INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR
WOMEN IN MARITIME MAY 18

PacTow celebrates women in maritime

THE maritime industry is becoming an increasingly attractive career path for women not only globally but also here in Papua New Guinea. Leading companies recognise the business value of gender-diverse workforces and are implementing strategies to attract, develop, and promote women. Pacific Towing (PacTow), a leader in marine services, is no exception.

While women represent only 2–3 per cent of the international maritime workforce, nearly 20 per cent of PacTow's employees are female. This marks a significant transformation. Over the past decade, PacTow has invested in training, introduced progressive policies and programs, and fostered cultural change. These efforts have paid off, with women now serving in management positions and as officers leading crews aboard the company's tugboats both domestically and internationally.

PacTow's female employees are making vital contributions across the business. Beyond traditional roles in finance and HR, women are actively working in marine operations and crewing. Onboard, they are in engine rooms and maintenance workshops, supporting fleet reliability, and on tugboat bridges assisting LNG tankers and bulk carriers to berth. Some even participate in complex and high risk tasks such as salvaging grounded ships and emergency spill response.

With a global shortage of maritime professionals, especially at senior ranks, there has never been a better time for women to pursue a maritime career. The demand for female maritime talent is especially high in companies serving PNG's oil, gas, and mining sectors, where major industry players like Santos, ExxonMobil PNG Ltd, and Newmont favour suppliers demonstrating strong gender diversity credentials.

Building a more inclusive maritime workforce

PacTow recognises that attracting and retaining women in maritime requires more than just opening doors, it requires creating an environment where women can thrive. The company has introduced a range of targeted programs, policies, and training initiatives to support women's success across all levels of the business:

Women in maritime cadetships

In partnership with the Australian Government, Swire Shipping, and Consort Express Lines, PacTow accelerates the maritime careers of young PNG women through its Deck and Engine cadetships. Women are also enrolled in PacTow's in-house cadetship program which has recently been extended to include its Solomon Islands' operation Notably, 2025 marked the recruitment of PacTow's first female cadet from the Solomon Islands.

Pay parity

Women receive equal pay to their male colleagues performing the same roles or working within the same pay categories.

Safer workplaces

PacTow has implemented a range of initiatives including CCTV cameras, improved lighting, GPS trackers on buses, and hygiene kits through the Business Coalition for Women's (BCFW) Gender Smart Safety program. This addresses workplace safety concerns specific to women.

Leadership and management training

Female staff are sponsored to undertake various leadership and management courses, including internationally accredited qualifications.

Anti-Sexual harassment policy and training

(L – R) Katrina Kombol (Mate Class 3) and Natasha Kema (Engineer Class 4) are among the rising number of female officers at Pacific Towing, playing a key role in maintaining the company's position as a market leader in marine services.

PacTow has adopted a BCFW policy aimed at preventing and eliminating workplace sexual harassment.

Family and Sexual Violence (FSV) Policy and training

A BCFW policy designed to support staff affected by family and sexual violence.

Bel isi PNG seif haus and case Management

Free emergency accommodation, counselling, and case management services are available to staff impacted by family and sexual violence, through the Steamships Group of companies' subscription to the Bel isi PNG service.

In addition to offering rewarding, economically empowering maritime careers for women and benefiting from their valuable contributions PacTow is also supporting broader efforts to advance gender equality. The company has long been represented on the board of the PNG Business Coalition for Women (BCFW) and has contributed to its development of several key resources for the PNG business community. PacTow has also sponsored multiple initiatives promoting gender diversity, both in PNG and, more recently, the Solomon Islands. This includes a 2025 sponsorship of the Solomon Islands Women in Maritime Association.

PacTow delivers excellent, reliable, and safe marine services through PNG and the broader Pacific. A well-maintained fleet, as well as a dedicated and exceptionally trained team underpin PacTow's ongoing expansion and success. PacTow is part of a larger maritime and land Logistics Division of the Steamships Group. To learn more about PacTow:

www.pacifictowingmarineservices.com