THE 2ND OCEANIA FIRST VOICES REGIONAL FORUM

One Voice, One People, One World.

26 - 27 March 2024, Suva, Fiji
Title: The 2nd Oceania first voices regional forum outcome statement.

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We can’t be Silent
nor can we just
walk away
because we are
indelibly
a Sea of Islands
connected Forever
and fated with woes
We can’t ignore
nor face alone
because there is
Power in Unity
and to Protect all
that we have
we must draw strength
from the collective Wisdoms
of our Forebears
who First arrived upon
our island shores
and embraced
the old spirits
Understanding
without a measure of doubt
that theirs and
their descendants’ survival
Rested on
an undeniable pact
between us and
the Great Mother
our Moana
may we
as First Nations
with One Voice
as One People
in One World
be the Storytellers
that sparks
this Remembrance
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WWF-Pacific would like to acknowledge the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs of the Government of Fiji, the representatives and participants at the 2024 Oceania First Voices Regional Forum, resource persons, presenters, the members of the media, Civil Society Organisation representatives and development partners and our Mistress of Ceremony Ms. Lavenia Naivalu.

We would also like to acknowledge our Donor WWF Australia, our partners GEF Small Grants Programme and cChange.

Vinaka Vakalevu

Group photo of participants with chief guest and Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage & Arts, Ratu Isimeli Tuiwailevu. Holiday Inn, Suva. © WWF-Pacific/Jason Chute.
Ninety-eight participants attended the 2024 Oceania First Voices Regional Forum that was held in Suva, Fiji on the 26th and 27th of March 2024. These participants represented, largely, indigenous people and local communities from across the oceanic region including Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, First Nations Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Present too were other key stakeholders from Civil Society Organisations, Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific, Development Partners, and Governments. The 2-day Forum’s theme was “One Voice, One People, One World”.

This second regional forum provided an opportunity for representatives, stakeholders and partners to:

- Reflect on the key messages and outcomes of the inaugural Oceania Regional Forum at Mission Beach, 2022
- Spotlight community stories of traditional knowledge and leadership in climate and ocean actions, share lessons, best practices
- Compile key messages from Oceania First Voices 2nd Regional Forum to advocate at key events, national, regional and global level to shape key decisions needed to accelerate community-led climate action at scale and pace to create the impact needed
- Explore opportunities to strengthen Pacific Indigenous People and Local Communities and CSO engagement and participation towards shaping priorities for an Australia-Pacific CoP31 in 2026.

At the conclusion of the 2 days of talanoa and sharing, the participants reaffirmed the significance of traditional and cultural values, wisdom, knowledge systems, and languages as the different threads of the woven magimagi (coconut sinew) that spiritually connects everyone with each other, and with their land, waterways and ocean. They further celebrated their solidarity as Indigenous people across Oceania; their leadership, guardianship, innovation, and resilience in the face of accelerating climate and biodiversity crisis and collectively charted a way forward as one voice to influence key decisions at various levels and in places that matter. This will help galvanise and catalyse community-driven climate and nature actions that are just, equitable, culturally appropriate, and rooted in the traditional wisdom and values entrusted to them by their ancestors, to be passed on to those still to come.
Chief guest Minister for Itaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage & Arts, Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu and WWF-Pacific’s Pacific Director, Dr. Mark Drew, Holiday Inn, Suva.
The Second Oceania First Voices Regional Forum with the theme “One Voice, One People, One World” was held on the 26th and 27th of March, 2024, bringing together 98 First Voices Representatives, and partners from across Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand. The second regional forum was an important opportunity with an URGENT CALL, as representatives of INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF OCEANIA to:

• recall and reflect the outcomes of the inaugural 2022 Oceania First Voices Conference, the 2023 Kauwai Communique, the outcomes of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change CoP27 and CoP28, Convention on Biological Diversity CoP15 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

• recognize the role and function of our governments in acknowledging the rights and engagement of our communities; creating an enabling environment to empower communities in national decision making processes and in the co-design and delivery of grassroots actions to achieve local, national, regional and global priorities beneficial to all its collective citizens.

• reaffirm the significance of our traditional and cultural values, wisdom, knowledge systems, world views and languages as the different threads of the woven magimagi (coconut sinew) that spiritually connects us as one with each other, our land, waterways and ocean

• celebrate our solidarity as Indigenous people across Oceania; our leadership, our guardianship innovation, and resilience in the face of accelerating climate and biodiversity crises

• safeguard our traditional knowledge and practices by enacting appropriate national laws and policies and incorporate these knowledge systems and practices into the formal educational curricula and ensure the registration of our intellectual property rights.

• collectively chart a way forward as one voice to influence key decisions at various levels and in spaces that matter, to galvanise and catalyse community-driven climate and nature based actions that are just, equitable, culturally appropriate, and rooted in the traditional wisdom and values entrusted to us by our ancestors, to be passed on to our children and those still to come

As the traditional custodians of Oceania, we are proud of our heritage as the First Stewards of the largest ocean and biodiverse regions of the world. We acknowledge Oceania First Voices Regional Forum as a platform to meaningfully share and amplify our stories our way, through our languages, songs, dances, arts and stories. We acknowledge that in order to move forward, it is crucial for us to recognize our roots and embrace our identity as the peoples of Oceania.
Our Commitment:

Through a shared spirit as One voice, One people, One world, with a vision of “inspiring all people to action through our protection and restoration of our Oceania”, we collectively pledge to:

- enhance our traditional knowledge and value systems as key components of the solutions to address the current climate, ocean and biodiversity crisis.
- reaffirm our commitment to safeguard and preserve our traditional knowledge and value systems, fundamental to our collective identity and as the foundation for mitigating and restoring nature loss and enhancing our socio-ecological resilience and adaptability.
- commit to actively listening to the voices and integrate the wisdom of our elders, women, youths, children, people with disabilities and the most vulnerable within and amongst our communities.
- continue our collaborative spirit, reinforcing our traditional relationships through ongoing storytelling, learnings and exchanges that are mutually supportive.
- develop a framework to actively seek opportunities to chart a course to advocate our collective priorities and needs at local, national, regional, and global levels.
- establish and expand the Oceania First Voices Alliance as a unified platform to include additional voices and stories from across the Pacific Ocean.
- forge connections between Oceania First Voices Alliance and other existing bodies and platforms at the local, national, regional and global level through better coordination to foster valuable collaborations and partnerships to strengthen our collective impact and resolution.

We note with utmost concern the continuous loss of our indigenous languages leading to the erosion of our traditional knowledge, values and cultural identities of our people. We also express deep concern over the insufficient progress in fully implementing our indigenous rights particularly those contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This lack of progress hampers our communities’ ability to effectively combat the pressing nature and climate crises.
Our Collective Call:

We stand in solidarity, calling on our Governments, CROP agencies, development partners and the global community to urgently translate commitments into action and:

- ensure the full and urgent implementation of the agreements and decisions adopted by UNFCCC CoP27, CoP28 and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) CoP15 Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in true partnership with indigenous people and local communities of Oceania.
- take decisive actions to safeguard our rights as indigenous peoples of Oceania, along with our traditional values, knowledge systems and languages, through enactment of appropriate legislations and policies, while adhering to the principles of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and the principles and values of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- facilitate meaningful actions to eliminate the barriers that impede the equitable, inclusive and impactful participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making processes through fostering ongoing capacity building initiatives, as well as providing sustainable and adequate technical and financial support. This shall include recognizing and promoting the use of indigenous languages in formal spaces that promotes meaningful, inclusive and effective participation of our diverse voices in decision-making processes.
- ensure that national and regional preparation for key national, regional and global events such as future CoPs must be inclusive of the diverse voices of indigenous communities, and community groups, every stage from the initial planning to execution and in the formal negotiations.
- support the call for a just transition towards a fossil fuel free Pacific and world in line with the goals and targets of the Paris Agreement and keeping 1.5 alive.
- expedite the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) climate finance agenda that is equitable, adequate, sustainable and easily accessible, that supports and strengthen urgent actions led by indigenous peoples and local communities of Oceania to protect our livelihoods;
- to ensure meaningful partnerships that are inclusive of leadership of indigenous people and local communities of Oceania in the Australia and Pacific CoP31 bid.
- to work with Indigenous People and Local Communities to define a partnership structure for a Pacific and Australia co-hosted CoP31 that centers the leadership and knowledge of the Pacific and Indigenous communities of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. This must include formal platforms for Indigenous and Pacific civil society to engage with the CoP President Designate, negotiators and other non-state actors.
The 2024 Oceania First Voices Second Regional Forum was hosted in Suva Fiji from the 26th to the 27th of March, 2024. Building on the first regional forum which was hosted by the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation in September 2022, in Mission Beach, North Queensland, the second regional forum brought together ninety-eight Oceania First Voices Representatives from across Oceania, partners and stakeholders from Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand to connect and share their lived experiences and challenges in the face of accelerating climate, ocean and nature crises.

The Second Regional Forum was opened by Fiji’s Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs Hon Ratu Isikeli Tuimavilevu. In his opening remarks, Hon. Ratu Tuimavilevu welcomed all participants and acknowledged the importance of talanoa or story telling as a traditional and time tested communication tool for learning, sharing, and building camaraderie, the Pacific way. He further encouraged the participants to make use of the opportunity to share freely, engage deeply, and entrust each other with stories and ambitions for a climate resilient future for our region.

The 2024 Oceania Regional Forum was hosted through partnership between WWF-Pacific, WWF Australia, WWF New Zealand, GEF Small Grants Programme (Fiji) and cCHANGE.
1.0 Welcome and Devotion:

The Mistress of Ceremony, Ms. Lavenia Naivalu, Mata ni Tikina (District Representative) called the forum to order with a brief Fijian Bula Welcome following the arrival of the Guest of Honour Assistant Minister of iTaukei Affairs Hon Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu.

She then invited Mr. Seru Moce from Mali District in the Province of Macuata to bless the day with a prayer. After the prayer, Ms. Naivalu invited Mrs Ranadiniceva to garland Hon Ratu Tuiwailevu. After the garlanding ceremony, Ms. Naivalu called on WWF-Pacific Director Dr. Mark Drew to deliver his opening Remarks.

2.0. Opening Remarks, WWF-Pacific Director Dr Mark Drew:

Dr. Mark Drew welcomed everyone to the 2024 OFV Regional Forum by acknowledging the presence of the Assistant Minister for Itaukei, Culture, Heritage & Arts, along with Traditional Community Leaders from Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji, representatives from various government and regional agencies, invited speakers, workshop participants, members of the media, and attendees, gathered for the second Oceania First Voices forum. He further emphasized the crucial role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conserving nature and biodiversity, as highlighted in a recent
report titled, ‘The State of Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities’ Lands and Territories,’ compiled by conservation experts in consultation with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This comprehensive document underscores the indispensable role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in preserving nature and biodiversity on a global scale.

Dr Drew then added that WWF is currently undergoing a paradigm shift in its conservation approach, redefining the organisation’s agenda to one that is shared, effective, ambitious, inclusive, and just. Central to this transformation is WWF’s commitment to robust collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, particularly those from the Oceania region, represented in the forum, as the First Voices of Oceania.

He stressed that as 2030 looms near, the urgent need to halt biodiversity loss, meet climate targets and the sustainable development goals must be underpinned by the active, meaningful and equitable involvement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in climate, nature and ocean action, guided by their traditional knowledge, values and practices. He then encouraged the participants to engage in respectful dialogues during the two day Forum to shape a more People and Nature Positive Pacific through regular strengthening of partnerships, sharing of lessons, best practices and learning from one another. He expressed his sincere appreciation and gratitude to all participants who took time out to join the forum and including the government partners, other stakeholders, individual participants, and First Nation representatives for making the event possible.

3.0 Introduction of the Chief Guest:
Ms. Tui Marseu of WWF-Pacific then introduced the Chief Guest following Dr. Drew’s opening remarks. She then invited the Chief Guest to deliver his keynote address.

4.0 Chief Guest Assistant Minister Hon Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu’s Keynote Address:

The Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu, the Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs, warmly welcomed delegates and guests to the Forum. He then shared his own story of where he came from to set the tone for the two days of camaraderie, network strengthening, and the reinforcement of the Pacific way. He delved into the traditional Fijian communal way of living, emphasizing the interconnectedness between the people with each other and their land, oceans, and culture.

Ratu Tuiwailevu acknowledged the urgent need for climate action, highlighting the significant leadership and role of Indigenous communities which ties in well with the theme of the 2 day forum, “one voice, one people, one world,” as a platform to exchange ideas and best practices in response to climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable development goals.

He reiterated the Fijian concept of “Kauwai” which symbolizes the collective concerns of everyone, stressing the shared and urgent responsibility of a whole of society approach to safeguarding the region’s natural resources and heritage. Participants were encouraged to freely share their stories and aspirations for a climate-resilient future, fostering deep connections and mutual trust amongst them.
5.0 Overview of 2024 Oceania First Voices Regional Forum:

Mr. Cliff Cobbo, WWF-Australia’s First Nations Principal Advisor then provided a brief overview of the 2024 OFV Regional Forum stressing the key objectives and expected outputs. Mr. Cobbo acknowledged the traditional knowledge holders present and the connection to their country, their land, past, present and future. He further highlighted the importance of recognising the rights of Indigenous People as stipulated under the UN Human Rights Convention including the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People which underpins the inclusive and meaningful participation of IPLCs in decision making process and self-determination with respect to using traditional knowledge and value systems through local action to solve global challenges such as Climate Change and Nature Loss.

6.0 Throwback to 2022 Inaugural Oceania First Voices, UNFCCC CoP28

The purpose of this session was to provide an overview of the 2022 Inaugural Oceania First Voices Regional Forum that took place at Mission Beach, Cairns, Australia and hosted by the Girringun First Nation and also for Oceania First Voices Advocates who attended UNFCCC CoP28 to share their experiences and some of the learnings and key takeaway messages.

This Session was facilitated by Ms Rachel Sapery James and the speakers were:

- Whitney Rassip and Chris Muriata - provided an overview of 2022 inaugural OFV Regional forum; what were the highlights, etc
- Talei Silabaravi - shared some highlights of her trip to CoP28 in Dubai, some lessons she would like to share and also her post CoP28 plans

6.1 Overview of 2022 Inaugural Oceania

First Voices Regional Forum – Whitney Rassip and Chris Muriata:
Whitney and Rassip provided a brief overview of the Girringun Community which was established in the early 90’s by the Aboriginal Elders from the Cardwell region to rename the then “Lumholtz National Park” to “Girringun National Park”. Incorporated in 1996, as a collective of 9 neighbouring Traditional Owner groups, and Governed by a Board of Directors (1 representative from each of the 9 groups). The Girringun National Park currently employs approximately 30 permanent staff, majority of which are from the 9 Tribal groups.

The GNP currently has 6 main programs with the Wabu Jananyu Joint Venture of operations being the commercial arm of Girringun:

i. Indigenous Protected Areas
ii. Rangers
iii. Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement
iv. Biodiversity and Native Plant Nursery
v. Aboriginal Arts Centre & Keeping Place
vi. Process Unite
vii. Wabu Jananyu Joint-Venture (Commercial Arm of the Initiative)

Girringun Oceania First Voices was launched in May 2022 and it provided a platform for Traditional Owners to discuss, share and network the impacts of climate change and discuss solutions to be
integrated into Girringun’s new IPA Plan of management while amplifying Indigenous voices surrounding climate change. The platform also helps to promote the Girringun IPA and Indigenous Rangers as nature-based cultural solutions to climate change.

Some of the key messages that came out of the launching of this OFV platform included:

- Elders’ grave concerns for species in decline or no longer seen.
- Knowledge Holders voices need to be heard and turned into action.
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge recording.
- Working with our Elders to engage our young people is vital now more than ever.

September, 2022 saw the Inaugural First People’s Regional Forum which was hosted at Mission Beach with representatives from First Nations Australia, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea (Virtual Participation) and Aotearoa New Zealand (Virtual Participation). Key messages and recommendations coming out of this forum included:

- Take real action to implement Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in a manner that is straightforward, meaningful, and accessible.
- Support the recording, valuing and passing-on of Traditional Knowledge.
- Formal processes that provide First Nations peoples a voice in decision making processes, and deliver accountability to Governments of all levels when making decisions on Traditional Lands, are critical.
- Equitable and fair access to climate finance opportunities need to be facilitated to actually trickle down to Indigenous communities.
6.2 A journey of an Island Girl to CoP28 in Dubai – Talei Silibaravi

Talei Silibaravi, who hails from the island of Kavewa in the Province of Macuata, Fiji, shared her experiences at UNFCCC CoP28 in Dubai. The main reasons why she travelled to CoP 28 were:

- to be the voice of my people and to share their stories of using nature based solutions, traditional knowledge and values to address our challenges on the ground such as Climate Change impacts, and nature loss
- to advocate the “Kauwai Communique” the collective voice and call to action from Fiji 1st National Symposium of Community Led Initiatives on Environment Sustainability.
- To understand how CoPs work and the connection to grass root communities on the ground and how communities can influence the decisions being made to halt and reverse the climate change and biodiversity crisis at the speed and scale needed

At CoP28, Talei made use of the opportunities provided to share her stories and messages at Key Side Events amongst world leaders and global citizens. Some of these side events included:

- We will do this: Indigenous Peoples Leading Climate Resilience and Nature Preservation with indigenous leaders from around the world
- Pathways to Island Climate Resilience: Local Solutions in Global Frameworks with other Pacific Voices from Around the world
- Dialogue on the future of CoPs – with other global leaders, business leaders, CSOs and Governments on why the voices of us the pacific grassroot people are important in shaping the future of CoPs

Talei was able to establish relationships and build networks with other indigenous representatives from other parts of the world, CSOs. Government Delegates and many others.

Some of the key lessons and takeaway messages from her CoP28 experience are:

- Prepare well, listen to the voices of her elders, the women, the youths, her daughter, other communities from around Fiji, and the Pacific, seek advice from local experts, stakeholders, and anyone who has a story that she could learn from
- Ensure we speaking the same language – with a united voice
- Build strong partnerships and networking on the ground and across many levels of society
- Have basic understanding of how COPs work – first-hand experience is the best way to learn
- Preparation for CoP needs to start early in the year, or few years in advance
• Find ways to amplify our collective voices, our stories, and our truth
• Seek your allies and connect with them – look around yourself, we are all allies in this room.

She also shared her reflections on some of the outcomes of CoP28:
• No clear decision to phase out fossil fuel – so we need to keep fighting!
• Nature: CoP28 Outcome emphasized the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems, halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 – we can work together on this, as indigenous people, this is our super power!
• It also mentioned nature-based solutions – another of our super powers!
• Adoption of a decision that operationalized the Loss and Damage fund, paving the way for financial pledges totalling more than $792 million and many more finances pledged – let’s keep networking and talking to our allies to help amplify our voices to ensure we get our fair share and equity, ensure there is transparency, there is accountability, and ensuring our accountability and honesty in how we spent this money and funds in a way it is intended to be
• What else can we do as a collective? Let’s discuss this further.

7.0 Stories from Fiji Oceania First Voices:

During this session, three community representatives from Fiji shared their stories of their community led initiatives, some of the success, challenges faced, lessons learnt and key takeaway messages. The three speakers were:

• **Mikaele Tagicakiverata Finau**, WWF Volunteer – turtle monitoring as an indigenous youth volunteer
• **Salanieta Kitolelei** – Indigenous Youth Project in Dreketi, Rewa
• **Sanaila Tawake** - Nakanacagi Bat Cave Conservation Initiative

7.1 Mikaele Tagicakiverata Finau, WWF Volunteer – turtle monitoring as an indigenous youth volunteer:

Mikaele hails from the village of Nawamagi in the district of Conua, Nadroga Province. He became involved in conservation because as a little child, he was always fascinated with the natural world while growing up in the village which is located in an area known as the “Salad Bowl” of Fiji due to its lush vegetation and beautiful geography. He first learnt about climate change and global warming in school and the thought of losing his home and identity has haunted him ever since and therefore opted to pursue a degree in environmental science at the University of the South Pacific.

Mikaele then provided a brief overview of the WWF Volunteer Programme which he is a member of. The WWF-Pacific Volunteer Programme aims to engage individuals who are passionate about nature and conservation to support and build capacity of budding conservationists with hands-on experience in conservation activities and initiatives on the ground. As a member of the Volunteer Programme, he applied and was accepted to be part of the Turtle Monitoring Programme which was an experience of a lifetime. Firstly, he participated in the training phase of learning the biology and life cycle of sea turtles which was very rewarding.
Overall, the program helped to build his capacity professionally in terms of his work ethics and what is to be expected when out in the field! He learnt a lot while being deployed with coastal communities on the ground across Fiji. As an indigenous youth, undergoing training in science, and through his interactions with indigenous communities as part of the turtle monitoring programme, he had learnt to realise the importance of the indigenous knowledge and values systems in conservation and climate action. His experiences taught him that Government legislations, scientific knowledge and research, and traditional knowledge and customary laws and protocols are key elements of successful and effective conservation – absence of one of these elements will result in gaps and ineffectiveness of efforts on the ground. His main takeaway from the turtle monitoring programme was that indigenous communities have so much knowledge and understanding of the natural surroundings and the seasonalties over thousands of years of observations and interaction can strongly contribute to solutions for the climate and nature crisis. The opportunity for him to connect with indigenous communities on the ground through the volunteer programme, listening and learning is most rewarding and fulfilling.

7.2 Salanieta Kitolelei – “Maroroi Dreketi Project”

Maroroi Dreketi is a Youth initiative collaboration between 5 villages within the district of Dreketi in the Province of Rewa. This inspirational story of indigenous youths’ perceptions of a climate resilient district for the people of Dreketi in Rewa which was shared by Salanieta Kitolelei, representing the Navotu Youth Club.

It’s about Youths taking actions to address current challenges and burdens highlighted by the district elders, one of which is flooding. The main components of this initiative included flood mitigation, food security, removal of invasive plant species, reforestation, establishing village disaster risk reduction plans and hazard and waste removals. This district youth led initiative is also contributing to the implementation of the Rewa Province Strategic Development Plan 2023-2027

Salanieta’s story demonstrated the important role indigenous youths can play in addressing climate change impacts within their own communities, guided by the traditional knowledge and values systems of:

- Veimaroroi – stewardship
- Veilomani – to love
- Veikauwaitaki – to be considerate
- Veiuasiviti – to respect
- Yalovata – unity
- Solesolevaki – to collaborate
7.3 Sanaila Tawake - Nakanacagi Bat Cave Conservation Initiative

Mr. Sanaila Tawake is from the village of Nakanacagi, in the district of Dreketi from the Province of Macuata and is a Community Ranger looking after the Nakanacagi Cave Bat Sanctuary which is home to the endemic Fijian free-tailed bat Mops bregullae. Scientific surveys from 2009 to 2015 confirmed that Nakanacagi cave is the only known maternity roost of this species of bats with only 2,000 to 7,000 remaining bats which is now recognized as endangered on the IUCN Red List.

The community of Nakanacagi is working very closely with the National Trust of Fiji, Nature Fiji Mareqeti Viti, Bat Conservation International and Rainforest Trust to support the conservation of the Fijian free-tailed bat through:

- Threat mitigation – threat identification and mitigation strategies
- Local communities and land owner engagement and partnership – community inclusion including establishment of community rangers to coordinate implementation of management strategies

In 2018, the People of Nakanacagi declared the Nakanacagi Bat Cave and its surrounding sites as a Protected Area with a Protected Area Dedication Ceremony. Ongoing efforts under this initiative to conserve the Fijian free-tailed bats following the establishment of the Nakanacagi Bat Sanctuary included:

- Biodiversity surveys, bat research and monitoring
- Socio-economic surveys
- Community Bat Ranger employment
- Reforestation programmes
- Ongoing community awareness and outreach

Sanaila’s story is a demonstration of the need to establish and nurture meaningful partnership with indigenous people and local communities, supported with adequate resources and capacity - both financial and technical to ensure successful conservation outcomes.

8.0 Stories from Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea First Voices:

This session focused on highlighting two community stories, one from the highlands of PNG and the other from the coastal communities of the Western Province of Solomon Islands. The two speakers were:

- Nerolyn Loni
- Patrick Pate
8.1 Nerolyn Loni – The story of the Sea-grapes in Community Adaptation and Sustainable Livelihoods

Nerolyn Loni is a community advocate and leader from Sairagi, Western Province in the Solomon Islands. Her story of resilience is centred around an integrated approach to sustainable sea-grape management as part of their broader actions to adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change and improve community livelihoods. Using a blended approach of traditional knowledge supported by science to guide efforts to sustainably manage their fisheries resources.

Sea-grapes had been a vital part of the Sairagi community’s food and income source. To ensure the viability and sustainability of their sea-grape fishery, a comprehensive management plan for sea-grape harvesting was developed by the community which was implemented and enforced. During this journey, the community learnt a lot of lessons and were able to adapt accordingly. These lessons included:

- Working together as a community to ensure enforcement and compliance of management and harvesting rules
- Respect for traditional leadership and authorities – a traditional value and wisdom passed down through many generations
- Blending of traditional and modern management techniques – legislation coupled with customary rules

Despite the impacts of climate change, the Sairagi Community Initiative has demonstrated remarkable success stories through effective implementation of sustainable sea-grapes harvesting practices. This resulted in healthy sea-grapes and associated mangroves ecosystems, protecting coastlines and providing stable income for the community through sales in Gizo local market. The spillover effect of the benefits of this community is felt across the entire country, supporting the informal sector and contributing to national resource management goals (the CBRM National Strategy), and climate resilience goals. This initiative also contributed towards national mitigation targets such as increased carbon sequestration using traditional and community led nature-based solutions.

The Sairagi story has influenced neighbouring communities to manage their sea-grapes, and with extra support from WWF, the community members are now exploring post-harvest processing and value adding to sea-grape products. The community members had just completed a training of trainers on value adding where they learnt the art of producing body lotions, soap, syrup, noodles and sea-grapes chips from their sea-grape harvest. This approach not only protected their marine resources but also enhanced coastal ecosystem resilience and the Sairagi community resilience in the face of changing environmental conditions.
However, the Community of Sairagi also has their fair share of challenges:

- Poaching from outside communities
- Lack of proper equipment to effectively facilitate monitoring for compliance
- High expectations for incentives from youths who normally help with looking after the management sites.

The community members worked together and with support of relevant government agencies and WWF, are able to continue to address these challenges as part of their learning and adaptive management.

Nerolyn’s key messages for the participants were:

- Climate action starts at the local level: Communities play a critical role in building resilience to climate change through initiatives like sustainable resource management.
- Adaptation is ongoing: Climate change is dynamic, and our responses must be adaptive and interactive.
- Continuous learning and adaptation are essential for building climate resilience in the long term.

8.2 Patrick Pate - Sulamesi Wildlife Management Area (WMA)

Patrick Pate is from Mount Bosavi, Western Province and Southern Highlands Province, in Papua New Guinea. His inspirational story stemmed from the establishment of the Sulamesi Wildlife Management Area in 2008 to address the threats from unsustainable logging practices and to protect the rainforests, waterways and wildlife of Mount Bosavi for current and future generations. The biodiverse rich rainforest of Mount Bosavi with a variety of unique species of butterflies, birds of paradise, wild orchids, fish, with unique landscapes such as caves, rivers and waterfalls are still largely intact and are primarily used for hunting, fishing and collecting bush materials for the local communities’ day-to-day livelihoods.

The harvesting of the staple sago is also a common practice in the region. Communities have their own conservation practices and already have traditional restricted sites protected well before the establishment of the WMAs.

The Sulamesi Wildlife Management Area is an indigenous people led initiative with a management committee, elected by the local landowning community with technical support from the Government and partners such as WWF.

Patrick currently serves as the Chairman of the Sulamesi WMA Committee, and since 2008, the committee has supported and contributed significantly to the proposed UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Kikori River Basin.
Some of the WMA Committee’s efforts included increased community awareness working within the three parts of the provinces – Southern Highlands, the Gulf, Western and Hela, benefiting about 20,000 people within the Mt Bosavi LLG, Bamu LLG, and West Kikori River villages.

To support ongoing efforts of the WMA, three community conservation resources centres were established in:
- Musula.
- Fogomaiyu
- Bona.

These resources centres help to support the community-led protected areas within Mt Bosavi community conservation program towards improved management, increased awareness on climate change impacts and ensure resilience and sustainability of these forest communities. These land owning units are currently working with CEPA to draft laws to protect through gazetted, three WildLife Management Areas:
- Sulamesi WMA 80,159.04 hectares,
- Hose WMA, 4, 830.47 hectares, and
- Arisai WMA 4, 661.04 hectares.

Early this year, 2024, the PNG Government passed a new Protected Area Legislation that could help support community efforts on the ground to protect their forests from logging, oil and LNG pipelines.

9.0 First Nation Voices from Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand

During this session, two representatives from Aotearoa New Zealand and five representatives from First Nations people of Australia shared their stories of community actions and initiatives on the ground to protect their land and sea resources and address the impacts of climate change and declining ocean health.

Aotearoa New Zealand Representatives were:
- Sheridan Waitai, Pou Tangaroa (Oceans) Iwi Advisor (New Zealand)
- Toka Makaa, Ngāti Kuri Trust Board (New Zealand)

Australia First Nation Speakers were:
- Mali Djarrbal Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation
- Sheila Ann White Strong Women for Healthy Country Network – MIMAL Land Management Aboriginal Corporation - (Northern Territory)
- Daniel Billy 350 Org Climate Advocate (Warraber Island, Kulkalgal Nation, Central Torres Strait - Zenadh Kes)
- Torres Webb - Indigenous First Nations Aus Research, Traditional Knowledge & Climate (Torres Strait - Zenadh Kes)
- Pius Gregory (WWF) First Nations Kimberly Leader Savanna Burning and Emissions Avoidance (Western Australia)

9.1 Sheridan Waita and Toko Maaka - Te Haumihi Programme

Sheridan Waitai grew up in Te Hiku o te Ika. She has significant experience in legislation and the policy environment in relation to indigenous issues and has contributed to environmental, social, education and health initiatives. Sheridan has become a resource person to people and initiatives for biodiversity across the country and has inherited her late grandmother Saana Waitai-Murray’s passion for the welfare of Ngāti Kuri, Whenua and Whakapapa.
Toko Maaka is the Bio Security and Biodiversity Manager for Te Haumihi. He has over 30 years of experience in pest control and building enduring relationships and connections with key partners for environmental prosperity.

Ngāti Kuri are descended from the original inhabitants, the founding peoples of the northernmost peninsula of Aotearoa, in Te Hiku O Te Ika. Ngāti Kuri’s contemporary tribal area covers approximately one million square kilometres in the Far North (Te Hiku o Te Ika) and extends from Hukatere on the west coast across to Maunga Tohoraha (Mt Camel) on the east coast and north to Te Rerenga Wairua (Cape Reinga) and Manawatāwhi (Three Kings Islands) and Rangitāhua (Kermadec Islands).

Sheridan and Toko shared their story of the Te Haumihi Programme - an ambitious portfolio of projects that focus on creating a resilient environment that can sustain higher levels of activity and create a fit-for-purpose workforce that has sustainable employment. This had allowed them to be able to earn their own money, and build their own homes.

Their story was centered around the Te Ara Whanui Research Center which focused on creating their own traditional research center to generate and advance research for, and by Ngati Kuri, guided by the waka which forms the physical and conceptual framework of the Te Ara Whanui. It created a cohesive context to each aspect of the operation and the visitor experience and is a binding symbol of the kaitiakitanga - an inextricable relationship between the environment and people.

The Te Ara Whanui vision is to lead and disseminate dynamic research and practices underpinned by their commitment to WA1262. The research center will host and bring together a range of scholars and world-leading experts across multiple disciplines to undertake research and collaborate to make a difference for their tāonga (anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques), the moana, the whenua and their people.

This included working very closely with the younger generation, uplifting traditional knowledge and practices of the Ngata Kuri people unapologetically. The research center allowed the community to better understand the status of their environment and implement successful restoration projects which successfully brought some of the most endangered species back from the brink of extinction.

One of those species was one of the rarest trees in the world, the Kaikomako (Pennantia baylisiana) - there was a lone tree found on Manawa Tawhi/Three Kings Islands north of Cape Reinga in 1945 which took more than 40 years for scientists to successfully increase the rare trees numbers.
In 2018, the Fourth Generation from Saana Waitai-Murray, the original WAI262 claimant from Ngati Kuri, through their leadership adopted a Zero Extinction Vision - to grow their people’s understanding of what needs to be protected, restored and revitalised for future generations. Some of the planned activities under this project included exploring and researching traditional knowledge around burn practices for preventative and clearing fires, national research project to reimagine kainga (Indigenous Maori Communities or Villages) as transformational actions and practices, amplify innovative youth leadership to advance resilient kainga, monitoring, evaluation and learning, revitalising cultural practices and knowledge exchanges with other indigenous networks, just to name a few.

The initiative’s current focus for 2024 included:

- Build the knowledge of people as kaitiaki to return the mana to our whenua
- Delivering restorative work to protect and care for our environment – land, sea, and islands
- Revitalise creative and cultural practices
- Creating and extending partnerships to deliver greater impact
- Laying the foundation to create long-term thriveability

Sheridan and Toko’s story demonstrated the importance of indigenous people-led conservation and research efforts that are culturally relevant and meet the needs of current and future generations in addressing global crisis at the local level.

Mali Djarrbal is a female Ranger with Arafura Swamp Ranger Aboriginal Corporation (ASRAC) from Djilpin Country. According to Mali, Djilpin is the Goyder River, which flows to feed the Arafura Swamp and then finally drains into the ocean. Mali shared that the Goyder River holds the songlines and connects her to her ancestors and every time she visits her country, her ancestors speak to her through dreams.

The women are very busy at Djilpin. They dive for djalagu (water yam), dig for buyumar (long yams) and make dilly bags and skirts from the inner bark from the djirrpar (Kurrajong tree). It takes them about one week to make a special damper from cycad nuts called djakalangarr, collected and prepared with gunga.
(Pandanus) leaves for weaving baskets and mats, and cooked traditionally in a djambal (bush oven).

As a ranger, she regularly walks through the country and has observed its changes. Her walk through the country continues to give her knowledge and wisdom and she was able to work with other women to share this knowledge and understanding and to the kids for the future generation. Bush Heritage supports the work of the Arafura Swamp Rangers through the Aboriginal Partnerships program.

Shiela Ann White is a proud Malak Malak woman from Daly River in the Western Top End of the Northern Territory, which is made up of floodplain Country. She recently joined the team at the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network as a project officer, following five years working as the Malak Malak Land and Water Management Assistant Ranger Coordinator for the Northern Land Council Caring for Country Branch at Maddaingya Outstation.

In 2019, Rembarrnga, Dalabon, and Mayili elders invited women caring for Country from across the NT to meet at Bawurrbarnda Outstation in central Arnhem Land. The forum begins with a traditional blessing ceremony and welcome from the TO’s of that country. Over three days the forum brings workers from remote communities to exchange knowledge and experiences, proudly share their ranger work stories/journey and identify common needs as women caring for country and people.

At the end of the forum, women from 32 ranger groups articulated their shared vision:

- We are strong Indigenous women of the Northern Territory. We stand united as one strong voice. We commit to a network that gives equal power to the rights of all our women. Strong Women means Healthy Country.

Today, this network is known as the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network and it’s focused on empowering hundred’s of indigenous women many of whom are rangers, healers, artists, bush medicine makers and community workers, committed to working together sharing and learning and focusing their time on their common goal of strong women, healthy country.

In May 2021, the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network came together and agreed on 4 key priority areas:

- Promote the understanding that healing country means healing people, and advocate for women’s caring for country values, aspirations, and needs.
- Facilitate opportunities for Strong Women for Healthy Country from across the NT to meet and work together through ranger exchanges, women’s camps, training, and forums.
- Convene Message Stick Meetings every two months to maintain communication across the Network, plan future Network events, and inform the development of the Network’s governance.
- Develop the Network’s governance together with Strong Women for Healthy Country, and pursue support for governance training and meetings in different countries throughout the NT.

Mali then shared her experience as a Message Stick Member that is committed to meeting online every two months, sharing information and planning for future network events. More recently, women from across the network gave the Message Stick Members the responsibility to advocate their work and key messages, support...
and communicate for The Protectors of Country, continuing to follow in their ancestor’s legacy of protecting their natural environment, their plants and animals.

Mali and Sheila’s stories demonstrated the importance of investing and empowering indigenous women and girls in protecting and nurturing Country for healthy people and thriving nature. Their stories demonstrated the important role indigenous women and girls can play using their own knowledge systems and values in caring for and protecting nature. The network of strong women and women rangers working very closely with one another in unison and supporting networks can bring multiple benefits to women, people and communities as a whole while advocating their ancestor’s legacy. They further reiterated that as First Nation women and stewards of the land, they carry the cultural obligations as knowledge holders with traditional responsibilities. They can see the changes to their Country from the impacts of climate change and strongly call on Governments to listen with their hearts and make changes to help First Nations women and indigenous communities slow down and halt the accelerating climate crisis.

9.3 Daniel Billy 350 Org Climate Advocate (Warraber Island, Kulkalgal Nation, Central Torres Strait - Zenadh Kes)

Daniel Billy is a saltwater man from Warraber Island, Kulkalgal Nation, Central Torres Strait - Zenadh Kes Torres and is a member of 350 Australia - Our Islands, Our Home Campaign. He was part of the Eight Torres Strait islanders that created history in taking the Australian Government to the UN Human Rights Committee over its Climate Records holding them accountable before the Human Rights Committee.

Billy shared that his island home is connected to all other island homes through the great big ocean. As the first voices of Torres Strait, Billy and his fellow islanders take their roles and responsibilities as the traditional stewards over their marine reserves and traditional fishing grounds whole heartedly. The surrounding ocean provides them with food, home to their totems and central to their culture as saltwater people.

Torres Strait Islanders are at the forefront of the climate crisis and urgent action is needed to ensure that they remain on their islands. King tides, coastal erosion, coral bleaching and many storms and cyclones are threatening their island homes, their culture and identity.

As part of “Our Islands, Our Home Campaign”, Daniel is working very closely with the young people to build and strengthen their voices to fight for their islands while they can. He stressed that “First Nation Voices” matter - voices from
the past, voices from the elders, voices of the people and voices of the future- for the survival of their indigenous culture and traditions to be passed down for so many generations.

“We must not be silent - as First Nations People, our voices shall be heard across the globe”, said Daniel Billy.

**9.4 Torres Webb - Indigenous First Nations Aus Research, Traditional Knowledge & Climate (Torres Strait - Zenadh Kes)**

Torres Webb is a proud Erubam man from Darnley Island, Torres Strait. Torres is an environmental scientist, published author and advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing through culture, education, sustainability, and economic development opportunities. Torre’s story is about self-determination across the scientific landscape - Our rights and responsibilities to Country and Kin.

In his story, Torres spoke about the importance of recognising traditional ecological knowledge as forefronting and promoting scientific knowledge systems that empowers indigenous people’s self determination to effectively manage and look after Country. This can be done through adoption of relevant national policies and legislations that protects strong cultural governance of traditional knowledge systems and intellectual property.

Torres work included developing Indigenous Data Governance strategies for:

- Governance of Data - mechanism, process and supporting structures embedded with indigenous values and worldviews
- Data of Governance - realising indigenous community aspirations, reclamation of self governance and self determination

He also shared some of the impacts of climate change on human health including First Nations people through an increase in the greatest invasive pest threat to human sustainability on Earth such as mosquitoes as vectors for a lot of deadly viral diseases such as dengue and chikungunya.

Addressing climate change will also require working in partnership with relevant experts and most importantly indigenous communities to allow for effective community-led management of these pests.

His key advocacy message is that First Nations peoples have protected Country for millennia and have survived dramatic climatic shifts. “We are intimately connected to Country, and our knowledge and cultural practices hold solutions to the climate crisis.”

**9.5 Pius Gregory (WWF) First Nations Kimberly Leader - Savanna Burning and Emissions Avoidance (Western Australia)**

Pius is a proud Karajarri and Yawuru man of the Kimberley region in north-western Australia. Pius lives in Broome and has worked extensively on protecting and managing Yawuru Country through ranger work as a senior Yawuru Country Manager. Pius’ story is about the traditional use of right-way fire as an example of a Nature-based economy for carbon abatement.

Fire is important to the people and the ecosystems of the Australian Savannas. First nations people of the Kimberley region had over thousands of years mastered the art of using right-way fire management to regenerate the country and prevent widespread bush and forest fires.
By doing these small mosaic patch fires, it gave animals areas that they could shelter in as well be able to feed fresh new growth, but the main benefit was that these patches would hold up the big late-season bushfires.

Pius highlighted that currently many First Nation groups are successfully using the traditional practice right-way of fire as a successful Nature-based economic model carbon abatement. There are currently 79 Savanna burning Carbon Abatement projects valued at $20 million, capturing 7 Mt of GHG emissions per year. The ecosystem services and the socio-economic benefits from these projects are valued at greater than USD10.5 billion annually.

10.0 Breakout Session

During this session, participants were divided into groups and were asked to:
- identify a team leader to lead the group discussion
- identify one team member to be responsible to taking down notes of the discussion

Each group was to discuss the following questions based on the community stories that were presented and also to reflect on what they can do as a collective group with a united voice. The questions to guide the group discussion were listed below:

1. What are two things you would like to celebrate as a collective?
2. What are two priorities you would like to champion as a collective?
3. What are two priority advocacy messages for this year? This would include some of the most pressing challenges IPLCs face and proposed solutions to be advocated?
4. Do we need an Oceania First Voices Alliances? Or can we use existing bodies and platforms?
5. If so, what would be the mandate and possible ToR?
6. What type of resourcing is needed?
7. Who would be part of the Steering Committee for this?
8. Who will host the Secretariat?
The table below summarizes the outcomes of the group discussions. The outcomes of these group discussions including the presentations were used to inform the drafting of the 2024 Oceania First Voices Regional Forum Outcome Statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Outcome of Group Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1            | 1. What are 2 things you would like to celebrate as a collective?  
• The space that was created last year the space has encouraged more participation from IP/Youth  
• Platform  
• Decolonizing  
2. Prioritizing holistically (lagi, vanua, Bulu)  
• Indigenous participation in all spaces  
3. Traditional knowledge (climate science)  
4. Yes, we need an Oceania First Voices (alliance)  
• We appreciate that there are existing bodies & platforms but we are still not convinced that our stories are being shared the way we want/need them to be shared.  
• “No one should be telling our stories on our behalf!”  
• Our oceania/ IP's & leaders must be included so we want our own space!  
5. Mandate of OFVA  
• Indigenous/ traditional knowledge  
• Oceania- first  
• ??TOR  
• Decolonise institutions that speak for us on our behalf  
6. Resourcing??  
• Ownership of the spaces  
• Intellectual property rights  
7. Steering committee needs to be made up of the future: young people  
• Past- Traditional leaders, Indigenous Leaders  
• Current  
8. Who will host  
• NZ- the youngest |
Kaviti Group

1. Two things to celebrate
   • Our identity & traditional connection (s) to our land & natural resources.
   • Common bond & link to our stories

2. Two priorities to champion
   • Our language (our identity)
   • Our traditional knowledge & practices.

3. Two priority advocacy messages
   • Push for more traditional/indigenous knowledge in decision-making processes
   • Visibility in vernacular language

4. Oceania First Voices Alliances
   • Yes, we need the OFVA
   • Is there an existing structure?
   • Our traditional, language & priorities to safeguard our practices and natural environment.
   • Resources
     i. membership fee
     ii. fundraising
   • Secretariat - rotate

Alliance
   • Amplify voices not usually heard - focus on the voices of most vulnerable, voices from remote places, voices that do not have the platforms, nor resources to participate in relevant spaces
   • Identify priorities, challenges and share best practices and promote peer learning including explore options and opportunities to tailor solutions specific to these challenges for these communities
   • Collectively speak as one united voice
   • Spread the burden & share opportunities across the network to ensure equal representations from across the region
     Represent at COP (e.g.) report
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Outcome of Group Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4            | 1. Celebrate this group being formed  
   • Celebrate Oceania First Voices Alliance formation  
   • Celebrating showcasing the work being done on different countries  
   • Declaration on Statement to the wider community (world) ensure all work from the past continues from what we’ve learnt to work towards  
   • WWF research projects around mapping out the existing bodies & platforms  
   2. Interim Steering Committee to bring together all of our thoughts and all of the communities of Oceania  
   3. Priority Advocacy  
   • Valuing traditional knowledge systems  
   • Safeguarding our traditional culture & knowledge systems  
   • Hope & Possibilities  
   4. Yes, we need to find out what is there |
| 5            | 1. 1st Nation solution  
   • Traditional Knowledge & Aspects to solving climate change issues.  
   • Authentic sharing of knowledge  
   • Transferring of knowledge of through generations  
   2. Including grass-root locals into global conventions and involved in the full process  
   • Climate change to be added into the education system.  
   • Reconnecting with nature and creating awareness  
   • Breaching language barriers  
   • empowering the people and prioritizing the awareness through the people.  
   3. Ensure indigenous systems as part of the solution when addressing climate change  
   • Reconnecting with nature and creating awareness in communities  
   4. Yes, we need an oceania first voices alliance and keep the existing bodies.  
   5. Centre indigenous knowledge  
   • Alliance is a platform where donors can invest in building capacity and advocacy.  
   6. Balance of technical and community level skills  
   • Tapping into existing bodies and parties  
   • Funding  
   7. Diversity of indigenous community in the oceania region  
   • Balance of regional & global parties.  
   • Balance of gender |
### Outcome of Group Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>1. Two things to celebrate as a collective:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>• Togetherness / unity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Enabling space for exchange</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Two priorities that we would like to champion.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One Voice- of the people</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• One Voice- Politicians</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Two priorities advocacy message for this year:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Merging of knowledge systems particularly indigenous knowledge &amp; practises which are the solutions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Revitalization of indigenous languages and culture (informal &amp; formal systems). Cultural practice.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Yes, we need an oceania first voice alliance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• inclusive and engages with existing bodies for examples:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• i. CORA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• ii. UN decade of language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• iii. PIFs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• iv. UN FAO- global hub for indigenous food systems</td>
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<td>• v. SPC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Platform for inclusive</td>
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<td>5. Mandates and possible TOR:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep it local</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• FPIC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Self-Determination</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Celebrates and honours indigenous knowledge, research and practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sea of Islands- the connectivity represented and heard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Funding- create setting for investment in indigenous solution &amp; practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Resourcing needed:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Funding is needed to do the kind of work we need to do &amp; it’s not a very cheap exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Steering committee:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pacific Island communities should take the lead on this sorts of initiative because it lets them take ownership of it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 11.0 Conclusion and End of Day 1:

Following the presentation and reporting back of the groups after the break out session, Alfred Ralifo of WWF-Pacific ended day 1 with a vote of thanks followed by a brief overview of the Day 2 Programme for the next day. Due to the severe storm and flood warning for the Central Division, the forum ended quickly to allow ample time for Participants to safely return to their various homes and accommodations. Day one ended with a song followed by prayer by the Tui Drola Ratu Manasa Naikasowalu.
DAY 2 – WEDNESDAY, 27TH MARCH 2024

12.0 Welcome and Devotion:
The Mistress of Ceremony Ms. Lavenia Naivalu started the day with a welcome address followed by a short prayer by Mr. Sepesa Raisili from Fiji Council of Social Services. She then provided a brief overview of the day’s programme before calling on the lead facilitator for the day, Kesaya Baba, WWF Australia’s Senior Manager, COP31 Strategy and Partnerships.

12.1 Day 2 objectives
The main objectives of the second day of 2024 Oceania First Voices Regional Forum were to:

• increase awareness on Australia’s bid to host CoP31 in partnership with the Pacific and the opportunities it present
• connect key messages developed on the first day of the OVF Regional Forum to CoP and other UNFCCC processes and develop a personal connection to at least one of the messages
• be aware of opportunities to advocate for the key messages and identify allies to work with

13.0 The Road to CoP31:
Ms. Kesaya Baba connected the global to the local, with a reminder of the Paris Agreement goal to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and “limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”.

She pointed out that if global warming hits 2 degrees, almost all coral reefs will be lost, but if we can keep it to 1.5 degrees, it’s possible that 10-30% of coral reefs would survive.

CoPs are one of the main ways to make sure the Paris Declaration goal is achieved, and Australia has bid to host COP31 in 2026, in partnership with the Pacific.

Ms. Baba then invited Mrs Kesaia Tabunakawai to share her reflections on Climate Change and CoPs over the years. Ms. Tabunakawai is WWF Australia’s Governor and a iTaukei Natural Resource Steward.
Ms. Tabunakawai started her *talanoa* by reminding the participants of the Pacific as a Large Ocean States with a collective Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covering 28 million square kilometers of Oceans making up 8% of the total Global Oceans and 20% of global EEZ and home to 25% of global coral reefs. Despite having large oceans and EEZs, the Pacific Island Countries’ combined land area is just over half a million square kilometers with a population of about 12 million people (2020).

Despite being large ocean states, the small land masses and remoteness of the island communities across the vast Pacific ocean presents unique challenges in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. This calls for a sense of urgency in terms of the science and future predictions for some of the most vulnerable Pacific Island nations:

- Tuvalu will be the first country to disappear under water from sea level rise due to Climate Change if greenhouse gas emission rates are not lowered to 1.5 degrees by 2050. However Tuvalu will be uninhabitable long before it is swallowed by the sea. The people of Tuvalu are already preparing itself for such an outcome exploring opportunities to be the first nation to exist digitally, moving a sovereign nation of indigenous people with unique culture to exist as a whole, when ultimately forced to relocate.

- Vanuatu is currently ranked by World Disaster Index 2019 as the most vulnerable and most at risk country to disasters in the world such as tropical cyclones, storm surges, coastal floods, river floods, earthquakes, landslides, tsunami and volcanic eruption. Vanuatu is currently one of those nations from the Pacific who had been championing Loss and Damage including seeking legal advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice.

Ms. Tabunakawai also shared the significance of traditional indigenous knowledge and cultural practices in the Pacific and its uniqueness and diversity within each country and across the region. For example, special mats specifically woven and unique to certain communities in Fiji - and since 2019, the group has woven 3 similar mats and are currently weaving their fourth mat. These diversity and uniqueness of traditional knowledge and practices for each community are important in the sustainable management and use of their natural resources including the spirit of community living and values.
She further reflected on the current reality of her village:

- with the influence of modern technology taking loads off the hard work associated with community living and communal sharing
- increase in use of outboard motors versus traditional canoes, coupled with GPS, spearguns and diving gears have over the years have contributed to overfishing of traditional fishing grounds or qoliqoli
- there is an increasing neglect of village farms and gardens due to shift in use and values influenced by modern lifestyles and contributing to more unsustainable practices far removed by the traditional values and practices of our ancestors

Some of the possible solutions from her experiences included:

- encourage alliance building and partnerships between indigenous groups within countries and across Oceania to promote learning and sharing of best practices and knowledge
- promoting and supporting community led fishing area management plans
- reiterating that Indigenous people hold vital ancestral knowledge and expertise on how to adapt, mitigate, and reduce climate and disaster risks.

To conclude, Ms. Tabunakawai recommended that in order to describe or understand the Personality whose voice is the Oceania First Voice, the participants need to consider:

- Who are we? Who is she?
- How many of us? How many of her?
- How many languages does she speak? 840 dialects in PNG alone
- How much of the global biodiversity is she steward of?

13.2 - The Bid to Host COP31:

Ms Baba then provided a brief background and update of Australia’s bid to host UNFCCC CoP31 in partnership with the Pacific in 2026. She also further shared the opportunities this presents to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities of the Pacific and its relevance to Oceania First Voices Regional Platform.

The history of the bid:

- Australia officially bid to host COP31 in 2022, saying it was bidding to “co-host in partnership with Pacific neighbours”. Pacific Island Forum leaders agreed to this arrangement.
- Australia now has to get agreement from the “Western Europe and Others Group”. To do so, Australia will need to show international standing and action on climate change. This is a challenge for Australia.
- Türkiye is also bidding to host COP31 and likely the earliest we will know the outcome of these bids is at COP29, in November 2024.
Opportunities of the bid:
- With the world watching, it is an opportunity to encourage Australia to do more to address climate change.
- Civil society can also use it to hold Pacific governments to account, including on Indigenous matters such as protecting intellectual property.
- Civil society can also prepare. While the host of COP31 hasn’t been announced, we can still work on carrying initiatives through COPs via our relationships.

Opportunities of hosting COP in the region:
- It is a chance to drive the agenda; for example, advocate for the Indigenous leadership, the connection between nature and climate.
- Having it in the region reduces logistics and costs.
- We know that storytelling is so important, so reducing those logistics and costs means that more Indigenous people and Pacific Islanders can be there to tell their stories.
- It increases access to negotiators:
  - Negotiators pick things up from side events and listening to civil society.
  - They also refer back to capitals and advocate there. We can speak more directly to them with our priorities.
- Non-state actors such as corporations are also active at COP - they are important actors in addressing climate change and are also influenced by active civil society.

Professor Epeli Hau’ofa said “human reality is human creation, if we fail to create our own reality someone else will do it for us”. If Australia and the Pacific host COP31 in our region, it is our opportunity to share our reality with the world.

14.0 Draft Key Messages for the 2024 Oceania First Voices:

During this session Alfred Ralifo of WWF-Pacific presented the draft outcome statement reflecting on the stories and key messages from the first day for participants’ consideration and comments.
Draft 2024 Oceania First Voices Second Regional Forum Outcome Statement

26th – 27th March, 2024

Holiday Inn, Suva, Fiji

The Second Oceania First Voices Regional Forum with the theme “Once Voice, One People, One World” was held on the 26th and 27th of March, 2024, bringing together 98 First Voices Representatives, and partners from across Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand. The second regional forum was an opportunity to collectively:

• recall the outcomes of the inaugural 2022 Oceania First Voices Conference, the 2023 Kauwai Communique, the outcomes of CoP27 and 28
• reflect on the key messages and outcomes of the inaugural Oceania Regional Forum at Mission Beach, September, 2022
• reaffirm the significance of our traditional and cultural values, wisdom, knowledge systems, and language are the different threads of the magimagi (coconut sinew) that spiritually connect us as one with each other, our land, waterways and ocean
• celebrate our solidarity as indigenous people across Oceania, our leadership, innovation, and resilience in the face of accelerating climate and biodiversity crisis
• collectively chart a way forward as one voice to influence key decisions at various levels and in places that matter to galvanise and catalyse community-driven climate and nature actions that that are just, equitable, culturally appropriate, and rooted in the traditional wisdom and values entrusted to us by our forefathers to be passed on to our children and those to come

As the traditional custodians of Oceania, we are proud of our heritage as the First Stewards of the largest ocean in the world and acknowledge Oceania First Voices Regional Forum as a platform to meaningfully share and amplify our stories our way, through our language, song, dance and art. We recognise that in order for us to chart a path forward, we must first appreciate where we came from and who we are as people of Oceania.

We collectively pledge to:

• reaffirm our commitment to undertake robust actions to safeguard and preserve our traditional knowledge and value systems which serve as the foundation for halting nature loss and enhancing our resilience and adaptability.
• commit to actively listening to the voices and wisdom of our elders, women, youths, children, people with disabilities and the most vulnerable within and amongst our communities
• continue our collaborative spirit, reinforcing our traditional relationship with one another through ongoing storytelling, learning and exchanges that is mutually supportive
• actively seek opportunities to chart a course to advocate our collective priorities and needs at national, regional, and global levels.
• expand the Oceania First Voices Alliance as a unified platform to include additional voices and stories from across the four corners of the Pacific, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand
• forge connections between Oceania First Voices Alliance and existing bodies and platforms at the local, national, regional and global level fostering valuable collaborations and partnerships to strengthen our collective impact.
We note with serious concern the continuous loss of our indigenous language leading to the erosion of our traditional knowledge, values and cultural identity of our people. We also express deep concern over the insufficient progress in fully implementing our indigenous rights particularly those contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This lack of progress hampers our communities’ ability to effectively combat the pressing nature and climate crisis.

We stand in solidarity, calling our Governments, CROP agencies, development partners and the global community to:

- take decisive actions to safeguard our rights as indigenous people of Oceania, along with our traditional values, knowledge systems and language, through enactment of appropriate legislations and policies, while adhering to the principles of free, prior and informed consent
- facilitate meaningful action to eliminate the barriers that impede the equitable, inclusive and impactful participation of indigenous people and local communities in decision-making processes through fostering ongoing capacity building initiatives, as well as providing sustainable and adequate technical and financial support. This shall include recognizing and promoting the use of indigenous language in formal spaces that promotes inclusive and effective participation of our diverse voices in decision-making processes
- ensure that national and regional preparation for key national, regional and global events such as future CoPs must be inclusive of the diverse voices of indigenous communities, youth, women and children at every stage from initial planning to execution and including in the formal negotiations

Alfred then invited Sheridan from Aotearoa New Zealand to present on her draft recommendations which she had put together based on the discussions and outcomes of the first day of the forum:

**Why?**

The Ocean is crucial to this Planet’s survival and ours. We have known for generations that the Ocean is in trouble and we are past the point of choice. Our traditional knowledge, expertise and voice of the ocean needs to be heard if we are to turn the tide to save this planet. At no time in our history have we witnessed such physical change with nature, plastics, pollution, overfishing and climate change. Our ocean faces a series of unprecedented threats. Our world can no longer sustain this and the world cannot fix climate change without bringing the Ocean into the conversation. We need to heal with our ocean to do this required with cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity and culturally engaging ways at the forefront of planning and action. We are the circle of connection as “Te Mona Nui”. We are a family, bound by blood related to each other because of our ocean. We are the transformational leaders to heal the land and water. Now, it is time for us, people of the Pacific, to care for Moana so she may continue to be the touchstone for our future generations. Because none of us are prepared to tell our children we have failed.

**Our Collective Vision is:**

“Inspiring all people to commit to action for the protection and restoration of our Pacific Continent”
We have always been sea people. Everything we needed was provided by Moana. It gave us our first breath. The Pacific Continent is one ocean with many islands. Its tide laps on each one of our shores connecting all of us. For centuries, the ocean has been our communal home. Our ocean has nurtured us like a loving parent. It has given us life, taught us and sustained us, so that we can prosper.

In our eyes the ocean is a living being that does not belong to us, rather we belong to the ocean.

**How?**

Through gathering leadership, accelerating our capacity to stretch beyond what we are used to. The voice of our network needs to have a seat at decision making tables. It will take ‘ocean change’ at scales (local, community, country, regional, international) to do this. Giving voice to the ocean through connecting...

We have drafted a strategic objectives plan and are looking for potential partners to invest at impact level to enable us to:

- Elevate indigenous leadership and value traditional knowledge
- Creation intergenerational Cultural exchanges for secession and cohesion
- Through better coordination, build partnerships, share knowledge and work collaboratively
- Integrate our science and other science and research into all our decision-making and thought processes
- Have access to solutions to environmental problems
- Build communities of cultural commitments
- Reset relationships with Investment Partners to invest directly into Indigenous community lead action. Through the creation of a GIFT Fund
- Scale up activities for action

The group Te Moana Nui A Hiva is an indigenous Group of leaders that will propel culture to key organisations to give the ocean standing. They are a legitimate voice of the ocean that now require support to:

- Set up back office supports
- Operationalise our collective plan
- Finalise and implement key projects
- Create Fund for - Environmental Credits, restoration and protection
- Share our messages with a wider audience in order to achieve our vision/mission
- Deepen connections between each other and facilitate communication/access to resources
- Grow the Te Moana Nui Network through assimilating representatives from other jurisdictions
- Grow our own local capacity for ocean action
- Capture indigenous knowledge and practice across te Moana to exchange and support each other to fill knowledge gaps to collectively implement our solutions in place.

Following Sheridan’s presentation, the participants were then divided into groups to:

- discuss the draft outcome statements and explore recommendations to integrate Sheridans recommendations to the draft outcome statement
- identify and map out a timeline of key events and opportunities to plot a roadmap for CoP31 through 2024, 2025 and 2026.
14.1 Participants Feedback on the Draft Outcome Statement:

‘Following their group discussions the participants then presented their feedback and comments on the draft outcome statement which is summarised below:

- **Invest in Indigenous knowledge, and practices to secure our future:**
  - Oceania’s Indigenous communities are the frontlines of Climate Change
  - Direct funding empowers us to protect our land, sea and resources, that meets our needs and priorities our way.

- **Bypass Bureaucracy, Empower Action:**
  - Current funding mechanisms often get lost in government bureaucracy.
  - Direct access allows us to act swiftly and effectively in a more meaningful and impactful manner.
  - Invest in us directly, as the proven stewards of the environment for generations.

- **Climate Justice demands equity, and urgent action and not empty promises**
  - Empty pledges won’t save our islands.
  - Direct Climate finance is a matter of justice and survival. Fund our communities, the guardians of Oceania’s biodiversity

- **Indigenous-led conservation initiatives deliver higher impact per dollar.**
  - Traditional indigenous initiatives = nature based solutions

- **reiterate and reinforce the 2023 Kauwai Communique demands**

- **Communicate the links between western and Indigenous science to mainstream it**

- **Design, fund and implement programs to gather information from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities**
  - Preservation and transmission of Indigenous knowledge
  - Indigenous language revitalisation

- **Enrich the heart of the Pacific Ocean**
  - Do not cop out indigenous voices of Oceania
  - Oceania, first nations people are at the heart of climate action
  - Urgently direct funds to indigenous people of the Oceania region
  - Sufficient funds to realistically reach the heart of the Pacific.
  - Strengthen partnerships and networks to provide key climate finance readiness to indigenous people and local communities
  - OFV-tailored modalities of climate finance management to be used as the preferred means to disburse climate finance
  - Pacific direct access entities to GCF, GEF and Adaptation Fund are strengthened to deliver easier and faster access to Indigenous people and communities

- **Oceania First Voices is Captain of the boat and the captain is a “she” to ensure inclusive and meaningful partnership of women and girls and the leadership role of women and girls in climate and ocean actions**
  - The name of the boat is “Heart of the soul of Oceania”

- **Support and reiterate the call Fossil fuel free Pacific! “Port Vila Call”**

- **Incorporate Indigenous knowledge into policy decisions, elevate Indigenous knowledge and collaborate with Pacific Indigenous knowledge and institutions - intellectual property hub.**
Overall, there was general convergence in terms of participants’ feedback and comments on the Draft Outcome Statement and key messages with a strong call to urgent action to translate commitments into meaningful actions, creating the necessary impacts on the ground for people and the planet. These comments were further synthesized and integrated into the draft outcome statement.

15.0 Ocean Voyage of Key Events - The Voyage to CoP31:

The main objective of this session was to identify and map out key events and platforms from 2024 to 2026 that can be used as stepping stones and collective advocacy and collaborations for Oceania First Voices Alliance on the road to CoP31.
The Ocean Voyage of Key Events were summarised in the tables below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26-27 March 2024</td>
<td>Oceania First Voices Forum, Suva, Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>End March 2024</td>
<td>cChange Pacific Launch of Solwata blo Iumi, Honiara, Solomon Islands</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-12 April 2024</td>
<td>Ocean Decade, Barcelona, Spain</td>
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<td>15-17 April 2024</td>
<td>Our Oceans Conference, Athens, Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 April 2024</td>
<td>Revival of Lost Art</td>
<td>Grace Trifam Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-26 April 2024</td>
<td>COP29 Government and CSO Strategic Meeting, Nadi, Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2024</td>
<td>UGR, Geneva, Switzerland</td>
<td>Safaira Tagivuni attending</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2024</td>
<td>cChange Pacific Guest Speaker and Regional Gender Symposium, Honiara,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-10 May 2024</td>
<td>Otin Taai 20+ Climate Conference</td>
<td>Pacific Conference of Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 May 2024</td>
<td>Lau Education Charitable Trust Fundraising Event, Fiji</td>
<td>Contact Ana Fine Domoni 9265277</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-10 May 2024</td>
<td>SPRET Climate Roundtable, Apia, Samoa</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-30 May 2024</td>
<td>4th International Conference on SIDS, Antigua and Barbudua</td>
<td>Attending: Safaira Tagivuni, Chris Tagivuni, Mark Drew</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2024</td>
<td>OFV Girringun Final Regional Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2024</td>
<td>Grace Trifam Ministry “I Lololo” Reserved Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2024</td>
<td>Melanesian Spearhead Group, Suva, Fiji</td>
<td>PIANGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2024</td>
<td>Pacific Traditional Leaders Meeting at FestPac13</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2024</td>
<td>PTL</td>
<td>Not sure what this is... (KB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-14 June 2024</td>
<td>Regenerative Agritourism Symposium, Vanuatu</td>
<td>Regenerative Vanua <a href="https://www.regenerativevanua.org/events">https://www.regenerativevanua.org/events</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July - Nov 2024</td>
<td>SSV Lau Capacity Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>July - Sept 2024</td>
<td>WWF Policy Advocacy Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd week July 2024</td>
<td>SSVM iTaukei Lomaloma Mini Expo in the Island - Revitalise Women Handicraft</td>
<td>Contact Ana Fine Domoni 9265277</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2024</td>
<td>Honiara Summit on SDG14, Honiara, Solomon Islands</td>
<td>Attending: Mark Drew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2024</td>
<td>CChange Pacific District Level Workshop - PBF, Beqa-Yanuca</td>
<td>Share 4FJ Fish Smart tools and train local champions to facilitate small group discussions on fisheries health and the need for management discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2024</td>
<td>53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, Tonga</td>
<td>Likely the last week of August</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2024</td>
<td>Bose Levu Vakaturaga (BLV) Annual Meeting, Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 August 2024</td>
<td>International Youth Conference on Biodiversity, Yokohama, Japan</td>
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<td>7-11 October 2024</td>
<td>10th World Ranger Conference, Hyeres, France</td>
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<td>8-10 October 2024</td>
<td>Global Nature Positive Summit, Sydney, Australia</td>
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<td>21 Oct - 1 Nov 2024</td>
<td>CBD COP16, Cali, Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 October 2024</td>
<td>Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Apia, Samoa</td>
<td>Work with PBF team to visit hotels in Beqa-Yanuca seascape using 4FJ Fish Smart campaign as a platform to increase visibility for private sector commitments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2024</td>
<td>CChange Pacific Mini Private Sector Outreach</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2024</td>
<td>Pacific Leaders Forum, Tonga</td>
<td>PIANGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2024</td>
<td>Pacific Australia Emerging Leaders Summit, Australia</td>
<td>Attending: Olivia, Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-24 November 2024</td>
<td>COP29, Baku, Azerbaijan</td>
<td>Attending: Safaira Tagivuni, Kesaya Baba, Pacific Council of Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-13 December 2024</td>
<td>UNCCD COP16, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Community-led initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>SGP Fiji National Symposium for Community Led Initiatives on Environmental Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2025</td>
<td>Bose Levu Vakaturaga (BLV) Annual Meeting, Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2025</td>
<td>SPREP Meeting of Officials and Ministerial Talanoa, Samoa</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2025</td>
<td>COP30, Belém, Brazil</td>
<td>Community-led initiative</td>
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<td>2026</td>
<td>SGP National Symposium</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2026</td>
<td>Bose Levu Vakaturaga (BLV) Annual Meeting, Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2026</td>
<td>Bose Ko Viti (Methodist Annual Conference), Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2026</td>
<td>Torrest Strait Pearl Lugger Protest for COP31</td>
<td>Contact: Daniel Billy</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-20 November 2026</td>
<td>COP31, location TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Event/Project</td>
<td>Comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIFS</td>
<td>Blue Pacific Strategy Meeting</td>
<td>Occurs every second month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lau Women/ Grace Trifam Ministry</td>
<td>Revitalising traditional meke that tells stories of the impact of climate change</td>
<td>Seeking funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>CChange Pacific</td>
<td>Continue with 4FJ Fish Smart campaign with government and key partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tawake &amp; Lekima</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lekima</td>
<td>Indigenous dialect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grace Trifam Ministry</td>
<td>Emission Reduction Program 2023</td>
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<td>REDD+ 2018-19</td>
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<td>Carbon Accounting 2028-19</td>
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<td>IBSA Smokeless Stove Assembling 2018-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacific Council of Churches</td>
<td>Ecological Accounting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Season of Creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiji Council of Churches</td>
<td>Wildlife and biodiversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uni Fiji</td>
<td>Drua Project</td>
<td>Climate, culture, resilience <a href="https://www.unifiji.ac.fj/our-drua-voyage/">https://www.unifiji.ac.fj/our-drua-voyage/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lino Tubaka</td>
<td>Advocate for adoption of the recommendations by Pacific Island leaders at COP31</td>
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</table>
Participants were encouraged to continue regular communications, post 2024 Oceania First Voices to identify participants who will be attending these key events and to encourage collaboration and sharing of information using the outcome of the 2024 Oceania Regional Forum as the basis to develop advocacy messages at these key events.

16.0 Conclusion and Next Steps:
At the end of the second day of the 2024 Oceania Regional Forum. Alfred Ralifo provided next steps for the Participants:

1. WWF-Pacific team will collate all comments and feedback on the draft outcome document and then email to all participants for their final review
2. Participants to send comments and feedback by 12th of April
3. WWF team will incorporate all comments and circulate the final outcome statement for endorsement
4. A Report of the 2024 OFV Regional Forum will be drafted and circulated once finalised
5. WWF-Pacific will set up regular online webinars and meetings to further discuss the Oceania First Voices Alliances including opportunities to share information and learning on opportunities to collaborate and advocate key messages from the outcome statement.

Ms. Naivalu as the MC then gave a vote of thanks acknowledging the presence and active contribution of all participants, the speakers, the facilitators, the volunteers scribing the sessions, the sponsors, and also the WWF team who organised the regional forum.

Ms. Naivalu then invited Wilisoni Qarasaumaki to end the 2 day Forum with a word of prayer

17.0 Closing Prayer by Mr. Wilisoni Qarasaumaki

Gathered into one, we now pray for our sisters and brothers in all creation, for the oppressed of the world and for all in need. After each petition, you will hear me say “May we be committed to the balance in creation”. You are invited to respond “Hear Our Prayer”.

From our diverse faith and spiritual traditions. We have been called together to greet one another and value everyone and everything. We pray that our minds and hearts will be open to the Universal Wisdom known to all religion so that the world may see in us compassion and wisdom in action. May our lives lead others to believe in love and live by truth. May we be committed to the balance in creation

All - Hear our Prayer

Creator God,
You made all things and called them good
Thank you for the wonders of the world that surround us and the promise of new life stirring in the land and sea around us.
We pray for the earth in its vulnerability staggering under the demands of human needs and expectations. May your planet earth be held in reverence by all peoples
Guide us in the Pasifika, Fiji and our communities to use its resources wisely and respect its fragile balance between life and death. May we be committed to the balance in Creation.

All: Hear our Prayer
Let us listen to the cries of creation, and learn to speak to the hearts of peoples everywhere and to those who occupy places of power and influence in every land. Teach us how to seek peace on earth together. Especially this week we remember the regions in conflict Palestine, Sudan, Ukraine, West Papua and pray that a just resolution to conflict will soon prevail for the sake of the vulnerable and our sister and brothers in creation. Overcome the fear, greed, violence or vanity that turn neighbours against neighbour and nation against nation. May we all be known as makers of peace. May we be committed to the balance of creation.

All: Hear our Prayer

Healer of hearts and hopes, health and wholeness is desired for each one of us, we give thanks for the times of wellbeing, whether measured in minutes or months. We pray that lives caught in the economic pressures of these times may find enough to sustain them day by day and hope for a more generous future. Grant rest and renewal to all who are broken in body or spirit and bring comfort to those who ache with loss or anxiety. In silence we lift before you the names of those on our hearts today.... May we be committed to the balance in Creation.

All: Hear our Prayer

Source of wisdom and courage, embrace us all with hope this day that we may live faithfully, encouraging each other by the commitment we have witnessed in Jesus Christ who taught us to pray together, saying

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
And forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
For ever and ever
Amen.
1. Dr. Mark Drew Opening Remarks:

The Assistant Minister for Itaukei, Culture, Heritage & Arts, Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu, Traditional Community Leaders from Australia, New Zealand and here in Fiji; representatives from the respective Government agencies; representatives from national and regional agencies; invited speakers; workshop participants; members of the media; ladies and gentlemen, ni sa bula vinaka.

Today is a special day and I want to thank you, each and every one of you for taking time to join us. Taking time to join in thoughtful conversations, important conversations about how we can collectively advance a more People and Nature Positive future, one based on equity, inclusiveness, opportunity and sharing.

As we convene here today for the second Oceania First Voices forum, it is imperative that we ground our discussions in scientific understanding and evidence. Allow me to draw your attention to a recent report titled ‘The State of Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities’ Lands and Territories,’ compiled by conservation experts in consultation with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This comprehensive document underscores the indispensable role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in preserving nature and biodiversity on a global scale.

The report presents unequivocal evidence that addressing the triple planetary crisis—climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution—requires the full inclusion of Indigenous and local communities. It reveals that an astounding 91% of Indigenous and Local Community (IPLC) lands are in good or fair ecological condition, with at least 36% of globally identified Key Biodiversity Areas situated within these territories. This data underscores the vital link between IPLC custodianship and biodiversity conservation, emphasizing the wealth of knowledge that Indigenous Peoples and local communities possess.

WWF, as a global conservation organization, is undergoing a paradigm shift in our approach to conservation. We are redefining our agenda to one that is shared, effective, ambitious, inclusive, and just. Central to this transformation is our commitment to robust collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, particularly those from the Oceania region, represented here as the First Voices of Oceania.

For nature and humanity to flourish, we must adopt a whole-of-society approach to conservation. This approach recognizes the equal importance of all segments of society—government, business, civil society, IPLC, women, youth, and individuals—in the conservation discourse and decision-making processes.

We acknowledge the urgent need to address the historical lack of inclusiveness, equity, and justice faced by Indigenous Peoples and local communities across the Pacific and Oceania. As part of our Oceania First Voices Project, we are committed to a multifaceted agenda that includes learning from the past, building shared conservation objectives, reshaping partnerships, advocating for inclusive conservation, fostering mutual learning and innovation, building inclusivity, widespread communication, and ensuring accountability.

The year 2030 looms near, and with it, the imperative to support our First Voices of Oceania in advancing a conservation model that is just, fair, and inclusive. We recognize
that achieving our 2030 goals to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and meet the 1.5-degree target is impossible without the active involvement of IPLCs.

I invite you to open up your hearts and minds today and tomorrow, to engage in thoughtful, respectful dialogues to chart a course for collective voices to be shared, relationships to grow and the continued strengthening of mutual relations in order to ensure a more People and Nature Positive Pacific.

I would like to acknowledge many that have supported this event coming to fruition: WWF-Pacific team, WWF-Aus. For their unwavering support that has allowed us to convene this workshop, Our government partners from across ministries, CROP agencies and CSO, our WWF colleagues and most important, all of you individuals that have travelled far and wide to represent and share the voices of Indigenous people and local communities.

Thank you kindly-Vinaka vakalevu.

2. Chief Guest’s Introduction:


On the completion of his initial basic recruitment, he was posted to the Engineers unit in 1997 to attend the Trade Training School for a year. On completion of his training, he was absorbed into the service and confirmed into the rank of Private within the Republic of Fiji Military Forces. In 2011 he was promoted to Lance Corporal and to Temporary Sergeant in 2016.

In 2016 to 2022 he joined the Lyndhurst Private Limited as Manager Security and managed the Security Department, Company Traditional Protocol Officer, and the Company’s Charitable Support Officer.

From the Chiefly family of the Buli Dama in the Bua province, he was called upon in 2022 to enter politics and represent Bua in the recent elections (2022). After a successful outcome, he was appointed as Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Arts.

Hon, Tuiwailevu ministerial duties oversee the Cultural Sector. He is also a member of the two Parliament Small Committees for Natural Resources Committee (NRC) and Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee (FAD).

Hon Tuiwailevu as a rugby fanatic, has a lot of passion in supporting the local grassroots rugby and is an active member of Bua Rugby Union committee. He also loves meeting and helping people from all walks of life.
3. Chief Guest Honourable Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu Keynote Address:

Bula vinaka and good morning, delegates of the forum, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. It is no small feat to be charged with the honour of setting the tone for what will no doubt be two days of camaraderie, strengthening of networks, and the reinforcement of the Pacific way.

I am told that the foundation of this forum is sharing and storytelling. Let me be the first. My name is Mr Isikeli Tuiwailevu and I have the distinct honour of being the Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs. Today, I welcome another great honor, and that is to be here this morning to address you all, and to welcome you all to our island home.

In Fiji, when we are born, we are born to a mataqali, or clan. The mataqali has land where we can grow food crops or hunt for sustenance, and a qoliqoli, or fishing area. We are taught from a young age that the land is communal and is shared not just by the present inhabitants, but must be protected for the future generations. We are but custodians of this land. It is not ours to plunder, pillage and leave barren, but ours to nurture and protect.

From birth, we are given all we need to survive. Our ancestral beliefs and traditional ways ensure the sustainability of our livelihoods. We are tied to our land, our oceans, our culture. Likewise, our land, our oceans, and our culture are tied to us.

Each nation represented here today, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Fiji will have similar stories of belonging, ownership, and ties to the land and cultural practices. You are all encouraged to share these stories with one another.

As we chart a way forward toward a climate resilient future, gatherings such as these play a vital role in assuring us all that we are not alone, and that we are all connected in the fight against climate change.

Indigenous communities across the region are leading the fight against climate change not just out of choice, but out of necessity. Every day, we are faced with issues brought about as the result of climate change.

Today we bear witness to unprecedented acts of nature across the world. From cyclones, king tides and raging bushfires. Nature has spoken. Have we listened? How have we responded? How will we respond? Our theme for this year’s forum – “one voice, one people, one world”, is a reminder to us all that regardless of national boundaries and cultural differences, we are all connected. We have come together, representatives from across Oceania, to exchange ideas, lessons learnt and best practices from your communities in response to climate change, biodiversity loss and sustainable development goals.

Conservation, viewed through a global lens, can often be quite prescriptive. How many hectares of forests have been conserved, how much have we reduced CO2 emissions, how many protected areas have we created? While these figures are important, they take the heart out of the intention. At the very heart of conservation, is respect. Respect for the land, respect for traditional knowledge, respect for each other.

Looking through our traditional lens, conservation and protection of the environment is how we show our appreciation, and respect for those who have gone before us, and those who will come after us.
The importance of the preservation of traditional knowledge is evidenced in each of your presence here today. I may not know each participant’s story, but I think it is safe to say that each person comes from a village that still uses a natural waterway as a means of sustenance – be it a waterfall, a river, or a spring. That same waterfall or river or spring may have been used for generations as a means of healing or transport.

Indigenous communities have addressed challenges in a harmonious and collective manner since time immemorial. Let this forum mark a return to those ways, as we share our stories, experiences, and traditional knowledge that has formed the foundation of our respective ways of life. Let this forum allow us to pay homage to the ways in which our ancestors would meet to discuss collective concerns. A burden is only heavy when it is carried alone. In Fiji, we call this “Kauwai”, which can translate literally to natural resources, or to ‘collective concerns’. And that is what this is, a gathering of like-minded, like-hearted individuals to discuss the collective concerns of the first voices of Oceania, iTaukei of this region who had been bestowed with this immense responsibility to be custodians and guardians of the largest Ocean in the World.

I encourage you all to share freely, engage deeply, and entrust each other with your stories and ambitions for a climate resilient future for our region. Let us be confident in our commitment to one another, to our nations, and to the ideals that gatherings such as these represent.

May God bless your discussions.

May God bless us all.

Vinaka vakalevu.
4. PowerPoint Presentations:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FeLVUUmBhlyHV39NsocodmJSfzUE1n5k

5. Workshop Programme

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<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>AGENDA</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.00-8.30</td>
<td>Arrival and Registration</td>
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<td>8.30-9.00</td>
<td>Welcome and Devotion</td>
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<td>9.00-9.10</td>
<td>Introduction of Chief Guest</td>
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<td>9.10-9.30</td>
<td>Chief Guest Remarks</td>
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<td>9.30-9.40</td>
<td>Group Photo</td>
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<td><strong>MORNING TEA BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00-10.30</td>
<td>Introduction and overview</td>
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<td>10.30-11.00</td>
<td>Recap of 2022 Inaugural First Nations, Mission Beach</td>
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<td>- Girringun Oceania First Voices</td>
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<td>- CoP28 Update - Talei Silibaravi</td>
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<td>- LCIPP Pacific Regional Gathering Update (IPO Rep)</td>
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<td>11.00-11.30</td>
<td>Plenary Session:</td>
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<td>Fiji Oceania First Voices – Lived Experiences</td>
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<td>- Tavua, Nacula, Macuata (20mins)</td>
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<td>- Q&amp;A – (10mins)</td>
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<td>11.30-12.00</td>
<td>WWF PNG and Solomon Islands</td>
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<td>- PNG Oceania First Voices - Patrick Pate</td>
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<td>- Solomon Islands Oceania First Voices - Mrs Nerolyn</td>
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<td>- Q&amp;A – (10mins)</td>
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<td>12.00-13.00</td>
<td>First Nation Voices Australia and New Zealand TBD</td>
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<td>- TS-Ranger/ Community Leader</td>
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<td>- Western Australia Voices - Pius &amp; First Nations Kimberly Leader</td>
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<td>- NZ - Community Leader</td>
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<td><strong>LUNCH BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>14.00-15.00</td>
<td>Break Out Session Workshop</td>
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<td>- Oceania First Voices Climate Actions, Lessons.</td>
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<td>- Solutions and Challenges</td>
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<td>- Do we need a OFV Alliance?</td>
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<td>- What’s working and what isn’t working</td>
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<td>- Community POVs - WWF and Donor / I-Dev Aid Programs on Climate</td>
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**WEDNESDAY, 27th MARCH, 2024**

**AFTERNOON TEA**

15.00-15.30 Nominate Interim Steering Committee to establish OFV Alliance

15.30-16.00 Closing Dialogue
- Presentation of outcomes from group
- Q&A
  - Include Exit Survey and Feedback on Forum using Manatee

16.00-16.15 Announce and formalize the OFV Alliance

16.15-16.45 OFV Alliance (Meeting to discuss informal setting chats and planning around functions of the steering committee, role responsibilities and coordinating Advocacy Opportunities and key messages)

16.45-17.00 Next Steps and Conclusion
- Where to from here?
- Open dialogue

17.00 End of Day 1 Programme

**TIME** | **AGENDA**
---|---
8.00-8.30 | Arrival and Registration
8.30-9.00 | Devotion/ice breaker / Recap from Day 1
9.00-10.30 | The Road to COP31
  - Update on the bid for Australia & the Pacific to host COP31 in 2026
  - Connecting COP to our key messages developed on Day 1
  - Develop a roadmap of opportunities to advocate for our key messages as they relate to COP.
10.30-11.30 | Workshop - OFV Alliance- supporting the network to amplify Climate Advocacy and Map out 2024-2025 Key Consolidated Advocacy Strategy / Communications Plan
11.30-12.00 | Final Outcomes - Key Messages and Recommendations presented by one of our Steering Committee OFV Leaders - COP29
12.00-12.30 | Final Remarks and Closing of Second Regional Forum
12.30-13.30 | **LUNCH BREAK**
6. OFV Speakers Profile

SHERIDAN WAITAI
Ngāti Kuri,
Te Rarawa,
Tainui

Sheridan Waitai grew up in Te Hiku o te Ika. She has significant experience in legislation and the policy environment in relation to indigenous issues and has contributed to environmental, social, education and health initiatives. She has participated in a number of boards and has experience in the management of forums, governance and strategy groups.

Sheridan has become a resource person to people and initiatives for biodiversity across the country and has inherited her late grandmother Saana Waitai-Murray’s passion for the welfare of Ngāti Kuri, Whenua and Whakapapa.

She has been instrumental in the continuation of the WAI262 Fauna and Flora Claim for Ngāti Kuri. She has maintained the relationship with other claimant whanau and iwi over the many years that has resulted in a work programme nationally for Maori to Maori engagement. This is for preparation for Iwi nationally to engage with the Crown.

She has repatriated Taonga species and Taonga back to Ngati Kuri. She has led Ngati Kuri’s connections and works across our rohe including our Island work on Motu o Pao (Cape Maria Van Diemen) Manawatāwhi (Three Kings) and Rangitāhua (Kermadec Island). She manages and coordinates a range of relationships and partners, to achieve shared prosperity, community resilience and mana motuhake for Whanau, Hapu and Iwi.

TOKA MAAKA
Ngati kuri
Kaitaia, Northland,
NZ

Toka Maaka is the Bio Security and Biodiversity, Manager for Te Haumihi, Aotearoa. He has over 30 years of experience in pest control and building enduring relationships and connections with key partners for environmental prosperity.

Toka leads a multi-dimensional labour force to maintain infrastructure, assets and facilities and further establish new restoration sites for Te Haumihi.

Te Haumihi is made up of an ambitious portfolio of projects that focus on creating a resilient environment that can sustain higher levels of activity and create a fit-for-purpose workforce that has sustainable employment.

He leads the biosecurity management policy and framework for our mainland, islands and marine activities and production and security of tāonga plants, their recovery and sanctuary habitats.

Over the past decade he has facilitated predator control activities as a pre requisite to biodiversity enhancement including monitoring and maintenance.

Toka is a grandfather, father, brother, cousin and Uncle to many and is treasured by his people. He was born and raised in a small coastal village called, Te Hapua at the top of the North Island, Aotearoa New Zealand. He is committed to uplifting his tribal members to restore their land and seas.

The 2nd Oceania First Voices Regional Forum Report
Patrick Pate embarked on his advocacy journey in response to the depleting natural resources in his community due to the unsustainable logging practices, which led to the establishment of Sulamesi Wildlife Management Area (WMA), to protect the rainforests, waterways, and wildlife for current and future generations. Serving as Chairman of the Sulamesi WMA Committee, Patrick spearheaded its creation in 2008, contributing significantly to the proposed UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Kikori River Basin. His leadership oversees initiatives protecting water sources, caves with cultural significance, forests, and protected hunting areas. Patrick believes in integrating indigenous knowledge and traditional practices into contemporary solutions for sustainable forest resource management. The Sulamesi WMA embraces traditional ways of living, using the forest for hunting, fishing, and gathering. Facing modern challenges, the community adapts, introducing sustainable practices while maintaining their cultural identity.

As a community leader, Patrick believes in taking small steps, starting small to build momentum by working very closely with communities to promote sustainable practices. He envisions indigenous voices shaping global policies by sharing unique approaches and challenges faced by different communities. Patrick encourages aspiring advocates to place local communities at the forefront of advocacy.

Nerolyn Loni’s journey as an advocate for ocean conservation and indigenous rights in the Solomon Islands is driven by a deep concern for future generations. As a coastal community, her village is heavily dependent on marine resources for sustenance and income. She believes in the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge and traditional practices with marine resource management practices, fostering strong governance systems with communities.

As a female community facilitator in Sairagi, Nerolyn leads initiatives to manage sea grapes, a vital marine resource. Through a community-led fisheries management approach, she empowers her community members working closely with Government and other stakeholders in applying indigenous and scientific knowledge, resulting in the transformation of sea grapes into value-added products such as soaps, body lotions, syrups and sea grape noodles. Nerolyn confronts challenges like poaching and community politics through community patrols and engaging in community discussions. Nerolyn envisions expanding and scaling out lessons and best practices from her community across Gizo Island by establishing networks for learning and collaboration. She advocates for supportive policies and legislations to strengthen conservation initiatives throughout the Western Province and the Solomon Islands, ensuring a sustainable future for her people and for nature.
Lavenia Naivalu is on a mission to feed her people both now and in the future. Lavenia made history in Fiji when she was appointed by her community to be the first female Mata ni Tikina o Nacula (Nacula District Representative) in 2021, a position traditionally held by men. She regards her position as important in bringing about change in the communities for which she is responsible for. As a woman and mother, she always encourages and tries to motivate other women and girls to become more active, take on more leadership roles, and to contribute successfully to the sustainable management and use of their land and its natural resources. Lavenia has participated in numerous discussions and attended many national and international conferences advocating for a community-led approaches, and at this forum she will share her experiences as well as her community’s collaborative efforts to safeguard and manage their land and sea resources using traditional knowledge and nature-based solutions for a more sustainable and resilient future.

Seru Moce is an enthusiastic community leader who cares deeply for the ocean. When you search for him on the web, you will come across articles about protecting fishing communities from illegal poaching, collaborating with groups to combat the impacts of climate change and sea level rise as well as ensuring food security for future generations by exploring innovative opportunities. He is currently the Co-chair of the Qoliqoli Cokovata Management Committee (QCMC), a community based initiative that represents Mali’s four districts or tikina of Mali, Macuata, Dreketi and Sasa, as traditional owners. Qoliqoli Cokovata is located on Fiji’s Great Sea Reef. In 2018, the traditional owners of Qoliqoli Cokovata in collaboration and agreement with the Fiji Government to designate their traditional fishing grounds as Fiji’s first marine Ramsar site. Mr Moce will be sharing how Qoliqoli Cokovata, as traditional owners, is collaborating with Government, private sector and stakeholders to sustainably manage their land and sea resources, ensuring Fiji’s GSR continues to thrive now and into the future.
Talei Silibaravi is an i-Taukei youth, a mother, and an advocate for Indigenous women and climate change. She is the Project Coordinator for the Cagimaivai Women’s Club, which is based on Kavewa Island, Nadogo District, Macuata Province, Fiji.

She believes that, while being the most vulnerable to climate change, women and youths can provide constructive contributions to its mitigation and adaptation. She believes that they are the catalysts of change, that they can contribute significantly to the progress and well-being of any society. When we empower them, it is the empowerment of communities and the nation as a whole.

Climate Advocacy Messages: As Indigenous peoples, we share a deep connection with the saltwater, which sustains our communities and cultures. Climate change threatens this vital relationship, endangering our way of life and the health of our ecosystems. Rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and extreme weather events jeopardize our ability to fish, gather food, and maintain our traditions.

We call on governments and industries to honor Indigenous knowledge and rights, including meaningful participation in climate action. We urge a shift towards sustainable practices that respect the saltwater and all life it supports. Together, we can protect our oceans and safeguard our future for generations to come.
PIUS GREGORY
Karajarri and Yawuru man with connection to many other groups across the Kimberley

Climate Org / Professional Org:
WWF-Australia (Kimberley Office)

Background Profile in Brief: Pius is a proud Karajarri and Yawuru man of the Kimberley region in north-western Australia. Pius lives in Broome and has worked extensively on protecting and managing Yawuru Country through ranger work as a senior Yawuru Country Manager. Pius is a local expert on animals of his Country, in particular the spectacled-hare wallaby (manggaban), and their relationship with fire management. Pius now works as the Aboriginal Engagement Officer on the WWF-Au “Northern Australia Biocultural Solutions” program.

Climate Advocacy Messages: For a long time, Aboriginal people have been using right-way fire to regenerate Country. By doing these small mosaic patch fires, it gave animals areas that they could shelter in as well be able to feed fresh new growth, but the main benefit was that these patches would hold up the big late-season bushfires. As we all know, that is a major contributor to a lot of greenhouse gas emissions. Currently in Australia, many aboriginal groups have Savanna burning carbon abatement projects. Right-way fire is done each year in the early dry season which stops 7Mt of GHG emissions per year being emitted into the atmosphere and is important to support these communities.

SHEILA ANN WHITE
Malak Malak

Climate Org / Professional Org:
Strong Women for Healthy Country Network

Background Profile in Brief: I’m a proud Malak Malak woman from Daly River in the Western Top End of the Northern Territory, our Country is floodplain Country. Last year I joined the staff team at the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network as a project officer, after working for five years as the Malak Malak Land and Water Management Assistant Ranger Coordinator for the Northern Land Council Caring for Country Branch at Maddaingya Outstation on our Country. I am also a Message Sticks Group member for our Strong Women for Healthy Country Network, and have been working together with women caring for Country from across the Northern Territory to plan our forums since 2019. Our support network now includes rangers, support workers, healers, artists and community workers. Everyone has their own role to play.

Climate Advocacy Messages: The way we see Country is maybe different to how our non-Indigenous brothers and sisters see it. To me, I see that we are the protectors of our Country and we have cultural obligations to the Country for preservation and wellbeing. Country continues to sustain us. This is the message we try to send to our families. Indigenous people caring for Country are working to protect life from the impacts of climate change.
Damage to our Country hurts us, and our Country needs us. Protecting it is difficult work, and we need our voices to be heard. We also need safe spaces to support each other and share our stories, and it is important for women to be involved in ranger work and caring for Country. Because we are in this space, we are humble and kind and guide with love. That is what our Strong Women for Healthy Country Network is all about. We are all in this together, and we are all committed to supporting each other. Advocating and collaborating and communicating as a network of strong women. We now have a strategy and we want to become our own independent organisation so we can keep strong and affect real change. Because strong women means healthy Country.

TORRES WEBB
Zenadh Kes
(Torres Strait), Erub (Darnley Island)

Climate Org / Professional Org: Erubam Le Traditional Land and Sea Owners Corporation

Background Profile in Brief: Torres Webb is a proud Erubam man from Darnley Island, Torres Strait. Torres is an environmental scientist, published author and advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing through culture, education, sustainability, and economic development opportunities. Having worked previously with the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, as a Land and Sea Ranger in the Torres Strait and now currently with CSIRO as an Indigenous Research Project Advisor. Torres is passionate about supporting the empowerment of Indigenous people to look after Country ‘our way’ to improve environmental conditions and recognise the socio-cultural and economic benefits that come from Indigenous adaptive management of Country.

Climate Advocacy Messages: First Nations peoples have protected Country for millennia and have survived dramatic climatic shifts. We are intimately connected to Country, and our knowledge and cultural practices hold solutions to the climate crisis.
Community Clan / Area:

Djilpin unin narraku marluku ga mar’numukuny marrap unin. Nyiri narraka naniwarraŋu.

Djilpin is my country. It is my country because it belonged to my father and my grandfather.

Climate Org / Professional Org:

ASRAC – Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation

Background Profile in Brief: Djilpin is the Goyder River, which flows to feed the Arafura Swamp and then the saltwater. If you bring your eyes and see what it looks like, you will feel the country with your mind and soul. When I go there, I can feel the wind and I know the country is happy I am there.

The country holds the song lines and relationships and when I go to Djilpin, my ancestors speak to me and give me dreams. Every year when I go there, it changes. When I walk on country, the country gives me more knowledge to understand.

When we go fishing, we say, “Guyu guwang nownalayn gupurrui naniyalayn djiniŋ ḥirraŋuŋ ga djungayi ga wayirri waŋaŋu,” which means ‘give us fish, we are the Traditional Owners and caretakers right here. Do not hide them from us.’ The women are very busy at Djilpin. We dive for djalagu (water yam), dig for buyumar (long yams) and make dilly bags and skirts from the inner-bark from the djirrarr (Kurrajong tree). It takes us one week to make a special damper from cycad nuts called djikalangarr, we collect and prepare gunga (pandanus) leaves for weaving baskets and mats, cook traditionally in a djambal (bush oven) and teach everything to the kids for the future generations.

Bush Heritage supports the work of the Arafura Swamp Rangers through our Aboriginal Partnerships program.
Climate Org / Professional Org: 350 Australia - Our Islands, our Home Campaign

Background Profile in Brief: Daniel Billy, one of the Torres Strait Island Eight which successfully took the Australian government to the UN human rights committee over its climate record. Picture 350 Australia

Climate Advocacy Messages: To see climate impacts on the shores of my island home is very scary and it breaks my heart to see a part of my island home, my culture & traditions that was passed down for many generations is taking away from me and my people but mostly our future generation. Someone somewhere is causing all this problem but we are all coping with it the most. This is why we must fight everyday for the survival of what is very valuable to us. Climate change won’t stop so we won’t stop.
7. Local and Regional Media coverage provided for the two day Oceania First Voices Regional Forum- Suva Fiji.

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<td>2. <a href="https://www.fijitimes.com.fj/nature-has-spoken/">https://www.fijitimes.com.fj/nature-has-spoken/</a></td>
<td>Fiji Times</td>
<td>March 26th 2024</td>
<td>Nature has spoken</td>
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<td>4. <a href="https://fb.watch/rdAC3DS52D/">https://fb.watch/rdAC3DS52D/</a></td>
<td>Ministry of Information</td>
<td>March 26th 2024</td>
<td>Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tu’iwailevu officiates at the Opening of the 2024 Oceania First Voice Regional Forum at Holiday Inn.</td>
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<td>5. <a href="https://fb.watch/rdJI9twry3/">https://fb.watch/rdJI9twry3/</a></td>
<td>Fiji Television</td>
<td>March 18th 2024</td>
<td>Breakfast show: Raising Awareness on the Oceania First Voices Regional Forum</td>
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<td>• Tui Marseu speaks to breakfast show host Tevita K on the upcoming two day Oceania First Voices regional workshop held in Fiji, its importance to the region, the participants that are attending the workshop and the reason why they are doing and where from participating and where</td>
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<td>6. <a href="https://fb.watch/re_TY94ckw/">https://fb.watch/re_TY94ckw/</a></td>
<td>Fiji Television</td>
<td>March 25th</td>
<td><strong>Nai Ketekete nei Nau</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Yasawa District Representative Lavenia Naivalu and the District Chief of Nacula Ratu Manasa Naikasowalu, Yasawa speaks to television host Naomi Pareti on the issues they face on the ground especially with Food Security, Maritime Safety, and how communities are effectively working towards building sustainable communities through a collective effort.&lt;br&gt;• Ratu Manasa highlights how traditional leadership is essential in moving sustainable community projects forward highlighting the value of partnerships, the need.&lt;br&gt;• Lavenia provides an update on her participation in representing Fiji and her community at COP, raising awareness on the importance of traditional knowledge in the fight against climate change; measures taken to preserve important cultural practices &amp; how to work with youths.&lt;br&gt;• Lavenia highlights the importance of the upcoming two-day Oceania First Voices Forum, how the meeting will bring community leaders from across the Pacific to discuss.</td>
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<td>7. <a href="https://fb.watch/re_B2A-_Sg/">https://fb.watch/re_B2A-_Sg/</a></td>
<td>Fiji Television</td>
<td>March 27th</td>
<td><strong>Nai Ketekete nei Nau</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Interviews</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Sala Kitoleilei - Rewa Youth Group&lt;br&gt;• Lekima Muavere - Nakanacagi Bat Sanctuary, Vanualevu&lt;br&gt;• Mikaele Finau - Experience of a WWF volunteer on the field.&lt;br&gt;• Talei Silibaravi - Youth Lead for Cagimaiwai Youth Group Kavewa</td>
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