



Australian Government

# AUSTRALIA AND THE PACIFIC

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE  
OCEANS AND LIVELIHOODS



Fafa Island, Tonga.

Photo: Department of Environment and Energy.

**AUSTRALIA IS PART OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN FAMILY OF NATIONS. THE BLUE PACIFIC CONNECTS US, FEEDS COMMUNITIES, DRIVES ECONOMIES AND IS CENTRAL TO THE CULTURE OF OUR PACIFIC FAMILY.**

We share the responsibilities and challenges of realising the Pacific's vision for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity. Together we manage 20% of the world's ocean.

We support the Pacific's **regional and global advocacy efforts** for the sustainable development, management and conservation of the ocean and its resources.

Australia is a strong supporter of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner's role in oceans advocacy and coordination.

We are a longstanding supporter of **sustainable Pacific fisheries**. We are an active member of, and donor to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (\$5 million annually) and the Pacific Community (\$2.4 million annually).

Australia is implementing additional programs to help our regional partners tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including coordinated engagement under Australia's \$2 billion Pacific Maritime Security Program.

Our Community-based Fisheries Management program (\$8 million, 2017-21) is working with regional organisations, national fisheries agencies and communities in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to develop capacity to manage coastal fisheries sustainably and share learnings across the region.



A traditional net fisherman in a Kiribati lagoon. Australia is supporting several programmes in the Pacific to help protect fast depleting fish stocks. Photo: DFAT/Quentin Hanich.

We support the Pacific's embrace of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) to mobilise scientific research and innovation.

We recognise oceans and climate change are intrinsically linked. Australia participates in **global and regional ocean observation efforts** to inform decision-makers on the impact of climate change, warming and acidification on the ocean, and the role of the ocean in the global carbon cycle. We are investing \$26.1 million (2018-22) for the Climate and Ocean Support Program in the Pacific.

The tropical Pacific region holds approximately 25 per cent of global coral reefs. Australia supports the **protection of coral reefs** through the International Coral Reef Initiative (\$2 million, 2018-2020). Australia supports the use of innovative technology in the Pacific (\$2 million, 2019-2021) to enhance capabilities to gather and assess information on coral reef resilience.

Australia has stepped up our support to Pacific island countries to establish their maritime zones and secure maritime entitlements into the future. Since 2001, Australia has provided financial, technical and legal support to Pacific island states to establish their maritime zones, negotiate shared boundaries and submit extended continental shelf claims.

We have helped 7 countries to establish their maritime zone limits in national legislation, 10 countries to submit extended continental shelf claims, and 9 countries to negotiate or amend 15 shared boundary treaties.

In June 2019, we announced a new project with the Pacific Community to examine the impacts of **sea level rise** on maritime zones, and develop innovative, Pacific-led solutions (\$3.5 million, 2019-2021).

Since 2007, the Australian Government has offered more than **190 scholarships** to awardees from the Pacific countries to undertake studies in environment related issues including fisheries, marine science, climate change and environmental management.

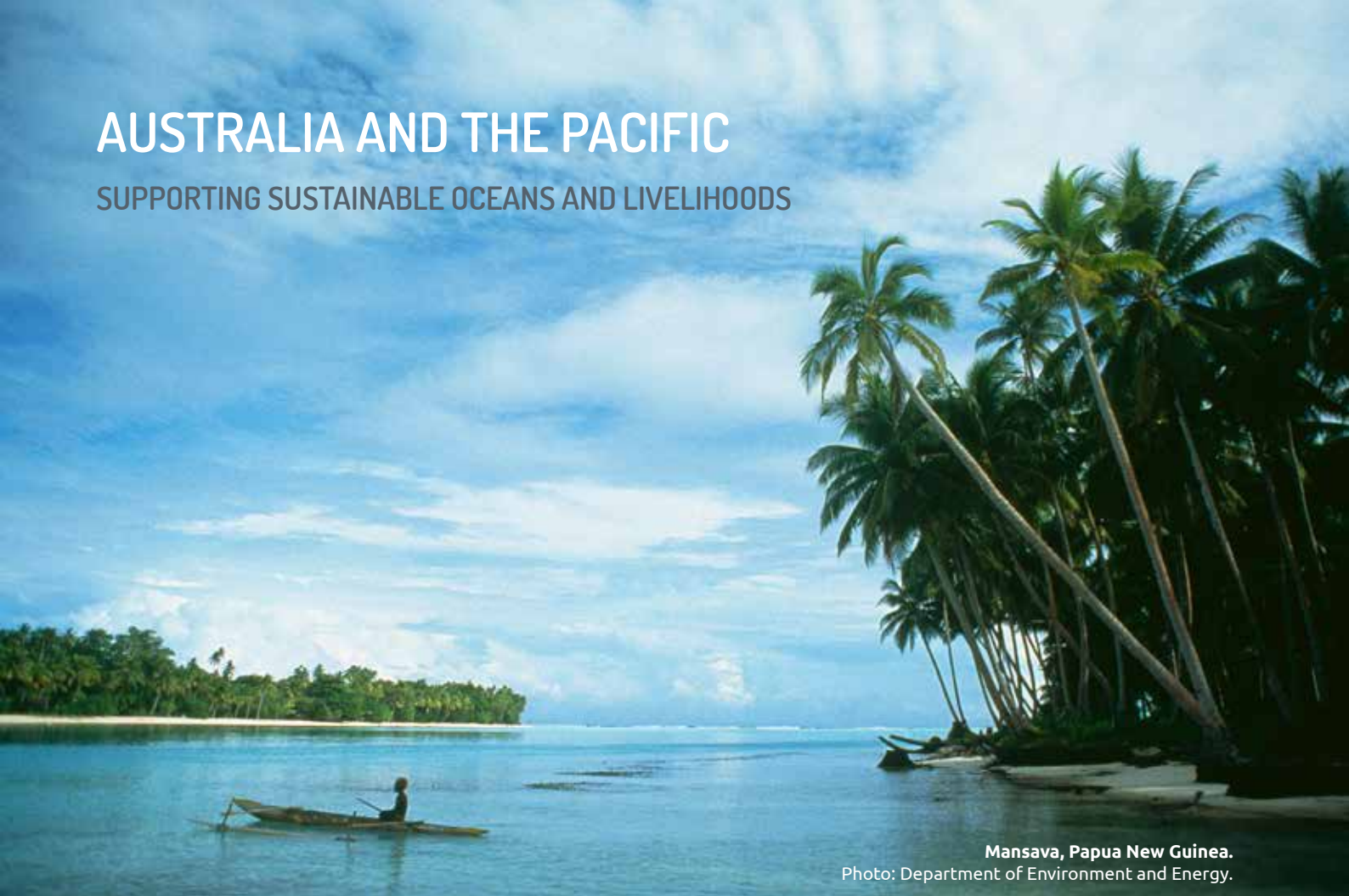


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Mansava, Papua New Guinea.  
Photo: Department of Environment and Energy.

## THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH OUR PACIFIC FAMILY TO COMBAT MARINE LITTER.

Recognising marine litter as a serious problem for the environment, public health, and economic development, the Australian Government has provided \$16 million to support Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Program (SPREP) implementation of the Pacific Regional Action Plan – Marine Litter 2018 – 2025.

Waste management continues to be a significant challenge in the Pacific region. Pacific countries have limited land available for waste management, and are far from recycling markets.

Australia is investing in regional initiatives to address the **Pacific waste management challenges**, in collaboration with international partners and experts. We support SPREP, which provides waste management technical assistance to Pacific countries, and the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) to improve the quality and effectiveness of waste management infrastructure. Our funding will help the **Pacific Ocean Litter** Project embrace innovative ways to phase out single use plastics, and change the behaviour of users, consumers and producers of plastic.

Broader **international cooperation** is also needed to address marine litter. Prime Minister Morrison is a member of the 14-nation High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. The panel will deliver a solutions oriented report for ocean health and wealth at the 2020 UN Ocean Conference in Portugal.

Australia has recently signed up to the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance, the United Nations Environment Programme's Clean Seas Campaign, the G20 Marine Litter Action Plan and its Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter. We also support the United Nations Environment Assembly's resolutions on Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics and Addressing Single-use Plastic Products Pollution.



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## CASE STUDY: PACIFIC PATHWAYS PROJECT

Fish from coastal waters are critical to the food and nutritional security of rural Pacific Islanders. Coastal fisheries face many challenges, including growth of markets and environmental change. The remoteness of many communities means they must lead on stewarding their fisheries.

The Australian aid programme is catalysing community-based fisheries management in collaboration with fisheries agencies in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Although there is a great appetite for change, building trust and sustaining community cohesion is an incremental process. The Pathways Project brings tools and approaches to facilitate the discussions needed to foster change. An important dimension of this process is to enable the perspectives of women to be heard in decision-making.

The isolated village of Kwamera, on the Vanuatu island of Tanna, is typical of the 100+ communities supported by the project in their journey to secure fish-based food and livelihoods. Kwamera is home to some 400 people, including Juline Bob Yamuami who has been a strong voice in facilitating the men, women and youth of Kwamera to re-engage with traditional practices in their pursuit of improved fisheries.



**Juline Bob Yamuami, in her village of Kwamera, Vanuatu.**  
Image: Dirk Steenbergen.