Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is essential to health and wellbeing.

Water for Women is partnering with World Vision Australia to deliver *Laetem Dak Kona* to reach an estimated 64,000 people in Sanma and Torba provinces of Vanuatu.

Gender equality and social inclusion are central to Water for Women. Actively involving all people within communities (women, men, marginalised groups, people with disabilities) ensures more equitable and inclusive processes, which lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes in WASH.

Water for Women is the Australian Government’s flagship WASH program and will be delivered over five years from 2018 to 2022.
Laetem Dak Kona: gender-equitable and disability-accessible WASH in Vanuatu

The Australian Government is committed to delivering effective and sustainable WASH access. Water for Women will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6), water and sanitation for all. Vanuatu is a highly traditional society where customary beliefs, practices, values and structures (including traditional governance) remain important. While women play an active role in family life, they are underrepresented in decision making at the community and government level. Many policies and practices related to WASH services do not account for the particular needs and priorities of women and social minorities, such as people with disabilities.

Commonly reported barriers to access include stigma, accessibility of the built environment, accessible information, literacy and numeracy, transport, and lack of specific disability support services.

The benefits of improved, safe access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are clear. Not only does access to WASH prevent disease and death, it also has profound, lasting socio-economic impacts on a community and its ability to prosper, particularly for women and girls.

Laetem Dak Kona will support opportunities and benefits in WASH for everyone in the community, with its emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion.

The Project will deliver WASH activities that will:

- Enable people with disabilities, especially women, to be project staff, lead advocates in communities, and core implementing partners.
- Cast “light into dark corners” (the meaning of Laetem Dak Kona) and lead similar groups to raise their own expectations, voice, and agency for removal of WASH barriers.
- Develop a better evidence base to feed into the policy process on the barriers faced by marginalised people in accessing WASH services.

Australia understands that equitable WASH access is crucial in developing countries. Water for Women and our partners will provide innovative solutions to WASH delivery in Vanuatu, and contribute to global WASH evidence and research.

Laetem Dak Kona aims to achieve improved health and wellbeing for communities in Vanuatu with a focus on ensuring women with and without disabilities in Sanma and Torba provinces are also able to share in access to safe and inclusive WASH systems.

The Australian aid program is investing in Vanuatu over a five-year period. Water for Women is proud to be partnering with World Vision Australia and World Vision Vanuatu in the delivery of Laetem Dak Kona: gender-equitable and disability-accessible wash in Vanuatu.