

Five years after Palau passed the *Family Protection Act 2012*, *Pacific Women* supported the Ministry for Community and Cultural Affairs to conduct a review of progress towards implementing the law. The review examined the coordination and availability of services for survivors of domestic violence and made recommendations to strengthen implementation into the future.

In 2014, Senior Judge Honora Rudimch and Palau Government Minister Baklai Temengil-Chilton initiated a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to clarify the roles and responsibilities of key responding agencies involved in the implementation of the *Family Protection Act 2012*. The MoU sought to strengthen coordination between direct service providers. It was signed by the Office of the Attorney General, the Bureau of Public Safety, the Palau Judiciary, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs. The 2017 review examined the improvements in coordination between services since the MoU came into effect. It also presented findings on progress made towards improving access to justice, health and social services.

Maire Dwyer, the Gender Equality Adviser for the North Pacific, said such reviews were critical to support informed decisions about priority areas for investments. She noted that discussing findings of reviews with stakeholders 'supports project ownership and can galvanise other investments as well as improved performance'.

The review highlighted significant achievements in implementing the *Family Protection Act 2012*. Overall, the MoU had improved coordination between agencies, enforcement of the law against offenders of domestic violence and the provision of services to victims of domestic violence. The review also showed that the Act is implemented more effectively when the key agency takes ownership of the Act and develops protocols to guide staff and set expectations for implementing the law.

The review included practical recommendations for each of the responsible agencies along with an implementation plan. Stakeholders will use this information and technical advice to take next steps in their implementation of the Act.