



Australian Government  
Attorney-General's Department

# AUSTRALIA'S COUNTRY REPORT 2022

PACIFIC ISLANDS LAW OFFICERS' NETWORK  
41<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
4 NOVEMBER 2022

**AUSTRALIA'S COUNTRY REPORT 2022**  
**41<sup>st</sup> PACIFIC ISLANDS LAW OFFICERS' NETWORK ANNUAL MEETING**

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# AUSTRALIA'S COUNTRY REPORT 2022

## 41<sup>st</sup> PACIFIC ISLANDS LAW OFFICERS' NETWORK ANNUAL MEETING

This report focuses on Australian developments in PILON's three priority areas under its Strategic Plan—namely, cybercrime, corruption, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and legislative drafting—from October 2021 to September 2022. The report also considers significant issues relating to the law and justice sector, including technical assistance.

Australia has a federal constitutional system with legislative, executive and judicial powers distributed between the Australian Government, six state governments, and two self-governing territories. All references to 'the Government' are to the Australian Government, unless stated otherwise.

### 1. Major law and justice sector developments and achievements

#### ***National Anti-Corruption Commission***

Corruption has a corrosive impact on the Australian community, undermining democracy and the rule of law, distorting market forces and paving the way for organised crime and terrorism. In response to these significant risks, this year the Government committed to establishing a transparent and independent National Anti-Corruption Commission. The Commission will:

- have broad jurisdiction to investigate Commonwealth ministers, public servants, contractors, statutory office holders, government agencies, parliamentarians, and staff of politicians and any person whose conduct adversely affects the honest or impartial exercise of a public official's functions
- carry out its functions independently of government, with discretion to commence inquiries into serious or systemic corruption on its own initiative or in response to referrals, including from whistleblowers and complaints from the public. To ensure the Commission's independence, the Commissioner and any Deputy Commissioner will serve for a fixed term and have security of tenure comparable to that of a federal judge
- be overseen by a statutory Joint Standing Committee of the Parliament, empowered to require the Commission to provide information about its work. To ensure support for the Commission's work, that Committee would be responsible for confirming the Commissioners nominated by the Government
- have the power to investigate allegations of serious or systemic corruption that occurred before or after its establishment
- have the power to hold public hearings where the Commission determines it is in the public interest to do so
- be empowered to make findings of fact, including a finding of corrupt conduct, but not to make determinations of criminal liability. Findings that could constitute criminal conduct would be referred to the Australian Federal Police or the Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions for further consideration, and
- operate with procedural fairness with its findings being subject to judicial review.

The [National Anti-Corruption Commission Bill 2022](#) which would establish the Commission was introduced in the Australian Parliament on 28 September 2022.

#### ***Australia's response to sexual assault***

The Government is leading a national conversation with state and territory governments on strengthening sexual assault laws, criminal justice responses to sexual assault, sexual harassment and coercive control.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Coercive control involves family violence perpetrators using abusive behaviours (both physical and non-physical) in a pattern over time in a way that creates and maintains power and dominance over another person or persons.

On 12 August 2022, Australia's national forum for Attorneys-General, the Standing Council of Attorneys-General, endorsed the [Work Plan to Strengthen Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault 2022-2027](#). Under the Work Plan, all Australian jurisdictions will seek to take collective and individual action to improve the experiences of victim-survivors of sexual assault in the criminal justice system. Commonwealth, state and territory officials are also co-designing [National Principles to Address Coercive Control](#) to outline a shared national understanding of coercive control.

### ***Respect@Work***

In June 2018, the Government announced a National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces to examine the prevalence, nature, drivers and reporting of sexual harassment, current legal and regulatory framework, and the impact of sexual harassment on individuals and business, as well as ways to improve prevention and response.

In March 2020, the Australian Human Rights Commission released the [Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report](#). The Respect@Work Council has been established and brings together leaders from key government regulators and policy makers responsible for sexual harassment policies and complaints to improve coordination, consistency and clarity across existing legal and regulatory frameworks. Responsibility for implementing Respect@Work is shared between the Government, independent government agencies, state and territory governments, and the private sector. The Government has committed to fully implementing all recommendations from the Report to address workplace sexual harassment.

On 27 September 2022, the Government introduced the [Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment \(Respect at Work\) Bill 2022](#) to the Australian Parliament. The Bill proposes a positive duty on employers to take steps to eliminate sex discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation, would strengthen the Australian Human Rights Commission with new functions to assess and enforce compliance by employers with the new proposed requirement, expressly prohibits conduct that results in a hostile workplace environment on the basis of sex and ensures reporting by Commonwealth public sector organisations on gender equality indicators to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

### ***Minimum age of criminal responsibility***

The Government is considering whether it should seek to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility, which is currently set at age 10 under Commonwealth law, paying particular attention to eliminating the overrepresentation of First Nations' children in the criminal justice system. The Standing Council of Attorneys-General has taken steps this year to advance the Government's commitment to justice reinvestment to allow First Nations communities to establish locally tailored initiatives that address the underlying causes of incarceration, including to reduce the contact of First Nations children with the criminal justice system. This work is expected to be an ongoing priority.

## **2. PILON strategic priorities**

### **(a) Cybercrime**

The rise in scams and phishing email activity during the COVID-19 pandemic has continued in 2022. Australians lost an estimated \$300 million to scammers in the first half of 2022, with phishing scams being the most frequently reported type. Investment scams involving cryptocurrency also saw a sharp rise in 2022. In addition, technology facilitated abuse – such as cyber stalking, harassment and online threats or abuse remained a threat in Australian society, with half of Australian adults estimated to have experienced this kind of abuse in their lifetime. The gendered nature of technology facilitated abuse is discussed more at Section 2(c): SGBV.

### ***Online safety regulator partnership between Australia and Fiji***

While Australia's borders remained closed, [Australia's eSafety Commissioner](#) (eSafety) engaged virtually with the Fijian Online Safety Commission (OSC) and relevant stakeholders to deliver online safety workshops on child cyberbullying, online gaming and online gender-based violence. The workshops covered online safety education resources including the contextualisation and translation of two online safety booklets for parents and carers. These have been translated into local languages, with more than 30,000 copies distributed across Fiji.

[In May 2022, eSafety delegates travelled to Fiji](#) to deepen the working relationship with the OSC, raise awareness of the importance of online safety within the Fijian policy landscape, build connections with stakeholders and extend eSafety's knowledge of cyber policy issues in the Pacific. The trip was also an opportunity to showcase Australia's approach to online safety regulation and education, child online protection and addressing online gender-based violence. eSafety plans to welcome delegates from the OSC to Australia on an immersive study tour later this year.

### **Australia's next Cyber Security Strategy**

The Government is considering a renewed, whole-of-nation vision for Australia's cyber security which builds on sovereign capability, expands the skilled workforce and strengthens cyber resilience to build systemic resilience across Australia's domestic cyber ecosystem. The development of the next Cyber Security Strategy will build on the [Cyber Security Strategy 2020](#) and complement existing initiatives including a review of the Commonwealth *Privacy Act 1988*. As part of the new Strategy, the Government will consider whether domestic cyber security regulations and incentives are fit for purpose to achieve its priorities.

### **ACSC-JCSC Partnership Program update**

While this digital age presents enormous opportunity, connectivity also brings exposure to cybercriminal activity. To help make Australia a safe place to connect online, the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) Partnership Program supports Australia's cyber security through collaboration and information sharing between government, industry, academia and the not-for-profit sector on best-practice ways to prepare for, and respond to, cyber security threats. The Program is delivered through the ACSC's network of Joint Cyber Security Centres (JCSCs) which play a major role in keeping Australia prepared for malicious cyber activity.

Between 2021-22, ACSC partners provided access to cyber threat intelligence, news and advice to enhance situational awareness, collaboration opportunities, and resilience-building activities. Activities included cyber security briefings, threat briefings, sensitive briefings, information exchanges, sector snapshots, spear phishing/ business email compromise workshops, incident response workshops, exercises, and Capture the Flag activities. As at 19 September 2022, JCSCs had delivered over 160 activities.

### **Pacific Cyber Security Operational Network (PaCSON)**

[PaCSON](#) is a network of Pacific government-designated cyber security incident response officials, funded through the [Cyber and Critical Technology Cooperation Program](#), as part of Australia's [International Cyber and Critical Tech Engagement Strategy](#). Seventeen countries participate in the network, including: Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and the United States. The PaCSON Executive Committee includes Tonga (Chair), Vanuatu (Incoming Chair) and the Cook Islands (Deputy Chair).

PaCSON works collaboratively with its members in order to increase cyber capabilities with activities guided by three key pillars:

- increasing threat and information sharing
- supporting and developing incident response capability through training and awareness raising activities, and
- encouraging collaboration on best practice.

Overall, the past year has been one of progress and advancement for PaCSON's members and partners as the organisational network looks to the future possibilities of continuing to improve the regions cyber security and cyber response capabilities. As COVID restrictions ease, PaCSON will be re-commencing face-to-face activities including hosting the first in person Annual General Meeting since 2019 in late September 2022.

In 2021, coinciding with October as International Cyber Security Awareness Month, the [2021 Cyber Smart Pacific](#) campaign focused on the increasing risk of cyber threats in the Pacific. The campaign detailed steps to increase personal cyber security and delivered four key messages: upsize your passwords, upgrade to two-factor authentication, update your apps and devices and uphold your privacy. It also highlighted how to report a cyber incident to a national Pacific cyber authority.

Released in December 2021, the inaugural [PaCSON 2020 Annual Report](#) provides a firsthand account from PaCSON members and partners of the state of their national cyber security posture. The report informs stakeholders and the public about PaCSON achievements, performance and the impacts that cyber security has on the Pacific region. PaCSON plans to publish its 2021 report in late 2022.

In June 2022, PaCSON welcomed the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as a partner. The FBI's knowledge of cyber threats is a welcome addition to assist in the uplift of partner nations. It will also increase the reach of PaCSON and allow members to achieve further influence.

### ***Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and its Second Additional Protocol***

In 2021, Budapest Convention parties, including Australia, concluded negotiations on the [Second Additional Protocol on Enhanced Cooperation and Disclosure of Electronic Evidence](#). The Protocol modernises the [Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime](#) (Budapest Convention) framework to better respond to the increased global reliance on cloud computing and the changing communications environment. Throughout the negotiations, Australia advocated for the Protocol to factor in the Pacific region's context to ensure it was inclusive and supportive of Pacific regional needs. The Protocol was finalised and adopted by the Council of Europe in November 2021 and opened for signatures in May 2022.

In November 2021, Australia took part in the Council of Europe Octopus Conference on Enhancing Cooperation against Cybercrime, participating in a Pacific region workshop on responses to online child sexual abuse and exploitation (OCSEA), alongside other PILON member countries. The workshop canvassed regional experiences on how the Budapest Convention framework can support countries to deal with cybercrime and OCSEA.

### ***Telecommunications sector reforms***

The Commonwealth *Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (International Production Orders) Act 2021* commenced on 24 July 2021 and amended the Commonwealth *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* to create a framework facilitating streamlined access to electronic communications data held offshore for criminal law enforcement and national security purposes. The legislation created a new 'International Production Order' regime to support cross-border access to data between countries with which Australia has entered into a designated international agreement.

On 15 December 2021, Australia's Minister for Home Affairs and the United States' Attorney General signed the [Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America on Access to Electronic Data for the Purpose of Countering Serious Crime](#). This is the first agreement that will be designated under the International Production Order framework. Once in force, the Agreement will allow Australian authorities to approach US-based communications service providers such as Facebook, Microsoft and Google for communications data, including content data held by those providers, without the request being reviewed by the US Government. The Agreement will also allow US authorities reciprocal access to data held by Australian-based providers. This work strengthens Australia's bilateral relationship with an important international crime cooperation partner and enhances Australia's legal framework for international crime cooperation.

### **(b) Corruption**

Corruption is a corrosive global phenomenon which undermines democracy and the rule of law, discourages investment and distorts markets, diverts resources from important services like schools, hospitals and roads and paves the way for organised crime and terrorism.

All Australian states and territories have broad based anti-corruption agencies. At a federal level, Australia is increasing its role in combating corruption by establishing the [National Anti-Corruption Commission](#), developing domestic policy on anti-corruption and engaging in a range of international anti-corruption forums including the [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts Working Group](#), [United Nations Convention Against Corruption](#) and the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group.

### ***Pacific anti-corruption roadmap***

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), which includes Australia, adopted the Teieniwa Vision as the anti-corruption roadmap for Pacific Island countries' engagement through PIF processes. In cooperation with the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the PIF is developing a draft action plan which will be used for further consultation with Forum Members and to support the work of Forum Members to develop annual implementation priorities.

### ***Commonwealth Fraud Prevention Centre***

The Commonwealth Fraud Prevention Centre helps Government entities deal with unseen and unchecked fraud by creating and embedding leading practice. In addition, the Centre helps entities to collaborate, create positive change, respond to emerging threats and address agency capability gaps. In early 2022, the Centre hosted the Fraud Prevention and Detection Community of Practice to over 220 members. Additionally, the Centre facilitated three cross-government conferences which focused on three key themes:

- increasing access and use of data for compliance and integrity purposes
- embedding integrity and thinking into program design and implementation, and
- shifting commonly held misconceptions and non-compliance and fraud.

### **(c) SGBV**

Violence against women and girls was already one of the most widespread violations of human rights prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Research by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety indicated that during the pandemic, intimate partner violence was more likely to occur in relationships where financial insecurity was experienced by one partner and not the other, highlighting the role of economic disparity in violence, as well as the link between violence and economic security. To assist victim-survivors in these situations, the Government has committed \$14.8 million over five years for accredited sexual and family violence response training for community frontline workers, health professionals, and the justice sector.

Australia continues to report increased instances of online harassment, bullying, unwanted sexual advances and trolling with the public use of the internet increasing since the pandemic. To help address these issues, the Government has committed \$5 million over five years to extend the National Online Safety Awareness Campaign. Funding of \$16.6 million over four years is also being provided to establish a new telephone service to provide support for women and children experiencing technology-facilitated abuse. This service will deliver practical advice and support for women and children experiencing this type of abuse. This funding will also go towards further training and resources for frontline workers supporting victim-survivors, by assisting in providing referrals from existing domestic and family violence support services. The Government's efforts to address the risks of online child sexual abuse are detailed under '[Combatting child sexual abuse](#)'.

### ***National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022***

Following the expiry of the [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022](#), the Government has committed to continuing to provide national leadership and investment to end family, domestic and sexual violence. The next [National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032](#) is scheduled to be finalised by October 2022 and publicly released, underpinned by an investment of at least \$1.3 billion. The National Plan will provide a renewed national approach to addressing and preventing family, domestic and sexual violence, with an enhanced focus on the impacts of violence on children in their own right. It is planned to commence in 2023.

### ***Women's economic equality***

The [2022-23 Women's Budget Statement](#) affirms the Government's commitment to strengthen women's economic security. The Budget will invest \$482 million in measures to give women greater flexibility and choice about how to manage work and care, and is supporting them into more diverse industries, jobs of the future and leadership positions. Key measures include the provision of up to 20 weeks of Enhanced Paid Parental Leave for Families, providing workers (including casuals) access to 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave, and support for women into higher paid jobs of the future.

In September 2022, the Government announced \$15.84 million for the [Women's Leadership and Development program](#) which consists of six projects to increase women's representation in leadership positions and boost women's workforce participation. The projects aim to address the structural and systemic barriers that impede women's employment and progression into leadership positions and make workforces safer and more attractive to women.

### **Family law reform**

Following the release of the [Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System second interim report with recommendations on the family law system](#), endorsement of recommendations commenced in late 2021. Included in the recommendations was a call for improved information sharing between the family law, family violence and child protection systems. The [National Strategic Framework for Information Sharing between the Family Law and Family Violence and Child Protection Systems](#) was developed in collaboration with the family law courts and the states and territories, and endorsed at the Meeting of Attorneys-General (now named the Standing Council of Attorneys-General) on 12 November 2021. The Framework seeks to facilitate the two-way exchange of family violence, child abuse and neglect information between family law courts and the state/territory courts, as well as child protection, policing and firearms agencies. The Government, in consultation with states and territories, is progressing implementation of the Framework, which includes amendments to the Commonwealth *Family Law Act 1975*.

### **Combatting child sexual abuse**

During 2021-22, trends in child sexual abuse continued to grow at an alarming rate. In the past year, the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation, located in the Australian Federal Police (AFP), received more than 36,000 reports of child sexual abuse, a substantial increase from the previous year. Further, the AFP charged 221 offenders with 1,746 child exploitation and abuse offences.

Combatting child sexual abuse is a priority for the Government as it continues to implement initiatives under the [National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030](#). The National Strategy, led by the National Office for Child Safety, focuses on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in all settings, including online. This involves developing strategies to change culture and attitudes, raise awareness, support children who show harmful sexual behaviours, offender prevention interventions, and providing support to victims and survivors.

Implementation of the National Strategy is underpinned by an investment of \$307.5 million across a National Action Plan and Commonwealth Action Plan. This includes \$131 million for law enforcement, Indo-Pacific law and justice capacity building, intelligence, policy and research measures to combat child sexual abuse. In 2022, Australia delivered a number of key initiatives under the National Strategy, including the first of four annual digital multi-stakeholder events, partnering with industry to combat live-streamed child sexual abuse.

In 2021-2022, Australia continued to work with its international partners to strengthen the global response to child sexual abuse. At the UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in May 2022, Australia worked with the UK to successfully secure support for the UK sponsored UN resolution on strengthening national and international efforts to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse. Australia successfully advocated for child sexual exploitation and abuse to be the topic of one of the thematic discussions by the CCPCJ on the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration 2021-2024.

Further during this time period, Australia established the *Indo-Pacific Child Protection Program (IPCPP)*, which aims to contribute to effective approaches by Indo-Pacific governments and share best practices on countering online and travelling child sexual offenders. IPCPP works with partners in the region to develop regional policy, legislative and operational responses to the increasingly borderless crime of child sexual abuse. IPCPP delivered its inaugural activity in Thailand to prosecutors on 'Investigating and Prosecuting Online Child Sexual Abuse' in June 2022.

### ***Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse***

On 14 December 2021, the Government tabled the [fourth Annual Progress Report 2021: Implementation of recommendations from the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#). In 2018, the Government committed to deliver five annual reports until December 2022 outlining progress made on implementing 206 recommendations directed wholly or partially at the Government. The fifth Annual Progress Report is currently being prepared and is expected to be tabled in December 2022. All annual reports are available on the [Australian Government Response to the Royal Commission website](#).

### ***Human trafficking, forced marriage and other forms of modern slavery***

Human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery disproportionately affect women and girls. In the 2021-22 financial year, 232 of 294 reports of modern slavery to the AFP related to female victims and survivors. During the reporting period, Australia continued to implement the [National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020–25](#) (National Action Plan), which includes 46 Action Items in support of five National Strategic Priorities: Prevent; Disrupt, Investigate and Prosecute; Support and Protect; Partner, and Research.

Australia recognises forced marriage as a slavery like-practice and a form of gender-based violence, with complex social, family and cultural dimensions. During the reporting period, the Government consulted with stakeholders from the six state governments, two territories, and civil society to inform the development of a model for enhanced civil protection and remedies for individuals in, or at risk of, forced marriage.

The Government also established the [National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-25 Grant Program](#) to support community-based projects and research to combat modern slavery. Round One of the Grant Program included a specific stream for projects related to forced marriage, with three projects funded under this stream. These projects focus on raising awareness and building capacity within families, communities and schools to prevent forced marriage.

## **3. Technical legal assistance**

### ***PILON***

The Australian Attorney-General's Department (AGD) continued to support collaboration, coordination and cooperation between Pacific law and justice agencies to progress regional law and justice priorities through its online support for the PILON Secretariat and PILON's working groups on their respective priorities of cybercrime, corruption, SGBV and legislative drafting. Over the reporting period, we continued our focus on online engagement with our Pacific Island partners but plans are underway for future in-country engagement.

AGD worked with the SGBV Working Group to deliver a four-part webinar series based on practical solutions for prosecutors in applying for appropriate special measures to support vulnerable witnesses in SGBV cases. This webinar series, alongside the Model Provisions and Explanatory Text: Supporting Vulnerable Witnesses in SGBV cases, published in August 2021 and regional and country-based surveys of the use of special measures, has led to work being undertaken in drafting broader regional guidelines. An advisory panel was established this year to support the drafting of these Regional Guidelines.

For the first time, the Corruption Working Group and the Cybercrime Working Group co-badged a webinar, 'Following the digital paper trail'. Guest speakers from Fiji and the US emphasised the importance of collaborating with financial intelligence units across the Pacific when investigating and looking to prosecute digital crimes. 85 devices watched the webinar, with representation from PNG, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Fiji, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Tokelau, the Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Given the success of the 2021 PILON Cybercrime scholarship pilot program, 'Fundamentals of Digital Forensics for Lawyers and Judges' (developed by Insig2 and Zyber Global), the Cybercrime Working Group, with support from AGD offered this course again in April 2022. Participants were invited to participate in the 'Intermediate level course' to improve knowledge and understanding of digital forensics topics such as computer forensics, mobile forensics, network forensics and cloud forensics which were not covered in the Fundamentals course. Nine Pacific officials participated in the intermediate level course.

AGD and the PILON Secretariat strengthened relationships with legislative drafters on the PILON Legislative Drafters' Committee (PLDC) to advance our mutual, long-term capacity building objectives in the Pacific region. The PILON Secretariat created a members' zone on the PILON website to support the PLDC to share legislative drafting resources and created a closed Facebook Group for Pacific legislative drafters to engage in everyday networking and information sharing. AGD and the PILON Secretariat also explored networking opportunities for the PLDC with the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel (CALC), including encouraging regional nominations for the CALC Council, facilitating attendance at the CALC Virtual Conference in July 2022 and convening an informal networking event on the conference margins.

### ***Legal policy development and law reform capacity***

During 2021-22 under AGD's Pacific Law and Justice Program, AGD trained and mentored hundreds of Pacific Island officials on legal policy, law reform and other legal capabilities through PILON webinars (including both live attendance and later views), bilateral law reform work and other workshops. AGD continued to harness technology in light of ongoing international travel bans but recognises the value of face-to-face engagement with our Pacific partners, with plans underway to return to the delivery of programs such as AGD's Pacific Legal Policy Champions and Twinning Programs in Australia in 2023.

#### AGD's bilateral work

AGD worked bilaterally with Kiribati to strengthen policy and law reform and contribute to effective governance in a stable, prosperous and resilient Indo-Pacific region.

In June 2022, at the request of the Kiribati Public Service Office, AGD, in conjunction with the Australian Public Service Commission, remotely delivered anti-corruption policy training to Kiribati. The training was delivered virtually to sixteen officers from the key Kiribati anti-corruption agencies, and provided practical tools and techniques on policy development.

Throughout this year, Australia has worked with the Solomon Islands Office of the Public Prosecutor to help develop a Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters manual and templates, to promote the sharing of evidence between countries to ensure criminals cannot escape justice by crossing borders.

### ***Australia-PNG institutional partnerships***

Under the Australia-PNG Institutional Partnerships Program, Australian agencies, including AGD, work with PNG counterparts to help build a strong and durable economic and strategic partnership between Australia and PNG.

In 2021-22, AGD supported the PNG Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) and the broader PNG law and justice sector in developing a new PNG Law and Justice Sector Policy, including running a consultation process with sector stakeholders. AGD also worked with DJAG on the implementation of amendments to PNG's Family Protection Act, which were passed in January 2022, building on the work from AGD's remote 2021 Pacific Legal Policy Twinning program.

### ***Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program***

Australia's [Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program](#) (\$74 million, 2016-25) works across the Indo-Pacific to improve cyber resilience. Established as the Cyber Cooperation Program in 2016, the Program plays an important role in supporting Australia's international cyber engagement which champions an open, free and secure Internet that protects national security and promotes international stability, while driving global economic growth and sustainable development. The Program supports Australia's commitment to deliver on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which recognises the vital role of digital technologies to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

Activities in the Pacific, which focus on regional, sub-regional and bilateral engagement, support the following six key outcomes, including:

- an international cyber stability framework to promote responsible state behaviour in cyberspace
- stronger cybercrime prevention, prosecution and cooperation
- enhanced cyber security capability for a strong and resilient cyber security posture
- best practice uses of technology to support economic growth and sustainable development
- advocating and protecting human rights and democracy online, and
- mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in cyber affairs.

### ***Gender and Family Harm Strategy***

Through the Pacific Community for Law Enforcement Cooperation (PCLEC) and in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), the AFP identifies and supports capability development initiatives that respond to violence against women within Pacific policing organisations and their communities through activities to operationalise the PICP Gender and Family Harm Implementation Plan. This includes the identification of potential areas for legislative and policy reform to strengthen and enable police response to gender and family harm from investigation to prosecution.

### ***Human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices***

During the reporting period, the Government launched [Australia's international engagement strategy on human trafficking and modern slavery: Delivering in partnership 2022](#), which included a commitment to deepen engagement in the Pacific to combat human trafficking, forced labour and forced marriage.

In August 2022, AGD co-chaired (with Indonesia) the Bali Process Working Group on Trafficking in Persons' (Working Group) Regional Webinar on the Role of Technology in Facilitating and Combating Trafficking in Persons and Eighth Annual Meeting. Co-chairs invited Pacific Island members of the Bali Process, and Timor-Leste, to observe the events to support more effective and coordinated law and justice responses to human trafficking in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia invited UNODC to present on the interlinkages between marriage and human trafficking at the Annual Meeting, and led members in consideration and endorsement of a research topic to deepen the Working Group's understanding of these interlinkages in the Asia-Pacific context.

AGD also continued to engage bilaterally with partner countries, including by meeting with a delegation of Fijian officials undertaking a study visit in Australia to exchange information and policy dialogue on responses to human trafficking, and discuss opportunities for collaboration.

Australia is engaging with partners of the Bali Process Working Group on the Disruption of Trafficking in Persons and People Smuggling Networks (Disruption Working Group), which is co-chaired by New Zealand and Vietnam. The AFP is a member in this working group and has been actively involved in the group since its inception, along with other law enforcement international partners.

AFP International Command representatives within the Pacific region continue to deliver capability building and technical assistance to international law enforcement partners in direct response to transnational serious and organised crime, which includes human trafficking and people smuggling. In addition to AFP Posts in Port Moresby and Suva, the AFP continues to engage Pacific law enforcement partners to combat transnational, serious and organised crime through the Pacific Police Development Program and the Pacific Transnational Crime Network (PTCN).

The PTCN is a mandated program under the PICP that provides a proactive intelligence and investigative network to combat transnational serious and organised crime in the Pacific. It enables PICP members and stakeholders such as the Pacific Immigration Development Community to share criminal intelligence between 28 Transnational Crime Units across the region. The AFP has a member seconded to the Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre to assist the coordination and management of intelligence sharing. The AFP also supports the PTCN by providing the PTCN Secretariat based in Canberra and through the deployment of dedicated advisors in Samoa, Fiji and Vanuatu and with the assistance of AFP Mission advisors in the Solomon Islands, Nauru, Tonga and PNG.

#### 4. Contact information for key law and justice agencies

Agency	Key responsibilities	Contact area	Telephone +61 2
Attorney-General's Department	<p>Federal policies and legislation concerning the civil justice system, some elements of the criminal justice system and international crime cooperation, and child sexual abuse policy and strategy (see <a href="http://www.ag.gov.au">www.ag.gov.au</a>).</p> <p>Policy responsibility for the criminal offences in the Criminal Code as well as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and its additional protocols.</p>	International Cooperation Unit Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Branch	6141 6666
Department of Home Affairs	National security, cyber security law enforcement and border protection	National Security and Law Enforcement Division	6264 1111
Australian Federal Police	Policing	International Operations	5126 0000
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC)	Regulatory responsibility for anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing	Domestic and International Relations	1300 021 037
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	Legislative drafting	First Parliamentary Counsel	6120 1400