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

Water for Women is supporting the Papua New Guinea (PNG) WASH Consortium, ‘WaSH Em i Bikipela Samting’ (WEBS) to deliver improved health outcomes through increased WASH access in healthcare facilities, schools and communities, and by strengthening the overall enabling environment for equitable WASH access in PNG.

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 WASH outcomes.

Water for Women is the Australian Government’s flagship WASH program and is being delivered over five years from 2018 to 2022.
Delivering improved health outcomes through inclusive and equitable WASH across PNG

The Australian Government is committed to supporting effective and sustainable WASH access for all in our region. Water for Women will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6) - water and sanitation for all.

In PNG, access to water and sanitation services are failing to keep pace with population growth. The disparity in access between rural and urban households is significant, with only 33% of the rural population having access to improved water sources compared to 89% of the population in urban areas. For sanitation, just 13% of the rural population has improved access, compared with 57% of the urban population.1

Gender inequality is also a major development challenge in PNG, with a range of traditional and cultural factors preventing women from realising their rights and sharing equally in the benefits of development.

Building on Water for Women’s existing support for improved WASH access in PNG, four civil society organisations (CSOs) have come together to form the PNG WASH consortium. ‘WaSH Em i Bikpela Samting’ (WEBs), which translates from Tok Pisin to English as, ‘WASH is important.’ The partners are motivated by the opportunity to harness their respective experiences, work together, share lessons, and amplify their voices when working with the government and the broader WASH sector in PNG. The consortium partners include World Vision, WaterAid, Plan International Australia and Live & Learn Environmental Education.

WaSH Em i Bikpela Samting is directly targeting WASH improvements through:

1. Activities to strengthen the overall enabling environment for WASH in PNG, including championing inclusive WASH and sharing lessons learnt through WEBs and Water for Women widely with the PNG government and WASH sector stakeholders.

2. Improved District WASH planning and increased community access to WASH in the National Capital District, Morobe, New Ireland and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, with a focus on participation, inclusion, and climate-change resilience. This includes models for access in peri-urban areas and public markets.

3. Improved WASH planning, management, practices, and facilities in schools, in partnership with sub-national government and school communities, for 20 schools in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, eight schools in New Ireland and 15 schools in Morobe.

4. Integration of cross-cutting issues into hygiene messaging, including for COVID-19 prevention and response, gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI), and climate-change resilience in WASH service delivery and systems.

The Australian aid program is investing in Papua New Guinea over a five-year period to improve WASH services in rural and urban areas of PNG. Water for Women is proud to be partnering with World Vision, WaterAid, Plan International Australia and Live & Learn Environmental Education for the PNG WASH consortium, WaSH Em i Bikpela Samting.

1 PNG National Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) Policy 2015-2030