

# business envoy

A group of Pacific Island athletes, likely from the Solomon Islands, are shown from the chest up, wearing blue and white striped jerseys. They are all reaching their arms up towards a red and white soccer ball that is suspended in the air. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, possibly a stadium. The overall mood is one of teamwork and aspiration.

## Australia in the Pacific

**Toward greater economic  
integration in the Pacific**

The Hon Dan Tehan  
Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment

**Securing long-term prosperity**

Senator the Hon Zed Seselja  
Minister for International Development  
and the Pacific

**Global Insights:**

Dispatches from our Pacific Heads of Mission

**Indigenous Trade and Investment**

National Roadmap for Indigenous Skills,  
Jobs and Wealth Creation



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**The Hon Dan Tehan MP**  
Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment



**Senator the Hon Zed Seselja**  
Minister for International Development and the Pacific

## Toward greater economic integration in the Pacific

Welcome to the Pacific edition of Business Envoy. Australia and the Pacific share a long history of friendship, strong people to people links, and a major trade and investment partnership.

Australia represents around a fifth of total trade in goods in the region and more than \$18 billion worth of investment .

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, there is also an upside and opportunity in the Pacific region.

A critical focus of the Australian Government is how we can tackle those challenges, while maximising the opportunities on offer.

Our Government is working to encourage trade, investment, and business to flourish, to support economic recovery in the region.

One of the best ways we can do that is to strengthen economic integration, empower business to create jobs, and get our economies growing again.

The entry into force of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus in December last year was an important step forward for business in our region.

PACER Plus provides a platform for greater economic integration between our countries, and will bolster more trade and investment in the region. It provides more certainty, transparency, and openness, and will help establish more partnerships between our businesses, making it easier for both Australian and Pacific businesses to trade and engage.

To maximise the impact of PACER Plus, we are leveraging our development program to help businesses realise the benefits it offers.

This edition of Business Envoy features the \$25.5 million PACER Plus Implementation Package, funded by Australia and New Zealand, which will help countries tackle barriers to trade and investment, make trade easier and cheaper for business, and help improve the investment environment.



Solomon Islands Tourism, Credit: IFC

*Continued page 4 >>>*

## Australia and the Pacific – securing long term prosperity

Australia is proud to be part of the Pacific family. Shared values, unbreakable people to people connections and historically strong business links are the cornerstone of our engagement with the region.

COVID-19 has caused untold hardships for people and economies throughout the Pacific; however I am confident about our future and firmly believe that our best days are yet to come.

Recognising that vaccination is our only pathway out of the pandemic, Australia has worked with our Pacific partners to deliver almost 2 million lifesaving vaccines across the Pacific, and we have committed to supporting full vaccine coverage for the Pacific and Timor Leste.

To help bolster and stabilise the region’s economies, Australia is investing an additional \$305 million for a COVID-19 Response Package for the Pacific and Timor-Leste above the \$1.4 billion in development assistance we already provide each year. This temporary and targeted increase has maintained essential health and education services, helped avoid a major economic collapse and cushioned the blow for many of our neighbours.

But I know, from listening to my friends and colleagues in the Pacific, that there is a shared desire to do more than just mitigate and repair the damage from COVID-19. Governments across our region are committed to innovate, grow, and bounce back stronger and more resilient than ever.

This means creating an environment that encourages investment and entrepreneurship. The Australian Government believes that a business led recovery will be pivotal in securing long term prosperity, and we are investing in the human and physical capital to support this.

Australia’s Business Partnership Platform is enabling businesses in Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and Timor Leste to access finances, resources, and expertise from corporate partners.

*Continued page 5 >>>*

### On the cover

The Fijiana – Women’s Rugby Sevens bronze medal winners at the Tokyo Olympics. See a new era for Pacific Sport on page 26.

Team Fiji prepare for the start of the Women’s pool B match between Team France and Team Fiji during the Rugby Sevens on day six of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at Tokyo Stadium on July 29, 2021

Photo credit: Dan Mullan/Getty Images (provided by PacificAus Sports)



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*Toward greater economic integration in the Pacific continued*

I was pleased that in a meeting with PACER Plus Ministers earlier this year, we agreed to accelerate delivery of assistance under this package.

The Package will also complement existing Australian aid-for-trade activities geared to supporting increased trade and investment in our region.

This edition of Business Envoy also showcases the opportunities in the Pacific as well as the programs and resources that can support you through your business' exploration of the opportunities in the region. As part of this, in this edition we:

- profile markets across the Pacific region
- highlight how government programs and policies – including our development program – are supporting business in the region
- take a closer look at opportunities for business in infrastructure in the Pacific
- highlight case studies on successful businesses in the Pacific

Working together to boost Australia's trade and investment with the Pacific will not only create more jobs but will also contribute to building a stronger and more resilient region.

This edition also looks at the National Roadmap for Indigenous Skills, Jobs and Wealth Creation. The Government is committed to working with Indigenous communities to ensure that not only Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19 but also our broad trade and investment settings are inclusive. The National Roadmap will focus on skills, jobs and wealth creation and connect Indigenous Australians to economic opportunities in a range of industries.

The National Roadmap will be designed in partnership with Indigenous Australians and industry groups, and I was pleased to attend the first in a series of consultative roundtables hosted by Ken Wyatt, Minister for Indigenous Australians on 24 August this year.

I am pleased to launch the November edition of Business Envoy coinciding with Indigenous Business month where events will be held across Australia to showcase Indigenous entrepreneurial and business innovation talent.

With thanks to all our contributors, I hope you enjoy this edition and find it useful in your own efforts to grow your business in the region.



Minister Seselja speaking with Amos, a participant in the Pacific Labour Scheme at Queensland Berries, Caboolture (Photo credit: Office of Minister Seselja)



Solomon Islander and Timorese workers in the Pacific Labour Scheme joined Minister Seselja for an informal discussion about their experience in the scheme (Photo credit: Pacific Labour Facility)

*Australia and the Pacific – securing long term prosperity continued*

In Fiji, for instance, an innovative low-cost digital payment system developed by Mastercard will support 400 female-led small and medium enterprises reduce costs, improve productivity, and grow their business.

Encouraging meaningful growth also means providing the infrastructure businesses need to thrive. Through our flagship Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific, and our bilateral programs, Australia has committed to investing more than \$2 billion in critical nation-building projects right across the Pacific. High-quality, transformative infrastructure such as solar farms, hydropower, highways, seaports and airports as well as fibre optic internet projects are already underway. We will continue to provide access to responsible and transparent concessional financing for infrastructure projects that will encourage further private sector investment, yielding economic benefits for generations to come.

The Blue Pacific's magnificent natural beauty, our vast natural resources and rapidly growing populations remain one of our biggest economic strengths. Tourism, forestry, fisheries, mineral resources, and agriculture will continue to be major economic drivers that underpin our region's COVID-19 recovery as well as our future prosperity.

That's why supporting Pacific farmers access new international markets, such as commercial Kava exports to Australia through Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access (PHAMA) Plus, is a high priority that will see stronger agricultural development and investment translating into more and better jobs across our region.

This is also why access to Australia's labour market through the Pacific Labour Scheme and Seasonal Worker Program is one of the most important priorities for the Australian Government as well as for participating nations.

The depth of Australia's investments in the Pacific is comprehensively supporting the economic needs and aspirations of our citizens at every level. And as our region achieves higher vaccination coverage, I look forward to seeing the Pacific gradually reopen, recover and flourish.

Australia will always be committed to a more resilient and economically strong Pacific, because when our region thrives, Australia thrives too.



# Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus):

A landmark trade and development agreement

# PACER Plus



The entry into force of Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus for eight countries on 13 December 2020 is a significant achievement for the Pacific region.

As a regional free trade agreement, PACER Plus facilitates the growth of existing business while attracting new business to the region. This is supporting economic growth in the Pacific, and most importantly economic recovery from COVID-19.

PACER Plus strengthens Australia's long history as a major trade and investment partner with the Pacific. Australian and Pacific business will benefit from an increased ease-of-doing-business, through more certainty, transparency, and openness in the PACER region.

PACER Plus outcomes, including its lower tariffs and flexible rules of origin, provide a foundation for partnerships between Pacific and Australian companies, even more important given the ongoing travel restrictions in the region.

The services sector, the single biggest component of all our economies and the principal generator of jobs, is also set to benefit from better market access, including in the tourism, education, and financial services sectors. This comes at a critical time, given the severe impact COVID-19 travel restrictions have had on important sectors like tourism.

Australian investment into the Pacific has also received a boost, though increased transparency and certainty under the agreement. This will facilitate Australian business to realise the investment opportunities in the region, including in the growing infrastructure sector. This investment will help meet the region's need for capital and will raise productivity, creating jobs and strengthening skills development in the region.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is working closely with other PACER Plus members to make sure business can realise the benefits from PACER Plus. The PACER Plus Implementation Package, funded by Australia and New Zealand, will help Pacific members implement the agreement, tackling key barriers to trade and investment in the region.

Considerable progress has been made to establish a bespoke Implementation Unit in Apia, Samoa, to deliver this \$25 million package. Personnel have been recruited, including the head of the unit Mr Roy Lagolago, and over the last few months, the unit has developed a work program, based on key priorities identified through consultation with the private sector and governments across PACER Plus members.

The initial suite of activities will focus on boosting business' ability to use the agreement to trade and invest in the region. In addition to awareness raising among the private sector on how to use the agreement, the Unit will also undertake training to help businesses utilise the specialised customs system ASYCUDA, rolled out in preparation for entry into force. Training will also be provided to assist help countries update relevant customs rules and procedures on national online trade portals, which will in turn support businesses' increased access to essential customs information for trade in goods.

Keep up to date on news and the benefits of PACER Plus by visiting [pacerplus.org](https://pacerplus.org) and [dfat.gov.au](https://dfat.gov.au)

## Introducing Roy Lagolago, Head Pacer Plus Implementation Unit



I was born and raised in Samoa, and from the villages of Fagalii, Fasitoo Uta and Sapapalii. I went to Victoria University in Wellington and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Sociology as well as a Masters in Public Management. I started my public service career in 2002 with the New Zealand Customs Service and my career has taken me to a lot of interesting places where I have been able to serve and protect Pacific communities.

In my spare time I coach my daughter's netball and rugby team. This year I volunteered to coach the Stokes Valley Rhinos premier two rugby team after they were not able to find a coach. It was great opportunity to give back to the community to grow the game of rugby at the grassroots level. I am very privileged to be taking up the role as the Head of the PACER Plus Implementation Unit (PPIU) and will be relocating to Samoa.

The PPIU supports parties to PACER Plus to implement a first-of-its-kind treaty in the Pacific. As Head of the PPIU, it is my role to work with partner countries to implement the agreement within and between the countries, and realise the sustainable development advances these commitments offer. I took up the role in July this year and the team that we have on board already are working on strategic planning with partner countries to achieve their desired outcomes by 2025. We want to provide support to countries to ensure that they can implement the agreement, but we also want to build public and private sector capabilities around trade and investment in the region. And that's the real value of PACER Plus – it's an agreement that puts in place the foundations to support business in our region – to make it easier for new businesses to flourish and established businesses to expand across the Pacific. Watching new investment be shared between our Pacific family is a win for all our communities, and I'm proud to be leading the team to support that change.

Attending a community event celebrating Samoan language week



Attendance at a traditional Samoan ceremony for getting the Tatau, the art of tattooing that is hundreds of years old



## Doing business in the Pacific

### Austrade – your business partner in the Pacific

Australia's connection to the countries of the Pacific region is deep and enduring. While New Zealand is often the first export market for Australian exporters, Pacific markets are a logical next step for Australian businesses that can provide products and services in demand in the Pacific.

It is essential to consider each market in the Pacific individually, as each Pacific Island country has its own regulations, business environment and opportunities. The pipeline of infrastructure projects in the Pacific, funded through bilateral and multilateral agreements are a magnet for Australian building, construction, and engineering businesses to develop operations in the region. Australian business often credit DFAT and Austrade support for their success in accessing these opportunities.

Hall Contracting has been operating in the Pacific for more than 15 years and has an office in Fiji. William Blank, Business Development Manager said “Austrade has facilitated valuable connections for us in the Pacific Islands, which has brought a number of dredging and climate change adaptation opportunities to our attention”.

Austrade continues to support Australian businesses by providing timely information on new opportunities through our Pacific webinar series and Pacific News.

Our partners, DFAT's Office of the Pacific and Export Finance Australia connect Australian businesses with private sector initiatives, such as the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific and export lending facilities.

Austrade's Export Market Development Grants [EMDG] program helps Australian businesses grow their exports in Pacific markets. These grants encourage small to medium enterprises to market and promote their goods and services globally.

Australian capabilities are evident in mining and resources projects in Papua New Guinea and food and beverage operations in Fiji where the tourism sector drives demand for premium Australian products. This demand is expected to rebound when Fiji reopens its tourism sector.

There are also new opportunities in sectors such as health, where Austrade facilitated the supply of PPE and respirators into Papua New Guinea, and PPE and test laboratory supplies into Fiji earlier this year.

The opportunities for investment in health services is expected to continue after the current pandemic crisis is over with a surge in demand expected once borders between Pacific Islands reopen.

Another area of opportunity is in fintech products. MasterCard, Fintech Pacific and ygap have formed a partnership to provide women-led micro and small businesses in Fiji, including market stall holders, access to a tailored digital mobile phone payment system.

Whether a company is an SME or the Australian entity of a global behemoth, the Austrade NZ Pacific team, as part of Team Australia, is your partner of choice in providing relevant information and connections to local partners, as well as programs and opportunities in Pacific markets.

For more information visit [www.austrade.gov.au](http://www.austrade.gov.au)

## Fostering a strong business dialogue: Australia Papua New Guinea Business Council

The Australia Papua New Guinea Business Council is in its fifth decade of representing Australian business investors and traders in Papua New Guinea and working to promote growth in the bilateral business and trade relationship.

The Council is a membership based not-for-profit association of businesses with interest in the Australia-Papua New Guinea bilateral business and economic relationship. Members are based in Australia and Papua New Guinea and include large, medium, and small businesses. Most of the major Australian companies with investments and significant trading and services relationships in Papua New Guinea are members of the Council, but equally many medium and smaller sized companies in a range of business sectors are also members.

In partnership with the Business Council of Papua New Guinea, the Council arranges the only bilateral business event held between Australia and Papua New Guinea which alternates between Australia and Papua New Guinea, the Australia Papua New Guinea Business Forum and Trade Expo. In 2021, the 36th Australia Papua New Guinea Business Forum was held in Brisbane and online with 150 delegates present in Brisbane and 70 participating virtually. Recognising the continued uncertainty of bilateral business travel, it has been agreed that the 2022 Business Forum will be held in Australia.

The Business Forum and Trade Expo brings together up to 400 business and government representatives to discuss business and investment policy and opportunities and features a trade expo. The Forum creates an engaged environment in which businesses in Australia and Papua New Guinea can meet frequently, kick-starting discussions between companies which can lead to investment and trading transactions.

The Council works closely with Austrade and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and their portfolio ministers. With the Business Council of Papua New Guinea, it represents business interests with ministers from both countries at the annual Australia Papua New Guinea Ministerial Forum, a bilateral meeting led by Foreign Ministers. The Business Dialogue provides an important opportunity for senior business representatives from Australia and Papua New Guinea to speak directly with ministers of both governments.

More information about the work of the Council is available by contacting the President, Mark Baker, at [mark.baker@anz.com](mailto:mark.baker@anz.com) or the Executive Director, Frank Youn, at [frank@australiapacificbusiness.org.au](mailto:frank@australiapacificbusiness.org.au) or telephone +61 412 608 195.



# Doing business in the Pacific

## The Blue Economy – Boosting trade and investment across the Pacific

The Australia Pacific Island Business Council (APIBC) is the peak body for Australian businesses working in the Pacific and has been promoting bilateral trade, investment relationships and economic and employment opportunities across the regions since 2000.

This year, the APIBC launched its Blue Economy platform focused on sectors driving jobs and investment opportunities in the Pacific. The Blue Economy platform supports the Australian Government’s goal for a Pacific region that is secure strategically, stable economically and sovereign politically. As the region’s largest shared natural resource, fisheries have been adopted by the APIBC as a new sector under the Blue Economy. The sustainable success of

our region’s fisheries sector requires ports, shipping, cold storage, and supply chains, as well as leveraging new technologies and attracting venture capital. APIBC members recognise their commercial interests support Australia’s strategic interests across one of the most pristine regions in the World.

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) estimates illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing robs the region’s economy of over \$600m per year. The Australian Government takes IUU seriously, including through its \$2 billion Pacific Maritime Security Program. The APIBC recognises the Australian Government’s work with Pacific countries, regional organisations, and the multilateral development banks in ensuring the sustainability of stocks, extraction of greater long run income streams and improved market access. Fisheries is a sector where PACER Plus and the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) can interlock to drive opportunities. The APIBC is one of the best advocates for both initiatives.



PTI Freight Assistance Package (Credit: PTI)

## Freight Assistance Package well received

Pacific Trade Invest (PTI) Australia’s Freight Assistance Package was launched in late 2020 to support Pacific exporters in the wake of COVID-19. Since its inception the initiative has been extremely well received by Pacific exporters and continues to provide tangible relief to businesses in the Pacific during the unprecedented pressures presented by the COVID-19 economic crisis.

The package has seen over 40 successful applicants receive \$2,500 per enterprise to offset any freight costs incurred.

The Freight Assistance Package was designed following the PTI Australia Pacific Islands Export Survey in early 2020, which revealed that freight costs were one of the top three barriers to export faced by Pacific businesses, a challenge that became further exacerbated when COVID-19 drastically impacted shipping routes and inflated costs.

Caleb Jarvis, PTI Australia’s Trade and Investment Commissioner, said the feedback from the Freight Assistance Package has been overwhelmingly positive.

“We are so pleased to witness the incredible impact the Freight Assistance Package has had on

SMEs in the Pacific, and it has been wonderful to see the grant has also been commended for both its efficiency and effectiveness by our Pacific colleagues and policymakers. During a time where the ongoing effects of COVID-19 have been immensely damaging to businesses in the Pacific, the Freight Assistance Package has enabled us to provide tangible and immediate support at a time it was needed most.”

The impact of the continued closure of international borders on Jessica Cassell’s boutique social enterprise, Bilum and Bilas in PNG, has been immense. Now exporting internationally, Cassell says PTI Australia’s COVID-19 Freight Assistance Package has provided the business with much-needed support and relief.

“In order to continue, our business has had to switch almost entirely to exporting our products internationally. We struggled to afford the additional cost involved in exporting our products to Australia. Receiving the Freight Assistance Package has significantly eased this pressure and means we can continue to pay staff wages and freight costs without going under.”

All recipients of PTI Australia’s COVID-19 Freight Assistance Package must have a registered business in one of the Pacific Island Forum countries, be currently exporting to Australia or utilising eCommerce to ship globally, or be an Australian-based importer importing products from a registered Pacific Island business.

Founded in 1979, PTI Australia is an agency of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Funded by the Australian Government, it facilitates trade and investment in the Pacific Islands.







## Global Insights: Dispatches from our Pacific Heads of Mission

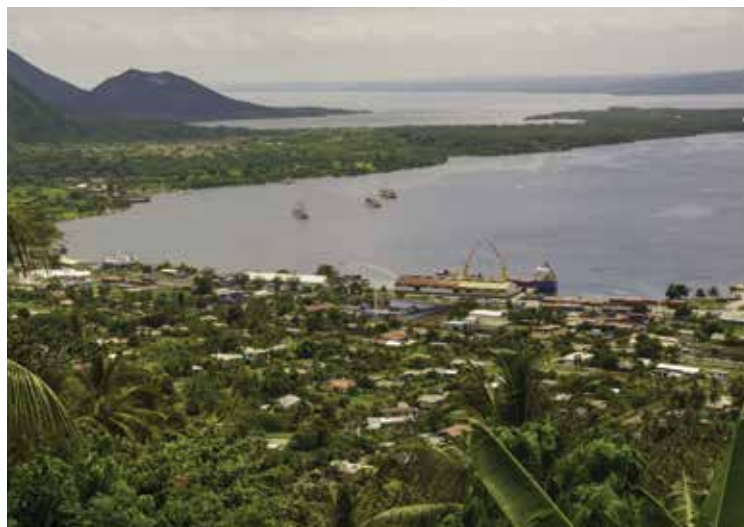


### Papua New Guinea

Jon Philp High Commissioner

## The land of opportunity and the unexpected

PNG is the land of opportunity, as well as the unexpected. The country is rich in untapped natural resources and potential human capital. Travelling around PNG and marvelling at its stunning beauty, you cannot help but wonder about the huge opportunities in tourism, agribusiness, and hospitality. PNG's links to the powerhouse economies of Asia are growing, as are its connections to businesses, research institutions, and capital in Australia and New Zealand.



Australian trade with PNG was worth \$6,309 billion in 2020 and some 4,500 Australian businesses now supply their goods and services to the PNG market. However, what makes our trading relationship unique is that PNG has a trade surplus. Australia imports more from PNG than Australia exports to PNG.

Australian companies play a large role in transferring technological know-how and equipment. Traditionally, this innovation was based in the mining sector, but we now see new technologies being rolled-out across other industries.

Australian company Pronto Software has been doing business in PNG for over 30 years.

*Today Pronto has more than 50 Customers in PNG including Nambawan Super, WaterPNG and PostPNG. One of our innovations is a technology that allows customers to transfer money to their family in the village safely via the Post Office.*

**Steve Hillyard,**  
General Manager, Pronto

Australian expertise is in demand to co-deliver with PNG companies. CEQ is an electrical and engineering business specialising in the delivery of complex

projects. Partnering with PNG companies, it delivered services to APEC Haus and is currently working on the Lombrum Naval base on Manus.

*CEQ sees PNG as a significantly important market and an evolutionary step in the company's history. The PNG market affords CEQ the opportunity to showcase the company's skills on a wider scale while imparting the knowledge gained in the Australian market to the national workforce.*

**Paul Bertinato,**  
Operations Manager, CEQ

In PNG, history and personal relationships matter for business. Successful businesses combine savvy market principles with strong in-country relationships, through alliances with local businesses, or through formal channels such as the Australia-PNG Business Council, the Australian High Commission, Austrade and industry conferences. Across the Pacific, and in PNG, there is a preference for goods and services provided by Australian companies, based on Australia's reputation for delivering quality.

Without doubt, there are challenges in the business environment. For those willing to invest in PNG, however, there are substantial rewards on offer.



### Supporting better coffee production in PNG

In Papua New Guinea, the coffee sector has seen several major transitions over the years, from a largely plantation-based effort to more smallholder-centric, commodity grade production. In a bid to improve global competitiveness, exporters in PNG are increasingly turning from commodity grade to specialty and high-grade coffee, as the market for high-grade coffee has been consistently growing in Australia, Europe, and the United States. Consumers are demanding responsibly sourced coffee, and in practical terms this has meant that exporters need to invest heavily in PNG's smallholder supply chains.



The Market Development Facility (MDF), funded by the Australian Government, is a private sector development program focusing on inclusive growth and sustainable employment generation. In PNG, MDF supports exporters to increase their supply of certified coffee, working with the exporters to identify champions in their supply chains and develop clusters of responsibly sourced coffee producers. There are also opportunities to recognise the role of women in the coffee market system, as they are involved at almost every stage of the production and marketing chain.

MDF is working with many of the largest exporters in PNG including New Guinea Highland Coffee Exports (NGHCE), PNG Coffee Exports (PNGCE) and Morobe Mountain Coffee Export Ltd. The exporters are training smallholder farmers on certification requirements and good farm management practices, to support a gradual transition to better

quality, sustainably produced coffee. Better quality coffee enables greater premiums for both farmer and exporter. According to NGHCE General Manager Joeri Kalwij:

*Papua New Guinea coffee is one of the best – however, there is inconsistency in the supply of quality coffee, due to a number of factors. One main issue is the lack of farmer appreciation that commercially viable, high-quality coffee requires consistency in [coffee] cherry selection and processing. Farmers can benefit from higher prices if they are consistent in their production practices and supply. We want this training to help coffee growers understand the quality requirements and encourage improved practices.*

For women working in coffee farming, the training has been useful in honing farming skills that were previously applied in a more ad-hoc manner. As Catherine from Menyama in Morobe Province says,

*We'd never had coffee training like this before. Some of the things we learnt were new, so we are very interested to continue working together with the extension officers to improve our skills. I feel that this is good, and we will benefit more from it.*

In 2020, a total 2,980 farming households were certified and sold high grade coffee to MDF's partners. Sales generated USD342,505 [AUD447,219] in additional income for the households. Despite the inevitable threats of the continuing pandemic and unpredictable extreme weather events, MDF's business partners are optimistic and plan to source certified coffee from around 4,000 additional farmers over 2021.





## Global Insights: Dispatches from our Pacific Heads of Mission



### Fiji

John Feakes High Commissioner

## Resilient and agile

Businesses in Fiji have displayed resilience and agility throughout the pandemic, working with the Fijian Government to ensure open supply chains and the delivery of important services. I'm proud that Australian businesses are playing their part in supporting Fiji's COVID-19 response and recovery, including delivering health solutions and facilitating remittances from family and friends abroad.

Beyond the COVID-19 response, Australian companies are making important contributions in almost every sector. Our proximity as well as our diverse supply chains make Australian businesses trusted suppliers of goods and services to Fiji. More than 3,200 Australian companies exported to Fiji in 2018-19 with a total export value of \$467 million. While total trade fell in 2020-21 due to the pandemic, we expect trade flows will strengthen in 2022.

We anticipate Fiji's economy will soon rebound, as tourists return, and business operations normalise. In this context, there are opportunities for Australian businesses, particularly in the infrastructure, health, and food and beverage sectors.

Australian companies are strong competitors in infrastructure and construction. We have recently seen tourism infrastructure projects launched in anticipation of Fiji's tourism rebound, with some significant contracts awarded to Australian businesses. For example, Australian company GCMarine was recently awarded a \$8.9 million contract to build a 134-berth marina as part of a major development on Nawi Island in Savusavu.

Australian businesses are also playing an important role in supporting the Fijian Government to deliver health infrastructure and services. For example, Aspen Medical has partnered with the Fijian Government to develop, finance, upgrade, operate and maintain two hospitals. We anticipate a sustained high demand for innovative health services, including digital health services, in coming years. Australian businesses are well placed to take advantage of these opportunities.

### Positioning Fiji as the Outsourcing Hub of the Pacific



While the pandemic took a heavy toll on Fiji's tourism economy, it presented unexpected opportunities for the country's emerging Outsourcing Services (OS) industry. Australia's Market Development Facility (MDF), a private sector development program focusing on sustainable job creation and inclusive growth, has been supporting Fiji's Business Process Outsourcing industry since 2019. Fiji's OS sector is estimated to be worth USD50 million (AUD65 million) annually (2 per cent of GDP) and employs approximately 5,000 people. In 2020, as traditional Asian OS destinations experienced hard lockdowns that caused service disruptions for their Australian clients, large firms started to seek more geographically diversified solutions. Fiji is well placed to take advantage of this, particularly from clients in Australia and New Zealand.

Yet Fiji remains relatively unknown as an OS destination. Business is usually generated by word of mouth and through the Fijian diaspora. Those firms that do work with Fijian OS providers however, quickly become loyal customers. Clients point to Fiji's familiarity, proximity, reliability, favourable time zone, neutral accent, well-educated labour pool, internet connectivity and infrastructure. While Fiji's costs are marginally higher than its main competitors (India and the Philippines), clients report that this is more than offset by Fiji's impressive call conversion and customer satisfaction levels. According to DHL Fiji Business Services Manager, Kavish Prasad, the DHL Fiji office call conversion rate is above 95 per cent, with customer satisfaction rated the highest among the Pacific teams within DHL Global Forwarding.

Australian food and beverages are mainstays in Fijian supermarkets, restaurants, and hotels. While demand for imported food fell in 2020-21 due to the decline in tourist arrivals, we anticipate a significant uptick in demand for premium Australian food and beverage exports in coming months as resorts reopen to international tourism. We encourage exporters to position themselves to support the increased demand.

Fiji is increasingly regarded as a hub for ICT and back-office processing services. Australian and other global businesses have invested in call centres, data processing, software development and IT centres in Fiji. Reliable telecommunications, customer service capabilities and the establishment of free trade zones make Fiji an attractive option for outsourcing services.

My team and I are always looking for ways to better support Australian businesses to trade and invest in Fiji. I encourage Australian businesses considering opportunities in Fiji to contact our Austrade team at [suva@austrade.gov.au](mailto:suva@austrade.gov.au).

Marketing this potential is important. MDF is supporting the Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) Council of Fiji to increase awareness among the Australian and New Zealand markets with targeted marketing campaigns informed by an in-depth market demand study. This seems to be paying dividends. In 2020, council membership doubled as Fijian firms recognised the benefits of industry wide marketing. MDF partners Greymouse Investments Limited, BTR Fiji Limited and Pacific Centrecor Fiji Ltd have all seen an almost 100 per cent increase in client queries in 2021. The general feedback from clients is that they are looking to either start outsourcing or spread their risk from existing markets.

Australia's support includes a partnership between the MDF and major Fijian developer Lyndhurst Pte Ltd to support the marketing

of Fiji's first Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Business Park for OS providers. The partnership also works with Investment Fiji, which is actively targeting OS as a source of new investment. The industry's advocacy has recently resulted in the announcement of a series of government incentives including tax holidays for OS investments in projects such as ICT parks and customs exemptions for OS material and equipment.

MDF is exploring the feasibility of further expansion of its BPO support in the Pacific, including Samoa, where outsourcing services could provide valuable opportunities for economic diversification and employment.



### New Zealand

The Hon Patricia Forsythe AM High Commissioner

## Building on a gold standard FTA with Australia

Signed in 1983, the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (CER) was celebrated by the WTO as one of the world's most comprehensive, effective, and multilaterally compatible free trade agreements. Almost 40 years on, Australia and New Zealand's trade arrangement sets the gold standard for FTAs globally.

Building on the success of the CER, the Single Economic Market (SEM) agenda was launched in 2004. It works to promote a seamless trans-Tasman business environment that is agile and responsive to today's economic challenges and opportunities. The SEM has provided a framework to harness innovations from our respective COVID-19 responses and explore solutions to common challenges like supply chain disruptions.

Our deep economic integration unlocks opportunities to collaborate across a wide range of areas to our mutual benefit, from Indigenous business collaboration to harnessing technology and innovation.

Building on our bilateral Indigenous Collaboration Arrangement, signed in 2020, Australia has been able to share our experience in developing a world class Indigenous Procurement Policy and is learning from the success of Māori businesses thriving in global markets.

As New Zealand moves ahead on its Just Transition journey to decarbonise, Australia has the expertise and experience to provide low emissions technology-based solutions for hard to abate sectors such as energy and agriculture. Reflecting our commitment to innovation-led solutions, in 2021 the Australia New Zealand AgriTech Council was established to promote and help scale home-grown ANZAC solutions, driving more sustainable agricultural practices.

Beyond our own borders, Australia and New Zealand stand together as advocates for the rules that promote open global trade, and underpin both our economic prosperity, and that of our broader Pacific neighbourhood.





## Global Insights: Dispatches from our Pacific Heads of Mission



### Solomon Islands

Dr Lachlan Strahan High Commissioner

## Greater connectivity and market access a basis for better investment and business links



High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan toured a Solomon Islands commercial farm that is funded by Australia's private sector development program, Strongim Bisnis, to convert green waste from Honiara Central Market into organic fertiliser. (Photo credit: Eugene Kerekere)

Agriculture is a growth sector in Solomon Islands, where rich soils and traditional knowledge deliver excellent products for domestic markets (Photo credit: Eugene Kerekere)

The trade relationship between Australia and Solomon Islands is relatively modest when compared to the broad scope of our political, development and security relationships, and our people-to-people links. However, recent Australian initiatives to support connectivity and market access, combined with PACER Plus, provide a basis for greater investment and business links.

After eleven years in the planning, construction has commenced on the \$320 million Tina River Hydropower Project. Australia has contributed almost \$30 million to the preparatory phase of the project, including construction of a major access road, and will provide an additional \$30 million in financing for the transmission system through the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP). Once complete, the Tina River project will meet around 70 per cent of Honiara's electricity needs. Reductions in electricity costs will support local households and

businesses, enabling electricity-intensive sectors like manufacturing to grow.

The Coral Sea Cable (CS2) is already transforming Solomon Islands' digital landscape providing faster, cheaper, and more reliable internet services. CS2 has helped to reduce retail internet costs by as much as 90 per cent and spurred 100 per cent growth in internet usage in the last year. More and more local businesses are selling their goods and services online and considering options for cross-border e-commerce.

Our cooperation on CS2 is complemented by Australia's new \$250 million Solomon Islands Infrastructure Program (SIIP). In addition to financing new infrastructure, SIIP will support the Solomon Islands Government to improve infrastructure planning and prioritisation, raise construction standards and upskill the local construction sector.

Named after King Solomon due to its abundance of gold, Solomon Islands is rich in resources, including gold, nickel, and bauxite: offer opportunities for Australian mining companies. New mining legislation is being developed to attract investment and provide much

needed transparency, environmental management, and sustainability.

Due to its declining forestry resources, once the backbone of the economy, Solomon Islands is seeking to diversify its economy. Other than mining, export opportunities exist in agriculture and sustainably sourced plantation timber. Our private sector development program, Strongim Bisnis, is supporting these sectors to grow domestically, while our Pacific Horticulture and Market Access program is opening export opportunities by helping businesses meet international standards – and now PACER Plus is removing tariff barriers in the region.

Finally, it's hard to write about Solomon Islands without mentioning its beautiful environment and widely recognised untapped tourism potential. While COVID-19 pandemic-related border closures have put a temporary hold on the tourism sector, Australia is supporting upgrades to key enabling infrastructure, like our \$18 million investment in a New Zealand-led upgrade to airfields in Western and Choiseul provinces. Solomon Islands is focused on building new infrastructure in preparation for eventually welcoming new visitors, including when it hosts the 2023 Pacific Games.



Solomon Islands Tourism, Credit: IFC

### Tourism revitalised: coral reefs, mountains, and beaches

As the global economy regains its strength and momentum, Solomon Islands is looking to the post-pandemic horizon and the potential to grow its tourism industry.

With beautiful coral reefs, mountains and beaches, remarkable biodiversity and proximity to Australia, Solomon Islands has a natural appeal for tourists. An emerging destination before tourism came to a halt in 2020, this Pacific nation, made up of around 1,000 islands, catered to a niche market seeking to avoid the crowds and take advantage of its world-class dive sites.

Building up Solomon Islands' tourism industry is a national priority as a major job creator for its more than 700,000 people. Tourism also foreign exchange revenues and an alternative to the unsustainable logging industry.

But private investors in Solomon Islands tourism have faced key challenges, including a lack of sites for investment and inadequate infrastructure. Complex land issues such as clarity of tenure have deterred much needed investment.

An International Finance Corporation (IFC) tourism project has laid the foundations to address such thorny

problems, including through identifying more than 60 sites suitable for tourism development. The project has also conducted an environmental and social analysis of key sites and created an accompanying tourism focused investor guide.

IFC's work in Solomon Islands is guided by the Pacific Partnership, under which the governments of Australia and New Zealand together with IFC, are working to stimulate private sector investment and reduce poverty in the Pacific.

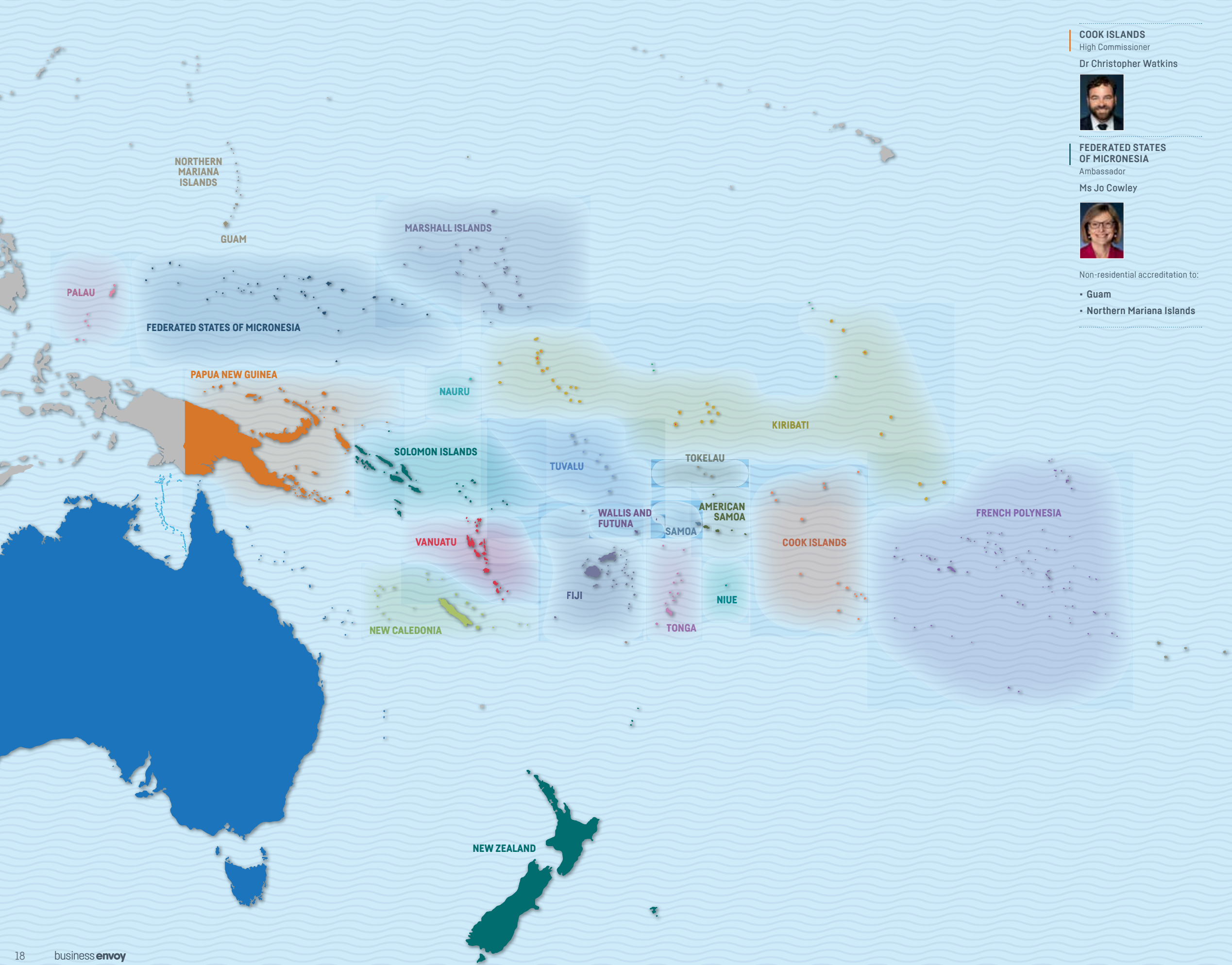
As the DFAT-funded Strongim Bisnis project noted, the identification of investable land and the inventory of land that can now be made available for investors is a "game changer" that overcomes a key barrier to entry in this exciting market.

*There is a great opportunity to build a bigger, better tourism industry in Solomon Islands.*

**Thomas Jacobs,**  
IFC Country Manager for Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands.

Tourism offers the opportunity for sustainable, inclusive growth and importantly, a way of broadening the economy, creating jobs and opportunities.





**COOK ISLANDS**  
High Commissioner  
Dr Christopher Watkins



**FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA**  
Ambassador  
Ms Jo Cowley



Non-residential accreditation to:  
• Guam  
• Northern Mariana Islands

**FIJI**  
High Commissioner  
Mr John Feakes



**FRENCH POLYNESIA**  
Consul-General  
Ms Claire Scott



**KIRIBATI**  
High Commissioner  
Mr David Yardley



**MARSHALL ISLANDS**  
Ambassador  
Mr Brek Batley



**NAURU**  
High Commissioner  
Dr Helen Cheney



**NEW CALEDONIA**  
Consul-General  
Ms Alison Carrington



Non-residential accreditation to:  
• Wallis and Futuna

**NEW ZEALAND**  
High Commissioner  
The Hon Patricia Forsyth AM



Non-residential accreditation to:  
• Tokelau  
Consul-General , Auckland  
Craig Knowles AM



**NIUE**  
High Commissioner  
Ms Susan Allen



**PALAU**  
Ambassador  
Ms Richelle Turner



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**  
High Commissioner  
Mr Jon Philp



Consul-General  
Mr Mark Foxe



**SAMOA**  
High Commissioner  
Ms Emily Luck



Non-residential accreditation to:  
• American Samoa

**SOLOMON ISLANDS**  
High Commissioner  
Dr Lachlan Strahan



**TONGA**  
High Commissioner  
Ms Rachael Moore



**TUVALU**  
High Commissioner  
Ms Karyn Murray



**VANUATU**  
High Commissioner  
Ms Sarah deZoeten







## Global Insights: Dispatches from our Pacific Heads of Mission



### Samoa

Emily Luck High Commissioner



### New Caledonia

Alison Carrington Consul-General



### Tonga

Rachel Moore High Commissioner



### Vanuatu

Sarah deZoeten High Commissioner

## Building business partnerships

Australia and Samoa have an enduring relationship which spans political, security, business, and people-to-people links. This year, we celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations. Throughout COVID-19, Australia has supported Samoa to strengthen health systems, promote stability and support economic recovery. We are pleased we have been able to effectively adapt our assistance to Samoa as the country's needs have evolved.

Private sector partnerships will play a role in supporting economic recovery in a COVID-shaped world. In support of this, Australia recently announced two new partnerships with businesses through its Business Partnerships Platform.

Australia will partner with local business, BookingSamoa, to scale online bookings for micro to medium sized tourism businesses, improving their online presence to increase opportunities and income when international borders re-open. We are also partnering with a business consortium of regional private laboratory and non-government organisations to provide enhanced expertise on screening and diagnostic facilities.

Congratulations to Roy Lagolago, selected to head the PACER Plus Implementation Unit based in Samoa. Through PACER Plus, we will see greater opportunities for local business, particularly in the agriculture sector, to access export markets. Australia was also pleased to select Samoa as the home to a new Regional Sports Hub for the Pacific. This builds on our shared love of sport and fosters future generations of sporting talent across the Pacific, while creating more opportunities for women and girls in the sporting arena.

Australia has played a supportive role in Samoa's vaccine rollout, sharing 50,000 CSL-manufactured AstraZeneca doses with Samoa. Beyond vaccines, we are proud that the Tamanu application, developed by Australian company, Beyond Essential Systems, has provided valuable and accurate data on immunisation rates. Vaccines are saving lives and the faster we can achieve comprehensive vaccine coverage, the faster we can get back to reopening our region.

## A 'New' Caledonia means new opportunities for Australian business

On 12 December, the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia will hold its third and final referendum on independence. Regardless of the result, all sides agree a new chapter of development and greater regional integration will begin. This creates opportunities for our highly regarded Australian businesses.

Only 1,500kms east of Queensland, New Caledonia's capital Nouméa is a 2-hour flight from Brisbane. With a GDP per capita of USD 32,600 in 2019 (third highest in the Pacific after Australia and NZ), the territory's 271,000 residents enjoy a high standard of living. With our natural advantages there are opportunities to increase Australia's position as the territory's fifth largest trading partner.

New Caledonia's strength is its 'green' nickel (a key component in batteries) mining industry. Australian METS companies have had success supporting this industry, yet room to grow remains. The local energy transition towards net zero carbon emissions also opens doors to Australian technological expertise and investment.

Pre-COVID-19, New Caledonia welcomed over 300,000 Australian tourists each year. Once borders reopen, the industry expects significant growth in this sector. Opportunities exist, not only for direct investment, but to support local infrastructure expansion, such as port upgrades.

However, our greatest opportunity lies in education. Demand for world class English language skills, as well as technical and vocational education and training (especially in hospitality), is rising. Australian education providers are well placed to help meet these needs.

Agricultural links already go back over a century, with locals adopting Australian terms like 'stockmen'. These are becoming more sophisticated with new opportunities in areas such as animal and plant genetics.

New Caledonia, with its French language and laws, may seem daunting at first, but with the right local partner and determination it can be rewarding. 81 years after we first opened, the Consulate-General continues to promote ways that make it more so.

À bientôt!

## Unlocking Tonga's delicious export potential

The Kingdom of Tonga is a beautiful archipelago of 178 islands in the vast South Pacific Ocean. Its climate, which is good for agriculture, and fertile soil contribute to the deliciousness of locally grown fruit and vegetables. Its currently watermelon season in Tonga and my family and I are indulging daily in the sweetest watermelon we have ever tasted.

Agriculture is estimated to contribute 16 per cent to Tonga's Gross Domestic Product, and Tonga has one of the highest rates of subsistence food production among Pacific Islands countries. Investments in agriculture contribute to improving sustainable livelihoods and boosting economic growth.

With Australia's support, Tonga has embarked on a new project to design and

construct an agricultural goods packhouse that will help Tonga's export marketing pathways for root crops and cucurbit, especially watermelons.

A study conducted by the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus Program (PHAMA Plus) identified the need for a centralized general-purpose processing facility to unlock Tonga's export potential. The packhouse would need to be climate resilient and fully equipped to meet international standards in handling and biosecurity.

*Not only will this new packhouse open up more market opportunities for our root crop products, it will also provide employment and income opportunities for women and youths who are heavily involved at the export processing stage.*

Melesisi Finefeuiki  
Tongan root crops exporter



Taro plantation for export. Pictured: Melesisi Finefeuiki, Lotopoha Export Company. Photo credit PHAMA Plus



Tonga squash (Photo credit PHAMA Plus)



Watermelon harvesting for export. Pictured: Watermelon Grower, Lampetiti Mosaati, Young Growers Association (Photo credit PHAMA Plus)

The project will contribute to Tonga's COVID-19 economic recovery and support the private sector to harness trade and development opportunities under the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER Plus).

*This packhouse project reaches out to each and every family and community in Tonga. The responsibility is on us to work and make good use of it, for the benefit of our families.*

Samu Vaipulu,  
Former Minister for Trade and Economic Development, Tonga

With a feasibility study now completed, Australian company Reeves International with Tongan company Puloka Construction have been selected for the detailed

design and construction of the packhouse. It will be built at Vaini village, the most centralized and accessible area of Tongatapu.

Australia is also supporting Tonga's horticulture and root crops sector by expanding the scope of agricultural extension activities that will help growers to upgrade their operations and enter export markets through the packhouse over the next five to ten years.

The Central Packhouse project is a demonstration of Australia's commitment to enable economic diversification and integration with Pacific communities. We hope it will help Tonga share its beautiful produce with neighboring countries, including Australia.

Ofa Atu.

## A passion for fruit drives ni-Vanuatu business to new heights

A passionfruit business - founded by Australian farmer and businessman Robert Osbourne - is thriving in Vanuatu. Based on the island of Espiritu Santo, Tropical Plantations Ltd has over 40,000 plants (equivalent to 10 per cent of Australia's total passionfruit production). Australia, in partnership with the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), has supported the business to gain HACCP Certification, the global gold standard in food safety which opens access to international export markets.

The story of Mr Osbourne's successful passionfruit farm is a small piece of the broader jigsaw of Australia's private sector, trade, and investment support in Vanuatu. In addition to HAACP, the Governance for Growth (GfG) program has supported VCCI to provide business coaching and one-on-one business mentoring to a number of micro, small and medium enterprises. This work, which has had a strong focus on women-founded and led businesses, has allowed them to adapt, pivot and survive through the pandemic.

GfG is also assisting the Government of Vanuatu Foreign Investment Promotion Agency to develop its first National Investment Policy. The policy, which aims to increase and improve investment that promotes sustainable and equitable development, is critical to growing jobs and income opportunities as part of Vanuatu's economic recovery from COVID-19.

Australia is also supporting the Government of Vanuatu's ambition to utilise technology to improve trade through the establishment of the Vanuatu National Electronic Single Window (ESW) Project. A Pacific Island first, the ESW makes trade faster, easier, and more reliable by digitising paper-based processes and connecting inter-operable systems such as customs, biosecurity and trade. This has allowed Vanuatu to better connect to global markets which will drive local business growth.



First Secretary Port Vila, Frédéric Jeanjean (left) visits Mr Robert Osbourne's (right) passionfruit farm on the island of Espiritu Santo





## Global Insights: Dispatches from our Pacific Heads of Mission

### Federated States of Micronesia

Jo Cowley Ambassador

## Australian innovation in Micronesia

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a beautiful, 'large-ocean state' at the frontline of climate change - with 607 islands located over 2.6 million square kilometres of ocean. Australian companies are delivering innovative services and advice to support transformative projects across FSM.

Queensland-based telecommunications services company Universal Communications Group (UCG) has been designing a fibre to the premise project in FSM to connect homes to the internet. It is part of a World Bank project building reliable and affordable internet access to boost economic growth and delivery of public services.

Since February this year, UCG has been working virtually in Yap and Pohnpei States to train survey teams and provide them with the systems and tools to carry out the work. UCG has distributed GPS dongles to assist local teams accurately locate customers. Despite their remote situation, UCG says its approach in FSM is building a strong partnership between its offshore and local teams.

Efforts to restore the coconut industry in FSM are also benefiting from Australian expertise. Vital Corporation, a local company, has

been exploring hybrid renewable energy solutions, including using crude nut oil and coconut biomass for energy production. In 2018, Perth-based energy company Balance partnered with Vital to deliver a 40kW Solar and Battery solution using a Crude Nut Oil Generator for the Pohnpei bulk fuel terminal. It was a first-of-its-kind energy project in the Pacific, substituting diesel with 100 per cent pure crude nut oil.

Balance is now working with Vital to design and construct a 'renewable ready' power station to accommodate future photovoltaic (solar) battery storage and biomass generation for a new coconut processing plant in Chuuk.

Australian company BMT Defence and Security delivered studies on materials handling and port infrastructure for Vital and has also helped it acquire a new landing craft vessel for the coconut farming and processing project in Chuuk.

These projects have showcased Australian capabilities and innovation in crucial sectors such as telecommunications, renewable energy and maritime design, as well as their ability to respond to the challenges of geographical remoteness, climate and other local conditions.



Photo credit : Balance



### French Polynesia

Claire Scott Consul-General

## A new Consulate-General: French Polynesia is open for Australian business

The Australian Consulate-General in Papeete opened on 3 May 2021. It is committed to helping Australian businesses understand the local trade and investment environment, advocating on economic issues of interest and helping to identify emerging opportunities.

As a French territory, French Polynesia has a stable regulatory environment, high levels of education, a high per-capita income and substantial infrastructure. It is well connected to European, US, Chinese and New Zealand markets. Australia has a good reputation here, especially given our similar tropical geography; locals are keen to see what we can offer.

Opportunities for Australian businesses and investors exist in:

- Tourism – expected to rebound strongly after the pandemic, new hotels, and training for qualified staff to run them are needed
- Pearl farming – the iconic Tahitian black pearl
- Aquaculture – tropical lagoon fish
- Food and beverage
- Broader VET and tertiary Education services
- Municipal services – such as waste disposal and recycling solutions
- Infrastructure – including public works, with a focus on the local transition to renewable energies



### Nauru

Dr Helen Cheney High Commissioner

## Roadmap charts course for private sector development opportunities

In 2020-21, Australia supported the Nauru Chamber of Commerce to partner with Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) to develop a private sector Roadmap to strengthen Nauru's sustainable economic development.

*The Chamber aspires to foster cross-sector collaboration and the Roadmap will advance private sector development in alignment with Nauru's broader socioeconomic development aims.*

Sean Oppenheimer  
Chamber President

*The Roadmap aims to strengthen communities through business, by supporting and promoting locally-led, private sector driven solutions, open collaboration and youth leadership and entrepreneurship.*

Liz Mackinlay  
ABV CEO

The Roadmap has been developed to streamline private sector development opportunities alongside broader economic development priorities under Nauru's National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS).

Two examples are the construction of a new seaport and resurfacing of the airstrip. The port construction project is jointly funded by the Government of Nauru, Australia, the Asian Development Bank and the Green Climate Fund. The outcome will be a climate resilient sea transport hub for Nauru.

The port project will reduce shipping costs and ensure the reliable shipment of food, medical supplies, fuel and other essentials, it will also open up opportunities for the private sector in and around the new port facility.

The airstrip resurfacing project is funded by the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific and will increase certainty for business owners and managers and improve safety for Nauru's air transport for the next two decades.



### Palau

Richelle Turner Ambassador

## A Pristine Paradise

Palau, a small island state with a population of approximately 18,000, is a popular tourist destination for travellers from Pacific rim economies like Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, as well as the US. Like Australia, Palau is surrounded by an amazing reef system with a rich and diverse marine life that provides experiences like no other.

Palau's tourism industry was hard hit by COVID-19, and there is renewed interest in diversifying the economy to protect it from future downturns. Although barriers still exist, including issues with land tenure and foreign direct investment regulations, the Government of Palau welcomes private investment in sustainable business such as renewable energy and infrastructure. As an innovator in environmental conservation, Palau is also proactively encouraging eco-tourism.

Tourism businesses in Palau have had to diversify given border restrictions over the past year, including the COVE Resort Palau co-owned and managed by Australian Matt Wakley. With the loss of tourists, the COVE quickly adapted to provide quarantine facilities for repatriated residents and essential workers. With 92 per cent of the total population now vaccinated, Palau and the COVE are ready to welcome back tourists. Tourists buses are becoming a familiar sight with the travel bubble opening up again between Palau and Taiwan and weekly flights via Guam.

Overseas markets are keen to access Palau's range of rare aquatic species. Marine life nursery, the Biota Group, is at the forefront of Palau's aquaculture industry. Founded by Australian Tom Bowling in 2012, Biota's approach to aquaculture aims to protect and restore the ocean. Biota exports marine life to aquarists and pet stores, predominantly in the United States and Europe.

Global health emergencies such as COVID-19 have highlighted the need for countries to modernise and strengthen national health information systems. Through Australia's development program and working with the Ministry of Health, an Australian company – Beyond Essential Systems (BES) – is installing an eHealth system that will digitize public health data and provide an end-to-end logistics management system. BES has developed software specifically for the Pacific context. The software is free and open source, sync-enabled and interoperable with other existing health management systems, demonstrating the success of fit-for-purpose innovative solutions.

Australian businesses interested in discussing opportunities are welcome to contact the Australian Embassy in Palau, [koror.embassy@dfat.gov.au](mailto:koror.embassy@dfat.gov.au)





Fiji Women's Rugby 7s players at the 2021 PacificAus Sports Oceania 7s tournament in Townsville (Photo credit: PacificAus Sports)



Photo credit: PacificAus Sports



Photo credit: Getty Images



Fiji's Ana Maria Naimasi (L) runs past Canada's Olivia Apps to score a try in the women's pool B rugby sevens match between Canada and Fiji during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (Photo credit: Getty Images)

## About PacificAus Sports

Australia and the Pacific share a rich history and deep love of sport. PacificAus Sports is working with partners to unlock this potential further and create new opportunities for our athletes to train and compete together.

Since 2019, PacificAus Sports has reached 850 players and officials, attracting crowds of over 47,000 people at 120 unique sports diplomacy matches, events, and training camps.

The \$52m program primarily operates in Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, PNG, Fiji, and Samoa.

## A new era for Pacific Sport

### Fiji's Medal Winning Men and Women's Rugby 7s players inspire the region, paving the way for Super Rugby Pacific 2022

Fiji has cemented its status as the spiritual home of rugby sevens, winning an historic two Olympic medals at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in July.

This includes the first Olympic medal for a Pacific women's team – the Fijiana – proving that Pacific women and girls have what it takes to compete against the world's best, and win.

In a major boost for the Pacific economy, in 2022 Rugby Australia and New Zealand Rugby will also host Super Rugby Pacific – a new 12-team competition – featuring two new teams, the Fijian Drua and Moana Pasifika.

The two Pacific teams will join five Australian and five New Zealand sides, delivered via a joint venture partnership between RA and NZR.

*This is a game-changer for Rugby in the Pacific, and indeed, the rest of the Rugby world,"*

*We have seen the brilliant rugby that Fiji play, and their inclusion will make this new competition one of the toughest in the world.*

Andy Marinos,  
Rugby Australia CEO

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne said DFAT's investment in the Fijian Drua would build careers for generations of talent and attract investment to support Fiji's economic recovery from COVID-19.

Fiji Rugby thanked the Australian Government's PacificAus Sports program for providing seed funding for the club's inclusion in Super Rugby Pacific.

*The Fijian Drua will bring a new level of excitement to the competition, promising to play with high octane flair and skills that are uniquely Fijian.*

*The world has long known what our players are capable of. Our 7s teams have been doing it for years at the Olympics and World Rugby 7s Series. We now get the opportunity to do this week in, week out, in Super Rugby Pacific.*

John O'Connor,  
Fiji Rugby Union President

## Q+A with Josephine Sukkar



Josephine Sukkar AM is an Australian business executive and Principal at Buildcorp. In 2021, she was appointed the first female Chair of Sport Australia. Here, she speaks with staff from DFAT's PacificAus Sports program about the future of sport in the region.

### Q1: What contribution do Pacific players make to the Australian sports industry?

As a large Pacific nation, Australia has always taken pride in the participation of Pacific Islanders in the Australian sport ecosystem. The sense of family and community, the innate ability and skill of Pacific players, the warmth and participation. All of these factors help evolve the Australian sports industry and the community it serves. Through sport, Australians have come to better know and understand our Pacific neighbours.

### Q2: Where do you see opportunities for growth?

Australia is keen to see the increased independence of Pacific sports and their participation on the global stage. I would love to see a Pacific sports tourism industry develop with visiting national teams and matches broadcast to the world. The secondary benefit to each country - restaurant visits, hotel bed nights - the broader economic benefit would be fabulous.

### Q3: What advice do you have for Pacific sports companies seeking investment?

Assisting athletes and teams build their personal and collective 'brand' will go a long way in attracting sponsors and investors. This makes them commercially valuable and sponsors will come. We see this all around the world with well-known athletes.

A cohesive marketing strategy for each team and athlete will help create "products" for executives of global brands. However, to be financially viable, everyone, both the team, athlete and sponsor will need to benefit for it to be sustainable.

### Q4: How can Pacific teams and players best prepare for careers in sport internationally?

While athletes are still competing, they ought to consider what life after sport looks like. If they would like to remain in sport, they should reach out to the coaches, managers, administrators, medical staff to make a time to meet with them and discuss the type of roles that are possible.

## Countdown to 2032: 2021 Asia Pacific Cities Summit and Mayors' Forum Special Edition

DFAT's Queensland State Office has again joined forces with the Office of the Pacific to participate in this year's Asia Pacific Cities Summit and Mayors' Forum Special Edition. Pacific leaders from South Tarawa, Apia and Betio participated virtually from 8-10 September, joining over 700 physical and virtual delegates from 74 cities across the Asia Pacific region and beyond. Summit participants discussed challenges facing cities today and possible solutions. Keynote speakers included the Governor of Maryland and former Mayor of Baltimore, Martin O'Malley, and Australia's three-time Paralympic gold medallist Kurt Fearnley AO.

The Summit provided a unique platform for city leaders to reconnect with business and industry leaders and discuss COVID-19 recovery and shared experiences. This included city tourism, as well as exchanges on how the urban landscape has been redefined. Brisbane also used the summit to showcase opportunities that will stem from hosting the 2032 Olympics.



2021APCS Special Edition Project Showcase on Olympic Legacy and Opportunities (Photo credit APCS Secretariat, Brisbane City Council)



Special Edition Keynote Address by Kurt Fearnley AO, Three time Paralympian Gold Medallist (Photo credit APCS Secretariat, Brisbane City Council)





## Labour Mobility: Pacific and Timor-Leste workers continue to deliver throughout the pandemic



The Pacific Australian Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme (including the Pacific Labour Scheme and Seasonal Worker Programme) brings Pacific and Timor-Leste workers to Australia to fill low and semi-skilled roles in regional and rural Australia. The Scheme has proved highly valuable to employers at a time when Australia's labour market has been severely disrupted.

When COVID-19 border restrictions were introduced in March 2020, many employers faced severe labour shortages. The agriculture sector, usually highly reliant on migrant labour, was particularly impacted and all while producers were expecting bumper seasons.

In September 2020, Pacific labour programs were restarted under new COVID-safe arrangements, with workers quarantining on arrival in Australia. The first flight brought 162 Ni-Vanuatu workers into the Northern Territory just in time to support the mango season. Since then, more than 12,500 Pacific workers have arrived in Australia, supporting agriculture, food processing, tourism, and aged-care businesses that were otherwise unable to source local labour to meet their needs.

As just one example of the difference these programs can make to a business, Simfresh, a family-owned citrus producer - that supplies nearly 2 million boxes of citrus for both the domestic and export market annually - has used PALM Scheme workers to help expand its operations and fill labour shortages throughout the pandemic.

The Simfresh relationship with Pacific workers started in September 2018, when it had difficulty sourcing local labour for its new farm in Gin Gin, Queensland. Simfresh joined the Seasonal Worker Programme and recruited Ni-Vanuatu workers to help set up the new operations. After excellent results, Simfresh recruited another cohort of Ni-Vanuatu workers to support its NSW season - which Operations Manager, Mr Luke Cini, described as "far and away the best picking results we've ever had". Simfresh now has a workforce of Pacific workers across its NSW and QLD operations, including in semi-skilled roles such as forklift drivers, machine operators and line leaders for packing lines.

Businesses interested in sourcing labour through the PALM Scheme can find out more at [www.palmscheme.gov.au](http://www.palmscheme.gov.au).



## A step up for Fiji's aviation sector: The Australian Government and ANZ Bank partnership

The Australian Government, through the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP), in partnership with ANZ Bank, has provided a \$67 million loan to Fiji Airports. This is one of many investments the AIFFP has progressed to assist economic recovery in the region.

Fiji has long been a popular tourist destination. With a third of Fijians working in tourism prior to COVID-19, current travel restrictions have had a devastating impact on the Fijian people and economy.

Fiji Airports is the main provider of airport services in Fiji. It also provides air traffic management services to Tuvalu, New Caledonia, Kiribati, and Vanuatu, administering a massive six million square kilometres of airspace.

This financing will fund upgrades to airport facilities as well as re-finance existing debt. It will position Fiji Airports to meet traveller demand once borders re-open, which will be essential to Fiji's economic recovery.

The AIFFP maximises the benefits of investment for the local community, by creating jobs, improving gender equality, and boosting climate resilience.

"This project illustrates a clear commitment to our region's wellbeing, both from our own Government and by Australian industry (ANZ). This is a great example of why the AIFFP was established". Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Paul Richards, Head of ANZ Structured Export Finance, says "This has provided substantial support to a critical business and customer of ANZ to allow it to continue approved capex works for the long-term benefit of the Fiji aviation industry through these difficult times."

Fiji Airports Chairman, Geoffrey Shaw, says the re-financing deal will play a vital role in sustaining Fiji's economic wellbeing.

The Australian Government and the Australian business community share a vision of prosperity with our Pacific family.

To find out more visit: [www.aiffr.gov.au](http://www.aiffr.gov.au).





# PHAMA Plus

Agriculture – seeds of growth, recovery in the Pacific



Solomon Islands cocoa

Both household and national economies in the Pacific will rely on agriculture for economic growth and recovery from the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic.



Kava in Fiji



Kava farmer in Fiji

Most Pacific Island economies are limited by having a relatively small area of arable land, their remoteness from major markets, and a reliance on a narrow range of traditional export commodities with limited diversification and value addition. These challenges mean that many Pacific businesses with export potential fail to thrive.

The Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus Program (PHAMA Plus) aims to improve economic growth and rural livelihoods for Pacific peoples by working with agribusinesses and public agencies in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu to maintain and improve the trade of agricultural products.

PHAMA Plus support is practically oriented to strengthen biosecurity and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) compliance by Pacific countries to better facilitate exports.

In Samoa, PHAMA Plus has been supporting efforts to resume exports of fresh taro by piloting a hot water treatment that will enable produce to meet Australian import requirements. This will open more export opportunities for local taro exporters and commercial taro growers.

The Program has also been actively supporting Tonga to improve the quality and biosecurity compliance of watermelons for export to New Zealand.

An ongoing area of PHAMA Plus support is to assist Pacific biosecurity authorities to continuously improve their market access facilitation functions which are essential for agricultural and horticultural exports to grow. PHAMA Plus has been supporting PNG's response to African Swine Fever, Fall Army Worm and helping the other PHAMA Plus countries to improve their pest incursion preparedness. This is key to mitigating the combined socio-economic risks of animal and plant pests and diseases to Pacific livelihoods.

During 2021, PHAMA Plus extended its support under the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus agreement to three Small Island States - Cook Islands, Kiribati, and Niue. PHAMA Plus is supported by the governments of Australia and New Zealand and managed by DT Global.



HACCP food safety, PNG

## Maintaining food safety in a COVID-19 world

Export markets are increasingly requiring assurances under recognised quality or risk-based management systems such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles. But the process of attaining certification can prove challenging and costly for a small to medium sized export businesses, especially in the face of COVID-19 travel restrictions. Pacific businesses faced the risk of losing their HACCP certification and markets, impacting supply chains and livelihoods.

PHAMA Plus has supported a remote, technology driven HACCP audit system to enable Pacific export companies to maintain their accreditation in the challenging COVID-19 operating environment. Through its partnership with HACCP Australia, an Australian-based food safety service provider, progress has been strong with more than 75 per cent of previously accredited businesses participating in the remote audit process.

In 2020 alone, 28 companies across six Pacific nations were able to maintain HACCP certification under this program. Remote audit has proved to be a viable and scalable option for businesses' certification of food safety management systems. The support has now expanded to new companies to undergo a remote audit for first-time HACCP certification, helping Pacific businesses gain access to new international markets.

In Fiji and Solomon Islands, remote audit re-certification helped 6 companies prevent total business losses worth \$4.1 million from the potential loss of certification. Furthermore, three companies reported that they were able to expand their markets and exported additional \$235,000 worth of goods to new markets.

*The reaccreditation allows our products to still have access to main export markets and our dynamic customer base maintained. Now more now than ever, people want traceability, they need to know a product is safe, hygienic, fresh and meets a high standard*

**Patrick Killoran**  
owner of Papua New Guinea based coffee company, Banz Kofi.

The remote auditing system is now a cost-saving certification option for most exporters and being one of the unanticipated opportunities arising out of COVID-19.

## Transforming digital design in the Pacific

Over the last year, Pacific businesses have undergone an immense digital transformation as they adapt to a COVID-19 impacted world. In May 2021, Pacific Trade Invest (PTI) Australia announced their collaboration with online visual communication platform Canva, to provide tailored training and access to the Canva Pro platform for 250 Pacific businesses.

The Digital Design PTI Australia X Canva Program is the first of its kind in the Pacific, connecting the simplicity of Canva's design platform to businesses across the Pacific region through PTI Australia's network.

PTI Australia's Marketing and Communications Manager, Matisse Walkden-Brown, said the collaboration aims to equip Pacific businesses with world class tools and technical support.

*In the past year, we have seen a swift acceleration into digital trade and promotion in businesses across the Pacific. Our Pacific Business Monitor, a monthly survey that tracks the impact of COVID-19 across the Pacific has highlighted the widening digital gap between those with and without access to critical digital skill sets, resources, and support.*

*Unlike other design options, Canva provides an easy and cost-effective solution to empower businesses in the Pacific who don't have the resources or funds to access traditional design expertise.*

*I'm excited about the impact our partnership with Canva will have, enabling small and medium sized businesses to compete more effectively on an international stage against international brands.*

**Matisse Walkden-Brown,**  
PTI Australia's Marketing and Communications Manager

For Canva, the opportunity to partner with an organisation with a similar mission to create positive outcomes for people in the Pacific was important.

*We're thrilled to be collaborating with Pacific Trade Invest Australia to provide small businesses with free access to Canva Pro.*

*The pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on millions of small businesses around the world. We've seen a huge number of these businesses embracing Canva over the last year to shift their brick-and-mortar operations to an online environment while expanding their marketing and digital presence to keep up with the changing world we're seeing.*

**Zach Kitschke**  
Canva's Chief Marketing Officer

The first cohort of the Digital Design Program includes over 50 participants from 12 countries across the Blue Pacific. Founded in 1979, PTI Australia is an agency of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Funded by the Australian Government, it facilitates trade and investment in the Pacific Islands.





# Australia supports regional recovery with access to COVID-19 vaccines



## Indo Pacific Centre for Health Security

Comprehensive COVID-19 vaccination coverage is the key to our region's health and economic recovery, and that's why the Australian Government is working closely with Indo-Pacific partner governments to support their national rollouts. As well as the health impacts of COVID-19, countries in our region have experienced significant economic shocks with the loss of trade, travel and tourism dollars, as well as other critical supply chain disruptions.

In addition to committing to share at least 20 million vaccine doses from Australia's own supply line with countries in the region by mid-2022, the Australian Government's \$523 million regional Vaccine Access and Health Security Initiative is providing additional doses, delivery support and technical advice to assist our neighbours in accessing vaccines and safely administering them.

This year, we will deliver 2.5 million doses to Indonesia, as well as supplying medical equipment such as oxygen concentrators to support the Indonesian Government's response to the latest surge in infections. The Government will also send 1.5 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to Vietnam, along with procuring fridges to ensure the cold chain is maintained as the vaccines are transported to every community across the country.

In the Pacific and Timor-Leste, we have committed to ensuring comprehensive vaccine coverage. For example, Fiji has received more than 860,000 Australian-shared doses to date, with more to come. Our funding of hardware and the deployment of Australian-built information systems is assisting the Fijian Government with vaccine registration and tracking. One of the most useful outcomes of this partnership is a public vaccine tracking dashboard, which has supported a rapid and successful vaccination campaign that saw 97 per cent of eligible adults vaccinated in just 6 months.

Global cooperation is also an important part of our vaccine strategy. Australia is working with the United States, Japan and India to increase manufacturing capacity through the Quad Leaders Vaccine Partnership, and providing \$130 million to support the COVAX Advance Market Commitment which ensures equitable access for the world's developing countries. By 1 September this year, COVAX had delivered more than 85 million vaccine doses to the Asia-Pacific region.

We are all in this together. Facing the challenges of the global pandemic requires multi-sectoral, multi-country collaboration. In the Marshall Islands, the Australian Embassy facilitated the transport of vaccines supplied by the United States by an Australian company, Indies Trader, to several hard-to-reach outer islands. This kind of practical, collaborative problem-solving in cooperation with our partner governments will see us all come through the critical phase of this pandemic more quickly than if we acted on our own.

You can follow Australia's vaccine access assistance at the [Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security's website](#).

# Business Partnerships Platform (BPP) – Climate change and sustainability

## Clean, green, and affordable: Scaling a solar solution in remote Papua New Guinea

The Papua New Guinea Government's hopes to connect 70 per cent of the population to electricity by 2030. With current connectivity at 13 per cent, the goal has created an opportunity for Australian companies like Sola PayGo to take innovative solar solutions to scale and help transition households from carbon-intensive fuels. In doing so, it is also helping Papua New Guinea meet its target of switching to 100 per cent renewable energy use by 2030.

Sola PayGo, is distributing reliable solar power units to remote rural areas, spurred on by a partnership with the Australian Government. From an initial target of 2,500 households, Sola PayGo has today reached more than 9,000 households, many of which are in the hard-to-reach provinces of the Highlands Region.

Sola PayGo's solar units use a pay-as-you-go model to provide lighting, charge phones, radios, torches, and televisions, and are now being trialled to power fridges. The transition from dirty and expensive fuels has been welcomed by customers:

*Before Sola PayGo we were using kerosene lamps that smoke which made us sick. Now that we are using solar, we have all the benefits. At night the kids are happy to study, and I can make my bilums (woven bags) as well*

Beverlyn, schoolteacher, Enga Province.

In 2019, Sola PayGo partnered with the Australian Government, payment services provider Bmobile, and product manufacturer d.light

through the Business Partnerships Platform (BPP). The BPP supports partnerships between inclusive business and the Australian Government to create social and environmental impacts through core business operations.

The partnership with the Australian Government enabled Sola PayGo to test, innovate, and refine its model to distribute reliable solar power units. In 2020, an impact study found all of Sola PayGo's customers reported an increase in quality of life, with 97 per cent of customers rating the improvement as significant to extremely significant.

Jenny Ramamurthy, the Australian co-founder of Sola PayGo, has supported her team to work remotely throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, finding new efficiencies in the service delivery to customers.

*We coordinate as a team online and this has meant introducing a number of new platforms to keep the information flowing*

Sola PayGo, Co-founder Jenny Ramamurthy

Given the variability of internet connectivity in Papua New Guinea, and the challenges for staff to work remotely, this has been a major shift in conducting daily operations. As a result, staff have gained new skills and developed a range of new systems for collaborating online.

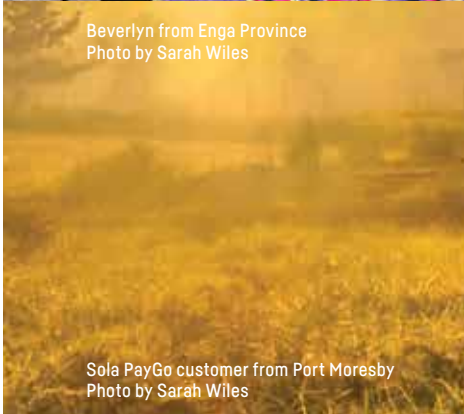
For more information, including partnership opportunities, sign up to the BPP's mailing list at [www.thebpp.com.au](http://www.thebpp.com.au)



Photo credit BPP



Beverlyn from Enga Province  
Photo by Sarah Wiles



Sola PayGo customer from Port Moresby  
Photo by Sarah Wiles







## Could an Indonesia-Australia partnership power next generation electric vehicles?

Katalis - a new Indonesia-Australia business development program - is exploring the potential for a globally competitive electric vehicle (EV) industry, driven by bilateral commercial partnerships.

The commencement last year of the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) brought into focus areas of complementarity between Australia and Indonesia, two of the region's largest economies. A new study commissioned by Katalis into EV manufacturing is evaluating the opportunity for collaboration between Australia's resource and green tech industries, and Indonesia's automotive sector.

*Our initial analysis has identified commercial partnership opportunities across minerals supply and processing, battery and vehicle manufacturing, technology platforms, and charging infrastructure.*

**Paul Bartlett**  
Katalis Director

Australia offers minerals like lithium needed to power EV batteries, battery development expertise, and precision engineering, while Indonesia offers a mature car-making capability and some of the world's largest reserves of nickel, which is also used in battery production.

Batteries are the most valuable component in electric vehicles, worth around 35 per cent of the value of the vehicle.

The Government of Indonesia recently released a plan to support its automotive sector to build an integrated EV battery industry within the next ten years. According to Mr Bartlett, building such an ecosystem will require private sector partnerships and support – which is where Katalis comes in.

*Under IA-CEPA, Indonesia can develop its industry and workforce with the support of Australian skills and exchange, and access Australian mining partnerships to secure the mineral resources EVs need Mr Bartlett said.*

*Business, industries, and other organisations can apply for support to undertake market research, develop in-country networks, build bilateral expertise, and undertake exchange and industry skills development.*

*Our insights, technical advice, policy advocacy and skills exchange facilitate connections, overcome barriers, and align business, trade and investment ecosystems.*

**Paul Bartlett**  
Katalis Director

Australian Ambassador Penny Williams, said the preliminary results for the EV study commissioned by

Katalis and undertaken by EY was an early demonstration of the value of bilateral economic cooperation.

*Under IA-CEPA, Katalis is investing in support for new and developing business ideas between the two countries.*

*Global demand and investment in electric vehicles is accelerating rapidly and IA-CEPA positions both countries to realise significant commercial opportunities in this area.*

*Katalis aims to link business sector-led activities to mutually beneficial trade and development outcomes, and we are excited by the potential identified in this early work.*

*As both economies recover from COVID, we're hoping to enable sustainable, equitable and socially inclusive growth*

**Penny Williams**  
Australian Ambassador to Indonesia

IA-CEPA ECP Katalis (Katalis) was established in 2021 under IA-CEPA by the Governments of Indonesia and Australia to maximise the benefits of IA-CEPA for both countries. More information can be found at [www.iacepa-katalis.org](http://www.iacepa-katalis.org) or [info@iacepa-katalis.org](mailto:info@iacepa-katalis.org)

## Lendlease's city defining urban regeneration precinct in Malaysia – The Exchange TRX

International property and infrastructure group, Lendlease, is developing its largest development in Asia – The Exchange TRX in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Headquartered in Sydney, Australia, urbanisation projects represent 80 per cent of its global development pipeline across 10 gateway cities around the world. Over the last 30 years in Malaysia, Lendlease has delivered a number of prominent projects such as the iconic Petronas Twin Towers, Platinum Park and Setia City Mall.

TRX City Park is Kuala Lumpur's green heart and the preferred city destination for arts and cultural exchanges as well as health and wellbeing experiences

Located within the new Central Business District Tun Razak Exchange (TRX), The Exchange TRX is envisioned to be the new social heart of Kuala Lumpur and will help fulfil the Government's vision for TRX - a 70-acre city with a world-class business and financial hub.

TRX is the first development in Malaysia to have received a neighbourhood-level provisional Green Building Index (GBI) certification. One of TRX's key aspirations is to transform the city around it, creating an impetus for urban regeneration in the surrounding area. This new Malaysian landmark will be central to the realisation of Malaysia's visionary Masterplan and underpins Kuala Lumpur's aspirations to be among the world's top 20 most liveable cities.

In partnership with TRX City Berhad, a subsidiary of the Malaysian Ministry of Finance, The Exchange TRX has been designed with a respect for local heritage, arts and culture yet representative of the Australian focus on sustainability and efficiency. It will be crowned by a 10-acre public park. The TRX City Park will be a world class public realm that will be home to more than 150,000 plantings from close to 150 native plant species, creating a new biodiversity corridor attracting urban birds, butterflies, and bees. This activated rooftop park is envisioned as

an event ready destination for arts and cultural celebrations as well as a space for sporting and outdoor activities that promote health and wellbeing, family-oriented and mixed-age activities.

### Elevating Industry Safety Standards

In 2016, Lendlease signed a first of its kind collaboration between the public and private sector in Malaysia with the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) to develop a pipeline of a highly skilled workforce within 5 years. The Safety Supervisor Apprenticeship Program (SSAP) was an integrated approach designed by Lendlease and CIDB to provide an industry-recognised qualification where apprentices receive theoretical and on-site training.

At the end of this 5-year journey, a total of 104 apprentices have been certified as Site Safety Supervisors, achieving a joint aspiration in building a workforce with high safety standards.

As a leading global Australian developer operating in Malaysia, Lendlease is a corporate member of the Malaysia Australia Business Council, an organisation that has a strong affiliation with its counterpart, the Australia Malaysia Business Council, providing a broad network of linkages between the two countries.







Our company acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to Traditional Owners and their cultures, to the Elders past and present, and emerging leaders.



## NEWS FROM THE TERRITORY

**Darwin and Denpasar:** Tourism and creative economy cooperation to drive economic recovery

On 28 June, Darwin Mayor, The Hon. Kon Vatskalis signed a Letter of Intent with Denpasar Mayor, I.G.N Jaya Negara to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding to increase economic cooperation across tourism and the creative economy in 2022. The initiative falls under the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) and will also focus on training and certification of Balinese workers to address labour shortages in Northern Territory's agriculture and tourism sectors. This will build on the already strong people-to-people ties between Darwin and Denpasar and assist with COVID economic recovery. Darwin and Denpasar aim to become sister cities by July 2022.

**Darwin:** Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards

Presented by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory and Telstra, the annual Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (Telstra NATSIAA) in Darwin is Australia's longest running Indigenous art award.

This exhibition features a wide breadth of artistic practice celebrating identity, Country, and stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from around Australia.

Responding to the challenges of COVID-19 by harnessing digital technology, the 65 artworks by this year's winners and finalists can be viewed from anywhere in the world via MAGNT's Virtual Gallery.

Vote for your favourite artist in the 2021 Telstra People's Choice Award and connect via [www.virtualmagnt.net.au/telstranatsiaa](http://www.virtualmagnt.net.au/telstranatsiaa)

*I'm painting Lake Baker. It's a sacred place. It's got a big story, but I can't tell all of it, milmiilpa (highly sacred), only the front part. I'm happy for this prize and that people see this work is important.*

**Timo Hogan**  
2021 Telstra Art Award Winner

## Indigenous trade and investment



### National Roadmap for Indigenous Skills, Jobs and Wealth Creation

The National Roadmap for Indigenous Skills, Jobs and Wealth Creation (The National Roadmap) will provide a long-term commitment and organising framework to implement actions that increase economic opportunity for Indigenous Australians. It will ensure Indigenous Australians contribute to the economic recovery and longer-term nation building.

It will be organised around three domains: Skills, Jobs and Business, and identify priority actions across short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years) and long-term (5-10 year) timeframe.

*My vision for the National Roadmap is a set of agreed immediate and long-term actions delivered by the Commonwealth, and state and territory governments by working hand in glove with the private sector and unions to advance Indigenous jobs and wealth.*

**The Hon Ken Wyatt,**  
Minister for Indigenous Australians

The National Roadmap will focus on connecting Indigenous Australians to opportunities in a range of industries including the:

- Primary sector – agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, and resources and energy.
- Manufacturing sector - linked to our comparative advantages in the primary sector, space and defence industries, and niche high-value activities such as medical products.
- Services sector - local services such as education and health, construction, land, water and sea management, and higher value knowledge-intensive professional services.

A range of enabling factors will be covered, including employment services, skills and training arrangements, capital access for Indigenous entrepreneurs, and the commercial activities of Indigenous rights and interests to achieve locally driven economic development. The National Roadmap will have a strong focus on ensuring mainstream consideration of Indigenous interests and perspectives.

This will be based on a partnership between governments, industry, and Indigenous Australians, and will complement the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

### Industry roundtables

The National roadmap will be shaped through a series of Industry roundtables, with the first launched by the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Indigenous Australians Minister on 24 August 2021.

Held throughout August and September 2021, the roundtables brought together Indigenous representative bodies and entrepreneurs, business chambers and big business, employee groups, tertiary education and service providers and respective Commonwealth departments and agencies. The conversations at these roundtables were guided by a Discussion Paper which provides evidence and analysis to inform the development of the National Roadmap. Concurrently, a small group of Industry Champions – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – are working closely with Minister Wyatt to support the National Roadmap's development.

Industry Champions involved in the roundtable launch were:

- Ms Jennifer Westacott, Chief Executive of the Business Council of Australia
- Ms Tania Constable PSM, Chief Executive of the Minerals Council of Australia
- Dr Brendan Nelson, President of Boeing Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific
- Ms Lara Watson, Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Ms Jenny Lambert, Employment and Skills Director, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Mr Adam Boyton, National Skills Commissioner
- Mr Darren Godwell, CEO i2i Global
- Ms Mikaela Jade, Founder and CEO Indigital
- Mr Shane Fields, Managing Director of Fields Group
- Mr Neville Power, Chairman of Perth Airport
- Mr Tom Harley, Chief Executive Officer of Sydney Swans
- Ms Carolyn McCann, Group Executive at Westpac
- Ms Jo Boundy, Chief Marketing Officer of Qantas Group
- Mr Jeff Maguire, Group Head of CDS Implementation at Coca-Cola Europacific Partners Australia
- Ms Kate Carnell, Former Australian Small Business & Family Enterprise Ombudsman

### RESOURCES

- [Discussion Paper: Increasing economic opportunity for Indigenous Australians](#)

For more information, email [nationalroadmap@niaa.gov.au](mailto:nationalroadmap@niaa.gov.au).

## Unlocking the potential of Australia's Indigenous SME's

DFAT commissioned Indigenous company i2i Global to survey the Australian Indigenous business sector to develop a data driven picture of export and investment activities and identify opportunities that will further its potential.

This research has been boosted by the engagement of the Indigenous Network for Investment, Trade and Export (IGNITE), Indigenous chambers of commerce, Indigenous Trade representatives and almost 100 Indigenous companies.

The research will inform policy to support innovative Indigenous start-ups in accessing international investment and boost their participation in international markets in conjunction with the Indigenous Network for Investment, Trade and Export (IGNITE), under the department's Indigenous Diplomacy Agenda and the Services Exports Action Plan.

### Indigenous women leading in Indigenous exports

When Master Chef featured Indigenous ingredients, they turned to legend of the Indigenous foods sector Mrs Rayleen Brown to guide contestants. Mrs Brown is an Alice Springs-based pioneer in the revival of Indigenous foods and, according to DFAT research into the Indigenous sector, is part of a larger set of Indigenous women business leaders looking for export opportunities to grow their companies.

According to initial data from the survey, Indigenous companies seeking export opportunities to stimulate business growth are more likely to be owned and led by Indigenous women. An encouraging finding from the research found that 54 per cent of the Indigenous companies responding to the survey identified that they were owned by an Indigenous woman.

### Indigenous businesses looking to export opportunities for growth

Indigenous companies are heading offshore. Early findings reveal a cohort of Indigenous companies actively orientating themselves to new markets in search of export opportunities.

In addition to a sub-set of Indigenous companies already exporting, an additional cohort of companies have set their sights on accessing new markets and export opportunities. This outward facing set of companies will provide both leadership and an industry basis for supporting Indigenous outcomes through trade and investment.

It's an exciting new chapter that is being written by today's Indigenous companies in a revival of ancient Indigenous practices of international trade and commerce.

The full report and data will prove an evidence base for informing policies that support Indigenous inclusivity in international trade. The full report is due for publication in November 2021.

### Making a difference where it matters - Indigenous exporters from remote and regional economies.

The research has found that most Indigenous exporters are in regional and remote Australia. This is encouraging in the context of Indigenous Australian development outcomes led by Indigenous companies as exporters.

The implication is that there is a direct correlation between the economic growth of these companies and the benefits for respective Indigenous communities and stakeholders, such as job creation for Indigenous Australians and investment in community infrastructure. It's a direct line from export markets to Indigenous communities.



# business envoy

## Acknowledgements

*business envoy* brings insights from Australia's global diplomatic network to the Australian business community. It considers global geopolitical events and trends, their economic implications and what they might mean for Australian business.

*business envoy* is produced in the Trade, Investment and Business Engagement Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Any views expressed within are those of DFAT officers and not the views of the Australian Government.

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The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to elders past, present and emerging.

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