

## Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Foreword

Welcome to the 2025 edition of the USP Research Newsletter, where we celebrate the remarkable achievements and groundbreaking advancements of our research community. This edition captures the dynamic spirit, innovative mindset, and profound impact of our university researchers, reaffirming our commitment to addressing both global challenges and regional priorities.

### Driving Research Excellence in the Pacific

USP remains steadfast in its dedication to conducting relevant, high-quality research aligned with the unique needs and aspirations of the Pacific region. Our Strategic Research Themes (SRTs) are directly inspired by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030) and are underpinned by the core pillars of Innovation, Empowerment, and Sustainability. These themes guide our USP researchers in tackling critical issues such as climate resilience, sustainable resource management, and socio-economic development, ensuring our work remains impactful and future focused.

### Celebrating Research Achievements

In this issue, we spotlight a diverse array of research initiatives across our schools, institutes, and centers. From local community-based projects to international collaborations, our researchers are making significant contributions that resonate globally. We take pride in highlighting:

- High-Impact Publications: Recognizing researchers whose work has achieved notable influence in their fields.
- Research Excellence Awards: Annual awards celebrating senior and early-career researchers for their outstanding contributions.
- Global Recognition: Honoring our scientists Professor Surendra Prasad, Professor M. Rafiuddin Ahmed and Professor and Professor Maurizio Cirrincione who featured in Stanford University's World's Top 2% Scientists List—a testament to the caliber of research emerging from our university.

### Innovation and Funding Success

Innovation is at the heart of our research strategy. This year, we celebrate the success of numerous groundbreaking projects, supported by substantial research grants. Our research community saw significant progress through the launch of three NERE-NAHAL projects funded by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, and the commencement of the UNDP-funded Pacific Digital Democracy Project across Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. Additionally, the EU-funded RERIPA project's CALL 3 Living Lab on climate change and coastal communities launched in Vanuatu, complementing ongoing RERIPA initiatives. These projects, alongside those supported by Griffith University, SPREP, and the University of Waikato, are advancing critical research in sustainable development, climate change, and digital democracy. Moreover, the PIURN, in collaboration with the French Embassy, hosted "Blue Talk" to amplify youth voices on ocean conservation, aligning with the 2025 UN Ocean Conference. The UNDP-USP Pacific Digital Democracy workshops further strengthened digital strategies in Tonga and the Solomon Islands, fostering a human rights-based approach to enhance state-society relations. These achievements reflect the ingenuity of our researchers and students, whose work continues to attract critical funding, enabling the pursuit of transformative ideas.

### Strengthening Regional Collaboration

Our collaborative initiatives within the Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network (PIURN) have flourished, fostering a strong culture of partnership and academic excellence. Through regional research collaborations, our researchers are leading projects that address pressing regional issues, with the potential to evolve into large-scale, sustainable programs. The Gender Barriers Leadership in Pacific Universities project under PWL at SPC grant developed within PIURN and the selection of 4 USP-led collaborative research projects for the 2024 PIURN Call for Proposals contribute to foster regional scientific cooperation. These efforts are generating continuous publications, securing external funding, and positioning the network as a central force in regional research development. Mark your calendar for the 6th PIURN Conference, to be held at Papua New Guinea University of Technology, in Lae, PNG, on 1-3 July 2025, providing a unique opportunity to connect with Pacific scholars and academics and share your research.

### Supporting the Next Generation of Scholars through our USP Graduate School

We are deeply committed to nurturing future researchers. Our extensive range of internal and external scholarships ensures that financial barriers do not impede academic and research pursuits. By investing in our students, we are shaping the next generation of leaders who will drive innovation and progress in the Pacific region and beyond. The Graduate School continues to communicate and meet regularly with international partners who support USPs various PG research scholarship programmes. The ACIAR PASS-CR scholarship and U.S.-Pacific Resilience and Adaptation Fellowship programmes continues with a variety of capacity building activities for master's and PhD scholars and their academic supervisors.

### Celebrating Success and Looking Ahead

Finally, we take immense pride in our graduation ceremonies held across our regional campuses, celebrating the accomplishments of our students—the future custodians of knowledge and innovation. As we look ahead, I am inspired by the potential of our research community to continue breaking boundaries, creating solutions, and making meaningful contributions to the Pacific and the wider world.

### Graduate School

Together, let's continue to foster a vibrant research culture that empowers our region and advances global knowledge.

## Professor Gurmeet Singh

### Message from Director Research

Bula Vinaka, and a warm welcome to the 2nd edition of the 2024 Research Office Newsletter. I am delighted to share key updates and highlights from our schools, sections, and regional campuses.

Under the UNDP-USP Pacific Digital Democracy Initiative Project, funded by UNDP, three four-day workshops were held in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Fiji. The workshops aimed to support

these countries' digitalization strategies through a human rights-based approach. The workshops brought together participants from various government and civil society organizations for a Train the Trainers program.

The year 2024 has brought a wealth of exciting developments to our research community. We have launched three NERE-NAHAL projects funded by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, of which the DeResCap project, conjointly with the FALAH project, successfully organized a 3-day seminar (22-24 October) on "Traditional Knowledge and Local Practices of Food Systems in the Pacific (Terrestrial & Marine Ecosystems)"

The Call for Proposals Committee under the USP-Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network (PIURN) approved four projects promoting collaborative research with regional universities. The 6th PIURN conference will be organized in Papua New Guinea in July 2025, so mark your calendar to participate in this scientific and academic regional event.

I sincerely acknowledge your contributions towards the objectives and activities of Priority Area 2: Research, Innovation & Partnerships of Strategic Plan 2022-24, and I look forward working with you for the new Strategic Plan 2025-27. I encourage our colleagues to foster collaborations across disciplines, international institutions, and industries. Thanks for your commitment to advancing knowledge and creating a positive impact through your research and innovations.

I wish you all an inspiring and productive new year 2025!

*Professor Sushil Kumar*



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# SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTING, FINANCE AND ECONOMICS (SAFE)

- Mr. Shelvin (an AL in accounting) received two research grants from AAFANZ, New Zealand, and is currently working with Professor Patel on one of these FT50.
- SAFE received research grant from UNFPA to conducted training and research related activities on population and demography.
- SAFE renewed a MOU with Ministry of Finance (Fiji) to do joint research, workshops, and training.
- Selected staff from SAFE worked on Global Development Conference (GDN) committee for the GDN conference, co-hosted by USP and Fiji Government.
- Dr. Rup Singh and DVC Research met with an international consultant to gauge prospects of joining and international research and policy consortium that would potentially work on labour mobility and training in the Pacific region.
- Dr. Rup Singh is currently working of three research projects with collaborators from outside (i) on ESG and accounting teaching at USP (University of Wollongong and Sydney), (ii) Financial Resilience in SMEs (Fiji National University), Financial resilience and household insurance (FLAME University, India).
- The Master and PhD research students are currently working on the research and expect two PhD completions mid-2025.

Inaugural Central Bank of Solomon islands-ADBI-APAEA Joint Conference on “Monetary Policy and Central Banking Issues in Asia and the Pacific” hosted by Central Bank of Solomon Islands. Dr Keshmeer Makun of SAFE discussed excess liquidity in the banking system in Fiji.



Inaugural Central Bank of Solomon islands-ADBI-APAEA Joint Conference



Dr Keshmeer Makun of SAFE presenting at the inaugural Central Bank of Solomon islands-ADBI-APAEA Joint Conference

## Discipline of Geography, Earth Science and Environment

- From November 11 – 15 the Discipline attended the Expert Consultation and Meeting on Enhancing Geospatial Information Management for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Sub-regional Workshop on United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories and 2024 Plenary meeting of the Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council had the theme ‘Identifying Problems, Finding Solutions’.
- The USP Geospatial Science section was highly distinguished for its excellent work USP has done for now more than 30 years in fields of Geospatial Science. Without this outstanding and in the early 1990s innovative approach Geospatial Science in the Pacific Islands region would not stand where it is today. The meeting expressed its sincere hope that the leading role USP has in the training of professionals in Geospatial Science will continue also in future. USP is the only provider of formal education in the fields of Geospatial Science in the Pacific Islands region.
- From 25th of November 2024 to the 29th of November 2024 the annual Pacific Islands GIS & Remote Sensing User Conference brought more than 300 professionals in Geospatial Science to USP. The theme of the 2024 meeting was “Sustainable Management for Coastal Areas through Remote Sensing and GIS“. The first Pacific GIS/RS Conference took place in 1998 as the Fiji Annual GIS & RS User Conference. After 2004 it took a Pacific-wide character and in the meanwhile it is a global event. The USP plays a major role in organizing the conference, particularly through its Discipline of Geography, Earth Science, and Environment. Fiji Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources is another critical organizer as well as the Pacific Community (SPC). Financial support is provided by International Agencies and Development Partners like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also contribute expertise and resources.
- Members of the Disciplines of Geography, Earth Science and Environment attended the RISE symposium on October 24. With the theme “Leaving No One Behind: Partnerships for Improving Community Health Through Safely Managed Sanitation for All” the symposium addressed various areas of sustainability. RISE is a transdisciplinary research program working at the intersections of health, environment, and water and sanitation. RISE is introducing a new water sensitive approach to water and sanitation management in 24 informal settlements across Makassar, Indonesia and Greater Suva. Working with communities, governments, local leaders and partner institutions, RISE is co-designing location-specific solutions that integrate green infrastructure, such as constructed wetlands, to strengthen the whole-of-life water and sanitation cycle. Underpinned by the emerging discipline of ‘planetary health’, RISE success will be measured by the health and well-being of residents – particularly children under five years of age – and the ecological diversity of the surrounding environment.
- USP had been a partner in RISE since its very beginning in 2017. This year Dr Weber travelled to Monash University when the idea of RISE was becoming a face and when preparations for a funding application to the Wellcome Trust started. He was a member of the team drafting the proposal. Dr Weber, Mrs Camari Koto and ten of Geography students helped in the research that became the foundation for the selection of settlements in Greater Suva to participate in RISE. In the meanwhile lots of research on water sensitive issues are carried out by various partners. Some activities have also extended to other Pacific Island countries which are not part of the RISE activity but where water sensitive issues also play crucial roles in the development of people and communities.

## Discipline of Management and Tourism Administration

MPA is currently working on The Women TEK Climate Resilience Project, a collaborative research project supported by the School of Business and Management and led by the Discipline of Management and Public Administration. This research, which has been awarded a FJ\$19,541 grant, aims to investigate how women's livelihoods are affected by climate change and how Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) influences their social and economic behaviors. The study focuses on indigenous communities that are particularly vulnerable to climate change and is conducted in Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati.

In June 2024, the project team carried out a pilot research in Nananu village, which included Principal Investigator Dr. Buriata, Drs. Maureen Karan, Jone Lako, David Mapuru, and Anica Mapuru. Data on the difficulties women encounter due to climate change and how TEK is used for adaptation and mitigation were collected during the pilot test of survey questionnaires. Additionally, local women attended brief training workshops on financial literacy, business, and marketing. The researchers extended their fieldwork to Mokani village in August 2024, and they have plans to do additional study in Fiji until 2025 as well as in Kiribati and Solomon Islands later that year.

Crucial collaborator viewpoints highlight the importance of protecting TEK, particularly in light of climate change. While Dr. Jone Lako underlined the value of traditional practices in community participation, Dr. Maureen Fatiaki focused on the threat to TEK in Nananu village. Dr. David Mapuru emphasized the research's distinctive "give and take" methodology, which benefits communities as well as academics. In addition to highlighting TEK's vital role in mitigating climate change's effects, the study will help better understand and support the resilience strategies of women in these at-risk communities.

Along with the above research pursuits, a key researcher from MPA, Dr. Buriata Tofinga (Lecturer) has also been actively involved in supervising N-POC PhD researchers working on important regional subjects, such as the role of women in food production and food security and the governance of entrepreneurship development, in addition to spearheading influential research. Through co-supervision, Dr. Buriata has worked with researchers from USP and the University of Bergen, Norway, to advance their academic careers. By leading numerous NVivo training sessions for N-POC academics, postgraduate students, and staff, Dr. Buriata has also played a significant role in improving qualitative research abilities. These 2022, 2023, and 2024 sessions aim to increase the region's capability for research, and Dr. Buriata intends to carry on with these initiatives through 2025. Positive comments have been made about the training sessions' contribution to participants' increased capacity for research. These programs demonstrate a dedication to bolstering Pacific research and assisting the upcoming generation of researchers and academics.



Explaining the survey questionnaire and research procedure to women in Nananu village



Engaged Training Participants



Group activities



Dr. Buriata in research action

## Highlights from Discipline of Land Management

The Discipline of Land Management (LMD) is working on two important research projects focusing on Fijian land development, culture, and community life. Since most of the area's history is oral, a growing push exists to use the targeted study to record and inscribe the rich legacy. While the other research focuses on how customary values affect land use planning, the first study examines community-led planning. These research projects aim to understand poverty in relation to iTaukei land better. The saying "Tu nai nima, luvu na waqa" (meaning "we have the water bucket in our hands while the boat is sinking") captures a crucial point: the difficulty lies not in the availability of resources but in their administration.

## Highlights from Discipline of Tourism and Hospitality Management

Discipline of Tourism and Hospitality Management is currently involved in three important funded research projects. In one of the projects, Mr. Marika Kuilamu (assistant lecturer and principal Investigator), is closely working along with Dr. Dawn Gibson, Ms. Ella Bennion and Dr. Vikas Gupta to assess the factors underlying migration of staff members in the tourism and hospitality industry and potential consequence of this migration in the Pacific Island countries. This project is important, considering that Fiji and other PIC countries have faced labor migration challenges for the past few years.

Dr. Vikas Gupta is also working on two funded research projects. In one of his projects, funded by the Pacific Island Universities Regional Network (PIURN), Dr. Gupta is working in collaboration with a researcher from Fiji National University to examine the sustainable practices, community engagement, and visitor experience in Fiji's Hotels and resorts. Along with this project, Dr. Gupta is also working on assessing the visitor experience of foreign tourists at the nature-based Based Tourist attractions in Fiji. Dr Gupta recently received the prestigious "Emerald Literati Award-2024" for being an "Outstanding Reviewer" for British Food Journal.





Suva Archives Workshop was held on 29 October 2024 at National Archives of Fiji

- The Suva Archives Workshop was held on 29 October 2024 from 9-11am in the National Archives of Fiji. It was hosted by SoLaSS, USP, and funded by Marsden Fund (grant UOW2012). This workshop brought together archives and records staff and users to share some preliminary findings from the Marsden Fund project on Suva's histories, led by Dr. Kate Stevens (Waikato) and Dr. Nic Halter (USP). The attendees included archives and libraries managers and staff from the National Archives of Fiji (NAF) and Suva City Council (SCC), as well as academics and graduate students. As well as sharing some preliminary findings, the workshop aimed to connect (or reconnect) a variety of people who worked with archival collections in Suva, and create a forum to sharing our knowledge, skills, and passion for archives and history.
- Dr. Lorenz Gonschor attended a workshop in Global Interpolity Relations in Christ Church College, University of Oxford from 29-30 October. He presented a paper titled 'Interpolity relations in pre-colonial Oceania: From Indigenous thalassocracies and trade networks to a late but rapid integration into the world system'.
- Dr. Milla Vaha and Dr. Sarina Theys are contributing authors to 'Pacific Ocean and Climate Crisis Assessment Volume 1' launched at COP29. Dr. Vaha authored 'Chapter Three: Climate Change and Ocean Governance in the Pacific: Challenges of Sovereignty and Political Agency' with Tuvaluan diplomat, Tapugao Faletou and Dr. Mathew Kensen from USP. Dr. Theys compiled 'Chapter Four: Regional Climate and Ocean Strategies, Politics and Frameworks: A Stocktake of Current Status' with Dr. Morgan Wairiu from the Solomon Islands National University and Dr. Diana Hinge-Salili from USP.
- A study conducted by a team of researchers from USP and Western Sydney University and funded by UNICEF, looked at the impact of the Pacific labour mobility scheme on children left behind in Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The study warned that there is an urgent need to mitigate the risks of labour mobility to ensure that children left behind have access to the protection and services they need. It highlighted that despite the financial benefits of remittances from labour mobility schemes, improper management of these funds often leads to insufficient family support and tensions. With children left behind, the study reveals several challenges, particularly concerning the social costs associated with labour mobility, including family breakdowns, exploitation, social isolation, and lack of care for families back home. According to the study, the Pacific is already witnessing increased rates of family violence, child abuse and neglect in labour migration families. There has been increased demand for services, including shelters, for women and children who have experienced domestic as well as family violence. Social service and child health practitioners interviewed as part of the study commented on malnutrition and sexual violence for children left behind.
- The study report on The Impact of Pacific Labour Mobility Schemes on Children Left Behind - In Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu: An Initial Study can be downloaded using this link: <https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/reports/impact-pacific-labour-mobility-schemes-children-left-behind>

# SCHOOL OF PACIFIC ARTS, COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION (SPACE)

## OCIES Conference

Dr Kerryn, Billy Fito'o and Ms Vilma Ratumudu attended the 52nd OCIES education conference held in Melbourne Australia from 26th to 20th November 2024. It was hosted by the Australian Catholic University. Two postgraduate research students were able to attend the conference that were Dr. Billy's research students. The respective conference papers were presented at the conference. Details of the conference program can be accessed via the link: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/10mNV67y19D90lNpnVrOKkqEv8gmlPROq/edit>. Three journal articles were also published during the conference and has been updated in the USP repository.



OCIES participants 2024



Ni-Vanuatuan OCIES participants 2024



Dr. Amton Mwarakurmes leading a discussion during the OCIES Conference

## A Cost-Effective Biogas Digester

- A Cost-Effective Biogas Digester for a small family unit is developed by MSc student of Physics, Mishra Singh under the supervision of Dr. Ajal Kumar. At its optimum performance level, the percentage of methane was between 58% - 60% and the digester was stably producing biogas at a rate of 0.2 m<sup>3</sup>/day and 0.118 m<sup>3</sup>/day of methane gas. With a net positive value (NPV) of \$656.00 and a high benefit to cost ratio, the project will be beneficial for households especially in remote areas.



The biogas digester that was constructed (left) and the flow meter used for measuring the amount of biogas produced per day (right).

## Pacific Senior Energy Officials Meeting

- Prof. M. R. Ahmed was invited to the Pacific Senior Energy Officials Meeting that was held in Nadi in September 2024 to make a presentation on the Emerging Renewable Energy Technologies for the Pacific Island countries along with the representatives of the University of New South Wales and the Pacific Centre of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. In his presentation, he urged the Energy Officials to incorporate Solar Chimney Power Plants that take less space and have minimum maintenance issues compared to solar PV panels, and Seawater Air Conditioning, which is now being implemented in many countries for cooling purposes eliminating the need of conventional air conditioners. He was also involved in panel discussions on Capacity Building in Energy Sector and Pacific Adoption of Waste-to-Energy Solutions (PAWES).



Prof. Ahmed in a panel discussion along with other members during the Pacific Senior Energy Officials Meeting.

## VINETA Project

- The success event of the VINETA project, which is a joint partnership between Technische Universität (TU) Berlin, USP, and Martin Systems GmbH, that is funded and supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, was organized by STEMP on 15th October 2024. The AQUA CUBE water filtration systems at the project site in Naimasimasi Village, Tailevu, and at USP are fully operational and function efficiently. These systems supply clean drinking water to both the local community and the students on campus.



Seated (L-R): Head of School STEMP, Professor Bibhya Sharma; German Ambassador to Fiji, Dr. Andreas Prothmann; Chair of Environmental Process Engineering, Technische Universität Berlin, Professor Dr. Sven-Uwe Geissen with the invited guests during the VINETA Project Success Event.



# PACIFIC CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (PACE-SD)

- **OACPS EU RERIPA Call #2:** The project is currently in implementation phase in collaboration with the two partners: National University of Samoa (NUS) and Sustainable Sea Transport Initiative (SSTI). A no-cost extension has been sought till the end of May 2025 (initial end of project is February 2025). RERIPA Call 2, in partnership with Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) held a Proposal Development Training Workshop (PDTW) from 26 to 29 August at the Central Cuisine, Sports City. This workshop partially fulfills one of the deliverables for SSTI in the RERIPA Call 2 project. It aligns with Output 2.1: Capacity Building and Structuration of the Living Labs, as outlined in the RERIPA Call 2 project Log frame for Activity 2.1.1. This involves preparing training materials and training/mentoring Living Labs partners and other stakeholders on project engineering, open innovation, R&I brokering, impact pathway, intellectual property, contracting, writing up project proposals, and the Living Lab/open innovation approach. The workshop had 10 participants from the RERIPA Call 2 project in attendance.
- **POCCA:** The project team is currently finalizing their chapters for the publication of their report. This forms an integral part of their project deliverable. The project has been approved for a no-cost extension till January 2025. During the last month, the POCCA project solely focuses on the finalization of the POCCA Assessment Report. The book is being authored by some 100 Pacific authors, researchers and scholars with 19 thematic chapters in the areas of Climate Change in the Pacific. In the last three months, the POCCA project focused on finalising the POCCA report for submission to the donors that is due this month. Authors had submitted final versions of their chapters to the POCCA editorial team led by Prof. Steven Ratuva (our project partners from the University of Canterbury) with operational and on the ground work at USP lead by Associate Prof. Awnesh Singh and Dr. Hilda Waqa- Sakiti.
- PaCE-SD hosted a **Proposal Development Training Workshop (PDTW)**, co-organized by Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) and Research and Innovation Ecosystems to Address the Impact of Climate Change in the Pacific (RERIPA) from 26 to 29 August at the Central Cuisine in Sports City Suva. The week-long workshop brought together early career professionals from across the Pacific to enhance their skills in crafting research proposals. Focusing on key subthemes such as ecosystem services, climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction and innovations in global change research, participants engaged in a series of interactive sessions and hands-on training. Approximately 30 participants received training during the workshop.



Proposal Development training workshop



Proposal Development training workshop

- **Blue-Carbon Condition Index and Tool for Fiji (B-CABONI) Project:** The project started in August 2024 with the recruitment of the Project Officer and currently working on recruiting of a Research Assistant. The project will also recruit 2 master's research students from the Pacific in the area of Blue Carbon Assessment to commence in Semester 1, 2025. The overarching goal of B-CABONI is to establish a pilot initiative to quantify the condition and stability of Fiji's blue carbon pool. B-CABONI aims to develop a robust monitoring tool capable of assessing the condition of a range of blue carbon ecosystems (mangroves forests and seagrass meadows) that is tailored to Fiji's needs and requirements.

Over recent months, the Graduate School (GS) has been supporting the selection process for PhD candidates under several scholarship programmes (i.e. US-PRAFP and Project Halophyte), supporting capacity building activities for PG research scholars and supervisors, reviewing the stipend and associated conditions for PG scholarships, and updating the guideline for the conduct of the Oral Defence as part of the PhD examination process. The revised guideline for the Oral Defence is provided in a separate document to the URC. The GS continues to communicate and meet regularly with international partners who support USP's various PG research scholarship programmes.

## **Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)**

The ACIAR PASS-CR scholarship programme continues with a variety of capacity building activities for master's and PhD scholars and their academic supervisors. For example, a Mid-Year Refresher Induction was held for continuing and new scholars (19th – 20th August) and supporting with the N-POC programme the training on N-Vivo led by Dr Buriata Tofinga (13th September). In recent months, 3 scholars have submitted their theses for examination. The PASS-CR programme is currently advertising for applications for the 2025 intake (i.e. 8 master/PhD scholarships), with this call to close on the 23rd October.

## **Norway-Pacific Ocean Climate (N-POC)**

The N-POC programme successfully completed a month-long Study Tour to Norway and New York in June 2024, with all scholars completing the subsequent essays required by the University of Bergen (UiB). Most scholars (15/17) have received approval of their Research Proposals from their respective Schools at USP. These scholars are now at various stages of their fieldwork, with some having completed this phase and have transitioned into data analysis and writing. The N-POC Administrator has recently held individual talanoa sessions with each scholar and their supervisors to ensure the N-POC programme continues to provide the necessary support. USP also holds monthly meetings with UiB colleagues as members of the N-POC Joint Management Committee. The position of N-POC Project Team Leader was advertised in September and HR staff are managing the selection process. The N-POC programme received its next funding instalment of FJ\$399,767 from UiB. The N-POC team organized two research support activities – NVivo Training and an Article Writing Workshop – for N-POC scholars and other postgraduate students. The N-POC team also participated in the USP Open Day as part of the Research Office booth.

## **Project Halophyte**

Project Halophyte is a collaboration between USP and UNSW Sydney to undertake world-class research on mangrove ecology and restoration, with financial support from Swire Shipping. In response to the recent advertisement for 4 fully funded PhD scholarships, 10 applications were received with interest across the 3 themes of Project Halophyte. An interview process was conducted with the shortlisted candidates, and 4 exceptional candidates selected and offered PhD scholarships. These students will commence their PhD studies in 1st semester 2025. The full-time Project Coordinator position was advertised in August/September and HR anticipates making an offer in November.

## **PAWES Project (Pacific Adoption of Waste-to-Energy Scholarships)**

The four postgraduate scholars supported by scholarship in the PAWES Project (funded by the EU via SPC) are currently enrolled in the required postgraduate diploma units this semester. They are also preparing research proposals for submission to SAGEONS' AURC so they can undertake SRP research during 2025.

## **OCPD Scholarship**

All scholars under the OCPD Scholarship are progressing well in their respective programmes. However, there have been some delays in obtaining approvals for research proposals. The Research Office is actively coordinating with the students, their schools, and the OCPD team at ACU to expedite the transfer of funds and facilitate proposal approvals.

## U.S.-Pacific Resilience and Adaptation Fellowship Program (US-PRAFP)

The US-Pacific Region Academic Fellowship Program (US-PRAFP) aims to recruit 26 PhD candidates for full-time studies at the University of the South Pacific (USP), in collaboration with five US partner universities: Georgetown, Stanford, Hawai'i, UC San Diego and UC Santa Barbara. The application period closed on the 28th August and received 49 applications. A Selection Committee, chaired by the DVC Research & Innovation, reviewed applications in meetings on the 11th and 23rd September, and selected 29 applicants for interviews – primarily from Fiji (17), Kiribati (6), the Solomon Islands (3), and Tonga (3), with balanced gender representation. Interviews were conducted from the 30th September to the 16th October, with outcomes and offers to be finalized at the next meeting of the Selection Committee scheduled for the 29th October. The program intends to award 18 scholarships in this round. A further 8 scholarships will be retained and advertised in 2025, with a targeted approach to encourage applications from USP members countries that were under-represented in the 1st call (i.e. potential for up to 26 PhD scholarships). The program received its first funding tranche of US\$120,879 on the 23rd September, and preparations for the next invoice is underway. Ongoing discussions with US partners, including the Department of State, US Embassy Fiji and partner universities, are strengthening program relationships.

## Pilot of Epigeum's training programmes

The GS completed the pilot / trial of selected Epigeum online training programmes. Schools / Centres nominated 16 PhD scholars and 17 early/mid-career academic supervisors to participate in the pilot, with participants given 4 months to complete the relevant programme – either the Research Skills Toolkit (PhD scholars) or the Supervising Doctoral Scholars (academic supervisors). Initial feedback from participants has been positive, with many welcoming the opportunity to participate in the training. PhD scholars reported that the training programme helped them organize their research and develop skills relevant to their role as a PhD scholar and more generally in life. The academic supervisors found that the training programme supported their professional development, and they have already begun applying the insights gained to their supervision techniques and research design. The GS has submitted a request for funding to make the Epigeum training programmes 'open access' in 2025 for all registered postgraduate research students and academic supervisors.



Launch of book 'Raising Trees and Livelihoods' by DVC Professor Gurmeet with colleagues from ACIAR



Launch of book 'Raising Trees and Livelihoods'

# EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS

## Project Halophyte

Project Halophyte is a collaboration between USP and UNSW Sydney to undertake world-class research on mangrove ecology and restoration, with financial support from Swire Shipping. In response to the recent advertisement for 4 fully funded PhD scholarships, 10 applications were received with interest across the 3 themes of Project Halophyte. An interview process was conducted with the shortlisted candidates, and 4 exceptional candidates selected and offered PhD scholarships. These students will commence their PhD studies in 1st semester 2025

### Muzammil Ali - Fiji



Muzammil has a Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering and graduated with a Gold Medal. He further pursued a Master's in Mechanical Engineering from USP, with a thesis focused on the Feasibility and design of a Seawater Air Conditioning (SWAC) System, for a University Building in Fiji. This allowed him the opportunity to explore renewable energy technologies tailored to the Pacific region's unique challenges. For Muzammil, Project Halophyte: Enhancing Coastal Resilience through Innovative Floating Mangrove Pontoon Systems aligns seamlessly with his expertise and aspirations. Through this project he aims to integrate renewable energy technologies into coastal resilience strategies, creating systems that are not only functional but also sustainable for future generations. He is particularly interested in exploring how floating mangrove platforms can serve as a scalable solution for protecting vulnerable ecosystems and communities across the Pacific. He ultimately hopes to contribute to solutions that bridge engineering ingenuity with environmental sustainability.

### Jasma Devi - Fiji



Jasma holds a Master of Science in Climate Change specializing in resource economics from USP. Her research focused on quantifying mangrove ecosystem services through environmental economic analysis, leading to significant insights into the value of the mangrove ecosystem. As part of Jasma's master's work, she critically evaluated mangrove restoration practices to design a comprehensive mangrove restoration framework based on best practices. This framework aims to enhance restoration effort. The Project Halophyte scholarship will empower Jasma to advance her contributions to climate resilience and sustainable development in Fiji and the Pacific. With enhanced access to research resources and mentorship, she aims to expand her expertise in ecological economics, focusing on the valuation of mangrove ecosystem services. Ultimately, Jasma believes that the scholarship will not only strengthen her research capabilities but also position her to make a lasting impact on the resilience of coastal communities in Fiji, ensuring that they can adapt to the challenges posed by climate change while preserving their mangrove ecosystems. By contributing to the valuation and conservation of these vital ecosystems, she hopes to support Fiji's commitment to the Paris Agreement, particularly Article 6, which emphasises the role of nature-based solutions in climate mitigation and adaptation.

### Jimmy Kereseka – Solomon Islands



Jimmy holds a Master of Science in Conservation and International Wildlife Trade from the University of Kent, UK and has over two decades of experience in education, conservation and project Management. Through the Project Halophyte scholarship, Jimmy aims to deepen his understanding of the specific local conditions that favor the growth of diverse mangrove species and their associated plant communities. By identifying and analyzing the critical biophysical factors essential for mangrove development — such as soil type, marsh conditions, and key environmental parameters like pH, oxygen levels, salinity, and temperature—he seeks to build a comprehensive knowledge base for effective restoration efforts. Jimmy is also committed to exploring how improved mangrove management practices can be coupled with robust community governance systems. He aspires to influence policies and regulations that support sustainable mangrove restoration and conservation, empowering local communities to take an active role in managing their natural resources. Ultimately, Jimmy intends to apply the skills and insights gained to address the unique environmental challenges of the Solomon Islands, contributing to the preservation of coastal ecosystems, bolstering climate resilience, and enhancing the livelihoods of his fellow citizens. His vision extends beyond ecological restoration, encompassing the strengthening of community engagement and the promotion of long-term sustainability.

## Salote Nasalo – Fiji



Salote is an aspiring indigenous Mangrove Ecologist from the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCE-SD) at the University of the South Pacific. She is an ACIAR PASS-CR scholar during her master's program where her research focussed on mangrove management and restoration by assessing human generated mangrove ecosystems at the Lami and Nasese foreshore. Salote is a passionate environmentalist and a climate change advocate. She is heavily involved with grassroot community- led initiatives / projects, at national, regional, and international platforms proudly representing her country and the Pacific peoples. Project Halophyte has provided an opportunity to further expand her research within the thematic area of "Large-scale tidal restoration opportunities for mangrove habitat to increase coastal ecosystem services and resilience". She believes being awarded the PhD scholarship under project Halophyte will be the perfect platform to fulfil her aspirations as a way of giving back to her people. Salote hopes to utilize her findings to improve the restoration of mangrove ecosystems in Fiji and eventually the Pacific region.

## Pilot of Epigeum's training programmes

The Graduate School (GS) completed the pilot / trial of selected Epigeum online training programmes. Schools / Centres nominated 16 PhD scholars and 17 early/mid-career academic supervisors to participate in the pilot, with participants given 4 months to complete the relevant programme – either the Research Skills Toolkit (PhD scholars) or the Supervising Doctoral Scholars (academic supervisors). Initial feedback from participants has been positive, with many welcoming the opportunity to participate in the training. PhD scholars reported that the training programme helped them organize their research and develop skills relevant to their role as a PhD scholar and more generally in life. The academic supervisors found that the training programme supported their professional development, and they have already begun applying the insights gained to their supervision techniques and research design. The GS has submitted a request for funding to make the Epigeum training programmes 'open access' in 2025 for all registered postgraduate research students and academic supervisors.

# LAUNCH OF THE PACIFIC ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

October 23, 2024 marked the launch of the Pacific Academy of Sciences, at the National University of Samoa, in Apia, as an official side-event from the 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The Pacific Academy of Sciences promotes the study and application of the natural and social sciences, the humanities, indigenous knowledge, and technology for the benefit of the Pacific Islands region and beyond. The Academy will also support young Pacific scholars and scientists in their professional development, offering them mentorships and collaborative work with their peers at the regional scale.

Twelve eminent Pacific Scholars has been elected as Foundation Fellows, to lead the Academy in delivering its mission. Professor Jito Vanualailai, Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Education), one of the Foundation Fellows, expressed the importance of the Academy to forge connection with scholars across the region and the world.

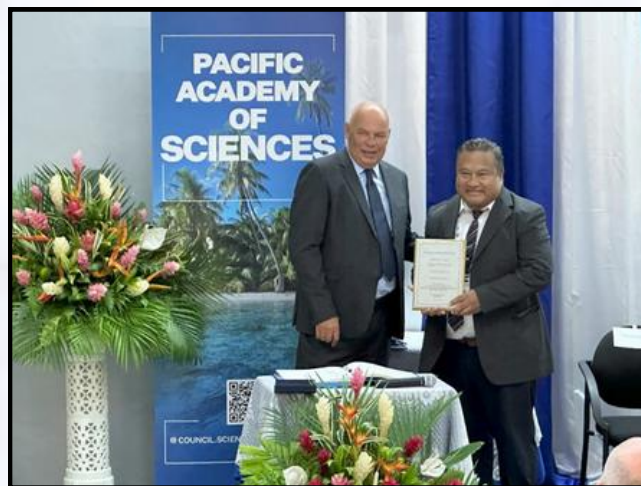
The Pacific Academy of Sciences was established with the support of the Establishment Committee, that was appointed in Apia, in October 2023. Professor Sushil Kumar, Director Research at USP, was a member of the Establishment Committee, alongside colleagues from Cook Islands, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu. The Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network (PIURN) Coordinator, Ms Mathilde Souchon, was designated as an Observer Member to the committee.

The Pacific Academy of Sciences will carry the voices of the Pacific Islands and contribute to harnessing the knowledge of the Pacific.

The launch of the Pacific Academy of Sciences was facilitated by the National University of Samoa and the International Science Council Regional Focal Point for Asia and the Pacific led by the Australian Academy of Science with the support of the Royal Society Te Apārangi and Sasakawa Peace Foundation.



Launch of the Pacific Academy of Sciences



Launch of the Pacific Academy of Sciences

# PACIFIC ISLANDS UNIVERSITIES REGIONAL NETWORK (PIURN)

## Workshop: RERIPA Call 1

The Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network (PIURN) Members gathered in Port-Vila, Vanuatu, for their annual Board Meeting, on Tuesday, October 15th, 2024.

The National University of Vanuatu hosted the Vice-Chancellors and their representatives from the network member universities, from Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Tonga. National University of Samoa and the University of French Polynesia participated online to the discussions.

PIURN universities shared updates on collaborative research projects through PIURN Call for Proposals, as well as regional initiatives including “Family Farming, Lifestyle and Health” FALAH Project, RERIPA Calls and Pacific Women Lead - PWL funded project on Gender barriers in Pacific universities.

Mr Jean-Pierre Nirua, Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Vanuatu, welcomed the participants by highlighting that “the cooperation between Pacific Island universities is essential for advancing research and academic excellence in our region. PIURN plays a pivotal role in fostering collaborative projects, sharing knowledge, and empowering our institutions to contribute to the development of the Pacific”.

Founded in 2013 under the name Pacific Islands Universities Research Network, PIURN is a consortium of 15 universities from the Pacific Islands countries and territories, aiming to enable closer and meaningful collaboration among researchers in the consortium, and to collectively empower the Pacific Universities to become key contributors to finding solutions for challenges facing the region. The network is co-chaired by the University of New Caledonia (UNC) and The University of the South Pacific (USP).

Pr Catherine Ris, President of UNC, reminded the participants of the Board Meeting “the strength of PIURN resides on our common capacity of working together, to support our academic staff, our students and contributing to the advancement of research to respond to the challenges faced by our region”.

The discussions of the 2024 Board Meeting included implementation of new collaborative projects, such as regional training for PIURN PhD students, staff mobility between member universities and the development of PIURN, with a reaffirming commitment from the member universities to support their collaborative effort and build their capacity through research collaboration and academic cooperation.

Pr Pal Ahluwalia, Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, indicated that “academic institutions must foster an inclusive environment where every voice is heard, and every perspective is valued. Diversity within research teams is not just a strength—it is a necessity, and our region is so diverse that we can do amazing things via this network”.

The participants also discussed the upcoming 2025 PIURN Conference to be hosted by PNG University of Technology (PNGUoT), in Lae, Papua New Guinea.

## USP PIURN Call for Proposals Selected Projects

USP Selection Committee approved 4 projects under the USP PIURN Call for Proposals 2023-2024

### 1. Climate Resilient Livestock Production over Fiji

Project leader: Dr Philip Obaigwa Sagero – Lecturer SAGEONS

PIURN Member University: A.P Royford Magiri – Fiji National University

Budget: 19,962 FJD

### 2. Community engagement, and Visitor Experience in Fiji’s Hotel and Resorts

Project leader: Dr Vikas Gupta – Lecturer SBM

PIURN Member University: Sunil Kumar Sinha – Fiji National University

Budget : 15,990.76 FJD

### **3. Estimation of healthy and post-traumatic stress disordered psychological states using continuous monitoring with non-invasive wearable biosensors and machine learning models**

Project leader: Dr Levente Orban – Lecturer SOLASS

PIURN Member University: Sefanaia Qaloewai; Violet Erasito - Fiji National University

Budget: 20,000 FJD

### **4. Two-way Tongue-based Assistive Communication System for Disabled Persons - 2TACS-DP**

Project leader: Dr Mansour Assaf – Associate Professor STEM

PIURN Member University: Professor Ioana Chan Mou - National University of Samoa

Budget: 20,000 FJD

### **Signature of Pacific Women Lead Grant Agreement**

The project 'Barriers to Female Leadership for Staff at Selected Pacific Island Universities, with an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)', led by USP has successfully secured 400,000 AUD from the Pacific Women Lead (PWL) grant, a DFAT funding administered by SPC.

The project will facilitate regional University staff female in leadership advancement in the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The grant was developed within the Pacific Island Universities Regional Network (PIURN) and involves a consortium partnership with diverse range of researchers from The University of the South Pacific, Fiji National University, The National University of Samoa and the Solomon Islands National University, Western Sydney University in collaboration with Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Ltd a private company dedicated to reducing systemic barriers to gender equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education and research institutions.

Through the Australian Aid funded grant project, researchers will work to better understand the barriers that Pacific Island female staff at four different Pacific Island University's experience when progressing towards leadership and decision-making positions in the STEM field.



Annual Board Meeting at Port Vila Vanuatu (15th October, 2024)



## Memorandum of Understanding: USP and Macquarie University Collaboration

The University of the South Pacific (USP) has signed a Research Collaboration Agreement with Macquarie University to advance research on the ecological links of the Fijian seascape.

This partnership focuses on:

Data Collection: Gathering critical ecological data on the Fijian seascape.

Analysis: Conducting in-depth analysis to understand ecological connections.

Workshops: Engaging stakeholders through workshops to share insights and foster collaboration.

This MoU underscores USP's commitment to strengthening research partnerships and advancing sustainable ecological solutions in the Pacific region.

## Externally Funded Research Projects: Driving Regional Innovation and Development

The Research Office at USP is currently managing 11 externally funded research projects, supported by prominent funding agencies such as the EU, UNDP, Griffith University, University of London, and Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie – Canada. These projects reflect USP's commitment to advancing research, innovation, and sustainable development across the Pacific.

Here's an overview of some of the projects:

- Pacific Digital Democracy Initiative: Focused on Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Federated States of Micronesia, funded by UNDP for USD 200,000.
- Pacific Regional Innovation Network Project: Covering Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, and RMI, funded by UNDP for USD 150,000.
- RERIPA Call 1: Mapping and diagnosing Research & Innovation (R&I) ecosystems to create a shared vision with a climate change focus, funded by the EU for EUR 300,000 (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu).
- RERIPA Call 2: Capacity Building in Innovation and Valorisation, funded by the EU for EUR 350,000 (Fiji, Samoa, Tonga).
- RERIPA Call 3 Living Labs: A series of climate change-focused initiatives, including:
  - Enhancing R&I ecosystems in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Samoa, and Vanuatu (EUR 349,180).
  - Climate change adaptation innovation for coral reefs in Fiji, Kiribati, and Tuvalu (EUR 350,000).
  - Sustainable sea transport addressing climate impacts in Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga (EUR 350,000).
- Transforming Universities for a Changing Climate (ClimateU): Funded by the University of London for GBP 283,062.58.
- Supporting Decentralized Rural Water Supply in Pacific Islands (PaCWaM+ 2): Funded by Griffith University for FJD 148,323.12.
- SWAP Fiji Coastal Litter Pilot Project: Funded by SPREP for USD 82,025.
- Urban Island: Histories of Dispossession and Belonging in Suva: Funded by the University of Waikato for NZD 44,000.

These initiatives highlight USP's leadership in fostering innovation, tackling climate change, and addressing critical challenges in the Pacific region. Stay connected to learn more about the transformative impact of these projects!

## External Funding Opportunities: Empowering Research and Innovation.

The Research Office actively keeps Heads of Schools (HoSs), Deputy Heads of Schools (DHoSs), and Campus Directors informed about upcoming funding opportunities for staff and students.

For the latest updates, refer to the following link: <https://www.usp.ac.fj/research/funding-opportunities/>

## Innovation @USP: Driving Regional Development Through Research and Collaboration

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is committed to providing leadership in innovation through research and education, strategically contributing to regional development in the Pacific. USP fosters an environment that supports innovation by promoting collaboration across public and private sectors and partnering with research institutions to accelerate innovation across its campuses. Currently, USP operates four innovation hubs located in Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). These hubs act as focal points for nurturing creativity and advancing research-driven solutions. Supporting this initiative is the University's Innovation Framework, which was reviewed in 2021 through an inclusive Talanoa session. To further enhance innovation at USP, the Innovation Working

Group (IWG) has been established. This committee is tasked with reviewing, monitoring, and adapting the Innovation @USP Framework while serving as a catalyst for driving innovation and fostering research growth across the University. The IWG's mandate includes providing oversight, guidance, and promoting a culture of innovation, with a key focus on strengthening research engagement and fostering internal and international collaborations. The group also prioritizes building stronger ties with industries to enhance USP's innovation capabilities.

As part of their initial work, the IWG has submitted their Terms of Reference (ToR) for review and is actively working towards positioning USP as a leader in innovation and research in the Pacific region.

## **UNDP-USP Pacific Digital Democracy Initiative Workshops: Empowering Digital Rights and Development**

The **UNDP-USP Pacific Digital Democracy Initiative Project** successfully conducted a series of workshops across the Pacific to strengthen digitalization strategies with a human rights-based approach, enhancing state-society relations.

- **Tonga Workshop:** Held at USP Tonga Campus from 25–28 June 2024
- **Solomon Islands Workshop:** Hosted at the Solomon Islands National University Campus from 9–12 September 2024
- **Fiji Workshop:** Convened at Suva Peninsula Hotel from 7–11 October 2024

Each workshop spanned four days and brought together participants from government and civil society organizations for a **Train the Trainers program**. The initiative aimed to deepen understanding and foster commitment to digital rights and development priorities in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Fiji. This collaborative effort underscores the importance of leveraging digital tools to promote inclusive governance and strengthen regional development.



Tonga Workshop participants



Solomon Island Workshop participants

## **RERIPA Event (Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji; October 15-17, 2024)**



RERIPA Workshop participants

The much-anticipated RERIPA workshop, Enhancing Research and Innovation Ecosystems to Tackle Climate Change in the Pacific, concluded on a high note, leaving participants energized and inspired. Over three days, experts, academics, NGOs, and key stakeholders gathered to exchange ideas, share progress, and strengthen regional collaboration in the fight against climate change.

### **A Warm Opening and Energized Start**

The event began with heartfelt opening remarks from Professor Sushil Kumar, who welcomed attendees with, “Ni sa Yadra, Namaste. This initiative has united academic institutions and NGOs in addressing shared climate goals. I’m thrilled with the progress we’ve made and look forward to meaningful discussions.” His words set a positive tone, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and innovation.

## Key Highlights from the Workshop

- **Presentations of Achievements:** Participants showcased progress from Calls 1, 2, and 4, including ecosystem mapping, capacity building, and innovative education initiatives.
- **Living Labs Updates:** The five living labs under Call 3 revealed exciting user-driven solutions tackling issues like coastal vulnerability, ocean health, and rising sea levels.
- **Collaborative Planning:** Stakeholders engaged in fruitful discussions, aligning goals, sharing lessons, and proposing strategies for strengthening R&I ecosystems.

## Unprecedented Participation

The event attracted a diverse mix of participants, including representatives from USP, SINU, NUV, NUS, IRD, PIANGO, PIDF, and VMGD. Their active engagement fostered a rich exchange of ideas and bolstered efforts to co-design impactful solutions for the Pacific's climate challenges.

## Celebrating Success

The workshop was hailed as a major success, highlighting the power of regional cooperation and teamwork. Attendees left with actionable insights, renewed connections, and a shared commitment to advancing the RERIPA project's goals.

As one participant noted, "This workshop has not only strengthened our networks but also inspired new approaches to tackling the most pressing climate issues in the Pacific."

The RERIPA team thanks all partners and participants for making this event a landmark in Pacific climate action. Together, we are charting a path to resilience and sustainability.

## Key acronyms

- Institute of Research for Development (IRD), Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO),
- Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department (VMGD)
- Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF)

## Nere Nahal Projects funded by Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie

- Seafood Safety: Strengthening Ciguatera Poisoning Detection Tools to Reduce Human Health Risks, Build Resilience to Climate Change & Enhance International Trade for Economic Prosperity - EUR19,933
- Bridging the Taxonomic Gap to Preserve the Biodiversity of Subsistence Coastal Invertebrates and seaweeds in Fiji - EUR 9,800
- Developing Resilience through Capacity Development on FALAH in PICs: Solomon Islands and Vanuatu - EUR 19,500

The DesResCap project, in collaboration with the FALAH project successfully conducted a 2-day PhD training on R for Statistics as well as a 3-day seminar on Traditional Knowledge and Local Practices of Food Systems in the Pacific.

# 2024 GRADUATION

## LAUCALA CAMPUS SEPTEMBER GRADUATION

USP, semester 2 graduation was held on the 5th and 6th September at the Laucala Campus. This graduation witnessed a remarkable milestone as women make up 61% of the 1,147 students graduating over two days graduation. The first ceremony with sessions 1 and 2 included students from the School of Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean and Natural Sciences (SAGEONS), the School of Information Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Physics (STEMP), and the School of Business & Management (SBM) in the morning. The afternoon session featured graduates from the Pacific Technical and Further Education. The second day ceremony with session 3 included graduates from the School of Accounting, Finance and Economics (SAFE), the School of Law and Social Sciences (SoLaSS), and the School of Pacific Arts, Communication and Education (SPACE).



Samoan Graduates at the Laucala Campus Graduation



Graduands seated

## TONGA CAMPUS SEPTEMBER GRADUATION



Tonga campus Graduands

USP Tonga Campus Graduation ceremony held on 11 October, at Falemasiva Hall, in Havelu, Tongatapu was memorable as it reflected the domino effect of celebrating Pacific women, who made up 75 percent of the overall graduates.

Tonga campus graduation comprised of 148 students that proudly walked across the stage to collect their qualifications, marking a significant achievement in their academic journey. Of the 148 students, 72 percent received their undergraduate qualifications, and 28 percent of the overall number conferred their postgraduate qualifications inclusive of Postgraduate Diplomas and Master

## SOLOMON ISLAND CAMPUS OCTOBER GRADUATION



Graduands at the Solomon Island Campus Graduation

The University of the South Pacific's (USP) Solomon Islands Campus celebrated over 200 students who graduated with certificates, diplomas, degrees, postgraduate and master's degrees on 4 October. This graduation recorded 92 undergraduate degrees, 13 Postgraduate Diplomas and 9 Masters qualifications being awarded.

The graduation featured 52.8 percent males and 47.2 percent females. Graduating from USP is a monumental achievement, one that reflects students' hard work, dedication, and resilience.

# RESERACH OFFICE GALLERY

