



MERI TOKSAVE 2015 PRESIDENT'S REPORT: MERI TOKSAVE AGM

MERI TOKSAVE INC.

| QIN: IA41404 | ABN: 76 470 761 895 |
administration@meritoksave.org
<http://www.meritoksave.org>

Good Afternoon / Avinun to our Members, Volunteers, Partners, Fellow Directors of the Executive Management Team and Guests, welcome to the second Annual General Meeting of Meri Toksave.

Firstly, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today, paying particular attention to the women of these communities.

I am delighted to present you with my second president's report and make clear my intentions of re-nominating for presidents positions for the 2015/2016 period. Let me begin by discussing what Meri Toksave is and what our objectives are as we have held several Special General Meetings over the 2014/2015 period to amend our objectives:

Meri Toksave Inc. is a youth led (being between the ages of 18-27), non-profit organisation that is based on providing a platform for youth engagement and youth-led solutions towards addressing the high incidence of gender based, family and sexual violence in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The amended objects of the association are:

1. Empower women of all ages and facilitate the development of their self-worth within Papua New Guinea.
2. Harness educational mechanisms of printed, video and social media and materials in both Papua New Guinea and Australia to end domestic, family and sexual violence and gender-based violence in all its form in Papua New Guinea.
3. Create generational change within Papua New Guinea and address the negative stigma of gender based violence victims.
4. Engage men of all ages within Papua New Guinea and Australia to challenge the existing negative behaviours, attitudes and perceptions of women.
5. Address the information asymmetry within Papua New Guinea of emergency services contact details for victims of violence.

6. To act as a platform that provides youth engagement and solutions towards combating gender based violence within Papua New Guinea and Australia.
7. Actively challenge bystander behaviour within Papua New Guinea and Australia.
8. Partner with grassroots, local and international organisation in Papua New Guinea to help meet the aforementioned objectives.
9. Partner and empower with the Papua New Guinea community in Australia and particularly in Queensland to help meet the aforementioned objectives.

Over the past year Meri Toksave has achieved some incredible things.

- We have distributed all directory collateral – which was the 5000 hard copy books to partners on ground in PNG and we have been developing new collateral to include pocket sized directories that will also be available in Tok Pisin.
- We were invited participants to the U.S. Embassy PNG Women's Forum
- We were invited participants to the Queensland Premier's Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence
- Held our first community event, which was the screening of Pawa Meri and our panel on decreasing the barriers to youth engagement within the development sphere. Total attendance: 32 people. 25 identified as women, 7 identified as men. Age range: 18 - 57
- We were nominated by Oxfam in PNG and named as a non-voting observer to the PNG national development council
- We have secured new partnerships in the past year including with the One Woman Project – to provide gender training and partner on youth programs within QLD and Young Women's Christian Association in PNG – regarding distributing directories in PNG.
- Meri Toksave received pro-bono project management software.
- We are now officially a QLD recognised charity which means we can begin collecting donations within QLD and have that information available on our website should anyone like to make a donation.
- We have increased our official membership from less than 10 to over 40. Membership to Meri Toksave is free and you are able to sign up online. We currently have 44 signed up members.
- On Thursday evening we received official confirmation that Meri Toksave has been appointed as a member of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Youth Network which provides us a global platform for engagement with various bodies, private partners and other youth organisations in regards to the sustainable development goals including project support, advocacy assistance, leveraging expertise from thematic groups, invitations to policy dialogue, ability to contribute to leadership council reports which are delivered to the UN Secretary General and much more.

I would also like to read some testimonials from individuals who have directly benefitted from the directory:

Lydia Kailap, Papua New Guineans Against Domestic Violence:

“The Meri Toksave Directory is one of the most helpful resources currently available in PNG for people who are victims of family violence, and those who are trying to assist them. We are constantly referring to it and giving out information to people in need. It has proved to be invaluable. A sterling effort by Meri Toksave. Thank you.”

Yvette Terrell-Perica, United States Embassy, Port Moresby:

“The Meri TokSave directory is a lifeline for so many women who need to know where to go in times of great need, and offering others accessibility to services they might otherwise never know about. Meri Tok Save empowers individuals with information that is useful, and important to the health and safety of women and children. The directory is a valuable resource that should be available at churches, schools, hospitals, police stations. Every woman should have one for herself and one to give away. Thank you for organizing the Meri TokSave directory for the benefit of all.”

Philma Kelegai, The Leniata Legacy:

“The Directory of Emergency Services in Papua New Guinea for Those Affected by Family and Sexual Violence is such a useful tool and very important piece of information. Meri Toksave has identified a need and has collated and continues to collate lifesaving resources into this Directory that is not only available in hard copy, but also online. I personally have been able to use this resource to provide information to many men and women, information which I would otherwise had not had access to. I commend Meri Toksave for their exceptional work in providing this valuable resource.”

Louise Humpington, Oxfam in PNG:

“It is no exaggeration to say that this directory is literally a lifeline for many women. There are limited medical, legal, counselling and other support services for the survivors of sexual and family violence in PNG. However, even where they do exist most women are unaware of these services or how to access them. The Meri Toksave Directory is an inspired and absolutely vital tool for ensuring that survivors of sexual and family violence get the support that they require and deserve.”

However, our year has not been without challenges. To name a few we have been challenged with:

- Getting on ground in PNG including incorporating.
- Securing sources of funding however we have remedied our banking processes and are working on a diversifying a financial strategy, so we are hoping to overcome this challenge within this coming year.
- Our organisational structure has also been a challenge this past year however the executive committee is in the process of adapting these structures and creating more ways for our volunteers to engage and easily accomplish tasks whilst gaining experience. Further adapting these structures means that over the next year we will be looking to recruit individuals to our Board of Directors and Advisory Committee.
- We have also been working hard to collate our application for Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme, which would allow us to work more seamlessly in PNG and provide tax-deductible donations for those who donate to Meri Toksave.

It is important to remember that none of these challenges are impossible to overcome and we will continue to work hard at achieving our goals.

This brings me to the year ahead of us.

- We would like to publish our first impact report
- Will continue to work on increasing the visibility of the directory through pocket size directories,
- Aim to hold our first fundraising events and crowd funding campaign,
- Aim to hold another community event before the end of the year
- Holding a photo campaign within PNG,
- Increasing volunteers in PNG and Australia,
- Working on the structure of our organisation so including an advisory council and board of directors, and better our volunteer engagement processes
- We are also seriously thinking about diversifying our activities and programs outside of the directory to increase our platform for youth engagement within PNG and Australia
- Will continue working on applying to receive OAGDS status.

Thank you for attending this afternoon and for continuing to support Meri Toksave. A final thank you to the team that make Meri Toksave the organisation that it is – you are valued and appreciated and of course to our partners who without our work would not have the reach it does.