



CONCEPT NOTE PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS NETWORK INC.

Voyage to Leadership: Pasifika Young Women's Symposium

March 01, 2024, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm **Venue:** Holiday Inn, Parramatta

Introduction

The 'Voyage to Leadership: Pasifika Young Women's Symposium' embarks on a transformative journey, inviting every woman to not merely be a passenger but a navigator on her path to leadership. The symposium opens with an inclusive celebration of Pasifika and Aboriginal traditional welcome. With a focus on shared wisdom, the aim is to empower every young Pasifika woman and guests. Through focused panels and plenaries, it intertwines Leadership, Cross-cultural Experiences, Education, Career Advancement, and Wellbeing.

In a world where the acknowledgment of women's empowerment is acknowledged but not fully realized, this symposium, orchestrated by the Young Pacific Women Collective (YPWC) in collaboration with the Pacific Women's Professional Business Network (PWPBN), stands as a beacon of celebration, empowerment, and education for young Pasifika women. It serves as the convergence point where cross-cultural appreciation and women's empowerment intersect and flourish.

Echoing the 2024 International Women's Day theme 'Count Her In: Accelerating gender equality through economic empowerment,' this symposium illuminates the path toward advancing gender equality through economic empowerment'. As highlighted by Simone Clarke, CEO of UN Women Australia, economic empowerment not only upholds women's rights and gender equality but also propels communities toward prosperity and abundance."

Background

Tracing back to the 1860s, Pacific Islanders in Australia have a rich, diverse history, initially characterized by forced labour in Queensland's sugar plantations and subsequently influenced by the multicultural initiatives of the 1960s and 1970s, and favourable migration policies for New Zealanders. Encompassing over 23 Pacific ancestries, these communities have intricately interwoven their lively cultural, social, and economic contributions into Australia's diverse milieu. A noteworthy aspect of this migration includes the significant presence of Fijian Indians, descendants of indentured laborers transported from India to Fiji. The Pasifika community witnessed substantial growth, especially among the Māori and Samoan populations, reaching 415,033 by 2021 – a notable 0.6% increase from 2011, and marking a vibrant shift in the multicultural demographic, particularly in New South Wales (133,475) and Queensland (147,928). (APEN & Centre for Western Sydney, 2021)

The establishment of the Pacific Women Professional and Business Network (PWPBN) in 2017 stands as a testament to a dedicated mission towards nurturing and amplifying the voices and leadership of Pacific women in Australia, setting a foundation stone for the inception of the Young Pacific Women's Collective (YPWC). YPWC emerged from the strong foundation set by PWPBN. It stands as a pivotal force, empowering young Pacific women. The initiative is deeply rooted in values like inclusivity, transparency, and empowerment. This was realized through a strategic alliance between the PWPBN board and young Pacific women, weaving a narrative linking historical migrations to current leadership initiatives.

Vision

To provide a nurturing space for Pasifika women to celebrate and systematically cultivate leadership.

Objectives:

- Cultivate leadership and empowerment through engagement with inspiring local Pacific women.
- Strengthen cross-cultural bonds via talanoa sessions and networking opportunities.
- Champion education, career growth, and entrepreneurial support.
- Emphasize the significance of well-being, grounded in gratitude.

Activities

- **Cultural Showcase "Women of the Sea of Islands "**

A tribute to the rich diversity of Pacific cultures, featuring weaving, art demonstrations, and digital presentations. This year, under the theme 'Count Her In': Advancing Gender Equality via Economic Empowerment, we focus on the influential and transformative role of women in society, while expressing gratitude for their contributions towards positive change. The title of the showcase is also the theme of the IWD Frangipani Gala held on 2nd March.

"Women from the Sea of Islands" aptly aligns with our vision. Professor Epeli Hau'ofa's concept of the "Sea of Islands" emphasizes unity and interconnectedness, viewing all islands as a single entity. In this spirit, we acknowledge and celebrate every individual woman from these islands. This sentiment perfectly echoes the 2024 International Women's Day theme, "Count Her In", reinforcing our commitment to inclusivity and recognition for every woman in our community.

- **"Wisdom Weave: Pacific-Aboriginal Cultural Exchange**

This exchange fosters a shared understanding by weaving knowledge from Pacific and Aboriginal cultures. It celebrates their rich heritage and wisdom while promoting unity through a traditional welcome.

- **Leadership through Culture and building Self-Worth and Confidence Break Out Sessions:**

- Cultural and Faith-Based Leadership: Navigating Diverse Paths to Inspire and Lead / Advocacy, Social Justice, and Impact: Empowering young women to become advocates for social change and community development.
- Continuing the Momentum: A Gratitude Session Inspired by the Standing Ovation Interview with Honourable Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa
- Heart & Body fit Session: Encouraging a Heart Growth Mindset by discussing the value of learning lessons from the past and identifying opportunities.
- Empowering Young Women in Politics: Mastering Effective Communication and Public Speaking" Delve into the challenges and opportunities young women face in the political arena and provide practical guidance on developing strong communication and public speaking skills.

- **Plenary - Empowering Aspiring Female Leaders: "Thriving in the Digital Age with AI ChatGPT"**

This session aims to equip aspiring female leaders with the digital skills, online presence management strategies, and well-being practices necessary to thrive in leadership roles. It combines practical knowledge with personal growth, offering a holistic approach to leadership development in the digital age.

Delegates

Symposium delegates encompass young Pacific women from across New South Wales and Australia, who are either emerging leaders or possess a fervent interest in ascending through the ranks.

Summit Takeaways

- Leadership Empowerment: Engaging with local Pacific women leaders provides actionable strategies and inspiring stories for personal, professional and community leadership development.
- Cross-Cultural Understanding: Talanoa sessions and networking opportunities foster expanded networks, diverse perspectives, and appreciation for Pacific cultures.
- Education, Career, Entrepreneurship: Participants receive guidance, mentorship, and networks to advance their education, career, and entrepreneurial ventures.
- Well-being Focus: Insights into mental health, holistic wellness, and gratitude practices empower attendees for improved personal well-being and community impact.

Enveloping the theme 'Count Her In', the journey that unfurls from here forward champions the ethos of the symposium: empowerment, diversity, and collaboration, propelling impactful change for Pasifika young women and the broader Australian societal tapestry.

Reference

- APEN & Centre for Western Sydney. (2021). Pasifika Communities in Australia.