

The future starts today

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Rosie Batty (2015 Australian of the Year and anti-violence campaigner) visited Papua New Guinea last month and spoke at public events at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) in Port Moresby and the PNG University of Technology (UNITECH) in Lae. In sharing her story she moved people but also brought to light the challenge of violence, not just being a challenge Papua New Guineans faced, but one the world faces right now. The events were sponsored by [Steamships](#) and were jointly organised by [Femili PNG](#), [UNITECH](#), [UPNG](#) and [The Voice Inc](#).

Here Lucas Kiak, a Level 3 – Nation Builder in The Voice Inc.'s [Leadership Development Program](#) at UNITECH, gave his thoughts on the challenge, and his pledge to move forward, in his closing speech to Rosie Batty.

On behalf of the audience and sponsors, I would like to take this time to thank Rosie Batty for the wonderful inspirational presentation this afternoon.

You know, coming from a Melanesian culture with the patrimonial practices, family and sexual violence is taken to be a cultural norm. We don't always talk about it, you don't always know about it, but just like you, we are all victims of violence one way or another.

Many times our own advocacy of the matter has been suppressed by the cultural limitations of the norm and despite our passion and energy for change, as young energetic people we find it easier to be like everyone else and blend in than to speak out for what we believe is right. But I take this time to salute you and other survivors for letting your own light to shine. I believe deep down inside that as you let your own light shine you are unconsciously giving us permission to do the same and as you are liberated from your own fears your presence in the frontier of this battle liberates us all.

As a young man I believe that there is a PNG free from family violence and sexual harassment. A PNG where my sons and daughters carry themselves and walk with dignity and respect for each other. I am convinced and I say this with the utmost conviction that my vision for a violence-free PNG is not in the future, not in ten years time, not in 2050, not tomorrow but today. I believe that we can create this violence-free PNG in the everyday things that we do in our lives. Because the future that I believe in is a process, it's a journey and it starts today. The future starts today.

I know it's a lonely road to fight this battle and that it's scary at times. But we don't need a spotlight. We just have to shine from within.

In closing, sometimes we are brought to troubled waters not to be drowned but rather to be cleansed, because although we are not all raised in a good family, we are all given the opportunity to create an even better one.



Lucas Kiak is a Level 3 – Nation Builder in The Voice Inc. Leadership Development Program at the PNG University of Technology (UNITECH).

This post first appeared on [The Voice Inc](#) on 1 May 2017. You can listen to the audio of Lucas' talk, as well as Rosie Batty and the other panellists' talks on the Femili PNG website [here](#).