Islanders, which impact on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) risk factors, focusing on increasing levels of physical activity; and**
- **Improved attitudes towards and increased inclusion of people with disability in Pacific communities.**

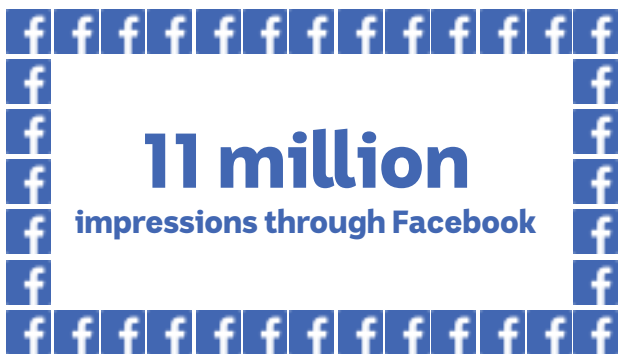
PSP is implemented across nine Pacific nations – Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. PSP supported 16 sports in the region including Australian Football League (AFL), Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Cricket, Football (Soccer), Gymnastics, Hockey, Netball, Paralympic Committees, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis and Volleyball .

At the center of PSP's communication efforts is the partnership between the program implementing partner (represented by GHD) and ABC International Development (ABCID). ABCID has a dual responsibility to develop and publish a range of stories from the region on the role of sports in achieving development outcomes, and support sporting partners (National Sporting Organisations) to develop content, identify media opportunities and produce targeted materials for their audiences.



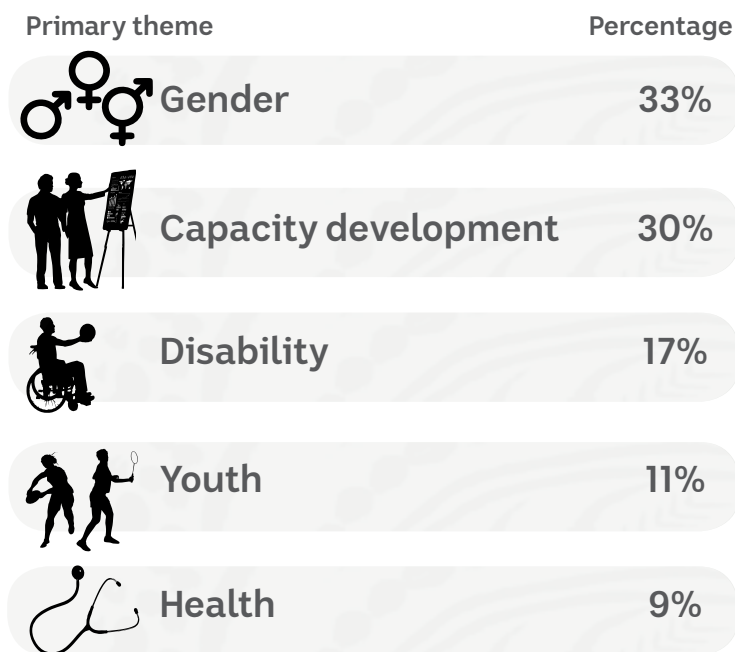
Adults learning the basics of table tennis in Vanuatu.  
Image credit: DFAT

# PSP communication highlights



## Story themes

Number of stories 141



## Stories by country

Number of stories 141



(all statistics based on aggregated data up from October 2015 to September 2018)

The PSP communications support was delivered by ABC International Development and led by experienced ABC content maker and trainer Aaron Kearney who produced stories for online, social media and radio. He also designed and delivered training workshops to sports media professionals. (see page 6).

## Top 10 stories

The following are the top 10 stories from the PSP initiative. The stories report on Fiji, PNG and Samoa among other countries. Many of the stories focus on issues related to gender equality and youth.



**Child champion turned teen mum takes another shot.**

Total reach:173,399



**All are welcome on Samoa's netball courts and Fa'afafine shine.**

Total reach: 131,854



**How Rugby League is offering hope and healing in Samoa.**

Total reach:168,052



**Fiji rugby's refereeing ranks reinforced by steely schoolgirl.**

Total reach: 131,744



**Game changers: A sporting chance for Pacific women.**

Total reach: 162,303



**Commentators' call commences Commonwealth course.**

Total reach: 127,024



**Going for Gold Coast - Pacific posse prepares.**

Total reach:136,846



**Will Olympic fever help secure Fiji rugby's future?**

Total reach: 125,245



**Coaching the coaches: Spreading netball knowledge to the young women of Samoa.**

Total reach:133,233



**Rugby League tackles disability and discrimination in Papua New Guinea.**

Total reach: 112,894

## PSP through the lens of our stakeholders

PSP garnered further reach through stories being shared and spread by numerous stakeholders and media outlets across various platforms encouraging audience engagement. These platforms include ABC Grandstand and Radio Australia as well as international platforms like the BBC World Service and Pacific media outlets like Samoa Observer and Loop Vanuatu.

The examples below illustrate some of these good news stories.



# Training and capacity development

ABCID delivered Media and Communications Training in the region as part of PSP in 2016 and 2018. The objective of the media and communications training was to capacity build in-country staff from National Sporting Organisations in relation to undertaking targeted media and communications activities in their countries (a separate in depth report on this training is available on request).

The learnings from the successful application of Media and Communications training for sporting organisations across six Pacific countries in 2016 were built on and updated with new skills for five countries in 2018. The trainings were conducted for approximately 230 sports administrators and media professionals. Greater media and communications capacity of sport administrators and development officers has extended and expanded broadcasting of the positive development outcomes of sports for development in the Pacific. This was made possible by partnerships with:

- Oceania Badminton (Samoa, PNG)
- Oceania Swimming (Vanuatu)
- Netball Australia (Tonga)
- Gymnastics (Fiji)

*“Athletics Fiji will benefit immensely because of the empowerment that this training has provided. More and more stories will be shared, the people of Fiji will get to know the athletes and have a better understanding and appreciation for the sport.”*

Eugene, Athletics Fiji.

*“I will utilise this knowledge to improve our social media presence as well as getting more real-life stories of the members and promote the sports where women are at the helm.”*

Nynette, Samoa Women in Sport Commission.



Course Graduates with High Commission staff in Vanuatu Image credit: ABCID



Course Graduates with Tonga High Commissioner Andrew Ford. Image credit: ABCID

*“A successful three days for me. I really enjoyed not only the beauty of the workshop but the excellence of the participants and good networking because we live in Samoa but never talk to each other.”*

Filoi, Samoa Rugby Union.

*“Coming from a non-media background, I found all topics covered in the training important learning skills for me.”*

Susan, PNG Cricket.

*“Every quarter I am supposed to write a story and this training really gave me ideas and techniques that I will definitely implement and there will be a great improvement in my next story.”*

Palu, Tonga Football.



# Conclusions

As part of the PSP, communication has been pivotal towards the achievement of overall program objectives.

ABCID contributed to capacity building with committed local partners through two rounds of Media and Communications Training in the region which led to enhanced media and communications capacity of sport administrators and development officers. In producing and publishing a range of stories from the region on the role of sports in achieving development outcomes related to various themes including gender equality, disability inclusion, health and youth engagement, ABCID also contributed to positive social development outcomes. It empowered participants by giving them a voice through telling their stories and sharing those stories to promote a dialogue via social media. Through supporting sporting partners to develop content, identify media opportunities and produce targeted materials for their audiences as well as its own content production (reporting across 16 different sports) ABCID promoted the benefits of sustained increases in sport-related participation.

Overall the impact of the communication support provided by ABCID was reflected in the Independent Evaluation of the program that highlighted the importance of communicating development outcomes for programs like PSP.

*“Building on the popularity and shared ground of sport and drawing on the comparative advantage of a respected and trustworthy media organisation with legitimate authority on the subject matter and region, enhances the public diplomacy outcomes of the program without compromising on key development messages. Indeed, ABCID media tracking indicates that stories that resonate best with audiences are those that illustrate the personal impacts of the program, i.e. the development outcomes.”*

(Holden & Vella, 2017)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holden, D.L., & Vella, L. (2017). Independent Evaluation: DFAT Pacific Sport Partnerships (PSP) and Asian Sport Partnerships (ASP) (p. 20). Retrieved from [Independent Evaluation document \(PDF 4.9MB\)](#)



Jonathan Ila has defied his MS diagnosis to become a leading AFL figure in PNG  
Image credit: ABC Aaron Kearney