

# FSM prepares for drought while rain is still falling in many places

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

September 18, 2026

**Pohnpei** — Heavy rainfall across much of the Federated States of Micronesia may make drought seem like a distant concern, but weather officials warned Friday that the current wet conditions are part of an El Niño pattern expected to turn considerably drier as the region moves toward 2027.

Representatives of FSM national and state governments, diplomatic missions, United Nations and regional agencies, and other partners gathered in Pohnpei Friday morning for a meeting of the FSM Joint Risk Management Network focused on drought preparedness and response.

Landon Aydllett of the National Weather Service office in Guam told participants joining the meeting in person and by video conference that El Niño continues to strengthen across the Pacific, with peak conditions expected around November, December, and January.



“The drought is coming soon, but not quite yet,” Aydllett said.

He said the rainfall now being experienced across much of the FSM is consistent with the onset year of an El Niño event. The onset year, in this case 2026, typically brings wetter conditions and greater tropical cyclone activity. The offset year, 2027, tends to be considerably drier.

“We’re in the wet phase right now. That dry phase is around



[Click here for continuation](#)

# Yap authorities identify possible causes of August fish deaths

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

September 13, 2026

**Yap, FSM**— Yap authorities say heavy rain and flooding, followed by unusually low tides and high temperatures, appear to have contributed to the mass deaths of reef fish and other marine life reported along the western coast of Yap Proper in August.

A newly released public advisory from Yap’s Disaster Coordinating Office, Marine Resources Management Division, and Department of Resources and Development provides preliminary findings on the event and urges residents to continue avoiding affected shallow reef areas and not

to collect or eat dead or distressed marine life.

Communities reported dead reef fish, invertebrates, and other marine life washing ashore along Yap Proper’s western coast on August 22.

According to the advisory, preliminary findings indicate that heavy rain and flooding carried sediment, organic matter, and nutrients into shallow coastal waters.

Authorities said rapid microbial activity likely reduced dissolved oxygen in the water, creating localized hypoxia—a condition in which oxygen levels become too low to adequately support marine life.

The problem was apparently compounded by unusually low tides and high temperatures, which the advisory said added heat and exposure stress.

The advisory does not identify a single confirmed cause of the mortality and says agencies are continuing to monitor conditions and coordinate further assessment.

It also notes that no water discoloration typical of a harmful algal bloom was reported during interviews.

Fish deaths were reported in the villages of Yyin, Gilfith, Rang, and Tamil. The advisory also lists Ifanif, Weloy, and Kanifay among communities where residents should

remain alert, and says all western-coast communities should follow official advisories.

Authorities are asking residents to keep away from affected shallow reef areas, refrain from collecting dead or distressed fish or invertebrates, and not consume marine life found dead or behaving abnormally.

Residents should also follow advisories issued by health and environmental agencies and report new fish deaths, unusual odors, or abnormal water conditions to local authorities.

The public is being asked to

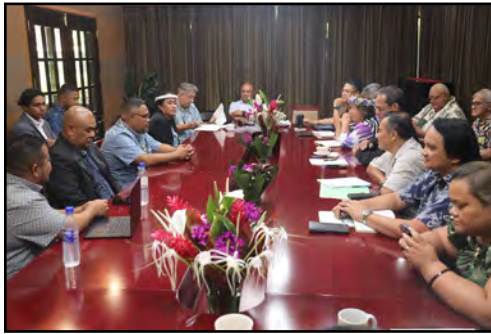
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# President Simina and Committee to Wait discuss priorities for Fifth Regular Session of the 24th FSM Congress

## FSM Information Services

September 19, 2026

**Palikir, Pohnpei** — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), met with the Committee to Wait on the President following the opening of the Fifth Regular Session of the 24th FSM Congress.



key staff would remain available to provide information and support the deliberations.

Other priorities included proposed accounting and monitoring requirements for Compact funds provided to the states as subrecipients. Timely passage of the measure is needed to ensure continued access to Compact funding in Fiscal Year



President Simina was joined by Vice President Aren B. Palik and members of the Executive Cabinet. The Committee was led by the Honorable Andy P. Choor and included Senators Johnson A. Asher, Jermy W. Mudong, and Perpetua S. Konman.

The discussion began with the Fiscal Year 2027 national budget, with both the Committee and the Executive Branch emphasizing its importance and the need for timely consideration. With hearings scheduled throughout the session, President Simina confirmed that Cabinet members and

2027. Cybersecurity was also discussed following a recent cyber fraud incident, with Cabinet members emphasizing the need for congressional support for the pending cybersecurity bills. Support was also sought for the Google subsea cable project, which would replace the HANTRU-1 cable and strengthen the FSM's telecommunications infrastructure.

President Simina shared that fuel supplies remain stable through the efforts of the FSM Petroleum Corporation but emphasized the need to maintain the stabilization mechanism for another 12 months amid continued global uncertainty. The request is supported by a resolution adopted by the national and state governments during the Fifth Chief Executive Council meeting in Chuuk in August 2026.

Other matters before Congress included a submitted bill to support activities commemorating the FSM's 40th anniversary of independence; nominations for Associate Justice of the FSM Supreme Court, Consul General in Portland, and members of the National Seabed Resources Authority; an Asian Development

Bank grant for water security; and U.S. Federal Aviation Administration funding for the second phase of improvements to Kosrae International Airport.

The Committee noted that hearings on the Marine Spatial Planning bill had been completed in three states, with the remaining hearing to be held in Pohnpei. President Simina thanked the Committee for its work and emphasized the bill's importance in strengthening the sustainable management of the FSM's ocean resources.

The Committee also received an update on the recent illness outbreak in Chuuk, where the situation has stabilized while investigations into its cause continue. The meeting further covered C.B. No. 24-120 concerning the citizenship status of FSM veterans of the United States Armed Forces, with the Committee expressing appreciation to the Office of Veterans Affairs for its efforts to help veterans access medical services.

On the Yap Defense Site Project, President Simina shared that his recent discussions with the Yap State leadership had been positive. Both sides recognized the project's potential benefits while emphasizing the need to carefully address its cultural, social, and environmental impacts.

President Simina extended the administration's appreciation to the Speaker through the Committee and thanked its members for the constructive exchange. The Simina-Palik Administration remains committed to working closely with Congress to advance national priorities and address the needs of the people throughout the FSM.



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**Bill Jaynes  
Managing Editor**

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**Monday, October 5, 2026**

# New report shows learning gains across the Pacific, but continued action needed

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

**September 8, 2026**

**Fiji** - The Pacific Community (SPC) today marked International Literacy Day with the launch of the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) 2025 Regional Report, providing the latest overview of literacy and numeracy levels in the Pacific region.

Implemented by SPC's Educational Quality and Assessment Programme, PILNA is the Pacific's largest education assessment, spanning 15 participating countries. Conducted at regular intervals since 2012, PILNA measures progress in learning, examines contextual factors that may influence learning outcomes and identifies priorities for strengthening education systems.

PILNA is delivered through a long-standing partnership between SPC and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), which provides technical support to SPC, helping Pacific countries to strengthen their capacity to collect, interpret and use education data to improve learning outcomes.

When asked about the purpose of PILNA, Dr Elizabeth Cassity, Senior Research Fellow of ACER, emphasised its importance as a means of collecting robust data on learning outcomes in the region.

"Strong education systems are built on good evidence," Dr Cassity said.

"ACER's partnership with SPC through PILNA helps Pacific countries access high-quality data about student learning and the conditions that support success. Those insights enable education leaders to make informed decisions about where to focus effort and investment so that children can achieve their full potential."

The findings presented in the PILNA 2025 Regional Report show encouraging signs of progress across the domains of numeracy, reading and writing, while highlighting areas where continued and targeted action is needed to strengthen learning outcomes across the region.

For both Year 4 and Year 6 students, scores were higher, on average, in 2025 compared with 2021, but remain below levels recorded in 2018. As in previous



PILNA cycles, girls outperformed boys in 2025, although the gender gap appears to have narrowed in recent years.

A key finding was that learners can often manage familiar and straightforward tasks, but face challenges when they are required to draw inferences, reason, apply knowledge in less familiar situations, think critically or work through multi-step problems. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening not only foundational skills, but also learners' ability to apply knowledge, reason and solve problems.

The contextual findings indicate a number of well-being and resource challenges in schools in the region. Around half of the students reported experiencing bullying at school in the past year, while around three quarters of students had teachers who reported experiencing frequent work-related stress. Only around a quarter of the students were in classes where they each had their own textbooks for numeracy and literacy subjects, and around one in ten students had no access to textbooks for those subjects.

The PILNA 2025 report offers recommendations for governments, regional entities, educators and caregivers in the region towards improving student learning outcomes and suggests three priority areas of intervention: student reading, higher-order thinking skills and the well-being of students and educators.

Held in Suva, Fiji, the launch was attended by representatives from Pacific countries, development partners, education institutions and regional organizations, reflecting the collective commitment to strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy across the Blue Pacific.

In his address at the event, His Excellency

Greg Andrews, New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, reaffirmed New Zealand's commitment to supporting inclusive and equitable education in the region. His Excellency also drew attention to the importance of literacy education, noting the relevance of the 2026 International Literacy Day theme to PILNA.

"This year's theme, Literacy for people, the planet and prosperity, highlights the central role literacy plays in fostering inclusion, supporting sustainable futures and expanding opportunities for individuals and communities. By providing robust evidence on literacy and numeracy outcomes, PILNA helps Pacific countries strengthen foundational learning so that learners are equipped to participate and thrive in a rapidly changing world," he said.

Representing the Australian High Commission to Fiji, Emmeline Cammack, Counsellor, Human Development, emphasized the value of strong partnerships and evidence-informed policymaking in improving educational outcomes.

"For development partners like Australia, the findings provide a basis for aligning our support with partner country priorities, avoiding duplication and focusing investment where it can have the greatest benefit. This report provides valuable data that ministries of education across the Pacific can use to inform practical policy decisions, curriculum reforms, resource allocations and strategic planning. It highlights when and where things are working well, as well as revealing disparities between regions, schools, genders and student groups," said Cammack.

In his address at the event, Seci Waqabaca,

Deputy Director of SPC's Educational Quality and Assessment Programme, reiterated the importance of using the PILNA 2025 report findings, observing that the report provides a valuable evidence base that should be used wisely to shape the future of education across the Pacific.

"PILNA has given us the evidence. Our task now is to turn evidence into action. To strengthen reading, to deepen thinking, to support teachers and school leaders, to protect learner well-being and to ensure that resources reach the learners and schools that need them most. Ultimately, the value of PILNA will not be measured simply by the quality of the data we collect, but by the quality of the decisions we make because of it," he said.

In the Closing Remarks, Karen Mapusua, Officer in Charge for the Suva Regional Office of SPC, remarked on the powerful message conveyed by the PILNA 2025 report.

"The story told by the PILNA 2025 Regional Report is not simply a story about assessment results.

It is a story about children, their opportunities and their futures. Behind every statistic is a learner with potential, a teacher striving to make a difference, and a community investing in the next generation."

Looking ahead, SPC remains committed to ensuring that every Pacific learner develops the skills to achieve their aspirations and will continue to work in partnership with countries and territories across the region to improve the quality of education, as this represents an investment in our people, our communities and the future of our region.

# ...Drought

[Click here to return](#)

the corner,” he said.

Aydlett said wet periods are expected to become shorter and less frequent during the coming months, while dry periods become longer and more frequent. The 2027 dry season is likely to begin earlier than normal and last longer, creating the potential for widespread drought across much of the FSM.

At the same time, the region is not yet finished with its tropical cyclone threat.

Aydlett said heightened tropical cyclone activity could continue through the remainder of 2026 and possibly into early 2027. Historically, El Niño years have brought late-season tropical cyclone activity to parts of the FSM, with storm tracks tending to move farther south toward the region later in the year.

That creates the possibility that emergency managers could find themselves preparing for two hazards at once.

“Are we ready to be responding to two major hazards at the same time?” Aydlett asked, noting that a tropical cyclone threat could emerge while drought conditions are developing or already underway.

He cautioned that El Niño does not guarantee any particular weather outcome. Strong El Niño conditions instead increase the likelihood of certain patterns, including heightened tropical cyclone activity followed by significant and widespread drought.

Rainfall is currently abundant across most of Micronesia, Aydlett said, although some locations are already showing signs of dryness. As the year progresses, however, heavier rainfall events are expected to become shorter and less frequent. Rainfall totals could begin falling below normal during October, November, and December, followed by the possibility of very low rainfall during the first months of 2027.

A representative of the Pohnpei National Weather Service office followed Aydlett's regional presentation with a review of recent

rainfall measurements for Pohnpei.

The figures compared rainfall during 2026 with normal rainfall based on data from 1991 through 2020. The presenter said rainfall has generally been above normal, with June standing out as a month with a deficit of approximately six inches. Other recent months have produced rainfall surpluses.

Those figures reinforced Aydlett's warning that current wet conditions should not be interpreted as evidence that drought preparations are unnecessary. The Pohnpei presenter said the numbers are expected to begin moving below normal as rainfall becomes less frequent toward the end of the year.

Aydlett pointed to the strong 1997-1998 El Niño as an example of how quickly conditions can change. Pohnpei experienced above-normal rainfall during the onset year of 1997 before rainfall dropped below normal in November and December. January through May 1998 then brought very dry conditions.

Water availability is only one of the concerns associated with a prolonged drought.

Aydlett warned that even a relatively short dry period can rapidly dry vegetation and increase wildfire danger. He asked participants to consider whether Pohnpei has sufficient equipment, water, and personnel to respond if house fires in Kolonia and grass or wildfires elsewhere on the island occur at the same time.

“We can see one of our biggest wildfire years in over a decade,” he said.

Agriculture, livestock, and conditions on the FSM's outer islands are also among the concerns emergency planners will need to consider.

Aydlett encouraged agencies to plan not simply for drought as a general concept but for what would happen at specific intervals if rainfall stopped.

“If the rain stops today, what are our problems and vulnerabilities in three days of no rain or five days?” he asked. “What if it's ten days without rainfall?”

He urged planners to extend that



exercise to two weeks or a month without significant rainfall and identify which communities would become vulnerable, what resources would be needed, and when particular response measures would have to begin.

The Secretary of the FSM Department of Environment, Climate, and Emergency Management opened Friday's meeting by emphasizing coordination and early preparation among national and state governments and development partners.

Secretary Yatilman said the meeting was intended to provide updated weather and El Niño information while allowing state Disaster Coordination Offices and partner agencies to report on preparedness activities, available resources, challenges, and areas where additional support may be required.

The Secretary also referred to the FSM National Drought Preparedness and Response Plan, describing it as the country's first comprehensive national framework for drought risk management. The project received funding support from the Government of Japan.

“The success of our preparedness effort depends on all of us working together,” the Secretary told participants, calling for agencies and partners to share information, coordinate activities, reduce duplication, and identify actions that can be taken before drought conditions become severe.

The Pohnpei Disaster Coordination Office reported that its current work includes raising public awareness from the state level down through municipalities and communities and coordinating with United Nations

partners. Plans discussed during the meeting also included preparations for water distribution to outer islands if drought conditions require it, along with water storage and catchment-related assistance.

Pohnpei officials later provided additional information about preparations underway in the state, including plans to purchase desalination units. Representatives of Chuuk, Kosrae, and Yap also said their states were working on similar plans to purchase desalination units as part of their preparations for the expected drought.

Representatives of the Disaster Coordination Offices of all four FSM states attended the meeting, along with members of the diplomatic corps representing Japan, the United States, and Australia. UNICEF, the United Nations, the Pacific Community, and other international partners were also represented, either in person or remotely.

The broader purpose of the meeting was to compare preparations already underway, identify remaining vulnerabilities and resources, and determine what additional steps should be taken before rainfall begins to decline.

Aydlett said the FSM and its partners currently have an opportunity to prepare while water remains relatively plentiful.

“The drought is not here yet, but it is coming,” he said. “And we do have to plan for it and be ready to respond to it before things get into a dire situation because drought can be life and death, especially for a lot of our outer islands.”

# China National Day reception celebrates decades of FSM friendship

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

September 18, 2026

**Pohnpei, FSM**—President Wesley Simina joined diplomats, national and State government officials, members of the local Chinese community, and other invited guests Friday evening at the Cliff Rainbow Hotel for a reception commemorating the 77th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and 37 years of diplomatic relations between China and the Federated States of Micronesia.

People's Republic of China Ambassador to the FSM WU Wei welcomed the guests and thanked people across the FSM, Chinese enterprises operating in the country, and the local Chinese community for their support of China-FSM relations.

Much of WU's address reviewed China's development and its plans for the coming years. He said China's new 15th Five-Year Plan would guide the country's development while creating opportunities for other countries, including the FSM. He also pointed to growth in advanced manufacturing, the digital economy, modern services, and technological innovation in China.

WU said China continues to regard Pacific Island countries as friends and partners and intends to deepen cooperation in areas including energy transition, ocean-related initiatives, trade, and investment. He said China would continue to support what he described as "small and smart projects" intended to produce tangible benefits for Pacific communities.

The Ambassador devoted a substantial portion of his remarks to the relationship between China and the FSM, which formally established diplomatic relations on September 11, 1989.

"Despite changes in the international landscape, our relations have remained steadfast and resilient," WU said.

He said China supports the FSM's sovereignty and independence and noted the FSM's adherence to the One China policy. He also recalled President Simina's 2024 state visit to China,

during which Simina met with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and pointed to continuing exchanges among national and State leaders.

WU cited several projects and exchanges currently underway or recently completed in the FSM. He said road upgrading work in Chuuk and bridge reconstruction in Pohnpei have entered the implementation stage, while preliminary work has also advanced on a road project in Yap. He also referred to Chinese-supported projects in Kosrae.

The Ambassador said China's agricultural technical assistance team continues work in the FSM and noted the response of a Chinese medical team following Typhoon Sinlaku in Chuuk. According to WU, the medical team treated more than 500 patients over six days. China and the FSM have also signed a protocol covering the dispatch of Chinese medical teams to the FSM from 2026 through 2030.

More than 100 FSM participants have traveled to China this year for training and study programs in areas including climate change, energy transition, government administration, disaster preparedness, maritime management, and public health, he said.

WU compared the relationship developed over the past 37 years to a growing tree, describing mutual respect and common development as its roots, friendship between the peoples of the two countries as its branches and trunk, and practical cooperation as its fruit.

He concluded by proposing a toast to the 77th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the 37th anniversary of China-FSM diplomatic relations, and the continued development of the bilateral relationship.

FSM Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ricky Cantero followed WU, offering

congratulations on behalf of the FSM government and people and President Simina.

Cantero said the presence of national leaders, diplomats, government officials, and other guests at the reception reflected the importance the FSM places on its relationship with China.

He described the relationship established nearly four decades ago as one "anchored in mutual trust, sovereign equality, and a shared commitment for sustainable development."

Cantero connected those principles with language in the FSM Constitution's preamble, saying the FSM seeks in its international relationships "peace, friendship, cooperation, and love for our common humanity."

He said cooperation with China has extended across infrastructure, agriculture, education, medicine, and capacity-building programs, with projects and assistance benefiting communities throughout the FSM.

Cantero placed particular emphasis on exchanges between people of the two countries.

"They allow our citizens, our leaders, our students, professionals, and our communities to better understand one another, strengthen friendship, and build friendship that goes beyond government-to-government cooperations," he said.

He also welcomed continuing high-level exchanges between the two countries, saying visits and other engagements provide opportunities to promote trade, investment, economic cooperation, and greater connections between the FSM and China.



Looking ahead, Cantero said the FSM remains committed to developing its comprehensive strategic partnership with China, including continued economic cooperation and cultural exchanges.

"The strength of the FSM-China relationship is not measured only in infrastructure agreements or cultures, but in the genuine bond of friendship between our peoples," he said.

Cantero concluded with his own toast to the continued success of the government of the People's Republic of China, the prosperity of its people, and 37 years of friendly relations between the two nations.

Following the speeches, the College of Micronesia-FSM Choir, under the direction of Dr. Michael Muller, performed three numbers for the assembled guests. Two of the selections were sung in Chinese, drawing an enthusiastic response from Chinese nationals attending the celebration.

The formal program concluded with a lavish buffet dinner.

# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph calls for whole-of-government commitment to accountability and single audits during APIPA address

## Pohnpei Public Information

September 7, 2026

**Palikir, Pohnpei** — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph delivered the keynote address at the 37th Association of Pacific Islands Public Auditors (APIPA) Conference at the Kamorale Convention Center in Palikir, welcoming Honorable Public Auditors, Heads of Supreme Audit Institutions, and distinguished delegates from across the region.

Addressing the core theme, "Navigating Towards Accountability," Governor Joseph reflected on the traditional Pacific art of navigation, drawing parallels between ancestral seafaring and modern governance. He emphasized that accountability requires leadership, discipline, and the courage to acknowledge mistakes and adjust course to serve the public interest.

Highlighting the critical mandate of audit institutions, Governor Joseph stated that public resources belong



entirely to the people, making auditors the essential custodians of public trust. He noted that the true value of an audit relies on executive and legislative action following report issuances, urging agencies to correct internal control weaknesses, improve services, and protect institutional independence and strict ethical standards.

Addressing the regional challenges surrounding the Single Audit, Governor Joseph described it as a primary tool for public assurance and partner trust, rather than a routine compliance exercise. He highlighted the persistent delays and audit backlogs facing many Pacific jurisdictions due to capacity

constraints and fragmented coordination.

"Bringing the Single Audit current can never be the responsibility of the Audit Office alone," Governor Joseph stated, calling for an aggressive, whole-of-government commitment where finance, budget, procurement, and program officers operate in unison with public auditors.

Closing his address, Governor Joseph challenged participants to keep one central question at the heart of their deliberations: How can we strengthen accountability so that our governments can better serve our people and safeguard future generations?

The Association of Pacific Islands Public Auditors (APIPA) provides essential technical training, professional development, and collaborative support to government oversight institutions across the Pacific.



By standardizing auditing practices and pooling regional resources, APIPA enables small island nations to overcome severe capacity constraints and complex financial oversight requirements. Its work is critical for ensuring that public funds—including vital external grant assistance—are managed transparently, efficiently, and for the benefit of local communities. Ultimately, APIPA strengthens the institutional independence of public auditors, reinforcing public trust and donor confidence in regional governance.

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# World Physiotherapy (Physical Therapy) Day

Pohnpei Department of Health and Social Services

September 15, 2026

**Pohnpei** - World Physiotherapy Day (World PT Day) is observed every year on 8 September. It marks the unity of the global physiotherapy community and celebrates the profession's contribution to health. It was established in 1996, aligning with the founding date of World Physiotherapy in 1951, and in 2026 the theme focuses on cardiovascular disease and stroke, highlighting physiotherapy's role in prevention, management, and rehabilitation.

The focus of this year's World Physiotherapy Day was cardiovascular disease (CVD) and Stroke. This is part of a four year campaign focus on non-communicable diseases (2026–2029)

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death globally, with an estimated 19.8 million deaths in 2022, about 32% of all global deaths. Of these, 85% were due to heart attack and stroke.

According to the World Health Organization, the 3 leading causes of death in the Federated States of Micronesia in 2021 were:

- Cardiovascular Disease  
161.4 deaths per 100,000 population
- Stroke  
116.9 deaths per 100,000 population
- Diabetes Mellitis  
77.8 deaths per 100,000 population

The population of FSM was reported to be 98,860 in 2025, so the numbers above are fairly representative of yearly mortality rates.

Physiotherapy helps prevent CVD by designing exercise programs, identifying risk, and promoting early action.

Stroke affects 1 in 4 people in their lifetime, but most strokes are preventable with lifestyle changes and regular exercise reducing risk significantly.

Mr. Jack Manlapaz, the Physiotherapy Supervisor at Pohnpei State Hospital, and his team help to improve mobility, balance, and quality of life during stroke recovery with the main goal being to restore lost function to pre-stroke condition or failing this, to achieve optimum function.

This may include using: motor skills exercises, mobility training and maintaining joint range of motion.

The sooner a person begins stroke rehabilitation, the more likely they are to regain lost abilities and skills.

The Pohnpei State Hospital Physiotherapy Department is currently working through a series of in-service training programs to review and maintain Best Practice Treatment of a range of conditions, including Stroke. These programs are being conducted by Australian Volunteers Program (AVP) Physiotherapy Mentor, David Taylor. The AVP is supported by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

## ...Fish deaths

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immediately report current or future sightings of irregular marine or environmental occurrences and, when possible, provide photographs.

350-2110.

The advisory says monitoring and further assessment of the affected areas are continuing.

Reports can be made to the Yap Environmental Protection Agency at 350-2113, the Disaster Coordinating Office at 350-2145, or the Department of Health Services at



# 19<sup>TH</sup> DR. ALEXANDER PANUELO'S ANNUAL SPORTFISHING DERBY

## SATURDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2026

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# Military historian explores the human side of war with Pohnpei audiences

By **Bill Jaynes**  
The Kaselehlle Press

September 10, 2026

**Pohnpei, FSM** —

Military historian and editor Jeff Ballard came to Pohnpei this week carrying stories of World War II, but the message he hopes audiences take away from his presentations extends well beyond battles, ships, and military strategy.

Ballard, Editor-in-Chief of Military History Chronicles, is visiting the FSM as part of a U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs program that is taking him to four Pacific countries for lectures, presentations, and roundtable discussions about World War II in the Pacific.

The State Department approached Ballard in April about participating in the program, drawing on a subject that has fascinated him since childhood. His Pacific itinerary includes the FSM as well as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

In Pohnpei, however, his presentations have not simply recounted military campaigns. Ballard said he has tried to use World War II as a way of exploring social history and the experiences of ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances.

One of his presentations examines the enormous changes in American society brought about by the war, including the movement of workers from agricultural areas into industrial centers and the entry of women into jobs traditionally held by men.

To make that history more immediate for young audiences, Ballard created a fictional young woman named Susan Martin, who leaves Pascagoula, Mississippi, in 1943 for a shipyard job in Richmond, California. She is in her early 20s, has never traveled far from home, does not know how to weld or rivet, and must make a five-day, 2,700-mile train journey alone before taking on work she has never done.

The point, Ballard said, was not simply to explain America's wartime industrial



mobilization.

"I hope that if anybody, the lesson that anybody received from those things yesterday, was we can all do much, much, much more than we think we can do," he said.

At some point, he said, people are likely to find themselves asked to do something they do not know how to do, have not been trained to do, or may not particularly want to do, whether in service to their community or their family.

Ballard gave presentations during his Pohnpei visit to students at several schools, including Pohnpei Island Central School, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School, and the College of Micronesia-FSM, as well as an audience at the U.S. Embassy. He said attendance at his presentations generally exceeded what he had been told to expect and singled out the students at Our Lady of Mercy as particularly attentive and engaged.

Another presentation grew from Ballard's oral-history work with U.S. Navy veteran Robert Nate, who recently celebrated his 102nd birthday. Nate served as a motor machinist's mate aboard a small patrol craft, and his wartime experience was characterized less by dramatic combat than by the long periods of routine and monotony that were also part of military service.

Ballard said his conversations with Nate led to several related research projects. He published Nate's oral history and



submitted it to the Library of Congress, while also pursuing archival research arising from the veteran's story.

That approach reflects Ballard's broader view of military history. Although battles and military operations have fascinated him for most of his life, he said his work is not intended to glorify warfare.

"I don't think that the work that I do is in any way meant to venerate war," Ballard said.

He cited the words of Dwight D. Eisenhower:

"War is mankind's most tragic and stupid folly; to seek or advise its deliberate provocation is a black crime against all men. Though you follow the trade of the warrior, you do so in the spirit of Washington—not of Genghis Khan."

Ballard said he hopes his own work helps people understand the social effects of war, including aspects of history that can disappear when wartime generations are viewed only through heroic narratives. He pointed to the racial and gender discrimination that existed alongside the accomplishments commonly associated with America's World War II generation.

Ballard's fascination with the subject began when he was 11, when his father gave him one volume of Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison's 15-volume history of U.S. naval operations during World War II. By age 14, Ballard had

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## ...Jeff Ballard

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read the entire series, but repeatedly returned to the volume dealing with Guadalcanal.

He became so absorbed in the campaign that he drew maps and used National Geographic maps and tissue paper in attempts to calculate the locations of shipwrecks described in the histories.

Guadalcanal remained a particular interest into adulthood. Ballard first traveled there in 2023 after a planned earlier trip was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. He subsequently returned and became involved in battlefield tours and historical work in the Solomon Islands.

His connection to maritime exploration is also a family one. His uncle is oceanographer and explorer Dr. Robert Ballard, best known for locating the wreck of the Titanic and associated with the exploration vessel Nautilus. Jeff Ballard acknowledged that the family relationship has provided him with opportunities for which he is grateful.

His work with the Ocean Exploration Trust eventually included running a battlefield tour program connected with Nautilus operations in the Solomon Islands. Recent exploration there located previously unidentified wreckage, including a Japanese destroyer and the long-missing bow section of the USS New Orleans, which was blown off during fighting in the Solomons but whose remaining hull survived the war.

Ballard also has formal academic training in the field. He earned a master's degree in American Military History from American Military University and became involved with the university's history journal while a student.

After one of his papers was published, he began working with the journal as a copywriter and editor and eventually became responsible for continuing publication during the COVID-19 pandemic. With historians suddenly having considerably more time available for research and writing, he recalled receiving a flood of material, allowing the journal to increase its

publication schedule from two issues a year to four.

Although his research has ranged more broadly across American military history, the Pacific remains a particular interest. His graduate research concentrated on naval warfare in the Solomon Islands, and he has now spent several summers traveling there and studying battlefields and other historically and culturally significant sites.

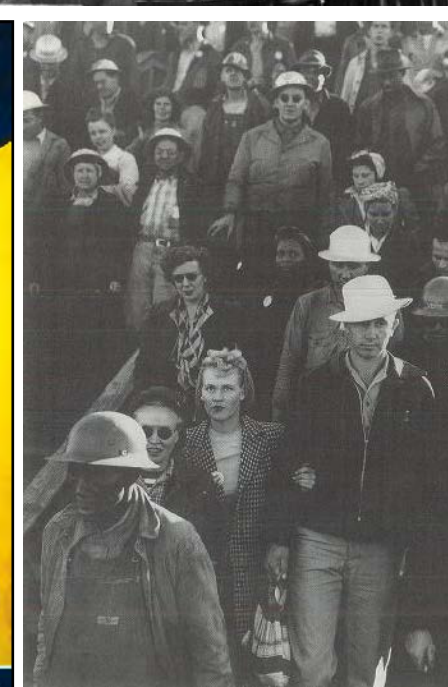
For Ballard, Guadalcanal was more than another battle in a long war. While Midway is commonly described as the turning point of the Pacific War, Ballard said he is among historians who regard Guadalcanal as the more significant turning point because it represented the first Allied offensive to retake territory occupied by Japan.

The Japanese airfield under construction there posed a threat to communications between the United States and Australia, he said, making the campaign strategically necessary.

The FSM has its own extensive World War II history, although the islands experienced the war differently from Guadalcanal. Ballard noted that U.S. forces did not undertake a ground invasion of Pohnpei or Chuuk. Instead, Japanese positions were isolated and subjected to air and naval attacks as Allied forces advanced elsewhere across the Pacific.

More than eight decades later, Ballard's visit comes as living memory of the war is rapidly disappearing throughout the Pacific. His presentations combine military history, oral history, archival research, and the experiences of people whose lives were transformed by events far larger than themselves.

For the students hearing those stories in Pohnpei, Ballard said he hopes at least one lesson survives after the names, dates, and battles fade from memory: people are often capable of considerably more than they believe when circumstances require them to step into unfamiliar roles.





## Current Job Opportunities

- Director of Cooperative Research and Extension (CTEC)
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# Grateful Ministries Medical Mission conducts health care training and community outreach in Kosrae

## Grateful Ministries

September 21, 2026

**KOSRAE** - From September 9-16, 2026, a four-member medical mission team sponsored by Grateful Ministries Kosrae worked alongside Kosrae State Hospital staff to provide intensive health care training, conduct more than 30 home visits, support mental-health outreach, and donate medicines and medical equipment to community facilities.

Grateful Ministries Kosrae, a nonprofit organization led by Sepe and Paul Hadik, sponsored the mission with the goal of providing immediate assistance while also investing in the skills of Kosrae's own health care workforce.

The Training was run by Dr. May Kealoha, a registered nurse and nursing educator who has conducted several medical missions and CNA training classes. Rebecca Hotta (RN), assisted in the classroom and helped manage the afternoon practicals in the hospital ward. Sam Ng, (APRN) led the home visits and donated medicines and equipment to families and the Health Centers. Jeannie

Chan (LMFT) conducted trainings on Mental Health Awareness while also visiting patients and families including a session at the Kosrae State Prison.

A major focus of the week was a 36-hour Nurse Aide Skills Training program completed by 15 Kosrae State Hospital staff members. The six-day program combined classroom instruction, hands-on skills training, clinical practicum in the hospital, and experience providing care during home visits. The Nurse Aide Skills Training covered a broad range of practical skills needed in caring for patients. Topics included the role of the nurse aide, confidentiality, communication and active listening, infection control, vital signs, comfort and hygiene, skin care and pressure-injury prevention, oral care, positioning, range-of-motion exercises, use of assistive devices, wheelchair transfers, nutrition and assisted feeding, intake and output, urinary care, and emergency response to choking.

Participants practiced skills such as proper handwashing and use of personal protective equipment, measuring temperature, pulse, respiration, blood

pressure and oxygen saturation, providing bed baths and oral care, making beds, positioning patients, assisting with mobility, and other basic patient-care procedures.

During the mission, the team and local health workers completed more than 30 home visits, including visits to Kosraean elders. These experiences gave the trainees an opportunity to apply what they had learned while seeing firsthand the realities of providing care to patients in their own homes and communities. The team also visited the Utwe and Tafunsak Community Health Centers, where medicines and medical equipment were donated.

The 15 participants in the Nurse Aide Skills Training were: Alik Jackson, Palikkun Waguk, Angie Siba, Shrew Jackson, Theodore Lonno, Jimmy Kinere, Adelyn Tulensru, Meagan Tilfas, Elsina Alik, Pegoline Aliksa, Swinton Lonno, Senelie Jonas, Elvey Joseph, Martina



Robert, and Regina Nena.

The week concluded with a closing ceremony and dinner, where the trainees were recognized for completing the program. Each received a certificate signed by members of the visiting medical team.

Kosrae Director of Health Dr. Tholman Alik delivered closing remarks, thanking the trainers and Grateful Ministries for their contributions to the program. He also congratulated the students and encouraged them to continue developing their training and health care skills. Dr. Alik expressed hope that the mission would lead to additional collaboration and training opportunities in the future.



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# 2026 APIPA Conference: Navigating towards accountability



*Embassy of Australia to the FSM*

**September 7, 2026**

**Pohnpei** - The Australian Ambassador was honoured to attend the 2026 APIPA Conference opening ceremony, hosted by the FSM Government.

The conference theme “Navigating towards Accountability” reflects both the challenges and opportunities facing our island nations today and underscores the shared journey the region undertakes and the collective commitment to strengthen the timeliness, quality and impacts of audits.

“APIPA 2026 has been designed to support the continued development of participants professional competencies while introducing new approaches and perspectives that will help to strengthen audit practices within governments in the region”, said FSM National Auditor Haser Hainrick.

Australia supports financial accountability, inclusion and public sector management in the Pacific through targeted budget support and regional partnerships.

“Australia stands with our Pacific family in the commitment of providing greater transparency to the community, which helps to strengthen accountability, improve public understanding of government programs and makes it easier for the community to access information,” said Ambassador Grant.

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## Opportunity at the Forum Secretariat

### The Pacific Islands Forum

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is an Employer of Choice in the region, aiming to recruit and employ staff based on merit and organisational needs, and to ensure that its employment selection upholds its values and commitment to Forum membership, gender balance, and building a diverse and inclusive organisation. PIFS is committed to achieving gender balance and being fully representative of its member countries\*. Our workforce is currently over 50% female, and we have representatives from 15 of the 18 Forum member countries.

### The Opportunity: Team Leader Human Resources and Administration

Applications are invited to apply to fill this vacant international position at the Secretariat in Suva, Fiji. The role will lead and manage the areas of Human Resources and Administration Support to ensure that the organisation has motivated, productive, agile, and capable people.

The key responsibilities are summarised as:

- Support a high-performance, Pacific oriented, Organisation Culture;
- Support Organisational Reform and Change Initiatives
- Develop a high-quality professional workforce; Management of HR Policy, Processes & Logistics;
- Occupational Health & Safety; Team Performance and Leadership; and
- Corporate Accountabilities

Applicants should have a bachelor's degree in human resources, management, psychology or similar (preferably a post-graduate qualification in Human Resource Management) with experience in workforce planning and developing staff capability.

Extensive relevant practical experience in recommending, implementing, and maintaining, human resource management policies, procedures in a medium-large organisation (preferably in a similar position in an international/regional or intergovernmental organisation), with preferably over eight years of relevant experience, is required.

### The Package

The position carries a competitive and attractive remuneration and benefits package including allowances for housing and education; and medical, accident and life insurance coverage. This position is based on Band 12 of the PIFS salary scale. The starting salary for the position is SDR 45,790 per annum, which is equivalent to FJD 140,892, based on 1 August 2026 foreign exchange rate.

### How to apply

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply through the PIFS website: [www.forumsec.org](http://www.forumsec.org) where an information package containing the position description and full remuneration details are available. Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees.

To be eligible for the position, applicants must be nationals of Forum member countries. The Forum Secretariat is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The deadline for applications is Friday 16 October 2026, 5pm (Fiji Time).

*\*Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.*

# MERIP joins the hunt for “Super Corals” in the fight against climate change

*Marine and Environmental Research Institute of Pohnpei (MERIP)*

**September 16, 2026**

The Marine and Environmental Institute of Pohnpei (MERIP), based at the old PATS campus, has joined The Nature Conservancy, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, the Marshall Islands Conservation Society, and the Palau International Coral Reef Center in a region-wide project to identify corals that can withstand hotter ocean water caused by climate change and grow these heat-resistant corals for reef restoration.

In a shallow area of Pohnpei lagoon, 132 heat resistant corals have already been planted on four nursery tables. These super corals look exactly like other corals in the lagoon, but they have survived a short heat stress experiment. During the weekly experiments, 24 corals of the same species are put through a four-day boot camp where the water temperature is raised each day. The fragments that survive are planted on tables according to how heat tolerant they are; being scored as either “high” or “medium”-heat tolerant. Importantly, they will be used to restock Pohnpei’s reefs if large-scale coral losses occur in the future.

Present El Niño and future ocean conditions across the Pacific are predicted to cause severe coral loss across the region’s reefs, and as a result would reduce inshore fish stocks for Pohnpei’s fishers. The work will therefore give MERIP a supply of corals to rebuild lagoon reefs using corals that have a fighting chance.

The project, called the Coral Futures Academy (CFA), is taking place across Micronesia and works directly with local conservation organizations. It is headed by Dr. Courtney Klepac of Stanford University, with support from Lauren Piot of the Palau International Coral Reef Center. The work is funded by the G20 Coral Research and Development Accelerator Platform, known as CORDAP, through a contract with The Nature Conservancy.



*The MERIP CFA team with trainers Courtney Klepac and Lauren Piot*



*An example of the kind of artificial reefs that can be set up using super corals*



*An example of the kind of artificial reefs that can be set up using super corals*

Piot said the project aims to identify, protect and manage coral reefs that are resistant to rising ocean temperatures. It will give local communities the training, resources, skills and knowledge to lead climate-smart coral restoration activities.

The heat testing experiment uses cheap, readily available materials, including ice chests and aquarium heaters, and can be set up in remote places. “We want to have as many people involved in this process as possible,” Klepac said. “In the future”, she added, “communities may use this framework to restore their own reefs, train other islanders, and even provide jobs in marine stewardship.”

MERIP Director Simon Ellis said he was pleased that MERIP had been chosen for the project. “MERIP has more than 20 years of coral farming experience with local farmers and has the expertise and facilities to successfully handle these delicate animals,” he said. “Projects such as this have the potential to sustain Pohnpei’s reefs and people into the future.”

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# Forum Leaders to Elevate Pacific Priorities on the Global Agenda at UNGA81

*Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat*

**September 18, 2026**

**New York** - Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders will gather in New York for High Level week of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA81) from 21 - 28 September 2026 to advance shared Pacific priorities agreed by Forum Leaders at its 55th Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Meeting (55PIFLM) in Palau early this month.



His Excellency Surangel Whipps Jr., President of Palau and PIF Chair together with other Forum Leaders, will lead the Forum's engagements at UNGA81 and related high-level meetings. They will be supported by PIF Secretary General, Baron Divavesi Waqa in advancing the Forum's priorities the High-Level Week.

The annual PIF Leaders' Dialogue with UN Secretary-General António Guterres will be convened on 25 September 2026, reaffirming the Forum's strategic engagement with the United Nations and providing an important platform to advance Pacific priorities within the multilateral agenda, including the partnership between regional organizations (CROP) and UN agencies in the region.

Forum Leaders' presence at UNGA81 offers an important opportunity to project a strong, unified regional voice on issues central to the Pacific's future, including climate change, sustainable development, ocean governance, development finance, and the escalating threat posed by sea-level rise.

Under the UNGA81 theme, "Restoring trust, managing transformation: A United Nations that delivers for all," Forum Leaders will reinforce the importance of a multilateral system that is responsive to Pacific priorities and our lived realities.

The engagements also come at an important moment for reform within both the United Nations and the Pacific regional system. As the UN advances its UN80 reform initiative, PIF Members are progressing the implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. These processes provide an opportunity to ensure that reform efforts are aligned, complementary and agile enough to deliver meaningful outcomes.

Together, these processes offer an opportunity to strengthen partnerships, enhance the effectiveness of multilateral

institutions, and ensure Pacific priorities remain firmly on the global agenda.

"The PIF brings to the United Nations a clear message: the challenges facing our region are inseparable from the global challenges before us. We must move from commitments to implementation, from vulnerability to resilience, and from fragmented responses to stronger, more coherent international partnerships that deliver for our peoples," said PIF Secretary General, Baron Divavesi Waqa.

Central to Forum Leaders engagement in New York is the effort to broaden advocacy, strengthening visibility on opportunities to mobilize prospective bilateral and non-traditional partners to capitalize the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) to reach its target of USD \$500 million by the end of this year. This work is particularly timely as the region builds momentum towards Pre-COP31 in Fiji and Tuvalu in October and COP31 in Türkiye and November.

With Pacific-hosted Pre-COP31 engagement in two weeks' time, UNGA81 provides an important opportunity to carry forward the momentum from the 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, build wider coalitions around Pacific climate priorities and strengthen convergence ahead of COP31.

The Pacific's engagement at UNGA81 reflects the region's commitment to shaping, rather than merely participating in, the global conversations that will determine its future.

Through collective leadership and a unified regional voice, Pacific Leaders will continue to advocate for global action that reflects Pacific priorities, strengthens resilience, and delivers tangible outcomes for the peoples of the Blue Pacific region.



- Pohnpei-based position
- Join the principal development organisation in the region

*The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Assistant, FSM WASH** within its Geoscience Energy and Maritime (GEM) Division.*

## Description

The **Pacific Community (SPC)** is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. We are an international development organisation owned and governed by our 27 country and territory members. In pursuit of sustainable development to benefit Pacific people, our unique organisation works across more than 25 sectors. We are known for our knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The **Geoscience Energy and Maritime (GEM) Division** provides advice, technical assistance, research and training support to Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). There are three (3) areas of scientific programming and two areas of focus within this division: Oceans and Maritime Programme (OMP), Georesources and Energy Programme (GEP) and Disaster and Community Resilience Programme (DCRP).

The **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Assistant, FSM WASH** will be responsible for ensuring that gender equality and social inclusion principles are systematically and meaningfully integrated across all activities, outputs and deliverables of the FSM WASH project. The role provides dedicated technical assistance on GESI to the project team, government counterparts and stakeholders, and ensures that the project meets its obligations as a Significant Objective under the EU Gender Action Plan III.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. **GESI mainstreaming support across all project outputs and activities**
2. **GESI-responsive consultation design and facilitation support**
3. **Technical support on inclusive policy and planning documents**
4. **Capacity building on GESI for government and project stakeholders**
5. **GESI monitoring, data management and reporting**

For a more detailed account of the key responsibilities, please refer to the online job description.

## Qualifications

- Tertiary qualification (diploma) from a recognized institution in a relevant discipline such as community development, social sciences, communications, development studies, public health, environmental studies or equivalent body of knowledge and experience.

## Technical expertise

- At least 3 years of professional experience in GESI programming, gender mainstreaming or social inclusion or similar in a development context.
- Knowledge in GESI principles for application in policy development, programme design or governance processes.
- Experience facilitating inclusive consultations with diverse stakeholder groups.

## Language skills

- Good communications skills in English

## Interpersonal skills and cultural awareness

- Knowledge of Pacific Island countries and territories is an advantage

**Contract Duration** – This position is budgeted until 31 December 2028, subject to renewal depending on funding and performance.

**Remuneration** – the **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Assistant, FSM WASH** is a Band 7 position in SPC's 2026 salary scale, with a starting taxable salary range of USD 32,652–40,815 per year, plus local staff benefits.

**Benefits** – SPC provides medical and life insurance for eligible employees. Employees are entitled to 25 days of annual leave. Provident Fund and/or Social Security will be according to FSM's local legislation.

**Closing date:** 4 October 2026 – 11:00 pm Noumea time

**Job Reference:** CR000627

Applicants must apply online at <http://careers.spc.int/>

For your application to be considered, you must provide us with: an updated resume with contact details for three professional referees, a cover letter detailing your skills, experience and interest in this position and responses to all screening questions

## Screening questions (maximum of 2,000 characters per question):

1. In the Pacific it is easy to just count how many women came to a meeting. When you are helping run a consultation, what practical things do you do so that women and people who are often left out can actually take part and be heard?
2. Talking about gender and inclusion can be sensitive in Pacific communities. When you are supporting this kind of work, how do you handle these issues respectfully while still making progress?
3. Part of this role is helping keep track of who takes part — women, people with disability, people from different islands — and helping put that into reports. In a busy field setting, how do you keep those records accurate and up to date?

# Supporting humanitarian efforts and disaster preparedness across the FSM



## Embassy of Australia to the FSM

September 15, 2026

**Pohnpei** - The Ambassador welcomed representatives of the Micronesian Red Cross Society for a courtesy visit, including Ms. Finau Leveni Head of Delegation of the IFRC Pacific.

The visit provided opportunity to strengthen dialogue and explore areas of mutual interest and cooperation, including the new humanitarian warehouse in Palikir, which is being largely funded by Australia. The meeting also reflects a shared commitment to support communities and advance humanitarian efforts in the FSM.

The Ambassador expressed appreciation for the delegation's visit and the important work of the Red Cross in serving FSM communities.

"We recognize the vital role of the Red Cross in supporting communities and strengthening resilience across the Pacific. We look forward to building on this spirit of partnership and cooperation to ensure there are adequate levels of support for disaster preparedness and response," said Ambassador Jenny Grant.

Australia recognizes that the need for effective, principled, and accountable humanitarian action is more crucial than ever, ensuring that the communities we seek to protect and assist are at the center of our endeavors.

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# Safer schools, stronger shelters: Building climate resilient communities together

*Embassy of Australia to the FSM*

**September 16, 2026**

**Pohnpei** – The Australian Embassy was proud to launch in partnership with IOM, the Safer Schools, Stronger Shelters Project alongside the Pohnpei State and National Government.

The project will integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into the education system and will also strengthen community

preparedness through the upgrading of an emergency evacuation shelter and providing training needed to safely manage and operate the facility during a disaster response.

“Australia looks forward to continuing our partnership with national and state governments, IOM and communities across the FSM to ensure citizens are better prepared, protected and able to adapt to challenges brought by climate change and disasters,” said Ambassador Grant.



- **Pohnpei-based position**
- **Join the principal development organisation in the region**



*The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of **Community Engagement Assistant, FSM WASH** within its Geoscience Energy and Maritime (GEM) Division.*

## Description

The **Pacific Community (SPC)** is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. We are an international development organisation owned and governed by our 27 country and territory members. In pursuit of sustainable development to benefit Pacific people, our unique organisation works across more than 25 sectors. We are known for our knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The **Geoscience Energy and Maritime (GEM) Division** provides advice, technical assistance, research and training support to Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). There are three (3) areas of scientific programming and two areas of focus within this division: Oceans and Maritime Programme (OMP), Georesources and Energy Programme (GEP) and Disaster and Community Resilience Programme (DCRP).

The **Community Engagement Assistant, FSM WASH** will be responsible for planning and implementing all community-level engagement, communication, awareness, and behavioural change activities under the FSM WASH project. The role ensures that WASH governance reforms and policy development are informed by — and accessible to — communities across all four states, with particular attention to outer island, rural, and marginalized populations.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. **Community engagement and outreach support across all four FSM states**
2. **Support communication, awareness and behavioural change programming**
3. **Community consultation support for national policy and governance processes**
4. **Traditional leader and civil society engagement assistance**
5. **Monitoring, reporting and knowledge management**

For a more detailed account of the key responsibilities, please refer to the **online job description**.

## Qualifications

- Tertiary qualification (diploma) from a recognized institution in a relevant discipline such as community development, social sciences, communications, development studies, public health, environmental studies or equivalent body of knowledge and experience.

## Technical expertise

- At least 3 years of experience in community engagement, communications or social mobilization in a development context.
- Experience working with Pacific Island communities, including outer island and rural populations.
- Experience in facilitating community consultations, focus groups and participatory planning processes.
- Experience producing multilingual or culturally adapted communication materials for low-literacy audiences.
- Understanding of GESI principles and inclusive engagement approaches.

## Language skills

- Fluency in English

## Interpersonal skills and cultural awareness

- Knowledge of Pacific Island countries and territories is an advantage

**Contract Duration** – This position is budgeted until 31 December 2028, subject to renewal depending on funding and performance.

**Remuneration** – the Community Engagement Assistant, FSM WASH is a Band 7 position in SPC's 2026 salary scale, with a starting taxable salary range of USD 32,652–40,815 per year, plus local staff benefits.

**Benefits** – SPC provides medical and life insurance for eligible employees. Employees are entitled to 25 days of annual leave. Provident Fund and/or Social Security will be according to FSM's local legislation.

**Closing date:** 4 October 2026 – 11:00 pm Noumea time

**Job Reference:** CR000626

Applicants must apply online at <http://careers.spc.int/>

For your application to be considered, you must provide us with: an updated resume with contact details for three professional referees, a cover letter detailing your skills, experience and interest in this position and responses to all screening questions

## Screening questions (maximum of 2,000 characters per question):

1. Reaching outer islands and remote villages in the Pacific is expensive and slow. When you are helping organize outreach, what practical ways have you used to reach these communities well without spending the whole budget just getting there?
2. A big part of this job is collecting what communities tell us and making sure it reaches the project team. How do you capture community feedback accurately, and pass it on so it does not get lost?
3. The Pacific has many languages and not everyone reads easily. When you are helping get water and sanitation messages across, what works — and how do you support local champions to keep the message going after an activity ends?

# Courtesy visit highlights potential project on derelict vessel removal and community benefits

## Pohnpei Public Information

September 9, 2026

**Pei Lapalap, Pohnpei** — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick recently met with Mr. Rob Jordan, Principal Consultant for EHS KOA, along with leadership from the Pohnpei Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to explore the potential for launching a project dedicated to removing abandoned and sunken vessels from Pohnpei waters. The courtesy visit focused on early assessments, project scoping, and the strategic alignment needed to safeguard maritime navigation, local marine ecosystems, and coastal resources. Supported by NOAA's Marine Debris Removal Program, the proposed initiative aims to address high-priority hazards while leveraging EHS KOA's technical oversight alongside local environmental management.

A central element of the discussion was a community-first operational model designed to maximize economic benefits for Pohnpei. Rather than relying entirely on outside entities, the proposed framework emphasizes hiring local contractors and partnering with community-based groups like the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP). EHS KOA and the Pohnpei EPA highlighted that building local capacity, respecting traditional customs, and ensuring strict adherence to environmental standards remain fundamental prerequisites as project plans take shape.

To avoid overburdening local infrastructure, the delegation presented innovative strategies for responsible waste management and material disposal. Proposals include exporting scrap metal to international recycling buyers in Korea and Taiwan, exploring local processing solutions for fiberglass and wood, and evaluating deep-water sinking for select vessels to create artificial reefs, subject to full regulatory approval. The administration was also briefed on potential coordination with the U.S. military for larger vessel removals, alongside critical coral mitigation plans to protect and restore marine habitats during potential extraction operations.

Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Movick expressed strong support for the proactive consultation and reaffirmed Pohnpei's commitment to maritime safety and environmental stewardship. The proposed phased approach will initially focus on assessing high-hazard, accessible vessels and engaging local vendors to determine logistics and timelines. This visit marks an encouraging first step toward establishing a collaborative, community-centered foundation to clear Pohnpei's coastal waters and protect its natural resources for future generations.

KOA CONSULTING is A full-service Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) firm providing consulting services to public and private partners in the Mariana Islands and beyond.



Ratu Sukuna Road, Nasese, Suva, Fiji  
T: (679) 331 2600 | info@forumsec.org  
www.forumsec.org

## Opportunity at the Forum Secretariat

### The Pacific Islands Forum

The Forum (PIF) is an Employer of Choice in the region, aiming to recruit and employ staff based on merit and organisational needs. The Secretariat is committed to ensuring that its employment selection upholds its values and commitment to Forum membership, gender balance, and building a diverse and inclusive organisation. The PIF is committed to achieving gender balance and being fully representative of member countries. The Secretariat's workforce is currently over 50% female, with representatives from fifteen of the eighteen Forum member countries.

To achieve greater workforce representation from our member countries we strongly encourage applicants from the following countries to apply: Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, and Niue

### The Opportunity: Senior Adviser – Strategic Policy, Futures and Foresight (SA-SPFF)

Applications are invited to fill this vacant international position at the Secretariat in Suva. The Senior Adviser – SPFF position is responsible for providing strategic policy leadership and advice on regional priorities and emerging issues affecting Forum Members. The position holder will be responsible for the following responsibilities to name a few:

- Strategic Policy Leadership, Foresight and Regional Coherence
- Forum Processes and Ministerial Support
- Organisational Coordination and Delivery
- Leadership and Team Management

Applicants should have an advanced University degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in strategic planning, politics, development studies, humanities or a related field with at least 8+ years of professional work experience, including 3+ years in roles requiring strong lateral management, relationship building, strategy formulation, project management, and cross-functional leadership. Candidates with strong analytical skills and the ability to master new materials quickly with proven ability to monitor regional and international developments and to conduct comprehensive stakeholder analysis including application of quantitative methods for analysing policy, formulating high-quality policy papers in the Pacific region or in an international environment.

### The Benefits

The position carries a competitive and attractive remuneration and benefits package including medical and life insurance, education, and housing allowance. The position is placed at Band 13 / Senior level of our salary scale, starting at SDR 52,492 equivalent to FJD 161,514.

Note: Amounts are based on 1 August 2026 foreign exchange rate, but your final salary will be dependent on foreign exchange rates at the time of payment.

### How to apply

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply through the PIFS website: [www.forumsec.org](http://www.forumsec.org) where an information package containing the position description and full remuneration details is available. Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees.

To be eligible for the position, applicants must be nationals of Forum member countries. The Forum Secretariat is an Equal Opportunity Employer. To be eligible for this position, the applicant must be a national of a Forum member country\*. Applicant must be willing to travel periodically via economy class. Deadline for applications is 9 October 2026.

*\*Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Naoero, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.*

# Pohnpei State partners with Tripler Army Medical Center to expand healthcare access and veteran care services

**Pohnpei Public Information**

**September 11, 2026**

**Pei Lapalap, Pohnpei** — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, First Lady Dr. Helentina Garstang, Lieutenant Governor Herolyn S. Movick, and Chief of Staff Patterson K. Shed recently welcomed a delegation from Tripler Army Medical Center to Pohnpei State, including Colonel Brimson, Colonel Nguyen, Colonel Medendorp, Yu Wei Chang, and Mark Eble.

This engagement follows an earlier official visit by Governor Joseph and First Lady Dr. Garstang to Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, where they discussed continuing and strengthening medical referral pathways for Pohnpei residents.

The current visit represents a direct support implementation step resulting from Governor Joseph's earlier visit to

Tripler Army Medical Center, advancing the partnership into actionable operational support alongside the Pohnpei State Health team.

During their visit, the delegation met with Pohnpei State leadership, U.S. Embassy officials—including the Chargé d'Affaires—and local veterans' representatives, such as Mr. Hainrick Panuelo, Director of FSM Veterans Affairs. Discussions centered on reinvigorating VA beneficiary care and expanding outreach for healthcare services across the state.

Key outcomes and focus areas from the visit include:

- Healthcare & Medical Program Reinvigoration: Delegation leaders and Governor Joseph outlined strategies to reintroduce active care programs to local physicians and hospital staff. Increasing patient consults and volume is critical to
- gathering data on local healthcare demands, which will support future resource allocations and program expansion in coordination with partner institutions like Tripler Army Medical Center. Following their official meeting with Governor Joseph, the Tripler team toured Pohnpei State Hospital and met with hospital officials and local specialists. During this visit, Pohnpei State Hospital specialists signed up for the Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC) website, enabling local providers to now post cases—including military veterans—directly for consultation and referral.
- Veteran Care Coordination: Meetings with local veterans' groups highlighted opportunities to better serve the region's sizeable military veteran population. State and military officials discussed augmenting current services by

coordinating with local Physicians.

- Patient Support & Logistics: The leadership addressed historical service delivery challenges, specifically patient housing support for medical referrals, with ongoing efforts underway to secure reliable accommodations for individuals receiving care abroad.

The delegation's itinerary also coincided with local Liberation Day commemorations, marking the 81st anniversary of the end of World War II in Pohnpei and its 47th official celebration, where visiting officials observed community events and sports preparations.

The visit concluded with shared commitments to maintain close regional coordination, support local hospital infrastructure, and ensure high-quality healthcare and veteran services for the people of Pohnpei.



## Establishment of diplomatic relations between the FSM and Nepal

**By Kenneth Welles**  
**FSM UN Mission**

**September 14, 2026**

**New York** - The Governments of the Federated States of Micronesia and Nepal today (September 14, 2026) formally established diplomatic relations at a signing ceremony held in New York. The Joint Communiqué was signed by H.E. Jeem Lippwe, Permanent Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia, and H.E. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Permanent Representative of Nepal, marking a significant step in strengthening cooperation between the two nations.

Both Permanent Representatives underscored the importance of diplomatic

relations as a cornerstone of peaceful cooperation among sovereign states. They noted that diplomatic ties enable countries to communicate effectively, coordinate on shared priorities, and advance mutual development interests within the multilateral system.

The Federated States of Micronesia, recognized as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), and Nepal, designated as a Least Developed Country (LDC), highlighted the natural solidarity between their respective groups. Both groups face structural development constraints and heightened climate vulnerabilities, representing populations most at risk from climate change despite contributing the least to global emissions.

The Permanent Representatives emphasized that SIDS and LDCs work closely in international processes, including at the UNFCCC, where they advocate for climate finance accessibility, adaptation support, and ambitious mitigation commitments. They reaffirmed that Micronesia and Nepal will continue to collaborate within these coalitions to advance shared priorities on climate resilience, sustainable development, and equitable global financing.

The two Permanent Representatives also highlighted the symbolic significance of this new relationship: Nepal is home to Mount Everest, the highest peak on Earth, while Micronesia's maritime jurisdiction includes the Challenger Deep, the



deepest part of the world's oceans, located within the Federated States of Micronesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Together, they represent the planet's highest elevation and its deepest point, an illustration of the geographic diversity of the international community and a reminder that global challenges require cooperation across all regions, from the mountaintops to the ocean floor.

# Building schools that can weather climate shocks

The European Union and UNICEF announce a major agreement to strengthen education systems and climate-resilient school infrastructure across the Pacific during the 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Palau

**European Union  
UNICEF**

**2 September 2026**

**Koror, Palau** – Thousands of children across the Pacific will benefit from a new European Union-UNICEF partnership supporting governments in building safer, stronger schools that are better prepared for climate-related disasters.

Across the Pacific, climate change is increasingly damaging schools and disrupting children's education. Almost every year, cyclones, floods, rising sea levels – amongst other disasters – damage classrooms, water systems, and school facilities, particularly in remote communities. In many cases, schools are repaired only to be damaged again by the next disaster, leading to a costly cycle of damage and reconstruction.

The new €17 Million Pacific Climate Resilient Education Systems (Pacific CRES) programme signed and launched at a side event of the 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Palau, reflects

the European Union's (EU) long-term commitment to working alongside Pacific countries and UNICEF on shared climate and development priorities.

The new programme will upgrade existing school infrastructure, strengthen maintenance systems, as well as introduce practical solutions that help schools remain operational during and after disasters.

Improvements will include climate-resilient water and sanitation facilities, renewable energy systems, and enhanced connectivity – creating safer, more reliable learning environments for children.

The agreement signed yesterday by the Deputy Director-General for the Directorate-General for International Partnerships, Marjeta Jager, and UNICEF Pacific's Deputy Representative, Roshni Basu, is not only an investment in school buildings. It is an investment in safety, continuity of learning, dignity, and opportunity for children and communities facing growing climate and disaster risks.

In addition to improving school infrastructure, the programme will support governments to plan and budget for the long-term maintenance of school facilities.

“Launched during this Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, and in the same year that the Pacific hosts pre-COP, the partnership reflects growing recognition that climate resilience must be built into the systems and services that children rely on every day,” said UNICEF Pacific's Deputy Representative, Roshni Basu. “With the leadership of Pacific governments and in partnership with the European Union, this programme is investing in solutions that will protect learning for years to come, rather than relying on short-term fixes.”

Over the next five years, the programme is expected to directly benefit around 15,000 children through improved school facilities in Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia



(FSM), Kiribati, and Solomon Islands. It will support approximately 2,000 teachers and school administrators with training on disaster preparedness and school resilience. It will also engage around 25,000 community members in disaster risk reduction and school maintenance activities.

The programme will be implemented by Ministries of Education in partnership with UNICEF, National Disaster Management Offices, climate change authorities, as well as regional organizations across Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, and Solomon Islands.

# Lippwe calls South-South cooperation indispensable for Micronesia

**By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlle Press**

**September 9, 2026**

**NEW YORK** — The Federated States of Micronesia has called for stronger cooperation among developing countries as they confront climate change, rising debt, rapid technological change, and other challenges that often fall most heavily on small island nations.

FSM Permanent Representative to the United Nations Jeem Lippwe delivered the message September 11 during a high-level panel discussion in New York for the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation.

Lippwe said the concept of countries sharing knowledge, experience, and solutions has particular relevance for Small Island Developing States, where climate change remains an existential concern.

“Across the Global South, solidarity is rising,” Lippwe said. “Countries are exchanging knowledge, adapting proven approaches, and scaling innovations that improve lives.”

He said that cooperation is taking place against what he described as a difficult international environment characterized by rising debt burdens, climate-related

disasters, rapid digital transformation, and growing uncertainty.

“For Micronesia, climate change remains an existential concern, threatening the security, livelihoods, and resilience of our communities,” Lippwe said. “In such a context, South-South cooperation is indispensable.”

South-South cooperation generally refers to developing countries exchanging resources, knowledge, technology, and expertise to address shared development challenges. Lippwe said the FSM's own experience demonstrates how such partnerships can be translated into practical programs addressing nationally identified needs.

He specifically thanked India for its support through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, which finances development projects proposed and led by countries of the Global South.

According to Lippwe, the FSM is benefiting from a group of initiatives supported through the fund that address clean energy, climate preparedness, inclusive institutions, gender equality, and access to health services across the nation's islands.

“These efforts support our transition to clean energy, strengthen climate preparedness,

reinforce inclusive institutions and gender equality, and expand access to essential health services across our islands,” he said.

Lippwe described those programs as examples of cooperation in which experiences and solutions developed elsewhere are adapted to local circumstances rather than imposed through a single model.

He said South-South cooperation ultimately extends beyond physical infrastructure and technology.

“They demonstrate that cooperation is not only about infrastructure or technology; it is fundamentally about people, about resilience, opportunity, and dignity,” Lippwe said.

The FSM also welcomed the launch of the Global Alliance for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, which is intended to provide a platform through which countries can connect development solutions, establish partnerships, and expand successful initiatives.

Triangular cooperation generally brings a third partner — such as an international organization, developed country, or other development partner — into cooperation between developing countries, providing additional resources, expertise, or



institutional support.

The theme of this year's UN observance was “Solidarity Rising: Global Alliance for Inclusive and Innovative Development.”

Lippwe said the theme reflects the circumstances facing Small Island Developing States, where many of the most serious development and climate challenges cross national boundaries and cannot readily be addressed by individual countries acting alone.

“Our challenges are shared, and our solutions must be shared as well,” he said.

Lippwe said the FSM remains committed to strengthening partnerships, exchanging solutions, and contributing to broader development efforts through cooperation among countries of the Global South.

## Yap Historical Preservation Office attends the opening of the FSM HPO annual meeting



**Yap Government**

**September 17, 2026**

**Pohnpei** - On Monday, September 14th, the Yap State Historical Preservation Officer, along with key staff, attended the Opening of the FSM HPO Annual Meeting in Pohnpei.

The opening program included a warm welcome from the Honorable Lieutenant Governor of Pohnpei, Madam Herolyn Semes Movick, who welcomed Historic Preservation representatives from across the Federated States of Micronesia. In her remarks, she highlighted the importance of collaboration and working together to protect and preserve the nation's cultural heritage and historic resources.

The Yap State HPO team also attended a welcome gathering hosted by the

Pohnpei HPO, held in honor of Historic Preservation representatives from the FSM states.

The FSM HPO Annual Meeting brings together Historic Preservation representatives from all four states—Pohnpei, Chuuk, Kosrae, and Yap. The annual meeting provides an important opportunity for the four state HPOs to share experiences, report on their preservation work, discuss programs and challenges, strengthen partnerships, and coordinate future activities.

Through continued collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and experiences, the four state HPOs work together toward the protection, preservation, and promotion of the Federated States of Micronesia's rich cultural heritage and historic resources.

## Community efforts restore Historic Men's House in Chool, Maap



**Yap Government**

**September 16, 2026**

**Yap, FSM** - On Saturday, September 12, the Yap Historical Preservation Officer, together with the Acting Director of the Department of Youth and Civic Affairs (DYCA), met with community members in Chool, Maap, to formally close out a restoration project and recognize their continued efforts to preserve an important piece of Yapese culture and history.

The project began on April 27th, when community members came together

to repair the roof of a men's house in Chool, Maap. Through their collective effort, dedication, and commitment to preserving their cultural heritage, the community worked to restore and protect this important historical structure for future generations.

The gathering served not only as an opportunity to acknowledge the completion of the restoration work, but also to recognize and celebrate the community members whose continued efforts help keep Yap's history, traditions, and cultural heritage alive.

## Yap leads receive courtesy call with U.S. Army Pacific Religious Support Office

**Yap Government**

**September 11, 2026**

**Yap, FSM** - The Yap State Leadership welcomed the U.S. Army Pacific Religious Support Office during a courtesy call hosted by the Governor's Office on September 9 at the Governor's Conference Room.

The meeting, held at 10:00 a.m., was led by Colonel John Smith of the U.S. Army Pacific Religious Support Office. The courtesy call provided an opportunity for both sides to strengthen engagement and discuss ongoing efforts to support communities across the Federated States of Micronesia.

During the meeting, Colonel Smith shared information about the office's

mission to conduct mental health and religious support engagements across all four states of the Federated States of Micronesia. The initiative aims to promote community well-being while strengthening connections with local leaders and faith-based communities.

The delegation also discussed recent efforts to engage with religious leaders and communities, highlighting the importance of collaboration and community outreach in addressing the needs of individuals and families.

Another area of discussion was the U.S. Army Pacific Religious Support Office's collaboration with the Division of Youth Services during the 2026 Youth Summit. The partnership reflected ongoing efforts to engage young people

and provide support through programs focused on their overall well-being and development.

The courtesy call concluded with a prayer led by Colonel Smith, followed by the presentation of gifts to the Yap State Leadership as a gesture of appreciation and goodwill.

The meeting underscored the importance of continued cooperation between the U.S. Army Pacific Religious Support Office and local leadership as efforts continue to support the mental, spiritual, and social well-being of communities throughout the Federated States of Micronesia.



# Mal'ay and Thabeth communities strengthen commitment to sustainable management of Reey Resources

**Yap Government**

**September 8, 2026**

**Yap, FSM** - Yesterday, September 7, the Reey Conservation Area-Reey shared highlights from the communities of Mal'ay and Thabeth, who reaffirmed and strengthened their commitment to sustainably managing the Reey Resources Management Area through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OneReef on September 6, 2026, marking another important step in strengthening community-led conservation and resource management efforts in the Reey Conservation Area.

The agreement reflects a shared commitment among community members, traditional leaders, and conservation partners to protect the area's natural resources while

safeguarding the traditional way of life that communities depend on.

The MOU also highlights the importance of collaboration in responding to growing environmental changes and challenges affecting local resources.

Founding member of the Reey program, Mr. John Gilsowuth, emphasized the importance of continued community involvement in managing and protecting natural resources.

"Community efforts such as our resource management program are important, especially with all the changes happening in our environment today," Gilsowuth said.

"We are thankful for all the support from our traditional leadership, community



members, and friends near and far. Thank you, OneReef, and everyone for your continued collaboration and support," he added.

The signing of the MOU represents Mal'ay and Thabeth's continued commitment to work with OneReef and other partners to strengthen sustainable resource management.

Through community-led conservation, the communities aim to protect their

environment and natural resources for current and future generations while maintaining the cultural practices and way of life that remain central to their communities.

The partnership demonstrates the important role that local communities and traditional leadership play in conservation and in developing long-term approaches to sustainably managing natural resources.

# Yap officials explore new internship opportunities through UOG outreach

**Yap Government**

**September 16, 2026**

**Yap, FSM** - Officials from the Department of Resources and Development's Workforce Enrichment Division shared highlights on their recent outreach mission to Guam, focusing on strengthening partnerships with the University of Guam (UOG) and expanding opportunities for Yapese students.

The mission, held from September 9–12, 2026, included meetings with Dr. Sharleen Santos-Bamba, UOG Senior Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs, and Mr. Harley Edeluchel, Professional Workforce Specialist. Discussions centered on developing structured internship pathways that could allow Yapese students to gain practical work experience in Yap during their academic breaks.

UOG leadership expressed strong support for exploring the internship initiative, which could help students meet academic internship requirements while gaining valuable experience in their home community.

The delegation also met with members of the UOG Yap Student Organization (YSO) at the Student Center. Officials checked in with students, provided updates on Spring 2027 application deadlines, and introduced new Loan/Scholarship Program guidelines.

The discussions also followed up on student concerns raised during previous meetings regarding graduation internship requirements. Officials shared progress on efforts to create internship opportunities in Yap in coordination with UOG and local employers.

UOG instructor Ms. Elizabeth M. Rutun, Dr. Santos-Bamba, Mr. Edeluchel, and members of the YSO supported the mission and helped coordinate the visit.

After returning to Yap, Workforce Enrichment Division officials have begun working to formalize partnerships between UOG and prospective local employers.

The initiative is expected to strengthen connections between education and workforce development while creating more opportunities for Yapese students to gain practical experience in their home community.



## Pacific Island countries and territories unite at the thirty-seventh Committee on Fisheries (COFI37)

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

**September 20, 2026**

**Rome, Italy** - Pacific Island countries and territories have reinforced their collective leadership in sustainable fisheries management at the 37th Session of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI37) at FAO Headquarters in Rome Italy, calling for stronger international recognition and support for Pacific-led strategies, regional cooperation and the unique needs of Small Island Developing States and Territories (SIDS).

Representatives of Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Pacific Community (SPC), and Members from the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Palau, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia had a high profile at COFI37, including through New Zealand representative Adam Berry, who ably chaired the meeting. Their collective voices highlighted the Pacific's strong record of regional cooperation, science-based fisheries management and effective monitoring and compliance systems. The region's experience demonstrates that coordinated action, supported by science and effective governance, can sustain



valuable tuna fisheries while delivering lasting economic, social and food-security benefits for Pacific communities.

Pacific region leadership was on display throughout the week. FFA was awarded the Margarita Lizárraga Medal in recognition of its contribution to sustainable fisheries management, an achievement reflecting decades of collective effort and cooperation across the FFA membership. Pacific representatives also featured prominently in high-level panels and side events throughout COFI37, including the panel marking the 10th anniversary of the Port State Measures Agreement and events on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and fisheries, World Trade Organization (WTO), climate change and youth, helping bring Pacific experiences, achievements and priorities to the forefront of global fisheries discussions.

The Pacific called for international support to strengthen existing regional systems and initiatives, including fisheries science, data, monitoring, compliance, enforcement, traceability and capacity development. Support for SIDS should be practical, country-driven and delivered through established regional institutions, ensuring that international assistance complements rather than duplicates existing Pacific arrangements.

Climate change was highlighted as one of the most significant threats to Pacific fisheries and aquaculture, with changing tuna distributions and growing pressures on coastal fisheries posing risks to food security, livelihoods, government revenue and economic development. Pacific region representatives called for increased financial and technical support for climate adaptation and mitigation, including improved data and monitoring, resilient fisheries management and support for communities on the front line of climate impacts.

The Pacific region also emphasized the importance of coherent international fisheries governance. New and emerging international commitments and measures should complement existing regional and subregional fisheries arrangements, respect the mandates of regional fisheries management organizations and avoid creating unnecessary or duplicative reporting and compliance burdens for small administrations.

Strong regional cooperation was further highlighted as essential to combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Pacific initiatives in regional surveillance, electronic reporting and electronic monitoring, information-sharing and electronic Port State Measures demonstrate the value of collective approaches to protecting fisheries resources. The Pacific called for continued international support to strengthen these systems, build national capacity and improve the ability to identify and respond to emerging IUU risks.

The Pacific message at COFI37 was clear: international support must build on Pacific leadership and strengthen the regional systems already delivering results. Sustaining healthy fisheries requires continued investment in science, people, technology and resilient communities, while ensuring that Pacific Island countries and territories retain and increase the long-term economic, social and food-security benefits of their fisheries resources.

The Pacific Island countries and territories represented at COFI37 reaffirmed their commitment to working collectively through FFA, SPC and other regional and international partners to advance sustainable, climate-resilient fisheries and ensure that the benefits of the Pacific's fisheries continue to support present and future generations.

## Governor meets with partners on Tamil Community Wastewater Treatment project

**Yap Government**

**September 9, 2026**

**Yap, FSM** - On Friday, September 4, the Governor's Office held a courtesy meeting with representatives involved in the wastewater treatment pilot project in the Tamil community of Yap. The meeting was held in the Governor's Conference Room and included Ohmae Jun-ichi of ECOPLUS, Professor NAKANO Kazunori of Nihon University, and representatives of the Tamil Resource Conservation Trust (TRCT).

The meeting provided an opportunity to brief the Governor on the successful development and operation of the pilot project, which uses a natural filtration

method known as an "artificial wetland" to treat wastewater before it is discharged into the environment.

Professor Nakano, who has been advising on wastewater treatment efforts in Tamil since 2016, reported that the current pilot system has been operating successfully for more than a year and has achieved a wastewater treatment efficiency of more than 90 percent.

The treated water has recorded a Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) level of 20 mg/L, indicating that the water meets the project's target for safe environmental discharge.

The Governor expressed his appreciation to Professor Nakano, TRCT, and ECOPLUS for their continued efforts and commitment to improving wastewater management in the Tamil community. He also reaffirmed his support for the project and pledged to continue supporting its development in his capacity as Governor.

The pilot project represents an important step toward developing

sustainable and environmentally responsible wastewater treatment solutions that can benefit communities in Yap.



## Opinion Editorial

# From the Himalayas to the Pacific: Climate Justice in a World of Rising Risk

By Miles Young and Bhakta Karki

On 26 August, Nepal suffered one of the darkest days in its recent history. High in the Himalayas along the Nepal–China border, a collapse of glacial ice and bedrock triggered a catastrophic debris flow down the Bhote Koshi and Trishuli river system. The resulting torrent — described by some as a “Himalayan tsunami” because of its extraordinary force and scale — sent a wall of water, ice, mud and boulders tearing through settlements across a roughly 70-kilometre stretch of the valley, carrying debris and the remains of many victims as far as 240 kilometres downstream towards the Indian border.

The human toll is staggering. As of 6 September, more than 1,300 deaths have been recorded as result of this tragedy while close to 5,000 people are still missing. The figures are still rising as rescue efforts continue.

Satellite imagery had picked up signs of instability in the glacier and surrounding bedrock in the days before it gave way. Scientists will spend months untangling the precise chain of events, and how far a warming climate shaped the conditions behind it. But one lesson is already clear: in a world of accelerating climate risk, preparedness cannot be an afterthought — and information is only useful if it reaches the people who need to act on it, in time.

### The Pacific and Nepal: A shared vulnerability, however far apart

For the Pacific, climate change is a present crisis affecting lives, livelihoods, security and development. Pacific Islands Forum Leaders have consistently declared climate change the single greatest existential threat to the Pacific region, calling for urgent emissions cuts, a strict limit of 1.5°C on global warming, and improved access to fast finance, amongst other things.

Nepal may be geographically distant from the Pacific, but the climate story unfolding in the Himalayas will feel strikingly familiar to communities across the Pacific. Nepal watches the ice above its communities; Pacific islanders watch the ocean at their doorstep. In the Himalayas, retreating glaciers and

swelling glacial lakes are reshaping risk for mountain communities. In the Pacific, it is rising seas, coastal inundation, stronger cyclones, saltwater intrusion, drought and coral loss.

For Pacific Islands Countries and Territories, changes in the ocean translate directly into food and water insecurity, disrupted livelihoods and, in places, the loss of the very land people call home. From ridge to reef, from mountain to atoll, climate risk does not respect borders, and the questions it raises are the same everywhere: who is most exposed, who has the resources to prepare, and who bears the cost when adaptation reaches its limits?

### Climate Justice: Paying most for contributing least

Between them, Nepal and the Pacific emit only a tiny fraction of global greenhouse gases, yet their people sit on some of the crisis's most exposed frontlines. That is what makes this a question of justice, not just risk management: financing adaptation before disasters strike, delivering real loss-and-damage support once impacts can no longer be avoided, and giving vulnerable countries access to the science, data and early-warning systems that can save lives.

The Pacific has already helped turn that moral argument into a legal one. In July 2025, the International Court of Justice delivered a landmark advisory opinion — sought by Vanuatu and driven in large part by Pacific youth advocacy — confirming that states have binding obligations under international law to protect the climate system, and that failing to act can amount to an internationally wrongful act. It is a ruling that Pacific climate negotiators are now carrying into every forum that matters.

But loss and damage are about more than rebuilding roads and power stations. It is about people losing homes, ancestral land, cultural heritage and, in the case of communities facing relocation — as some in Fiji already are — the chance to remain safely in the places that define who they are. Moving a village is not simply an infrastructure project.

### From Palau to COP31: Turning vulnerability into action

The 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting recently concluded in Palau with a strong reaffirmation that climate change remains the single greatest threat to Pacific peoples — and with important steps towards turning vulnerability into collective action.

Forum Leaders endorsed the Belau Declaration for Urgent and Inclusive Climate Action to Keep 1.5°C Within Reach, strengthened commitments on climate finance, renewable energy and the ocean-climate nexus, and backed the COP31 Pacific Partnership to carry a coordinated Pacific voice into global negotiations.

Importantly, Palau also pushed climate leadership beyond declarations. Leaders strengthened commitments to multi-hazard early warning and preparedness, recognised Pacific women's climate leadership, supported improved SIDS access to the Green Climate Fund, and reinforced the region's climate-justice advocacy following the historic ICJ Advisory Opinion.

For Nepal, still confronting the consequences of its Himalayan catastrophe, the message is particularly relevant: vulnerability may take different forms across mountains and islands, but collective leadership can turn vulnerability into diplomatic and legal influence.

The challenge now is to carry this momentum from Palau to COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye, this November. With Australia leading the COP31 negotiations in partnership with the Pacific, and Fiji and Tuvalu hosting Pacific Pre-COP events, the region has an unusually direct opportunity to turn political leadership into global action including through the following four priorities.

First, finance resilience before disaster strikes. Investing in adaptation, resilient infrastructure and early-warning systems is far cheaper — in money and in lives — than rebuilding after the fact.

Second, make climate finance genuinely accessible. Pacific nations should not have to navigate labyrinthine funding systems, or take on new debt, to protect people from a crisis they did little to create. The test for any facility is whether money actually reaches communities, not how many funding mechanisms it establishes. The Pacific

Resilience Facility — the region's first Pacific-owned and Pacific-led financing vehicle, now moving toward full operation — is a concrete attempt to meet that test, and deserves the support to succeed.

Third, turn loss and damage from a promise into a functioning system. Finance must cover more than physical rebuilding; it must also respond to displacement, lost livelihoods and non-economic losses — cultural heritage and ancestral places — that cannot simply be replaced.

Fourth, treat knowledge and preparedness as resilience infrastructure in their own right. Climate science, hazard mapping, forecasting and community-based early-warning systems are what stand between a hazard and a catastrophe. Nepal's tragedy is a stark reminder that information saves lives only when it reaches decision-makers and communities in time.

### What success looks like

The challenge for the Pacific is to carry the momentum from the recently concluded 55th PIF Leaders Meeting in Palau into COP31 in Turkey. Success will ultimately be measured on the ground — whether finance reaches communities before disaster strikes, whether early warnings save lives, and whether loss-and-damage support enables recovery without deepening debt. The Pacific has shown that vulnerability need not mean powerlessness when countries speak with a strong and united voice. That lesson reaches far beyond the Pacific. From the roof of the world to the atolls of the Blue Pacific, climate justice means turning collective leadership and global commitments into protection, resilience and hope for those most vulnerable and on the frontlines.

*Miles Young is Director of the Human Rights and Social Development Division at the Pacific Community (SPC), based at its Regional Office in Suva, Fiji.*

*Bhakta Karki is a Nepalese national and Adviser – Knowledge Management with the Human Rights and Social Development Division based in Suva, Fiji. Many of his friends were directly affected by the 26 August 2026 glacial collapse and some remain missing as rescue and recovery efforts continue in Nepal.*

*The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SPC.*

## Opinion Editorial

# As COP31 approaches, are Pacific Islands truly ready for more climate finance?

**Floyd Robinson**

While Pacific nations push for greater climate finance access ahead of COP31, are we paying enough attention to preparedness so that our systems, capacities and institutional realities can turn funding into results on the ground?

Pacific Island Countries continue to advocate tirelessly for greater access to climate finance. Calls for increased adaptation funding and reduced bureaucracy were echoed at the recent 55th Pacific Islands Leaders Forum in Palau. From a climate justice perspective, Pacific nations contribute the least to global greenhouse gas emissions yet remain among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts.

As the Pacific prepares for COP31, where improving climate finance access for Small Island Developing States has emerged as a key priority, the region has an opportunity to shape a more honest conversation about climate finance. Access matters. But access alone will not protect coastlines, strengthen food security, improve water systems, or reduce vulnerability to disasters. A difficult question remains largely unasked: Are Pacific governments truly ready to turn climate finance into climate action?

After more than 20 years working in the development sector, I believe we are overlooking a critical aspect of the climate finance debate. While much attention is rightly focused on increasing funding and reducing barriers to access, insufficient attention is being given to institutional readiness. In other words, our ability to implement projects and manage large volumes of donor funding effectively once it arrives.

The Pacific's climate finance challenge is no longer just about access. It is about readiness.

Preparing for funding opportunities through mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility is essential. These funds provide vital resources for

adaptation and resilience initiatives, but they also come with strict requirements, reporting obligations and implementation timelines. Once project agreements are signed, the clock begins ticking immediately.

How prepared are Pacific Island governments to absorb, utilize and account for large volumes of external funding? During my time with the United Nations, I once asked a national project manager in the North Pacific to draw a simple flowchart showing how many people had to review and approve a payment request before the Ministry of Finance could process it.

At first glance, the answer seemed straightforward: three people. A closer examination revealed a different reality. The flowchart showed that at least seven individuals were involved across the project coordination unit, executing government department and national finance office before a payment could be processed. This process was repeated for nearly every transaction over a four-year project period.

Such experiences are not unique. Across the Pacific, climate change project teams often face lengthy approval processes, particularly for large procurements. Compliance with government procedures, while necessary, can result in significant delays as requests move through multiple layers of review. Yet donor-funded projects operate under strict implementation schedules and performance targets. The question is whether our internal systems and procedures are sufficiently modernized to ensure timely decision-making so that benefits reach vulnerable communities as quickly as possible.

Another challenge relates to co-financing requirements. Demonstrating adequate co-financing is often an important component of proposals submitted to multilateral funds such as the Global Environment Facility and, in some cases, the Green Climate Fund.

During my tenure with the United Nations, I recall a project formulation

mission to Tuvalu for a Global Environment Facility-funded Ridge to Reef initiative. Senior government officials explained that much of the government's available co-financing had already been committed to another adaptation project, only a few weeks earlier. At times, the project formulation can feel like a "first come, first served" competition. Pacific Island Countries are also stretched in their capacities to distribute limited co-financing between multiple funding opportunities.

For Pacific Island Countries with small economies and limited fiscal space, balancing these demands can be difficult. While the Green Climate Fund does not impose mandatory co-financing ratios across all projects, proposals demonstrating strong co-financing commitments are often viewed favorably. For countries with limited financial resources, this can create an additional challenge in competing for scarce funding opportunities.

However, ownership should not be measured solely by the size of a government's financial contribution. It can also be demonstrated through leadership, policy support, institutional commitment and the allocation of capable personnel to project implementation.

As COP31 approaches, Pacific leaders will rightly continue advocating for greater access to climate finance. Yet the next phase of the conversation should focus equally on how we could prepare for receiving and managing large project funding for adaptation interventions.

Resilience is not built through funding approvals alone. It is built through improved processes, systems and people responsible for translating resources into meaningful action. Access without adequate readiness risks turning climate finance into missed opportunities. At the end of day, climate finance from donors is bound by strict deadlines.

Therefore, one cannot over emphasize the importance of readiness as a crucial discussion and decision-making point for Pacific Island Countries. The real test for the Pacific is not whether we can attract more climate finance, but whether we are prepared to transform that finance into resilience where it matters most.

## Strong enabling environment key to attracting private renewable energy investment in pacific

*Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative*

**September 14, 2026**

**Sydney** — The strength of the enabling environment is critical to attracting the private investment needed to meet ambitious renewable energy targets, according to a study just published by the Asian Development Bank's Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative (PSDI).

The study, *Enabling Renewable Investment: Lessons from Independent Power Producers in the Pacific*, examines the experiences of Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Tonga against a benchmark of Hawaii's much faster transition to renewable energy. It sets out country-specific reform priorities and practical guidance for Pacific policymakers and utilities seeking to accelerate private investment in renewable energy.

Many Pacific island countries are aiming to generate between 70% and 100% of their electricity from renewable sources by the early 2030s. With diesel costs now surging, this transition has become a commercial as well as an environmental imperative. For example, in July 2026, the levelized cost of solar generation with battery storage averaged less than half the marginal cost of diesel generation in the Pacific. However, over the past decade, the five countries included in the study commissioned only 8 new renewable energy generation plants with independent power producers (IPPs).

"With the cost of fuel rising, renewable energy investment is becoming an increasingly important commercial imperative for Pacific utilities," said Laure Darcy, PSDI's State-Owned Enterprise Reform Expert and co-author

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# Pacific partners launch new Action Plan to accelerate health and climate action

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

**September 9, 2026**

**Nadi, Fiji** - Pacific health and climate leaders launched the Pacific Network for Health and Climate Change Action Plan 2026–2028, setting out a shared framework to accelerate action to protect the health and wellbeing of more than 14 million people living in the Pacific, including Papua New Guinea, from the impacts of climate change.

The Action Plan was launched at the second Pacific Conference on Health and Climate Change, being held in Nadi, Fiji, from 9–11 September.

The conference, co-organized by the Pacific Community (SPC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), brings together around 65 regional leaders, climate and health experts, partners, researchers and civil society to shape the next phase of health and climate action in the Pacific.

Climate change is worsening existing public health challenges.

Rising temperatures, extreme weather events like floods and cyclones, water insecurity, and climate-sensitive diseases are increasingly threatening the health and wellbeing of Pacific communities.

Climate change also causes damage to health facilities and infrastructure, disrupts essential health services and places additional pressures on communities and health workers.

For Pacific Island countries and areas, addressing these risks requires strong health systems, coordinated action across sectors, and sustained investment in climate resilience that benefits health.

Across the region, countries are

strengthening disease surveillance systems, undertaking climate and health vulnerability assessments, investing in resilient health facilities, expanding renewable energy solutions, building workforce capacity on climate and health, and integrating climate considerations into health planning by developing national health adaptation plans.

The new Action Plan provides a platform for Pacific countries to collectively strengthen this important work across six priority areas:

- leadership and governance;
- collaboration, coordination and networking;
- capacity building;
- monitoring, research and data sharing;
- climate financing for health; and
- public awareness and engagement.

The Action Plan was developed through a consultative process led by the Pacific Network for Health and Climate Change.

The network was formally endorsed at the Pacific Heads of Health Meeting in 2024 and is tasked with advancing collective Pacific wide coordinated and accelerated health and climate action.

The process to develop the Action Plan has emphasized country leadership and ownership, ensuring that the Action Plan reflects national priorities while leveraging regional and partner support.

Strengthening the Pacific voice ahead of COP31

The Pacific Conference on Health and Climate Change comes at an important time for global climate and health action, with the Pacific preparing to play a critical role in discussions leading up to COP31, including through the role Tuvalu and Fiji will play as hosts for the pre-COP31 dialogue.

consistent, and durable government and utility commitment to increasing renewable energy through IPPs with accountability for meeting targets, (ii) coherent sector planning and grid readiness based on robust demand forecasts, (iii) a commercially governed and financially viable utility and an independent body that oversees licensing and tariff setting, and (iv) robust competitive procurement processes, bankable contract terms, and project sites procured in advance of IPP tenders.

The conference provides an opportunity for Pacific countries and partners to consolidate regional priorities and develop an outcome statement that can help inform health and climate discussions at pre-COP31 and COP31.

With the Action Plan now launched, the Pacific is strengthening its collective platform to ensure that health remains central to climate action and that Pacific priorities and experiences continue to inform regional and global climate discussions.

“Climate and health policy can no longer be pursued separately. For the Pacific, investing in resilient infrastructure, reliable water and energy systems, climate-informed surveillance, early warning, and a well-prepared health workforce is not optional. It is essential”, said Fiji United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr Dirk Wagener.

“The Pacific is not only calling for climate action – we are already delivering it. The Pacific Network for Health and Climate Change Action Plan demonstrates the leadership of Pacific countries and partners in protecting the health and wellbeing of our people in a changing climate,” Fiji Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services, Hon. Penioni Ravunawa. “This conference gives us an important opportunity to bring together our shared Pacific priorities and ensure that our voices and lived realities are reflected in the global climate discussions at the Pacific Pre-COP31 and COP31.”

“The Pacific Network for Health and Climate Change Action Plan is an important commitment to turning our shared priorities into practical action,” said Cook Islands Secretary of Health, Mr Bob Williams. “Our response requires collective action and strong Pacific leadership – this Action Plan prioritises both, ensuring we work together to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our people and our future.”

When these conditions are in place, IPP tenders have traditionally attracted strong international interest and delivered competitive offtake tariffs.

The study was launched 10 September 2026 at a Community of Practice webinar, Enabling Renewable Investment: Lessons from Independent Power Producers in the Pacific, hosted by the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF), and featuring a panel representing IPP partners active in

“The Pacific is showing that climate and health action can be practical, locally led and grounded in the realities of communities. This should give us confidence that despite the huge challenges countries face, guided by the action plan, much can be done to further protect the health of people in the Pacific”, WHO Representative to the South Pacific and the Director of Pacific Technical Support, Dr Mark Jacobs.

Quotes attributable to Pacific Community (SPC) Director of the Public Health Division, Dr Berlin Kafoa

“Climate change is one of the greatest health challenges facing the Pacific, but it is also an opportunity to strengthen our health systems and build more resilient communities,” Pacific Community (SPC) Director of the Public Health Division, Dr Berlin Kafoa. “This Action Plan provides a practical roadmap for countries and partners to work together, share knowledge and accelerate action that protects the health and wellbeing of Pacific people now and for future generations.”

“Through PAVE-Health, SPREP is working with Pacific countries and regional partners to translate evidence into practical, country-led action that strengthens climate-resilient health systems,” said Quotes attributable to Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) Director of Climate Change Resilience, Ms Tagaloa Cooper. “The Pacific Conference on Health and Climate Change provides an important platform to bring these national experiences together, amplify a unified Pacific voice, and ensure that health remains central to the region’s priorities and advocacy in the lead-up to COP31. SPREP is committed to supporting Pacific leadership and ensuring our communities’ realities, knowledge and solutions help shape global climate action.”

the region.

PSDI is a technical assistance program undertaken in partnership with the governments of Australia and New Zealand and the Asian Development Bank. PSDI supports ADB’s 14 Pacific DMCs to improve the enabling environment for business and achieve inclusive, private sector-led economic growth, including through reforms designed to improve the performance of state-owned enterprises.

## ...Renewable Energy

*Click here to return*

of the study. “To speed up the transition and attract private investment, the enabling environment has to allow private investors to assess and price risk with confidence.”

The study identifies a series of characteristics of an effective enabling environment. These comprise (i) clear,

# Emergency response capacity in Palau boosted through fire hydrant network upgrade as El Niño approaches

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

September 16, 2026

**Koror, Palau** – Fire safety and emergency response capabilities in the State of Koror, the commercial center and home to about 64 per cent of Palau’s population, are being strengthened with the upgrading and installation of fire hydrants across the state.

The work, funded by the European Union (EU) through the Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific Phase II (BSRP II) project, implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC), involves the replacement of seven defective fire hydrant units, the installation of seven new ones in underserved areas, and upgrading of water lines and fittings to ensure full operational capability and compliance with international fire safety standards. The work represents an investment of USD 235,000 towards improving Palau’s public safety.

Speaking at the project’s groundbreaking on 4 September 2026, the Vice President of the Republic of Palau, Honorable Raynold Oilouch said, “Infrastructure alone cannot make



a community resilient. We need the people, systems, knowledge, policies, and institutions that can operate and maintain that infrastructure when it is needed most.”

“For Palau, it represents something much greater. These fire hydrants are an investment in preparedness. It is an investment in our communities. And ultimately, it is an investment in resilience. As we stand on the cusp of what is anticipated to be an El Niño period, these hydrants take on an even greater significance. Palau has already begun experiencing wildfire incidents,

particularly across areas of Babeldaob, and these fires remind us that the hazards facing our communities are changing and, in some cases, becoming more difficult to manage,” Vice President Oilouch said.

The World Meteorological Organization expects the current El Niño to strengthen to a strong event before peaking towards the end of 2026 and persisting to February 2027.

Ms Marjeta Jager, the Deputy Director-General of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for International

Partnerships, was also present, co-launching this initiative in Palau. For the EU, the BRSP II project is key to strengthening urban resilience, accompanying authorities in their public service delivery efforts.

Ms Jager said: “Upgrading the fire hydrant system will directly support the Koror State Government and the National Division of Fire and Rescue by providing reliable, efficient, accessible high-pressured water sources during emergencies.”

SPC’s Director, Micronesia Regional Office, Mr. William Kostka, said the organization, through BSRP II, was committed to working with the Government of Palau to achieve its disaster risk management priorities.

“The timely installation of the fire hydrants improves the operational readiness of the Palau Division of Fire and Rescue. It is especially important given the onset of one of the largest El Niño events in recent memory,” Mr. Kostka said.

## Courtesy call by Associate Professors and students of Waseda University School of Social Sciences

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

September 7, 2026

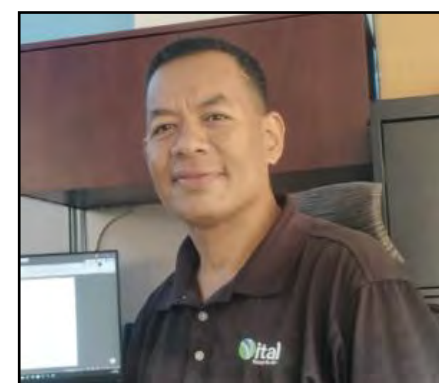
**Pohnpei** - On September 7, Ambassador KAGOMIYA received a courtesy call from Dr. Hajime OKUSAKO and Dr. Yoshiko TONEGAWA, Associate Professors from the Waseda University School of Social Sciences, as well as three students studying at Waseda University. Ambassador KAGOMIYA explained the political, economic, and cultural landscape of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), as well as the bilateral relations between Japan and the FSM, and the development cooperation that Japan is providing to the FSM. The students asked various questions regarding the FSM and the



bilateral relations, culminating in a beneficial exchange of views.

Ambassador KAGOMIYA hopes that the students deepened their understanding of the FSM and that the students’ experiences encountered during their visit to the FSM will help ensure their future endeavors.

## FSM Petroleum Corporation Announces Interim Executive Manager for Risk Compliance & Audit



FSM, 10 September 2026, 8:00AM – The Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation is pleased to announce the appointment of **Mr. Peterson Anson** as **Interim Executive Manager — Risk Compliance & Audit**, effective September 7, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

The interim appointment reflects the Corporation’s continued commitment to strengthening governance, risk management, compliance oversight, safety, assurance, and operational resilience across its business.

Mr. Anson brings valuable experience in business planning, program development, and project execution. In the interim role, he will support the development of structured work programs, clear accountability arrangements, and measurable deliverables for the Corporation’s Risk Compliance & Audit function.

The CEO Mr. Jared Morris said, “the appointment will help advance Vital’s efforts to maintain strong standards of compliance, safety, assurance, and responsible corporate governance while continuing to support reliable petroleum services for customers and communities throughout the Federated States of Micronesia.”

The Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation congratulates Mr. Anson on his appointment and looks forward to his contribution during this important period of organizational strengthening.

For more information pertaining to Vital FSMPC, please contact us via Telephone number 320-6364 or via email: [PetroCorp@fsmmpc.com](mailto:PetroCorp@fsmmpc.com)