



**OFFICIAL MINISTERIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL
Outcomes Report**

The provision of the information below is consistent with the *Guidelines for Official Ministerial Overseas Travel*. This report must be sent to the Premier within 40 working days of return, and published on the relevant department website within 60 working days of the Minister's return. The published version of the report does not need to include the 'next steps / follow up' section or the signature block.

Name of Department / Agency	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	
Departmental / Agency Contact	Sally Hasler, Director, Office for Women	
Telephone Number	0429 611 057	
TRAVEL DETAILS		
Minister's Name	The Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP	
Portfolio/s	Minister for Education and Minister for Women	
Did the Minister's spouse accompany the Minister in an official capacity? If Yes – please outline the role of the spouse in achieving the outcomes of the visit	Yes. <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Accompanying Ministerial staff	Rita Nasr, Senior Adviser for Women	
Countries visited	Rwanda	
Date of travel	14 July 2023 – 23 July 2023	
Number of official travel days (include day of departure and day of return)	Ten	
Funding source (list Department/s or Agency)	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	
EXPENSES <i>Include combined expenses for Minister, accompanying staff and spouse (if accompanying in an official capacity)</i>		
Air fares (including taxes and fees)	\$47,923.91	

Accommodation (including taxes and fees)	\$3,976.46
Other expenses (including surface travel and travel allowances)	\$1,477.19
Travel cost for Minister and ministerial staff (<i>and spouse or de facto partner if applicable</i>)	\$53,377.56
Are the above costs final and complete?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of travel

From 14 July to 23 July 2023, I travelled to Kigali, Rwanda to attend and participate in the Women Deliver 2023 Conference (the Conference) representing the Victorian Government.

The Conference is one of the largest convenings to advance gender equality in the world and brought together 6,000 people from 2,000 organisations and over 160 countries, including heads of state and parliamentarians, grassroots advocates, women's rights organisations, United Nations agencies and government officials.

With funding provided in the 2022-23 State Budget, the Victorian Government was one of five Regional Convening Partners for the Conference. Since mid-September 2022, Victoria has been working with the Commonwealth Government and various Australian and Pacific based non-governmental partners to mobilise the Oceanic Pacific Region.

As part of Victoria's role as Regional Convening Partner, the Victorian and Commonwealth Government supported twenty women from the Oceanic Pacific region to travel to Kigali to participate in the Conference, including 4 women from Victoria.

This visit directly aligned with the Victorian Government's ambition to host the next Women Deliver Conference as a major events and tourism opportunity, and broader priorities in relation to gender equality, women's safety, women's economic security, women's health and wellbeing.

Benefits of travel to the State of Victoria

The visit strengthened Victoria's reputation as a leader in gender equality on the international stage by contributing to regional and global efforts to advance gender equality.

The visit was also a significant demonstration of Victoria's continued interest and commitment to host the next Women Deliver conference in 2026, which would generate an estimated \$40 million in economic growth with over 6,000 delegates visiting Melbourne. Attending the Conference in person was an important opportunity to bring back first-hand knowledge to inform Victoria's bid to host the Conference and meet with senior international stakeholders to discuss Victoria's bid.

It was also a unique opportunity to promote Victoria's reforms in gender equality including the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, women's representation, women in leadership and preventing and responding to family violence, while strengthening our non-government and government-to-government relationships.

Participating in high level sessions and meeting other government representatives

I attended and participated in the Ministerial Forum hosted by the Government of Rwanda. The Ministerial Forum brought together approximately 26 Ministers from diverse portfolios such as Gender, Finance, Health, Youth, Education, Environment, Technology, and Foreign Affairs from across the globe. In this Minister-only engagement, I shared Victoria's commitment and key reforms to gender equality as part of a discussion to identify policies and strategies that have worked to advance key issues in gender equality. There was great interest in our Gender Equality Act and in our free pads and tampons in public places commitment. We also discussed actions to advance accountability and drive political and financial commitments. I heard about interesting work by other governments in relation to women and girls' safety online, girls in STEM and STEM careers, male champions to prevent violence against women and women's safety at work, which Victoria can learn from.

I also attended and participated in the Parliamentary Forum, hosted by the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and supported by the United Nations Population Fund. This event brought together about 50 Parliamentarians from across the globe working on improving access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. We discussed good practices in policy making and funding allocation for gender equality and SRHR and collaboration for more efficient, effective, and transparent law-making process recognising the critical link between SRHR and gender equality.

Alongside three ministerial colleagues from the Pacific where women's political representation is very low, I shared Victoria's progress in increasing women running for and elected to office and the linkages this has with SRHR, and women's rights more broadly.

Undertaking bilateral meetings with key stakeholders

On the sidelines of the Conference, I had several bilateral meetings to discuss Victoria's bid for the next Women Deliver Conference, share Victoria's gender equality reforms, and learn from key initiatives being progressed in other jurisdictions. The key outcomes from these are provided below.

- **Pacific Ministers and Parliamentarians** – I met with the Vice President of the Republic of Palau and Minister of Justice; Fijian Minister for Women, Children and Poverty; Solomon Islands Minister of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs; and two MPs representing Niue and New Zealand. We discussed the importance of supporting women in politics, noting the low representation of women in most Pacific countries, and the reforms that had been developed in our respective jurisdictions to encourage women to stand. We also discussed Victoria's desire to take a regional approach to hosting the Women Deliver 2026 Conference in Melbourne and future opportunities for collaboration.
- **Meeting with Helen Clark and Tulika Srivastava:** I met with Women Deliver Board Member and former New Zealand Prime Minister, Helen Clark, and Women Deliver Vice Chair, Tulika Srivastava, to discuss Victoria's ambition to host an inclusive Global Conference in 2026 and our commitment to work with the region.
- **Key Women Deliver stakeholders to advance Victoria's bid to host the next Women Deliver Conference:** I had several engagements with the Chief Executive Officer and President of Women Deliver, Dr Maliha Khan and other Women Deliver board members including their Board Chair, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and their Former CEO, Kathleen Sherwin who visited Melbourne in 2019 to conduct a site visit as part of our 2022 unsuccessful bid. I shared key outcomes from Victoria's role as RCP working in close partnership with a range of partners across different sectors. Stakeholders were very receptive to our interest in hosting the 2026 conference and acknowledged the impact the regional delegation had made at the 2023 Conference.
- **Chief Minister of Jersey, UK** – we discussed *Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2018*, primary prevention work, and Victoria's Respectful Relationships program. I heard about Jersey's work to close the gender pay gap in the public sector and public reporting on this. Jersey indicated interest in establishing a mutual learning partnership about primary prevention partnerships.

Speaking at high level plenary session on Gender Equality

The plenary was attended by over 1000 global representatives at the Kigali Convention Centre. I shared the Victorian Government's work in relation to the new gender equality strategy, gender responsive budgeting, the free pads and tampons initiative, women on boards targets and the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, as examples of how sub-national governments can lead ground-breaking reform in gender equality. I featured in a video played during the closing ceremony, speaking about Victoria's role as RCP and the benefits for Victoria in participating at the 2023 Conference.

Attending conference program sessions

I attended a number of plenary sessions including the Decolonisation plenary session where Aunty Jill Gallagher AO, one of four Victorian members of the broader Oceanic Pacific regional delegation, shared Australian First Nations perspectives on the international stage. These sessions featured globally renowned speakers sharing important lessons about challenges and successes, which are highly relevant to Victoria's ambition and work to advance gender equality.

Hosting and participating in specific sessions as part of Victoria's RCP role

I participated in two regional sessions which shared the key outcomes and shared priorities from the regional convening Victoria facilitated as RCP. The first was a concurrent session titled *Regional Solidarity and Intersectional Gender Justice: Lessons from the Oceanic-Pacific Regional Convening*. The session shared the outcomes from the Oceanic Pacific Regional Convening events held in Fiji on 11-12 May 2023 and in Melbourne on 6-7 June 2023, as well as share the partnership and co-creation journey of the Oceanic Pacific Regional Committee and Victoria's key role as RCP. I provided opening remarks for the session. The session also featured four Victorian delegates who shared interventions about key priority areas of Aboriginal women and girls' perspectives, women's leadership and representation and gender-based violence.

The second event was titled *Building bridges: From Big Ocean Nations to Global Movements*, which enabled further deep dive discussions about the 12 regional priority areas identified from the regional convening. Attendees explored common challenges and barriers to gender equality and opportunities to build global connections, and build on the momentum generated from the regional convening process.

The Victorian Government hosted a formal reception for all Oceanic Pacific delegates which was attended by Pacific Ministers and Australia's Ambassador for Gender Equality, Stephanie Copus Campbell, who attended the Conference representing the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government were a key partner in delivering the RCP role and also funded delegates to attend the Conference.



Other key outcomes

As RCP, we facilitated the biggest-ever delegation to a Women Deliver Conference from the Oceanic Pacific region comprising more than 65 members, including four Ministers, two Parliamentarians, the Australian Ambassador for Gender Equality, four Victorian delegates and a range of representatives from civil society, regional, multilateral organisations and grassroots advocates. Three First Nations delegates attended the conference. The regional delegation had a strong and impactful presence at the Conference, with eight speakers across the plenary sessions, two sessions hosted by the regional delegation, a regional exhibition booth and numerous speakers on various sessions across the conference program. Regional delegates who spoke across various sessions delivered compelling interventions, and shared unique perspectives of women and girls from our region.

The impact and cohesiveness of the regional delegation, including in advocating for Melbourne to host the next conference, was significant in supporting Victoria's bid to bring the next conference to the region.

Next Steps / Follow Up

- I am writing to the Australian Foreign Minister and Commonwealth Minister for Women about a partnership approach to host the next Women Deliver Conference in Melbourne in 2026, should Victoria be successful in its bid. My department is working with the Melbourne Convention Bureau and other key partners to plan for the bid.
- My department has hosted various debrief sessions to share key lessons and takeaways from the conference across government, and the regional convening role more broadly, and has followed up on specific actions arising from meetings during the conference.
- This includes a debrief and report back to Victorian stakeholders who have been involved in the regional convening process.

Noted by Department Secretary (Signature)	
Name	Peta McCammon
Date	19/ 10 /2023
Approved by Minister (Signature)	
Name	The Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP
Date	19/ 10 /2023