WOMEN'S FEDERATION FOR WORLD PEACE

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OCEANIA



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WFWP
OCEANIA NEWSLETTER



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WFWP is committed to:

- Serving communities – Service projects within Australia & the Pacific Islands.
- Strengthening the family – Workshops, forums, seminars, and conferences.
- Bridge of Peace - Reconciling differences and healing wounds of the past.
- Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN) – A network of women leaders and organisations dedicated to solving pressing social issues and securing an environment for human development.

Featured Article



A Hawksbill sea turtle with a plastic bag around its neck

Trashed Seas

The Race to Prevent and Remove Marine Litter; Plastics Comprise 85 Percent of Trash Accumulating in the Earth's Oceans

Website:
https://www.theearthandi.org/post/prevent-and-remove-marine-litter

Written by Cassie Journigan
The Earth & I Magazine | www.theearthandi.org

Marine litter—first recognized, anecdotally, in the 1960s—has been a serious environmental concern since the 1980s, according to the 2015 book, Marine Anthropogenic Litter. But while today's sources of litter are many and its effects are still growing, major efforts are underway to address the issue. Individuals, organizations, communities, and nations can all lend a hand.

Marine litter, also known as marine debris, has been a growing environmental issue since it was first noted in the 1960s and became widely recognized in the 1980s. It includes any persistent, manufactured solid material discarded into the marine environment—ranging from small items like cigarette butts and plastic bags to large debris like abandoned fishing gear or entire ships. This pollution threatens marine ecosystems, wildlife, and human livelihoods, affecting those who depend on the oceans for work or recreation.



Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) found in Norway

The debris comes from many sources. About 80% originates from land, such as litter blown into the sea, waste carried by stormwater, or sewage discharge. The remaining 20% stems from ocean-based sources, including shipping, aquaculture, and offshore drilling. Natural disasters like hurricanes and floods also contribute to the problem. Plastics dominate marine litter, accounting for 85% of all waste found in oceans, making them the most dangerous and persistent threat.

These plastics appear in many forms. Large plastic items, or macro plastics, can entangle marine animals or be mistakenly ingested. Coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds are often smothered or damaged by these objects. Microplastics, which are less than 5 mm in size, are especially concerning. They are absorbed by marine species and travel through the food chain, sometimes ending up on our plates. Worse still, these plastics release harmful chemicals and provide a surface for dangerous microorganisms in a new environment called the "plastisphere."

The accumulation of plastic waste has led to massive floating “garbage patches” in the oceans, like the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. These clusters, mostly composed of microplastics, can entrap marine life, support harmful algae blooms, and even transport invasive species. For humans, consuming seafood tainted by microplastics may cause health problems, including hormone disruption, respiratory issues, and weakened immunity.



Marine debris cleanup from the 2012 International Coastal Cleanup in Honolulu, Hawaii, by the Ocean Conservancy

Efforts to solve the issue have been ramping up since the 1980s. In recent years, various programs and organizations have taken on the challenge of cleanup and prevention. The U.S. has implemented eight new programs, with support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), such as the Clean Water Fund’s “ReThink Disposable” (NOAA), such as the Clean Water Fund’s “ReThink Disposable” campaign and the Ocean Conservancy’s waste-reduction projects. These aim to reduce plastic at the source, especially from food and beverage businesses.

Other initiatives span education, community involvement, and innovation. The U.S. EPA's Trash Free Waters program promotes knowledge and action through toolkits and waste management strategies. NOAA's Marine Debris Program provides emergency guides and educational materials. Globally, organizations like 4Ocean, the Coral Reef Alliance, and The Ocean Cleanup are actively removing debris and protecting ecosystems. UNESCO also supports many private and nonprofit initiatives in this cause.

Individual action matters too. Reducing the use of single-use plastics, recycling, avoiding products with microbeads, and supporting clean-up efforts are effective ways anyone can help. Public support for legislation and engagement with advocacy groups can drive long-term change and influence corporate and government behavior.

Though the scale of marine litter is alarming, the problem is not beyond repair. With collective effort—through awareness, policy change, innovation, and personal responsibility—marine litter can be reduced and eventually eliminated. Now is the time to act to protect our oceans, marine life, and future generations.

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Australia



Theme: Confident HER - Building Confidence and Integrating Leadership Skills

24th May 2025 | Melbourne, Australia
Video link: https://youtu.be/M1Dc1qD7gCY

Written by Anne Bellavance
President, WFWP Australia

OVERVIEW

- A FORUM OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR ESTABLISHED AND EMERGING LEADERS, WITH A FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP OF THE HEART.
- THE GLOBAL WOMEN PEACE AMBASSADOR AWARD HONOURS LEADERS WHO PROMOTE RECONCILIATION, OVERCOME BARRIERS, AND BUILD PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES BASED ON UNIVERSAL MORAL PRINCIPLES.
- LAUNCHING OF THE 2025 'LEADING INTO THE FUTURE' MENTOR PROGRAM UNDER THE THEME OF CONFIDENTHER.
- THE GLOBAL PARTNER AWARD HONOURS ORGANISATIONS COLLABORATING WITH WFWP TO ACHIEVE THE UN GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS, ESPECIALLY GOAL 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS.



The GWPN National Assembly was held on 24 May 2025 in Melbourne, Australia with the theme Confident HER – Building Confidence and Integrating Leadership Skills. The event brought together 82 participants, including 4 dynamic speakers, 11 awardees, and a warm welcome to 7 newly recognised Global Women Peace Ambassadors. It also marked the addition of 4 new WFWP members to our growing community. Distinguished guests included WFWPI President, Moriko Hori; International Secretary General, Dr. Paris Moon; new Sub-Regional President Matapa Shelly, and Regional National Presidents and Australian State Presidents.



The day was full of energy, laughter, tears, and triumphs. We embarked on a journey together— a journey of heart led leadership with confidence, deep human connections, and the kind of effective communication that builds more internal confidence.

Door prizes, awards, table talk, great food and great people – our mentors and mentees in the Leading into the Future mentor program themed ConfidentHer for 2025, our fabulous volunteers, and of course our inspiring participants!

Each moment was a golden nugget of wisdom: we learned that leadership is an action, not merely a title. It's about showing up, reaching out, and creating spaces where everyone feels valued and heard. It’s about embracing our roles as leaders, even when we're tempted to succumb to fear. It is about feeling the fear but doing the task anyway, and realising that hey, this builds the greatest confidence.



Today was a testament to what we can achieve when we come together, share our truths, and support each other's growth. Thank you to every participant, speaker, and volunteers for bringing your authenticity and heart to this gathering. Your contributions today have not just filled this space with energy but have sown seeds of change that will grow beyond today. It was a day of unforgettable memories and transformative experiences learning, of celebration, and most importantly, of coming together as a community committed to making a difference. Let’s continue to lead with love, pause with purpose, and act with confidence and integrity.



Thanking our GWPN Planning Committee, our VIC Advisory Committee, incredible volunteers. During events, our faces are towards the front. However, it's the volunteers at the back who create the beauty and energy that is felt by everyone - you make us shine!

PRESENTERS

Moriko Hori - The Journey to build Confidence



Moriko Hori is the President of WFWP International and WFWP Japan. She's also the Director of International Service of WFWP International and is responsible for 110 Global Development, Aid & Service projects in 50 countries. Moriko Hori's journey is a powerful testament to courage, conviction, and breaking cultural expectations. According to her, building confidence is a journey, but it's entirely achievable with consistent effort. Raised in Japan and educated in South Korea—two societies where traditional gender roles often discourage women from pursuing higher education or leadership—Moriko faced constant pressure to follow a narrow path. Even those closest to her encouraged her to simply be a "good wife and mother."

But Moriko knew she was called to more. With deep determination, she chose to honour both her family and her authentic self. As a wife and mother of two, she proved that leadership and motherhood are not mutually exclusive—they are powerful when held together. Today, as President of WFWP International, Moriko leads with vision, humility, and a heart for peace—showing women everywhere that they, too, can lead with love and purpose.

Anne Bellavance - Confidence unfolds from your inner heart, radiating strength and self-belief



Anne Bellavance, President of WFWP Australia and Regional Representative of the WFWPI UN Office, emphasized that true confidence is born from a deep connection with one's inner heart — the sacred place where divine love resides. She explained that confidence is not rooted in perfection or performance, but in the recognition that one's worth has always existed within.

She shared that the inner heart is not separate from the divine — it is the divine. The love a person feels is God's love flowing through them. God is projected into the human heart, and God's presence lives within each person. One is not merely connected to God's heart — their inner heart is God's heart.

Anne conveyed that when fear is released and this understanding is embraced, it awakens a life filled with strength, self-belief, and a confidence that radiates outward — uniquely, beautifully, and powerfully one's own.

She reminded the audience not to fear failure or making mistakes, affirming that they are already enough. Each person holds infinite value and dignity, not because of achievements, but simply because they were born that way. Therefore, she encouraged treating oneself and others with tenderness and deep respect.

> *"The inner heart is not separate from the divine — it is the divine."*

Kylie van Luyn - Step Into Your Greatness: How Confidence and Mindset Fuel Success

Kylie van Luyn is the Founder of Elevated Coaching & Consulting, a Global Mentor, a 2024 USA CEO 'Today Awards' - Human Rights Consultant of the Year, and featured as a top influential leader in CIO Women Magazine. In her powerful session, Kylie invited every woman in the room to reimagine what's possible when we choose to believe in ourselves.



With warmth and strength, Kylie explored the deep connection between confidence, mindset, and purpose—showing how these elements together become the engine that drives personal and professional transformation. Far from being a fixed trait, confidence was revealed as something we build, one brave decision at a time. She reminded us that cultivating inner belief enhances our ability to lead, make clear decisions, and challenge stereotypes that often hold women back. Rooted in neuroscience and lived experience, Kylie spoke about how purpose fuels resilience, and how positive thinking can literally rewire the brain—improving emotional balance, focus, and courage.

Participants were encouraged to let go of limiting beliefs, to embrace growth through challenge, and to surround themselves with people who lift them higher. The room echoed with a clear and powerful message: You don't need to be fearless—you just need to be willing. Confidence isn't innate; it's something we choose to build through intentional habits, mindset shifts, and courageous action. And anything is possible when you decide to back yourself.

Tessa Jetson - The Science of Confidence: Discover How to Overcome Fear & Unlock Your Full Potential



Tessa Jetson, Founder of the Tessa Jetson Foundation and the Restart Your Life retreats, and author of Restart Your Life, shared her powerful journey of transformation. Through her work, she provides funded courses to help women gain employment, created the Power Up referral network, and runs 12-month mentoring programs specifically designed for chronic procrastinators.

Tessa emphasized that confidence is not something one is born with— it is something that can be built. With the right tools such as practice, knowledge, mentoring, and encouragement, anyone can learn to master it. However, she openly shared that her own journey didn't begin with confidence. Once overwhelmed by fear, anxiety, low self-esteem, and self-doubt, Tessa's transformation was not immediate. It came through deep commitment, hard decisions, and a powerful sense of purpose. After escaping an abusive relationship, she was left with nothing but the determination to create a better life for her three children. That purpose pulled her out of her comfort zone and became the fuel that sustained her transformation.

Tessa rebuilt her confidence by continually investing in herself through personal development and upskilling, and by anchoring herself in a purpose greater than fear — her children. This clarity gave her the strength to keep going, even when the path was difficult. She reminded the audience that the average person has over 40,000 thoughts a day, and what we repeat becomes our reality. Negative self-talk not only holds people back but also floods the body with cortisol, increasing anxiety. However, she affirmed that the brain can be rewired. With 66 days of consistent, intentional practice, new and empowering thought patterns can be formed.



MUSICIAN

This year, we were delighted to feature QiQi, a Melbourne-based guzheng performer, composer, and creative producer, whose music enriched the atmosphere during registration and lunch. QiQi's performance transcended language, weaving together the elegance of her Chinese heritage with the nuance of contemporary storytelling. Her evocative soundscapes invited reflection, evoked emotion, and created a space of quiet connection.

TABLE TALK

One of the most meaningful moments during the GWPN Assembly was our Table Talk session— an opportunity for real conversation, reflection, and shared wisdom, designed to foster dialogue, personal reflection, and peer-to-peer learning in a supportive environment.
Each table was invited to choose from three guiding questions. The conversations were rich, honest, and insightful reflecting the diverse experiences and perspectives in the room. Below is a summary of the key outcomes from each discussion prompt:



Q1: What does confidence in leadership look like?
Participants described confident leadership as deeply relational and values-based. Common qualities included:

- The ability to communicate and listen from the heart
- Awareness and empathy toward others' circumstances
- Taking ownership and responsibility, rather than placing blame
- Demonstrating courage, humility, and a willingness to take thoughtful risks
- Creating inclusive, horizontal relationships where all team members feel heard and valued

Q2: What have you recognised in yourself when it comes to lack of confidence?
This questionencouraged self-awareness and vulnerability. Participants shared:

- That unfamiliar or unsafe environments often diminish their confidence
- A tendency to strive for perfection, which can become a barrier to action
- The impact of fear in holding back confidence, and the importance of focusing on progress over perfection

Q3: How can you support others around you to grow their confidence?
Participants emphasised that confidence grows within relationships and community. Key reflections included:

- The importance of self-awareness in guiding and empowering others
- Helping people recognise their potential and envision a positive future
- A shared belief that confidence cannot be built in isolation—it is nurtured through encouragement, connection, and mutual support



GLOBAL AWARDS

One of the most moving moments of the day was the Global Awards Ceremony, where we honoured individuals as Global Women Peace Ambassadors and organisations as Global Partners. Our Global Awardees dare to lead with confidence and courage — feeling the fear but doing the work anyway. These are leaders who have shown us that true confidence is rooted in trust, love, and service to others.

Congratulations to all our award recipients — your strength, humility, and unwavering dedication continue to inspire and uplift us all.



Left to Right - Back: Neil Hay - representing Rugby Victoria; Sharlene Lynch - Co-founder of Healing Through Love; Toni Joel (OAM) – Founder of Off Your Back; Tessa Jetson – Founder of Restart Your Life Retreats, Matapa Shelley – WFWP Oceania Regional President.
Left to Right - Front: Peter Bakua & Albertha Sukaliana - Papua & New Guinea Aust. Assoc. Victoria; Simone O'Brien; NasibaAkram- Haidary (OAM)– Founder, Project Humanity; Jo Cooper – Founder, The Good Warrior; Moriko Hori – WFWP International President; Kamla Reddy.

GLOBAL WOMEN PEACE AMBASSADOR AWARDS

Eight outstanding women received the Global Women Peace Ambassador Award for their values-led leadership and commitment to peacebuilding. Each embodies WFWP'score principle of living for the sake of others, working to heal divides and uplift their communities.

Awardees:

Jo Cooper - Founder, The Good Warrior
Kamlavathi Reddy- fostering inclusivity and social harmony.
Nasiba Akram- Haidary (OAM) - Founder and Director, Yassna Foundation and Project Humanity
Rose Davidson& Sharlene Lynch - Co-Founders at Healing Through Love
Simone O'Brien - domestic violence survivor and passionate advocate
Tessa Jetson- Founder, Tessa Jetson Foundation and Restart Your Life Retreats.
Toni Joel (OAM) - Founder, Off Your Back

GLOBAL PARTNER AWARDS

This year, four organisations were recognised with the Global Partner Award for their shared commitment to reconciliation, unity, and peacebuilding. The award honours their collaboration with WFWP in advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals—especially Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

Awardees:

Melbourne Rebels / Rugby Victoria - partnering with WFWP for running rugby clinics during the Melbourne Pasifika Festival.
Papua & New Guinea Aust. Assoc. Victoria (PNGAAV)– partnering with WFWP for the Melbourne Pasifika Festival.
Schools For Future - committed to educational equity for marginalised children.
Warlows Legal– supporting WFWP Australia with DGR status.







REFLECTION FROM PARTICIPANTS

Immediately upon arrival, I felt very welcome and sensed the joyful and inclusive energy. The importance of women's involvement in promoting peace is undeniable, and the presentations with a focus on issues of confidence in leadership were most relevant and very insightful.

The different stories and the different foci of involvement showed that peace requires all kinds of approaches and that every action stirs a butterfly effect. Thank you for the opportunity to attend this event - Birgit Trauer

True connection with global reach that can cause change. Honoured to be surrounded by powerful women from a diverse community. An Inspiring event full of real-life heroes who protect our community with love and care.

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Hosted by:

The Women's Federation for World Peace is an international NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. WFWP adheres to the principle that women working together, taking initiative, and empowering one another across traditional lines of race, culture, and religion to create healthy families can resolve the complex problems of our societies and world – www.wfwpaustralia.org

City of Monash
https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/

CITY OF MONASH

WOMEN'S FEDERATION
FOR WORLD PEACE AUSTRALIA

ConfidentHer Mentoring Program

28 June 2025 | Melbourne, Australia

Written by Patricia Vaz
Mentoring Program Coordinator

OVERVIEW

- **EMPOWERING WOMEN TO LEAD WITH CLARITY, COURAGE, AND COMPASSION BY FOSTERING MEANINGFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ESTABLISHED AND EMERGING LEADERS, SUPPORTED BY REGULAR SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOPS THAT ENHANCE CONFIDENCE, CAPABILITY, AND CONNECTION.**
- **CREATE TANGIBLE IMPACT BY CONNECTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT ACROSS THE PACIFIC.**

In 2025, WFWP Australia launched a bold new chapter in its ongoing journey of women's leadership using the Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN) as the delivery platform. With a theme that resonated deeply—ConfidentHER—the call was clear: it's time for women to lead with clarity, courage, and compassion. The message wasn't just powerful—it was personal.



In 2025, WFWP Australia launched a bold new chapter in its ongoing journey of women's leadership using the Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN) as the delivery platform. With a theme that resonated deeply—ConfidentHER—the call was clear: it's time for women to lead with clarity, courage, and compassion. The message wasn't just powerful—it was personal.

At the 2025 GWPN National Assembly, 80 attendees from across Australia and the Pacific gathered to ignite this vision. Among them were 25 women leaders—speakers, awardees, and program participants—each bringing their voice, their story, and their fire. From the opening keynote to intimate breakout sessions, the event pulsed with raw honesty, big ideas, and a shared desire to rise—not alone, but together.

But ConfidentHER was never just about a single day. It marked the start of a movement.

One of the most inspiring elements of the initiative was the Leading into the Future Mentor Program with the 2025 theme of ConfidentHER — a six-month journey pairing established leaders as mentors and emerging leaders as mentees from diverse backgrounds. These dynamic duos meet regularly, setting goals, sharing wisdom, and building something much bigger than themselves. The impact was immediate: women who had once struggled to speak up were now leading discussions, pitching ideas, and stepping into roles they never thought possible. One mentee, glowing with pride, shared that she finally felt "seen" in her workplace. Another landed a leadership position she had once believed was out of reach.







Alongside mentoring, the ConfidentHER Workshops became a powerful monthly gathering space. Held every third Thursday, they offer practical tools for confidence-building—public speaking, personal branding, boundary-setting, and more. But what really made these workshops stand out was the energy. These weren't just webinars. They were living, breathing spaces of transformation, where women didn't just learn—they lit up.

And the ripple effect? It was real.

Proceeds from workshop tickets have already helped fund university scholarships for young women in the Solomon Islands and Samoa. These weren't just numbers on a report. They were stories of hope, education, and economic empowerment—proof that when one woman rises, she lifts many.

What sets the 'Leading into the Future' mentor program apart is its heart-centred approach to leadership—prioritising personal growth, sisterhood, and service over traditional measures of success. Rooted in the pillars of clarity, courage, and compassion, ConfidentHER is more than a program—it's a movement. It nurtures a new kind of leadership culture, where women across industries and islands rise together with purpose and authenticity.

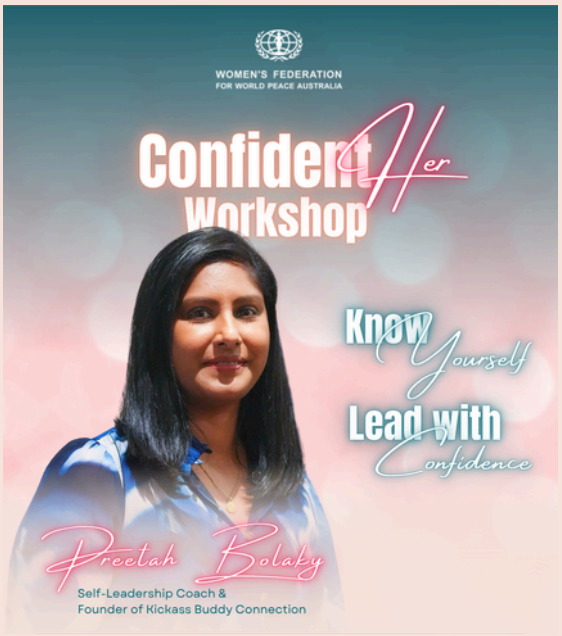


The biggest takeaway? Confidence is contagious—and collective. Investing in one woman creates a ripple that reaches families, communities, and future generations. And when participants learned that their attendance had helped send girls to university, it brought everything full circle. That's what ConfidentHER is all about—building up women who build up others!

reflection from participants

"I feel incredibly fortunate to have been part of the Leading into the Future mentor program as a mentee, where I worked closely with a mentor over the past nine months. This experience gave me much-needed clarity on my values and helped me explore potential career pathways. More importantly, it encouraged deep introspection, allowing me to understand why my actions and decisions reflected in certain ways.
My mentor facilitated thought-provoking conversations that challenged my perspectives and broadened my understanding. Their guidance was invaluable in shaping my personal and professional growth, making this mentorship journey truly transformative." – Priya Elangovan

"I had the honour of serving as a mentor in the Leading into the Future Mentor Programme in 2024. Over the course of six months, I had the privilege of working closely with my mentee while also attending inspiring Masterclasses run by other mentors on Saturdays.
What stood out to me most was the heart-centred openness of all participants—mentors and mentees alike. Each individual showed up with a genuine willingness to learn and serve together, creating a supportive and empowering environment.
I also deeply appreciated the autonomy given to each mentor-mentee pair, allowing us to focus on what truly mattered for the mentee's growth. This flexibility, grounded in respect, compassion, authenticity, and kindness, ensured that every interaction was meaningful and impactful.
Without hesitation, I would say yes to being a mentor again in this program. I wholeheartedly recommend this initiative to any woman aspiring to become a heart-focused, authentic leader who seeks to serve and create a positive impact." - Gladys Wong





workshops & speakers

The ConfidentHER Workshop Series featured a lineup of accomplished facilitators, each leading sessions on various topics:

Preetah Bolaky – Know Yourself, Lead with Confidence (June 18, 2025)

Odri Fernandes – Confident Communication (July 16, 2025)

Patricia Vaz – Leadership Mindset (August 20, 2025)

Linda Young – Overcoming Self-Doubt (September 17, 2025)

Charlotte Mukuberwa – Strategic Career Growth (October 15, 2025)

Melanie Atma Gertler – Speak with Impact (November 19, 2025)

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United Nations International Day of Families



Theme: Family-Oriented Policies for Sustainable Development

31 May 2025 | Melbourne, Australia

Written by Dr John Bellavance
Vice-President, UPF Australia

OVERVIEW

- TO PROMOTE ACTIONS THAT ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON FAMILIES.
- TO FOSTER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - WE NEED PEACE SINCE CONFLICT HAS THE GREATEST NEGATIVE IMPACT ON FAMILIES.

The Universal Peace Federation and Women's Federation Australia approached peace building with the focus on – One Human Family - The Role of the Abrahamic Faiths in Fostering Shared Values for Peace Building. Abrahamic faiths comprise - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The 40 attendees included religious, community, business and political leaders.

PRESENTERS

Professor, Dr Anoop Swarup- Non-Killing Approach to Peace



Professor, Dr Anoop Swarup,Chairman of the Centre for Global Nonkilling and UPF Ambassador for Peace, offered a powerful vision of a nonkilling society— one rooted in spiritual, ethical, and scientific traditions that respect life. He introduced the Global Nonkilling Index, revealing that around 70 out of 183 countries face ongoinglethal violence.
"Without ethical awareness," Dr. Swarup warned, "we risk undermining the foundations of civilization."

Bismi Palatty - Our shared human existence is a truth echoed through the very heart of the Abrahamic faiths



Bismi Palatty, a dynamic speaker, emerging author, inspiring radio host, and impactful speaking coach, spoke on the shared human values at the heart of the Abrahamic faiths. She emphasized that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all uphold core values such as obedience, perseverance, and generosity, which are expressions of love, peace, and joy. She highlighted the presence of the "golden rule" across all three faiths.

Reflecting on her upbringing in India, Bismi shared how various religious communities coexisted harmoniously, offering a real-life example of "unity in diversity." She described her talk as a personal moment where faith, love, and the human spirit came together, believing that true change begins from within. She concluded by noting the inspiration she drew from the stories of humanitarians and the uplifting energy in the room.

Fr. Jacob Joseph, PhD - What Does 'Human'Mean in Abrahamic Religions? A Peace Perspective



Fr. Jacob Joseph, PhD, is the Deputy President of the Victorian Council of Churches and Lecturer in Patristic Theology, Liturgy, History, and Mission St Athanasius College, University of Divinity, Melbourne. He explored the question: What does it mean to be human from an Abrahamic perspective? He argued that defining humans solely as material beings strips away moral responsibility. In contrast, theistic traditions see humans as spiritual beings with free will—a foundation for peace, justice, and coexistence. “Affirming our shared humanity,” he concluded, “opens the door to deeper dialogue and cooperation.”

Dr John Bellavance - Shared Values and Principles of Abrahamic Faiths

Dr John Bellavance, Global Vice President, Sun Moon University (SMU), Oceania Coordinator, International Association of Academicians for Peace and Vice-President, Universal Peace Federation Australia, argued that the Abrahamic faiths share foundational values that emphasise peace on multiple levels: Peace within oneself, Peace within the family and Peace with the environment. These universal principles offer a powerful framework for promoting social wellbeing, justice, human rights, and the dignity of all people—regardless of faith or background.



In a time marked by division and an “us versus them” mentality in religion, politics, and culture, what we need most is a renewed commitment to our common humanity. Dr Bellavance gave a report on UPF’s Middle East Peace Initiative, showing that UPF’s approach to peacebuilding worked to create strong bounds between political and religious leaders of the Abrahamic faiths in the Middle East.

Yousef Alreemawi



Yousef Alreemawi is a writer, internationally renowned proofreader of Arabic content, founder of Palestine Remembered radio program and expert on Arab culture and Palestine. He emphasized that while Australia has embraced multiculturalism for 50 years, true harmony requires more interaction between communities. He believes art, music, and culture can serve as a bridge, particularly in promoting Arabic culture, which spans 22 countries. One refugee from Gaza told him that during a concert he organized, “the war stopped for two hours,” illustrating how powerful art can be in dark times. Quoting poet Novalis, he said, “Poetry heals the wounds inflicted by reason.” Alreemawi urged avoiding sectarian views and divisive language while standing firm in one’s values. On Palestine, he expressed hope through voices like Israeli human rights activist Felicia Langer, saying that supporting peaceful Israeli allies helps both sides feel less alone.

Milon Islam FCPA - One Human Family - The Role of the Abrahamic Faiths in Fostering Shared Values for Peace Building



Milon Islam FCPA, Vice President of the Islamic Council of Victoria, emphasized that in a divided world, people of Abrahamic faiths must recognize their shared values—like love, justice, and compassion—and work together to build peace. Citing the Quran, he stressed that true worth lies in righteousness, not labels. Islam highlighted both the historical conflicts and cooperation between faiths, referencing the Golden Age of Spain as an example of peaceful coexistence. Today, he warned,extremism and fear threaten unity, making dialogue and authentic interpretation of religion crucial. Interfaith initiatives, including those by UPF and the UN, show the power of collaboration. He concluded by urging communities to live out peace not by erasing differences, but by honoring them with dignity and love, calling on everyone to recommit to peace as one human family.

Venerable Bhikkhuni Bodhicitta - A Buddhist Perspective to Peace Building



Venerable Bhikkhuni Bodhicitta is a Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist nun based in Melbourne with over 25 years' experience in meditation. She cited the example of President GotabayaRajapaksa of Sri Lanka who willingly submitted his resignation to ensure a peaceful transition of power. She spoke about the Buddhism as a religionof peace towards all life. Buddhismis deeply rootedin the principle of peacetowards all life,stemming from core concepts like non-violence, compassion, and the understanding of interconnectedness.

Sara Cohen - Reflections on the Middle East Peace Initiative

Sara Cohen, who participated in the Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI) in Israel in 2015 shared her reflection in text form, as she could not attend in person. Miss Cohen said, “As the former convenor for the Australian Psychological Society’s Psychologists for Peace, I reflected on the subject of peace psychology, thinking that it would be foundational to my approach to peace building”. She reflected on why conflicts persist, even among individuals within the same faith, citing an example of two congregants whose differing interpretations of sacred texts led to estrangement. She stressed that while religion and spirituality are core to identity, peace begins by recognizing each other first as divine beings of love. Without this deeper connection, faith alone cannot bridge division. True reconciliation, she concluded, lies in acknowledging our shared divinity beyond belief systems, which is essential in a world often fragmented by difference.

REFLECTION FROM PARTICIPANTS

Milon Islam, the Vice President of the Islamic Council of Victoriasaid, “This conference was a heartfelt gathering of souls committed to peace, unity, and a shared humanity. The seminar brought people together across cultures and faiths to reflect deeply on what unites us.

The atmosphere was warm, welcoming, and filled with genuine connection. Every speaker touched hearts with wisdom and sincerity, reminding us that love, compassion, and responsibility begin at home and ripple outward into the world.”

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The **Women's Federation for World Peace** is an international NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. WFWP adheres to the principle that women working together, taking initiative, and empowering one another across traditional lines of race, culture, and religion to create healthy families can resolve the complex problems of our societies and world - www.wfwpaustralia.org

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WITH SUPPORT FROM:

Australian Multicultural Media Centre led by Hussen Mahamed filmed the event. AMMC seeks to engage cross-cultural communities through media and social media platforms.

https://ammc.org.au/



NSW Youth Council

26 April 2025 | New South Wales, Australia

Written by Samantha Bing
NSW Youth Coordinator

OVERVIEW

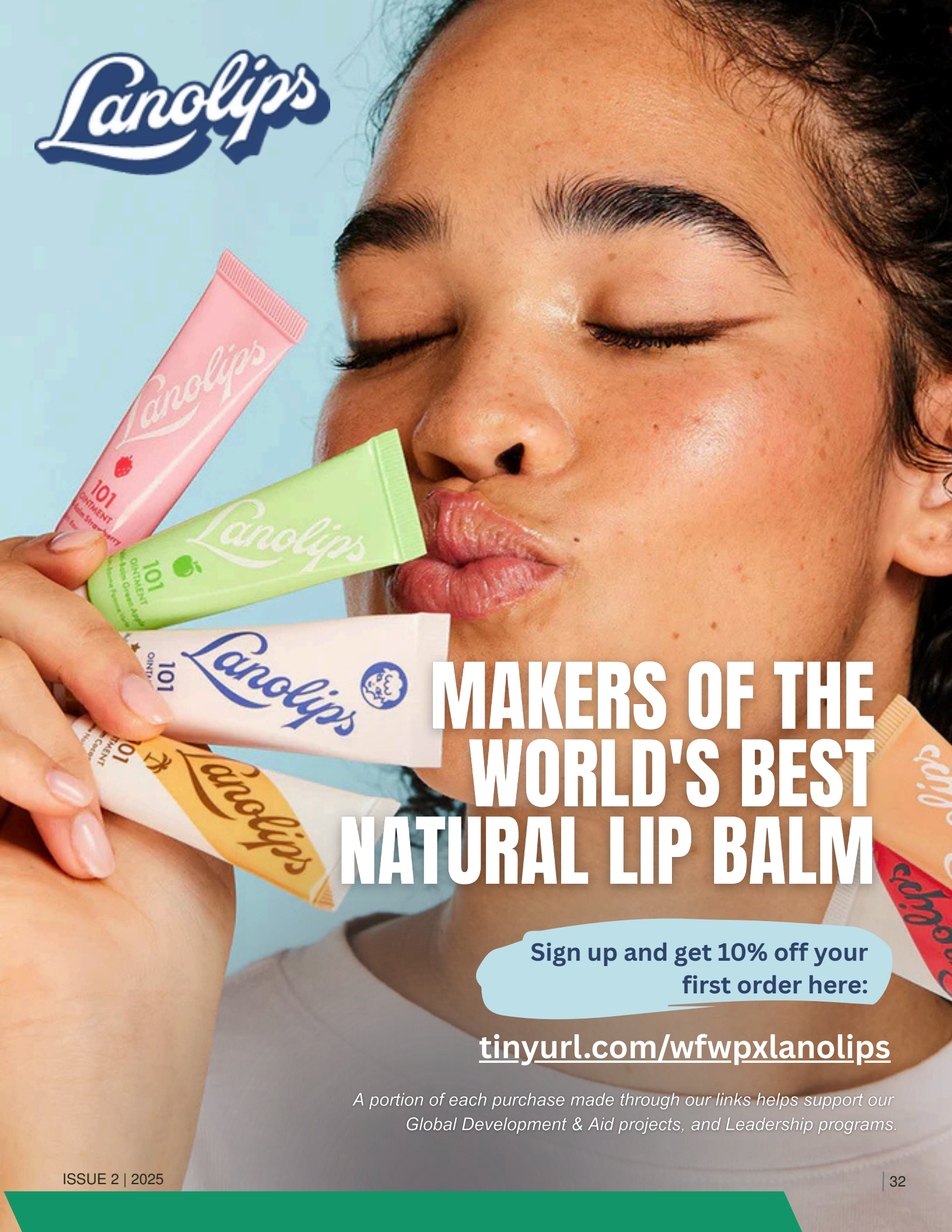
- EMPOWER YOUTH TO BECOME CONFIDENT LEADERS AND CHANGEMAKERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.
- LAUNCH AN ONGOING PLATFORM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO COLLABORATE ON ADVOCACY AND SERVICE PROJECTS AROUND CRITICAL SOCIAL ISSUES.

On Saturday, 26th 2025, WFWP Australia hosted its very first Youth Council session in NSW, bringing together 11 passionate young people aged 18–30. The session focused on leadership development, youth empowerment, and advocacy brainstorming around key issues such as climate change, gender equality, and mental health. Through workshops, interactive activities, and small group discussions, participants connected, shared ideas, and explored their unique leadership styles. The event ended with a strong sense of community and excitement for future projects, with the message that every young person has the power to lead positive change.



One of the most exciting moments was the Advocacy Brainstorm session. Small groups lit up as they dove deep into real issues like homelessness and domestic violence, dreaming up bold projects and creative solutions. There was a buzz in the air—ideas were flying, pens scribbling, and voices rising with purpose. Another unforgettable moment came during the Leadership Spectrum activity, where participants explored what leadership really means. The answers were as diverse as the people in the room—and that was the point.

Everyone walked away with something different, but the message that echoed loudest was this: Leadership looks different for everyone, and everyone has a role to play in creating positive change. By the end of the day, the room wasn't just full of youth—it was full of movement, of hope, and of a community ready to keep going, together.


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Solomon Islands



Peer preparation for doing presentation on Math lesson plan on 16/05/25

Pasifika Scholarship Semester 1 Report by Florence Liliu

June 2025 | Honiara, Solomon Islands

Hello! My name is Florence Liliu, and I'm currently a student study at the Solomon Island National University (SINU). As I embark on my educational journey, I am excited to share the course units I undertook during my first semester classes of 2025.

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Pasifika Scholarship Fund Team, Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) Victoria Chapter and its supporters, for their generous sponsorship during my semester one classes this year. A special thanks also go to WFWP Solomon Islands for smooth coordination of Pasifika Scholarship locally. Through your support, it has been helping me overcome the financial difficulties my parents face in paying my school fees. Your sponsorship allowing me to focus on my studies without having financial stress. Thank you once again, for your kindness and great support.



Group photo after typing final assessment on second language acquisition on 22/05/2025

In semester one, I engaged actively in four course units: Human Development, Academic English, Second Language Acquisition, and primary Mathematics.

Through human development, I gained insights into the physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional growth of individuals, enhancing my understanding of developmental stages and their implications for education.


Edu 501 class tutorial discussion on 19/05/25

The Academic English course improved my language proficiency, particularly in academic writing, reading comprehension, and critical my thinking skills. In Second Language Acquisition, I explored theories and strategies for effective language learning, which deepened my appreciation for diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The primary Mathematics unit strengthened my foundational knowledge of Mathematical concepts and the teaching methods suitable for young learners. These courses enriched my academic skills and broadened my understanding of educational development.

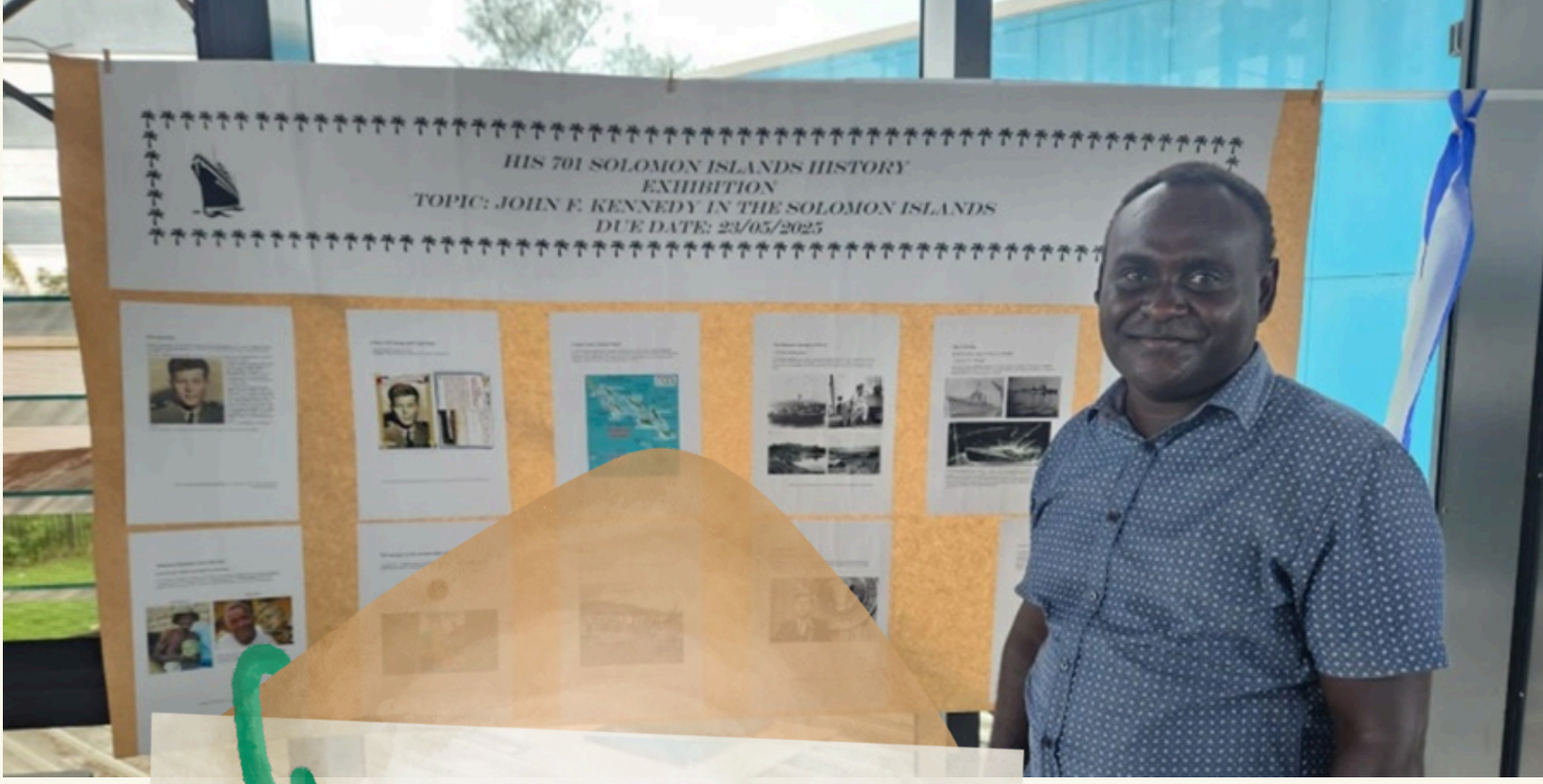
My studies helped me grow, learn, and gain new skills that will help me in the future. My family has benefited by giving them hope and new chances. I will apply what I learn to help my community by sharing knowledge and getting involved in local activities. Finally, I believe my education will help me make a positive difference in society and improve people's lives.

Lastly, my studies are shaping my future which will benefit my family, my community, and society. By gaining knowledge and skills, I am eager to make positive contributions and create a lasting change for those around me.

PASIFIKA SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

The Pasifika Scholarship Fund was initiated in 2017 by the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) Australia. WFWP Australia is committed to provide young adults living in the Pacific Islands an opportunity to access empowering education programs. The scholarship is for people who do not have the financial means to attend university, but who have a driving desire for education.

The program supports young adults who are passionate about getting an education to become future leaders, and who align their beliefs and goals with the values of WFWP International: 'Living for the sake of others'.



Pasifika Scholarship Semester 1 Report by John Galokaniki

June 2025 | Honiara, Solomon Islands

I am writing to share the progress of my studies and to sincerely thank you for your generous sponsorship from 2023 up to now, 2025. Your support has helped me continue my studies without the stress of financial burden, and I am very grateful for your kindness and commitment.

I am currently enrolled in the Diploma in Teaching Secondary program at the Solomon Islands National University. I have chosen to major in two subject areas: New Testament Studies (NTS) and History. I am also taking Professional Studies courses that prepare me to become a good and responsible secondary school teacher.

With your support, I have now successfully completed 19 course units as required by the program. I am happy to report that I have completed Semester 1 of 2025. The only part of my diploma that is left is my Teaching Experience, which I will carry out during Semester 2 this year. After that, I will have fully completed my diploma program.



My decision to study teaching was not only for personal growth but also because I want to contribute to my country—especially in the field of education. I believe that young people are the future of the Solomon Islands, and I want to help them by giving them a good education. My goal is to be a teacher who not only teaches academic subjects but also supports the students to become good and respectful citizens.

Although I am very thankful for the progress I have made, my study journey was not always easy. I faced some challenges, especially in managing my time. There were many times when I had some assignments due in the same week, which made me feel exhausted. I had to plan my time wisely, stay up late to study, and stay focused so that I could submit my work on time.

Transport was also a big challenge. I used public buses to travel to and from the university. Sometimes the buses were late or full, and during the rainy season, it was even harder. The roads would get muddy and slippery, which made it unsafe and stressful. But even with these problems, I did not give up. I reminded myself of my goal and stayed committed to completing my studies.

Your sponsorship means more than just paying for my tuition. It means you are investing in the future of many children who will learn from me one day.



You are not only helping me, but you are also helping to build the nation of the Solomon Islands through education. That is a powerful and beautiful thing, and I am truly thankful from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you once again for your continued love, support, and the trust you have in me. May God bless you and your families. I will continue to work hard and make you proud through my studies and future teaching service.

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Purchases made through our link help support WFWP's mission to empower mothers, families, and future leaders.



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Donate:
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Pasifika Scholarship Fund:
The full scholarship is for young adults living in the Pacific Islands who do not have the financial means to attend university, but who have a driving desire for education to become future leaders.
The program supports young adults who are passionate, and who align their beliefs and goals with the values of WFWP International: 'Living for the sake of others'.

Pasifika Micro-Credit: Taking a partnership approach between WFWP Australia and WFWP Chapters within Pacific Island Nations, Pasifika Micro-Credit aims to empower Island women by directly investing in their business idea, economic activity, or micro-enterprise. The program provides micro-business training and a low interest micro-loan.



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