

Australia-Pacific Connections  
for a Digital Future

# DIGITAL MARKETPLACE & ONLINE SERVICES

Helping to Empower  
Pacific Women

Pacific Connect Dialogue  
15-16 July 2019  
Port Vila, Vanuatu

## PACIFIC CONNECT DIALOGUE REPORT



## Summary

The International Centre for Democratic Partnerships (ICDP) hosted a second dialogue in Port Vila Vanuatu in 2019: *Pacific Connect Dialogue – Digital Marketplace & Online Services* from 15-16 July 2019.

ICDP brought together a group of individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences across a range of sectors, including primary healthcare, health policy and reform, financial technology, telecommunications, marketing and advertising, online marketplaces, software development, entrepreneurship, storytelling and social impact. Participants gathered to discuss the power of digital technologies to provide women with a greater opportunity to start their own business at a very low cost, seek expert advice and connect with professional service providers, such as doctors and teachers.

The aim of the Dialogue was to connect current and emerging leaders in the Pacific and Australia and to provide the opportunity for participants to build connections and identify opportunities to work together through selecting practical projects to take forward.

The Dialogue was facilitated by Mr Francis Herman OAM and Professor Ian Young AO. The Dialogue flyer and programme are attached for reference as well as key statistics from the dialogue.

## Discussions

Seventeen emerging leaders attended the dialogue - nine from Vanuatu, six from Australia, one from Fiji and one from Solomon Islands including fourteen women. It was convened over two days and on the first day participants attended an initial introductory session where: the Pacific Connect programme and second track process were introduced, they got to know each other, and the dialogue topic was broadly discussed. That evening the group attended the welcome dinner where Ms Jenny Da Rin, Australian High Commissioner to Vanuatu spoke to the group who included local business leaders and Pacific Connect Community alumni. The dinner provides a further opportunity for participants to get to know each other and to network with other members of the Pacific Connect Community and business leaders.

Day two involved further exploration of the topic, brainstorming and open discussions using the second track process. Out of these discussions participants were asked to self-select projects they would be interested in working on post dialogue and further hone the ideas to form a project plan. Later in the day Mr Ben Kealy, CEO, Digicel Vanuatu presented an overview of the telecommunications environment in Vanuatu to the group and was then invited to hear the project pitches and provide feedback along with the facilitators.

## Projects

As a result of introductory discussions on day 1, which were further refined on day 2, participants were able to identify several action areas and then agreed as a group to break down the action areas to projects for further exploration. Through this discussion they worked together to identify four projects to explore for the remainder of the dialogue. They then broke into small working groups to discuss these projects and to forge teams to build on the detail with the aim to deliver a short pitch at the end of the dialogue to the larger group for feedback. The following topics were identified to take further as projects:

- Vanuatu Finds – Online marketplace to link with Pacific Finds;
- Online Symptom Checker – Better access to healthcare and information;
- Yumi Wan Women Advisory Network – Connecting and supporting Businesswomen (Facebook page has already been established);
- Behavioural change for social change – educational support for youth.



*Dialogue participants pitch their project ideas to the group*

Mr Kealy also delivered on a commitment to install free Wi-Fi for the Haus of Handicraft building in Port Vila the day after the dialogue and offered his office conference facilities for future meetings of the Women Advisory Network (Yumi Wan). The Yumi Wan group also utilised time at the end of the dialogue to set up a dedicated and closed Facebook site for women in business to access to share information and knowledge on business and entrepreneurial matters.

## Feedback

Following the Dialogue, participants were asked to complete a Post-Dialogue survey. Ten participants completed the survey out of the 17 in attendance.

When questioned, **all respondents** indicated that they believed that *Pacific Connect* is a program that both *'expands and strengthens Australia-Pacific connections by developing new networks'* and **7 out of the 10 respondents agreed** that it is a program that *'cultivates meaningful enduring relationships between Australian and Pacific individuals and organisations'*.

**Nine respondents** indicated that attending the Dialogue helped them expand contacts and networks and that they are committed to pursuing long-term collaboration with current / emerging leaders from the Pacific or Australia.

For a full analysis of the survey please refer to the attached Dialogue Key Findings Report.

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*'I feel that ICDP has strengthened this relationship and will continue to do so, which will be seen through the growth of projects and networks.'* (Ni Vanuatu participant)

*'I'm more aware of the issues facing Pacific peoples, and of the opportunities available for mutual benefit.'* (Australian participant)

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## Next steps

Participants agreed that they will continue to network online via a dedicated Slack channel in the Pacific Connect Network Slack site and through WhatsApp and skype calls as needed. Attached is the communique cleared by the participants.

## Dialogue Participants

### Facilitators

- Mr Francis Herman, CEO, Vanuatu Television and Broadcasting Corporation
- Prof Ian Young, AO, Director of ICDP and Kernot Professor of Engineering at the University of Melbourne

### Vanuatu Participants

- Ms Evelyn Takalo, Self Employed, Marketing & Training Consultant
- Ms Leitare Joel, Community Engagement & Training, Save the Children
- Ms Serah Tari, Self Employed, Local Business Coach/Consultant
- Ms Leilopo Tarosa, Engineering Officer, Telecommunications Regulator
- Ms Winy Marango, Founding Director, FashionHer Bags
- Mr Pita Albet, Tours & Sales Operator, Vanuatu Happiness Tourism
- Ms Julia King, Consultant/Business Coach, Kings Consultancy
- Ms Anne Pakoa, Founder, Vanuatu Humans Rights Coalition
- Ms Wilma Vocor, GM, HR, Air Vanuatu

### Australian Participants

- Mr Harold Dimpel, Founder, MHITs Ltd
- Ms Briony Benjamin, Producer/Creative Entrepreneur, Briony Benjamin Media

- Mr Andrew Garrick, Founder/Managing Director, Production Group
- Ms Ainsley Pope, Creative/Strategic Communications, AP Collective
- Ms Tess van der Rijt, CEO/Founder, Patient Connector
- Ms Molly Benjamin, Founder, Ladies Finance Club

#### **Fiji Participant**

- Ms Pauline Benson, Founder, Fiji Finds Online Marketplace

#### **Solomon Islands Participant**

- Ms Donna, Co-Founder/Managing Director, Mere Care Co. Ltd

#### **ICDP**

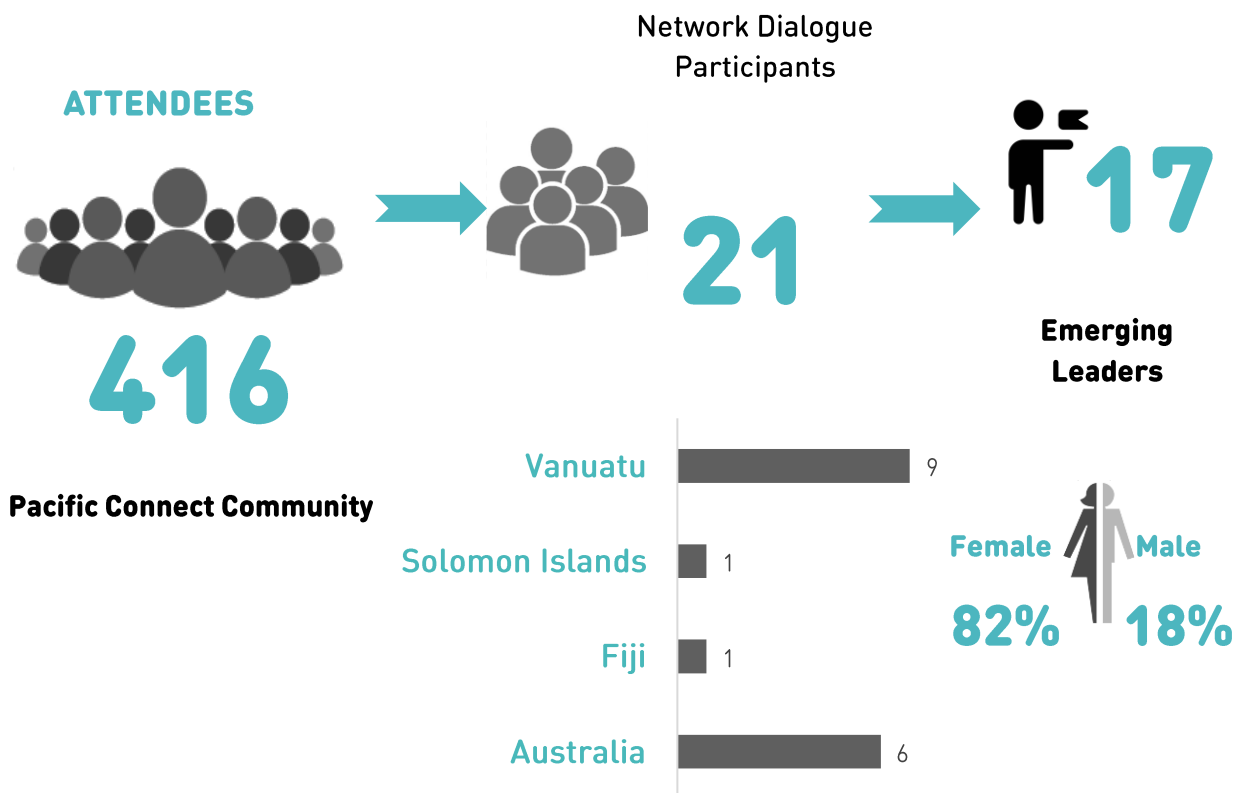
- Simone Pensko, Chief Executive Officer, ICDP
- Tina Briggs, Program Manager, ICDP

LOCATION



Port Vila, Vanuatu

15-16 July 2019



## ENGAGEMENT FORMAT



- Discussion Sessions
- Project conception – small group brainstorming
- Project pitching



- Hosted Dinners & Lunches
- Informal Networking

## SPEAKERS

2



## KEYNOTES

## Collaboration



4

participant-led projects

- Online marketplace (Vanuatu Finds)
- Online Symptom Checker
- Yumi Wan Women Advisory Network
- Educational Support for Youth

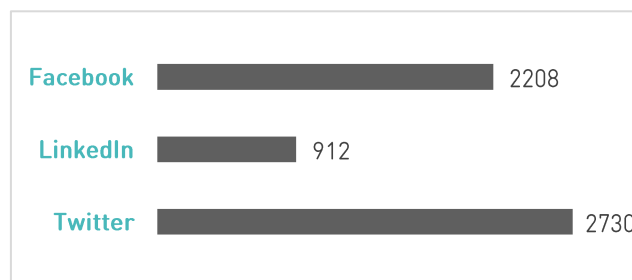


## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

## SOCIAL



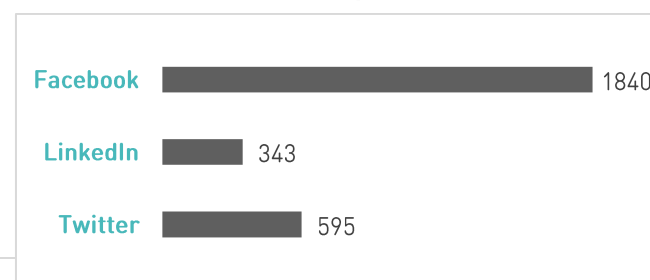
### Total Dialogue Post Reach



453

Facebook Likes

### Best Performing Posts Reach



17

Slack Channel Members



**The *Pacific Connect* Network Dialogue in Port Vila on 15-16 July will bring together current and emerging leaders from the Pacific and Australia to discuss how digital connectivity and emerging technologies can expand business opportunities and empower women in Vanuatu and the broader Pacific. Deadline for expressions of interest – 17 June.**

## What is 'Pacific Connect'?

*Pacific Connect* was launched by the Prime Minister of Australia in September 2017 to forge strong and enduring strategic relationships between Pacific and Australian leaders across the public, private and community sectors. *Pacific Connect* is delivered by the International Centre for Democratic Partnerships (ICDP) and sponsored by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

## What is the 'Network Dialogue'?

The Pacific is undergoing an unprecedented technological transformation, making it an ideal time to discuss and plan our region's digital future.

Since the official announcement of *Pacific Connect* at the 48<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum in 2017, ICDP has been working with regional partners and local leaders to create a series of Network Dialogues. In 2018, it held the inaugural Business Dialogue in Port Moresby (March); the Academic Dialogue in Suva, co-hosted by the University of the South Pacific (June); the Creative Arts Dialogue in Apia (July); and the Education Dialogue in Honiara (November). On 6 September 2018, 80 Network members attended the inaugural *Pacific Connect* Forum at NSW Parliament House in Sydney.

The year 2019 opened with the *Pacific Women in Business and Digital Delivery* Dialogue in Brisbane (February), the *Digital Trade and Labour Mobility* Dialogue in Port Vila (March), and the *Disruptive Technology in Agriculture* Dialogue in Port Moresby (April).

*Pacific Connect* Network Dialogues, delivered using the 'Second Track' unofficial, informal, consultative style, focus participants on specific issues and their possible ICT solutions, as well as potential practical projects that can be taken further.

## What are we aiming for?

Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home. Digital globalisation is an era in which you can buy and sell globally, seek and offer advice, learn and find work, and build personal networks. Connectivity provides women with a greater opportunity to start their own business at a very low cost, seek expert advice and connect with professional service providers, such as doctors and teachers.

Through facilitated, outcome-focused discussions, the participants of the *Pacific Connect* Network Dialogue in Port Vila will identify opportunities for Pacific women in the emerging digital marketplace, select one or two practical projects to take forward and develop them through a series of subsequent meetings and long-term collaboration.

Ideas could include:

- ▶ Creating an online health support service that provides general advice and assistance
- ▶ Developing an app that enables ni-Vanuatu to book appointments with medical professionals online
- ▶ Establishing an online marketplace where people can advertise and trade goods and services.

The Dialogue will be co-facilitated by **Prof Ian Young AO**, Director of ICDP and Kermot Professor of Engineering at the University of Melbourne, and **Mr Francis Herman OAM**, Chief Executive Officer, Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation.

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## Who are we looking for?

We are looking for people with leadership skills, a positive, 'big picture' outlook, and a record of achievement in their chosen field.

Our participants will be courageous and passionate free thinkers willing to share their own networks and ideas to build a better tomorrow for all. A keen interest in digital technology is necessary, but technical skills are not.

## How will you benefit?

*Pacific Connect* offers exciting opportunities for outstanding people in Australia and the Pacific to forge new relationships through continued engagement on common challenges.

Through a '*Second Track*' process which encourages fresh thinking and the development of concrete solutions, participants will be able to test their ideas, broaden their knowledge and widen their networks for future interaction.

Opportunities include:

- ▶ Mentoring and internships with Australian and Pacific organisations
- ▶ An invitation to participate in future regional *Pacific Connect* Dialogues and international forums, including an Ideas Exchange at NSW Parliament House in Sydney
- ▶ Unique networking opportunities with regional leaders
- ▶ New commercial partnerships

## PROGRAMME

### MONDAY, 15 JULY 2019

Warwick Le Lagon - Vanuatu

- 5:00pm Registration. Official welcome
- 5:10pm LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE
- 6:30pm Free time

Warwick Le Lagon - Vanuatu

- 7:00pm NETWORKING DINNER
- 9:00pm Close

### TUESDAY, 16 JULY 2019

Warwick Le Lagon - Vanuatu

- 8:45am Networking, Tea & coffee
- 9:00am PLANNING SESSION
- 10:30am Morning tea
- 10:45am PROJECT INITIATION
- 12:00pm Lunch
- 1:00pm INFORMATION SESSION
- 1:30pm PROJECT CONCEPTION
- 2:45pm OUTCOMES & NEXT STEPS
- 3:00pm Dialogue Closes

## How can you get involved?

**Please forward your CV and a brief overview of your relevant achievements to [pacific\\_dialogue@icdp.com.au](mailto:pacific_dialogue@icdp.com.au)**

**Enquiries +61 409 810 190**

**Deadline 17 June 2019**

# DIGITAL MARKETPLACE & ONLINE SERVICES

Australia–Pacific Connections for a Digital Future

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Pacific Connect Dialogue  
15-16 July 2019  
Port Vila, Vanuatu

## Monday, 15 July 2019

### Pacific Connect Dialogue

**Purpose:** The dialogue will bring together current and emerging leaders from Vanuatu and Australia to consider how digital connectivity and emerging technologies can expand business opportunities and empower women in Vanuatu and across the Pacific. The Vanuatu Dialogue will explore opportunities for Pacific women in the emerging digital marketplace. Connectivity provides women with a greater opportunity to start their own business at a very low cost, seek expert advice and connect with professional service providers, such as doctors and teachers.

**Aim:** The aim of the dialogue is for participants to identify one or two practical projects to take forward. Ideas for potential projects include creating an online health support service that provides general advice and assistance; developing an app that enables ni-Vanuatu to book appointments with medical professionals online and establishing an online marketplace where people can advertise and trade goods and services.

<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Pacific Ballroom 1, Warwick Le Lagon, Port Vila</b>
5:00pm	Registration of Dialogue participants & Pacific welcome
5:10pm	<b>Introductory Roundtable</b> <i>Getting to know each other - Speed introductions – 3mins each person</i> Facilitators – <b>Mr Francis Herman OAM &amp; Prof Ian Young AO</b>
6:15pm	<b>Introduction of topic – Digital Marketplace and Online Services</b> Facilitator – <b>Mr Francis Herman OAM</b>
6:30pm	Free time
7:00pm	<b>Welcome Dinner</b> Venue: Guest speaker: TBC <b>The Hon Matai Seremiah</b> Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
9:00pm	Close

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## Tuesday, 16 July 2019

<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Pacific Ballroom 1, Warwick Le Lagon, Port Vila</b>
8:45am	Dialogue participants check-in & networking
9:00am	<b>Topic overview – Digital Marketplace and Online Services</b> Facilitator – Mr Francis Herman OAM
9:10am	<b>First Planning Session – Exploration of ideas – one on one discussions</b> Facilitators – Mr Francis Herman OAM & Prof Ian Young AO
10:30am	<b>Opportunities for Women using technology in the Pacific</b> <i>Sharing ideas – group discussion</i> Facilitated brainstorming – Prof Ian Young AO & Mr Francis Herman OAM
10:45am	Morning tea
11:00am	<b>Second Planning Session – Identify projects to take forward</b> Facilitated discussion – Mr Francis Herman OAM & Prof Ian Young AO
11:45am	<b>Project Conception – Small group discussion</b> Facilitators – Mr Francis Herman OAM & Prof Ian Young AO
12:30pm	Lunch
1:30pm	<b>Project Conception – Small group discussion – continued</b>
2:00pm	<b>Project Pitch and Group Feedback</b> Facilitators – Mr Francis Herman OAM & Prof Ian Young AO
2:45pm	<b>Summary of Dialogue Outcomes and Next Steps</b> Facilitators – Mr Francis Herman OAM & Prof Ian Young AO
3:00pm	Close

*Australia-Pacific Connections for a Digital Future*

**Pacific Connect Network Dialogue**  
**Digital Marketplace and Online Services**  
**15-16 July 2019, Port Vila, Vanuatu**

**Communiqué**

1. We, the participants of the Pacific Connect Network Dialogue on Digital Marketplace and Online services, met on 15 – 16 July 2019 in Port Vila, Vanuatu at the invitation of the International Centre for Democratic Partnerships (ICDP) with the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).
2. We would like to thank the Australian High Commissioner, Ms Jenny Da Rin for her continued support and for her inspiring words at the Welcome Dinner.
3. We also thank Francis Herman OAM and Ian Young AO for their skilful facilitation of the sessions and keynote speaker Ben Kealy, CEO, Digicel for his informative presentation and participation in an informal pitch session which set the tone for action.
4. We congratulate the organisers on assembling an impressive group of participants from Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Australia. Participants had diverse backgrounds and experiences across a range of sectors, including, primary healthcare, health policy and reform, financial technology, telecommunications, marketing and advertising, online marketplaces, software development, entrepreneurship, storytelling and social impact.
5. We applaud Australia's step-up in engagement with the Pacific and its commitment to build stronger, long-lasting relationships with Pacific Island nations. We believe that Pacific Connect and the 'Second Track' process offer opportunities to collaborate and build personal rapport in an informal, consultative environment that encourages positive, fresh thinking and a personal interest in achieving practical results.
6. We acknowledge that people must have a reason to connect and stay connected in order to build enduring relationships. We think that translating ideas into concrete projects is the best way to achieve this. We

are inspired by the success of previous Pacific Connect Dialogues and projects, as they demonstrate what can be achieved through sustained collaboration.

7. We agree that digital technologies play an increasingly important role in people's lives and have the potential to transform the livelihoods of Pacific communities.
8. We believe the Dialogue met our expectations in terms of topics of importance to the Pacific, providing a forum for open and honest discussion, expanding our networks and contacts and as an enabler for developing joint tangible projects to take forward. This was already apparent in the dialogue and afterwards.
9. We considered several areas for action which Dialogue participants could pursue collectively or in subgroups and have slated the following four projects for action:
  - a. Vanuatu Finds – Online marketplace;
  - b. Online Symptom Checker – Better access to healthcare and information;
  - c. Yumi Wan Women Advisory Network – Connecting and supporting Businesswomen (Facebook page has already been established);
  - d. Behavioural change for social change – educational support for youth.
10. We thank Ben Kealy and Francis Herman for their in-kind support for our projects going forward. In particular, we thank Digicel for:
  - installing wi-fi in the Haus of Handicraft in Port Vila; and
  - offering to host the Yumi Wan group meetings at their office.
11. We will develop these ideas and opportunities through further meetings, ICDP's Slack forum and other online platforms. We appreciate the importance of clear objectives and firm timelines and will mobilise existing resources and adapt best international practice where possible. While not every idea from the Dialogue may come to fruition, we hope that the time and effort spent on their development will strengthen our personal links and form a foundation of longer-term relationships.
12. We welcome the opportunity to participate in the Pacific Connect Ideas Exchange, planned for Sydney, Australia on 18-19 September 2019, and look forward to forming closer bonds with other members of the fast-growing Pacific Connect Community.

## Vanuatu 'Online Services and Digital Marketplaces' Dialogue Findings

### Overview

ICDP held a Network Dialogue on 'online services and digital marketplaces' in Vanuatu from 15-16 July as part of the *Pacific Connect* program.

Seventeen emerging leaders from Vanuatu, Australia, Solomon Islands and Fiji came together at the invitation of ICDP for the Dialogue and were asked to complete a Post-Dialogue survey upon completion of the event. A total of **10 participants** completed the survey.

The key findings from the Network Dialogue are outlined below:

### Awareness of *Pacific Connect* program, networks and opportunities

Nearly all participants surveyed (**90%**) indicated that this was their first program event, indicating strong growth for the program in Vanuatu.

Per intended objectives of the program, participants were asked to outline their indication of agreement to the statements.

- *'Pacific Connect is a program that expands and strengthens Australian- Pacific Connections by developing new networks:*
  - o 9 agree, 1 strongly disagree

- *'Pacific Connect is a program that contributes to economic development in the Pacific':*
  - o 7 agree, 2 disagree
- *'Pacific Connect is a program that contributes to good governance in the Pacific':*
  - o 6 agree, 1 neither agree nor disagree, 1 don't know, 1 disagree
- *'Pacific Connect is a program that cultivates meaningful enduring relationships between Australian & Pacific individuals & organisations:*
  - o 7 agree, 1 neither agree nor disagree, 2 disagree

**Sixty percent** of participants said they found the event useful. **Nine** participants indicated that attending the Dialogue helped them expand contacts and networks and that they are committed to pursuing long-term collaboration with current / emerging leaders from the Pacific or Australia.

Despite participants' overall belief that the program will be beneficial to long-term collaboration, they were mixed on the facilitators. **Half** of those surveyed agreed with the statement that *'the facilitators provided clear explanations of the goals and objectives of the Dialogue* while the other **half** disagreed with this statement.

### Key strengths of the Dialogue

The survey also asked participants to determine the key strengths of the Dialogue. Determinations are broken down as follows:

- **3 participants** mentioned *'discussions on the role of ICT as a development tool in the context of growing connectivity and capacity in PICs'*
- **4 participants** mentioned *'opportunity to expand contacts and networks'*
- **3 participants** mentioned *'opportunity for future collaboration'*

In order to better ascertain key strengths and weaknesses of the Dialogue, a higher survey participation rate is needed to ensure the program is improved long-term.

### Participant engagement

The *Pacific Connect* program relies on active participant engagement and it is to this outcome that participants were tasked to rate interactions.

Overall, results were mixed, with survey results indicating that **half** of the Dialogue group believed that other participants' engagement levels exceed their expectations. Only **two** believed that their own personal engagement exceeded expectations, with the majority (**6**) saying that it equalled expectations.

For the project sessions, **half of the participants surveyed** indicated that overall group engagement was higher than expected.

### Connectivity amongst participants

Survey results indicate that participants are willing to stay engaged with the program long-term and with each other through ICDP channels.

After the Vanuatu Dialogue, **8** participants joined ICDP's community engagement platform on Slack and followed / liked the ICDP Facebook page. **Half of the participants surveyed** visited the ICDP website.

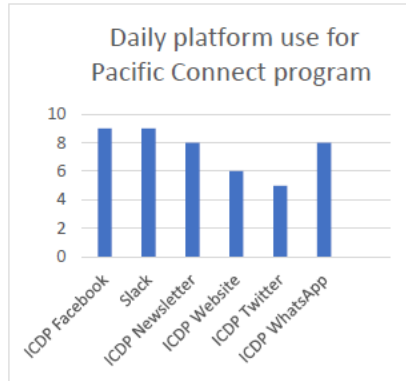
**A large majority (80%)** of participants were able to get advice and support from at least one contact at the Dialogue, and, most promisingly for long-term relationships, **nine participants** established a business relationship with at least one contact at the event.

Participants are also seemingly intent on maintaining cross-cultural communication online, with **8** Dialogue attendees inviting contacts to join a social media page or community and sharing relevant information or articles associated with the Dialogue outcomes.

**All Dialogue participants surveyed** responded that they were likely to organise meetings, events or another activity in-country based on the Vanuatu Dialogue, broken down into **8 'very likely'** and **'2' somewhat likely replies.**

In order to develop long-term connections, ICDP maintains various social media channels for Community members to operate through. **Eight participants** use Facebook daily, while a further **four** each use YouTube and WhatsApp daily, two platforms of which ICDP does not have an official presence.

Refer to the Diagram below on how participants connect online:



Participants were asked to reflect upon strengthened Pacific-Australian relationships developed in the program.

**Six participants** responded that their views on Australia or the Pacific (depending on perspective) had changed as a result of the dialogue. **One participant** was unsure, and **3 results** were unavailable.

In explaining their answers, participants replied with:

*“More meaningful friendships [have been] started and hopefully [we can] build on [these] to achieve personal and business goals.”*

*“It was encouraging to see the amount of entrepreneurial spirit and community growth opportunities. Plus those actively seeking to make it happen against all societal odds.”*

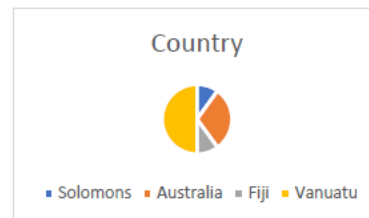
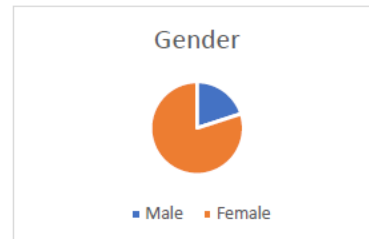
*“I’m more aware of the issues facing Pacific peoples, and of the opportunities available for mutual benefit.”*

*“Australia is not unfamiliar for me, having worked and lived there...”*

*“I feel that ICDP has strengthened this relationship and will continue to do so, which will be seen through the growth of projects & networks...”*

### Participant demographics

The gender of those surveyed was predominately female, with **8 females** and **2 males** responding.



**Half** of the survey respondents were from the Vanuatu, **one each** from Solomon Islands and Fiji and the remaining **three** from Australia (shown in above diagram).

**Sixty percent** of the Dialogue participants identified their employment status as self-employed with the remaining **three** employed full time.

The majority (**six participants**) are business owners, **one** identified as a director and technical staff respectively, and **two** work in upper management roles.

**Eight** participants work in the private sector, **one** works in the public sector and the final participant preferred not to answer.

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