

A Brief Look At Some Highlights of the IAS's Activities in the 2nd half of 2013

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IAS Researchers Scoop Top USP Vice-Chancellors Research Awards

IAS Researchers were recognised for their outstanding efforts in the recent USP VC's 2013 Research Awards. The Director, Professor Bill Aalbersberg was awarded the Vice Chancellor's Price for Research Impact and the selection according to the Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Research, USP was based on the following criteria:

- The research undertaken under Prof Aalbersberg's leadership is of the highest international quality spanning several fields of importance to the South Pacific region. It has been consistently recognized through the considerable external funding that has been secured from international agencies.
- The methodologies used are consistent with international best practice. This has enabled his laboratory to be internationally accredited. The research findings have been vital inputs to developing food and environmental health standard policies for the region.
- A highlight of Prof Aalbersberg scientific career has been his mentoring of research students and early career researchers. He has influenced the professional lives of many young people by supervising their Masters or PhD studies.
- The Societal impacts of his work have been profound and long lasting in the South Pacific region. The research findings from his Institute have been vital to establishing regional safe health and environmental management practices.

The VC's Best Research Output award was awarded to IAS Drug Discovery scientists Klaus-D. Feussner, Kavita Ragini, Dr Katy Soapi, Professor Bill Aalbersberg and former IAS staff members Rohitesh Kumar & Dr Brad Carte. The six along with two external researchers had published a 38 page review paper titled *Investigations of the Marine Flora and Fauna of the Fiji Islands* and was published in: *Natural Products Reports*, an A*-ranked journal. The paper is a comprehensive review that covers both known and novel marine-derived natural products and their biological activities and also reviewed the findings of research on marine natural products chemistry from the Fiji Islands conducted over a period of 30 years.

The rigor in cataloguing Fiji's marine natural products chemistry and the meticulous work by the eight researchers, six of whom are from USP, has directly led to the creation of a Centre for Drug Discovery and Conservation at USP in 2006. The impact of their work in the region is therefore noteworthy. The review is also an important aid for international researchers in the field of drug recovery from marine organisms.



IAS Senior Scientific Officer participates in International Marine Protect Area Conference

IAS Senior Scientific Officer and the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA) Coordinator, Mr Semisi Meo and IAS Consultant Mr Pio Radikedike were selected by the LMMA Network to accompany one of its SRA Leaders, Mr Hugh Govan, to fort for its vision and visibility at the international forefront in the International Marine Protected Area Conference held in Marseille, France from the 21 to 25 October 2013. The MacBio program under the GIZ funding was secured by LMMA to support travel and additional necessary costs for the FLMMA coordinator.



The five-day conference had intensive multitudes of intended goal that were well set out in the agenda as targets per day. Specifically, the conference focused on topics such as Resilience in Management, Cultural and local knowledge of World Heritage sites,

the need for greater communities' involvement and for good science and management in Marine Protected Areas monitoring.

According to Meo, the conference allowed him to critically assess the progress of FLMMA and how it could improve in the following areas:

- Management efficiency
- Sustainable financing of MPA
- Integration of organisations (Govt, NGOs) and people
- LMMA approach to dissemination of knowledge

FLMMA Partners (GVI) Funded Marine Research National Scholar Training

Fiji Marine Research & Conservation National Scholarship Program was awarded to IAS/USP Graduate Research Student Mr Tomasi Tikoibua to further his knowledge and skills as a Marine Researcher. The one month training was funded and facilitated by the Global Vision International (GVI-Fiji) which is a non-governmental organization and as well as Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA) partners working in marine conservation in the Yasawa Groups of Island. The training was attended by volunteers from other parts of the world that includes Canada, USA, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany to name a few. The National Scholarship Program was developed to enhance the marine conservation effort to communities through cross-sharing of information and for capacity building purposes to a National Scholar engaged in this programme.

Mr Tikoibua also contributed to the Marine Environment awareness programme to the Matacawalevu Village and assisted GVI Community Project staff in enhancing their waste management initiative in the Yasawas. Fortunately, the one month stint was well utilized by Mr Tikoibua through gaining knowledge on under water survey basic taxonomic training, Compressor Training, Offsite Expedition Training and as well as Certification on scuba training that includes Open Water and Advance Open Water Diving Certification.

According to Mr Tikoibua, the training has provided him with an opportunity to make new friends, sharing ideas (culturally and professionally), broaden his knowledge and skills in underwater research and as well as spreading a gospel of conservation to the remote areas in the Yasawas.

USPBeat



USP'S INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCES CONTINUES TO ENGAGE CUSTOMERS AT ITS OPEN DAY 2013

The Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS), a research and commercial arm of the University of the South Pacific's Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment (FSTE) held another successful Open Day on the 20th September, 2013 at USP's Lower Campus in Suva.

The Open Day, a key marketing initiative of the Institute, which was first held in 2006 and takes place every two years, continues to engage an increasing number of customers, collaborative and strategic partners for research, and showcases the Institute as a leader in scientific services.

IAS Acting Director, Mr Usaia Dolodolotawake noted that IAS amongst a range of core functions, also "works with communities to improve their livelihoods and sustainably manage their natural resources through analytical services, drug discovery (natural products/ biotechnology), its food unit, environmental services and the South Pacific Regional Herbarium". Mr Dolodolotawake also listed amongst IAS's key achievements, "being the first full service internationally accredited laboratory in the region, the establishment of a centre of excellence in taxonomy and ecology at

its Herbarium and the establishment of a center of excellence in biodiversity development and conservation".

Mr Dolodolotawake during his presentation at the Open Day, also touched on several future initiatives of the Institute which include "new advanced machinery obtained in association with the development of a biofuel testing laboratory, new analyses developed for testing trade products to be transported to the European Union under a proposed Pacific-EU Free Trade Agreement and associated with the Stockholm Convention (persistent organic pollutants)". He also introduced the Institute's strategic objectives of increasing research output in the area of drug discovery, as well as the development of a pilot process to produce freeze-dried kava for use in commercial products, and the development of a regional profile and investment strategy for biodiversity research in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

As one of only six regional UN global centers of analysis of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) under the Stockholm Convention, IAS appeals to a range of customers from across the region, who

continue to engage the Institute and its extremely high caliber staff whose skills are not only diverse but continue to be developed in their fields.

Over 50 organisations were invited to attend the IAS Open Day, and an additional 30 NGO's and strategic partners who constitute a majority of IAS's external stakeholders. IAS Open Day coordinator, Ms Mereoni Gonelevu also noted that "as a research and commercial arm, with a significantly different customer base from other schools and departments across the faculty (FSTE) and the University, the Open Day for its public and private sector organizations (its customers) is held in recognition and acknowledgment of their support to IAS and also serves as a way of informing guests about current and new services and expertise available at IAS, and a platform to receive their direct feedback on the quality of services offered to them".

This year's Open Day also introduced a range of new displays on analytical tests conducted by the Institute, tests that have received recent international accreditation and new equipment used in its analytical laboratory.

Congratulations and Welcome to the IAS Family!



Congratulations
Eparama Uluiviti on his
marriage to
Arieta Vunivalu



Congratulations
Vasenai Lewanikoro
on her marriage to Pita
Kunadrava

Congratulations Isimeli Loganimoce and Mere Naisilisili in welcoming their bundles of joy.

Meet the Staff

Philip Gabriel
Analyst, Analytical Unit



1. Explain your role at IAS?

My primary role is to conduct samples analysis and submit data for reporting upon completion for IAS Laboratory customers. I also conduct other tasks such as collection of and registration of samples from customers, and attend to tasks that ensure that the Quality Control System of the laboratory is maintained such as performing equipment calibration. As an overseas trained analytical balance calibration analyst, I now do balances calibrations that was previously done by an Australian company. I am also part of a committee responsible for the marketing of events at IAS such as for Open Days. I also assist customers in their queries whenever possible.

2. What do you enjoy best about your work?

Being able to understand my work and solve problems, helping out customers and getting paid for the work done in a timely fashion.

***IAS Family Wishes you a
Merry Christmas and a Happy
New Year!!***