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2025 PACIFIC UPDATE

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TUESDAY 3 TO THURSDAY 5 JUNE
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC
LAUCALA CAMPUS, SUVA, FIJI

SUPPORTED BY

**PACIFIC
RESEARCH
PROGRAM**

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#PacificUpdate

2025 PACIFIC UPDATE – TUESDAY PROGRAM

TUESDAY 3 JUNE

8.30am	Registration
9.00am	Welcome and opening plenary <i>Auditorium</i> Welcome Remarks Dr Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Campuses and Global Engagement), The University of the South Pacific Welcome Remarks His Excellency Mr Peter Roberts, Australia’s High Commissioner to Fiji Keynote address Hon Baron Waqa, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum Keynote address <i>A new approach to measuring the economic performance of the Pacific islands</i> Stephen Howes and Rubayat Chowdhury, Development Policy Centre, Australian National University
10.30am	Morning tea
11.00am	Panel 1a: Regional integration and governance <i>Auditorium</i> Chair: Tess Newton Cain, Sustineo <i>Why traditional media matters more than ever in shaping the Pacific’s digital future</i> Prashanth Pillay , Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Alexander Rheeney, Pacific Media Assistance Scheme <i>Tuvalu’s diplomatic preference: beyond the checkbook</i> John Augé , Center for Strategic and International Studies <i>Community rule and order making in Melanesia</i> Miranda Forsyth , Australian National University and Sinclair Dinnen, Australian National University <i>A Blue Pacific rules-based order: our rules, our home</i> Joel Nilon , Australian National University and Sione Tekiteki, Auckland University of Technology

Note: Bold text indicates the presenter/s where there is more than one paper author. If no names are in bold text all authors intend to present.

2025 PACIFIC UPDATE – TUESDAY PROGRAM

Panel 1b: Charting a new course for accountability ecosystems in the Pacific *Video Conference Room 1 (VCR1)*

Chair: Chair: Marine Destrez, United Nations Development Programme

Lisa Denney, La Trobe University

Gregoire Nimbtik, Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat

Neelesh Gounder, The University of South Pacific

12.30pm **Lunch**

1.30pm **Panel 2a: Gender and inequality**

Auditorium

Chair: Kushneel Prakash, University of Melbourne

Significance of youth awareness of domestic violence laws in PNG and the Pacific

Minetta Daniella Kakarere, University of Papua New Guinea

Dietary patterns of Indo-Fijians and their comparison to patterns of iTaukei (indigenous) Fijians

Naohiro Nakamura, The University of the South Pacific

Empowering I-Kiribati women through entrepreneurship: kindling Kiribati and the PPAC Programme (2022)

Mereoni Tavakaturaga, Josephine Kalsuak and Tarita Bartley, The Pacific Community (SPC)

Navigating pandemics: adaptation and resilience of redundant workers in Fiji Airways

Lolesio Seone, Emalini Bainivalu Nakabea, Amalaini Tikoduadua and Nacanieli Rika, The University of the South Pacific

Panel 2b: Unspoken rules of politics in Vanuatu

Video Conference Room 1 (VCR1)

Uncovering voter motivations and the barriers and enablers to women's political participation

Chair: Wilson Toa, Balance of Power

Hon Marie-Louise Milne, Government of Vanuatu

Telstar Jimmy, Balance of Power

Vani Nailumu, Balance of Power

3.00pm **Afternoon tea**

2025 PACIFIC UPDATE – TUESDAY PROGRAM

3.30pm

Panel 3a: Social development

Auditorium

Chair: Rachel Payne, Partnerships for Social Protection

Life in the Pacific islands: understanding determinants of life satisfaction in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga

Kushneel Prakash, University of Melbourne

The price of darkness: economic cost of energy poverty in Pacific Island countries

Siti Nur Rosifah, Australian National University

Living without electricity in urban communities in PNG: the case of 8-Mile Settlement

Loretta Dilu, University of Papua New Guinea

Standing firm against the tides of change: land tenure system in the Kingdom of Tonga

Holomesi Finau, The University of South Pacific and Digby Race, The University of the South Pacific

Panel 3b: Filling the gaps: Reshaping social protection research in the Pacific and Timor-Leste

Video Conference Room 1 (VCR1)

Chair: Shirleen Ali, Partnerships for Social Protection

Laisa Vereti, Pacific Disability Forum

Rufino Varea, Pacific Islands Climate Action Network

5.00pm

Close

5.30pm

Cocktail reception

Japan-Pacific ICT Centre Marquee

Hosted by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

2025 PACIFIC UPDATE – WEDNESDAY PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE

8.30am **Registration**

9.00am **Gender and governance plenary**

Auditorium

Keynote address

Chair: Miranda Forsyth, Australian National University

Bel isi: a PNG public-private partnership responding to gender-based violence

Tovi Amona, Bel isi PNG

Keynote address

Chair: Henrietta McNeill, Australian National University

Pacific approaches to understanding and fighting corruption

Steven Ratuva, University of Canterbury

Grant Walton, Australian National University

10.30am **Morning tea**

11.00am **Panel 4a: Corruption in the Pacific: perceptions, trends and resistance**

Auditorium

Chair: Grant Walton, Australian National University

Passports, prosperity and problems: (counter) geopolitical narratives of corruption in Vanuatu's Citizenship by Investment Scheme

Henrietta McNeill, Australian National University

Money laundering mutual evaluations in the Pacific: an update

Michael Kabuni, Australian National University

Security cooperation and corruption in the Pacific

Teddy Winn, Winn's Consultancy Limited

Addressing corruption in the context of climate change

Rimon Rimon, Kiribati journalist and Pacific Anti-Corruption Journalists Network

2025 PACIFIC UPDATE – WEDNESDAY PROGRAM

Panel 4b: Climate and energy

Video Conference Room 1 (VCR1)

Chair: Natasha Turia, Australian National University

Framing social protection and climate change in the Pacific

Marita Manley, Talanoa Consulting and Rachel Payne, Partnerships for Social Protection

Assessing the role of natural soundscapes in enhancing tourist satisfaction and loyalty to Fiji's nature-based tourist attractions

Vikas Gupta and Ilisapeci Matatolu, The University of the South Pacific

The impacts of expanding the oil palm industry in Papua New Guinea: the case of Kairak Community, East New Britain Province

Melga Mevat, Pacific Adventist University

Energizing remote islands in Tonga with mini-grid solar systems

Paea-'i-Muli Tau'aika and Seone Soakimi Lolesio, The University of the South Pacific

12.30pm

Lunch

1.30pm

Panel 5a: The future of work

Auditorium

Inclusive, climate-resilient and digitally enabled labour markets

Chair: Lavenia Rokovucago, The Asia Foundation

Abigail Chang, Pacific Australia Skills Partnership

Laisa Bulatale, Fiji Women's Rights Movement

Daniel Tagivakatini, Ministry of Employment, Fiji

Anju Mangal, Pacific Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity

Panel 5b: Economic development

Video Conference Room 1 (VCR1)

Chair: Alyssa Leng, Australian National University

Challenges and issues in assessment of the economic impact of tourism: a Tongan case study

Semisi Taumoepeau, Auckland Institute of Studies

Social constraints on capital accumulation in Melanesian economies

Martin Davies, Washington and Lee University

The role of the enabling environment in the success of micro and small enterprises in small island developing states

Seone Soakimi Lolesio, University of the South Pacific

Correspondent banking relationships – impacts and mitigation

Denton Rarawa and Rodney Kirarock, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

2025 PACIFIC UPDATE – WEDNESDAY PROGRAM

3.00pm	Afternoon tea
3.30pm	<p>Panel 6a: Fiji economy</p> <p><i>Auditorium</i></p> <p>Chair: Neelesh Gounder, The University of the South Pacific</p> <p><i>Fiji's macroeconomic performance amid global and domestic uncertainty: progress, challenges and policy options</i></p> <p>Janesh Sami, The University of the South Pacific</p> <p><i>Economic development and poverty reduction: income and human capital nexus in Fiji</i></p> <p>Rukmani Gounder, Massey University</p> <p><i>Fiji's Current Development Priorities</i></p> <p>Elisha Mala, Acting Manager Policy Planning and Sectoral/Regional, Ministry of Finance, Fiji</p> <p><i>The way forward for electoral reform in Fiji</i></p> <p>Jon Fraenkel, Professor of Comparative Politics, Victoria University of Wellington</p> <p>Panel 6b: The potential of AI in policymaking and development in the Pacific</p> <p><i>Video Conference Room 1 (VCR1)</i></p> <p>Chair: Ryan Edwards, Australian National University</p> <p>Miranda Forsyth, Australian National University</p> <p>Joep Tarai, Australian National University</p>
5.00pm	Close
5.45pm	<p>Conference dinner</p> <p>Japan-Pacific ICT Centre Marquee</p> <p>Hosted by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung</p>

2025 PACIFIC UPDATE – THURSDAY PROGRAM

THURSDAY 5 JUNE

PACIFIC MIGRATION RESEARCH WORKSHOP

Towards an inclusive future: strengthening Pacific integration through human mobility

8.30am **Registration**

Auditorium

9.00am **Welcome and opening plenary**

Auditorium

Chair: Charlotte Bedford, Australian National University

Keynote address

Pacific Mobility

Jan Hutton, First Assistant Secretary, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Keynote address

Solomon Islands labour mobility: achievements, outlook, and issues

Christina Marau, Solomon Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade

10.00am **Session 1: Socio-economic analysis**

Chair: Neelesh Gounder, The University of the South Pacific

Ko e kakai, ikai ko e palopalema: A social impacts study of temporary labour mobility in Tonga

Akosita Polota, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Tonga and **Kristy Ward**, Pacific Labour Mobility Support Program

Economic development and poverty alleviation in a Papua New Guinea: fishing island community through Pacific Labour Mobility Schemes

Keimelo Gima, The University of Papua New Guinea

Beyond dependency: MIRAB as climate resilience strategy

Masami Tsujita, National University of Samoa

Human mobility, demographic change and growth prospects in PICS

David Abbott, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

11.30am **Morning tea**

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2025 PACIFIC UPDATE – THURSDAY PROGRAM

- 11.45am** **Session 2: Reproductive health**
- Achieving reproductive justice for Pacific labour mobility participants*
Chair: Dolores Devesi, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Fiji
Lindy Kanan, Australian National University
Sera Ratu, Reproductive and Family Health Association of Fiji
Sarai Amataga, True Relationships and Reproductive Health
- 12.45pm** **Lunch**
- 1.45pm** **Session 3: Pacific diaspora**
- Chair: Lisa Denney, La Trobe University
- Trump’s deportations to the Pacific Islands: diplomacy and risk*
Henreitta McNeill, Australian National University
- Understanding Pacific communities in Australia*
Huiyuan (Sharon) Liu, Australian National University and Toan Nguyen, Australian National University
- Navigating cultural identity and integration: the dualistic transition of Pasifika youth in Australia*
Florence Hafoka-Kafoika, Alfred Deakin Institute for Globalisation and Citizenship
- How sovereignty is exercised (or constrained) under the free association model*
Mata Rakanui, Office of the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands
- 3.15pm** **Afternoon tea**
- 3.30pm** **Session 4: New developments**
- Chair: Stephen Howes, Australian National University
- Narratives, information and immigration policy preferences*
Alyssa Leng, Australian National University
- 2024 Pacific Engagement Visa scorecard: Papua New Guinea’s experiences*
Natasha Turia, Australian National University
- Update on PIFS Pacific Regional Labour Mobility principles*
Manisha Mudaliar, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and **Sachindra Singh**, International Organization for Migration
- A preview of Pacific Labour Mobility Survey Wave Two*
Dung Doan, World Bank and **Ryan Edwards**, Australian National University
- 5.00pm** **Closing Remarks**
- Stephen Howes, Australian National University
- 5.15pm** **Kava and drinks**

Did you enjoy the conference?

We'd love to hear your feedback.

**Please fill in our quick survey at
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PacificUpdate2025>**