



TAURANGA TAUI'ANGA REVA

CLIMATE CHANGE COOK ISLANDS

Office of the Prime Minister

Newsletter March 2017

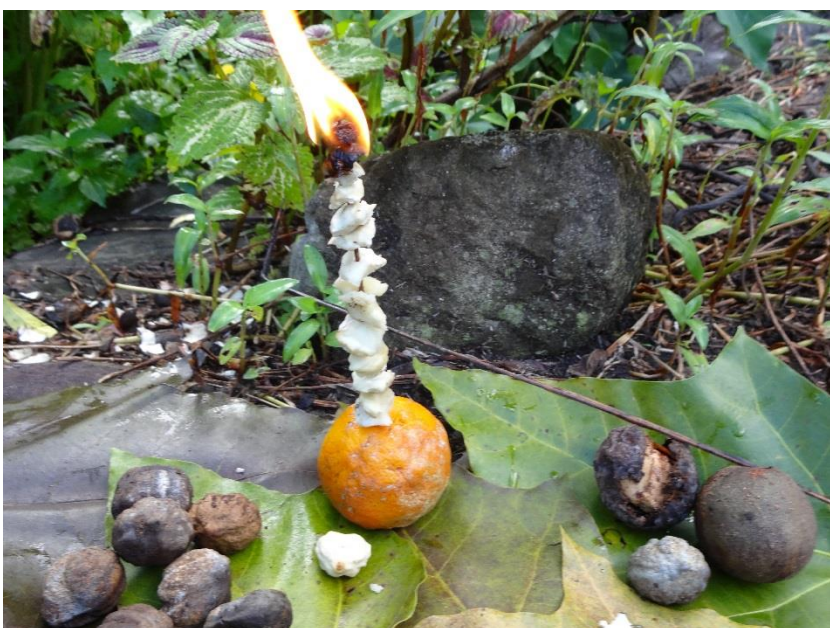
EMCI Planning Workshop

Final consultation workshop on the National Disaster Risk Management Plan NDRM Plan review was finalised. It entailed the Identification of the roles that Ministries play when it comes to hazards, cyclones, invasive species, epidemics, air, land, sea disasters and others. It is crucial that in times when such events occur in our country that the responsible ministries are aware of their roles, when and where they come in. An example of this was the fruit fly outbreak a few years ago that invaded Rarotonga and Aitutaki. It is situation like these that such a plan will kick in for a coordinated approach to deal with the problem. The workshop was held at the New Hope Church.



Let there be light

Earth Hour celebrated its 10th anniversary on Saturday 25th March from 830 – 930pm. Earth Hour is intended to draw attention to global climate action through universal solidarity. The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon says 'the symbolic turning-off of lights around the globe signifies the urgency to deal with the impacts of climate change'. Indeed, since climate change is the cause of human actions affecting all nations, biodiversity and people everywhere. For the last decade major cities around the world participated by turning city lights off for one hour.



Last year Climate Change Cook Islands released a media article with the students

from the southern Pa Enua to promote earth hour. This year we thought of reconnecting back to our traditional ways, perhaps this will inspire us to rethink our paths going forward in light of climate change.

Hands up if you remember the "Tuitui"? The Tuitui otherwise commonly known as Candlenut derives its name from the fact that the nut can be burned like a candle. The nut contains flammable oil, up to 70% by content, so it was important in our traditional ways of light before the introduction of oil, Benzine lanterns and energy. The fallen candlenuts were collected from the ground. The shell was cracked open to reveal the nut. The nut pieces were threaded onto a kikau stick. To ignite it, a simple match would suffice however prior to this you would simply use the already lit open fire. This practice was solely to provide light within the household. This was common for most of the islands in the Southern group of the Cook Islands. This particular tree is not found in the North. In contrast for the north, dried coconut pieces were used for household lighting.

The scientific name for Tuitui is *Aleurites moluccanus*, *Aleurites* meaning 'flowery' in Greek and this refers to the young leaves and flower buds. The tree is native to the Pacific islands and is similarly known as "kuikui" in Hawaii. It is also

used for medicinal purposes where the oil in the nut is considered good as laxative for cleansing. So next time there is a black out or you needing a natural cleansing why not resort to the humble candle nut.

Platform Meeting – 14 March

The first Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Platform for 2017 was held on Tuesday 14th March. Amongst those who attended were eighteen women and ten men from the various government and non-government agencies.

Lydia Sijp from Emergency Management EMCI gave an update on the Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific-EDF 10 Programme.



Accordingly, there are 23 projects signed off under the programme for the Cook Islands to a total value of \$573,762.00 to be completed in 2018. This includes the review of the Joint National Action Plan JNAP being the roadmap to building resilience. Amongst the 23 projects, one is specifically targeting women in partnership with Au Vaine a women's NGO. The training entails showing and teaching women digital, internet and social media practical skills. BSRP is also funding the review of the long overdue Building Code which is driven by Infrastructure Cook Islands ICI.

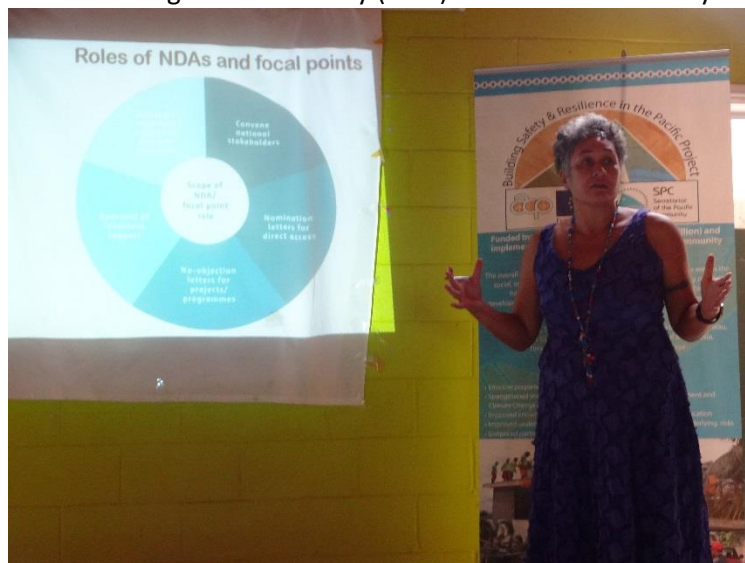


Renewable Energy Director Tangi Tereapii updated on the current progress of the southern group transformation to solar powered energy. Accordingly, work on the Mitiaro and Mauke islands is going according to plan and it is hoped the Mitiaro solar will be ready before the Manea Games in October. Rarotonga will be the last island to undergo transformation, however, due to the heavy demand of power source on Rarotonga, it will have to accommodate for several energy sources which Renewable Energy is working in collaboration with TAU. Rarotonga is already on 15 percent renewable energy. Suggestion was made to investigate the possibility of home batteries

whereby giving householders the option to purchase their own battery.

Ana Tiraa reports on engagement with the Green Climate Fund GCF

The Director of Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI) division, in their capacity as the Green Climate Fund's (GCF) National Designated Authority (NDA) moves in to its third year of engagement with the Fund.



2014:

- CCCI is selected by the National Sustainable Development Committee to become the country's focal point with the Fund known as the National Designated Authority (NDA).

2015:

- NDA and DCD (MFEM) work with the Fund to develop a proposal to apply for Readiness Support. This is to access climate change finance under the GCF NDA Strengthening component to build the capacity of the NDA and DCD to familiarise themselves with the Funds processes, among others.
- DCDs main role within the proposal will be to support the financial management of the proposal, known as the Delivery Partner (GCF term).

2016:

- NDA's Readiness Proposal approved, the Fund and government sign off on a contractual Grant Agreement for the amount of \$USD150, 000.00
- The contract is valid for twelve months.
- CCCI hires a consultant to assist the NDA with implementation of activities and build the capacity of CCCI.
- DCD hires a consultant to assist with the management of the finances and support the aforementioned activities.
- A number of consultation held, on Rarotonga and Aitutaki. Through these consultation it was realised that expectation to access climate financing were being raised which an ad-hoc procedural arrangement would not be able to manage effectively. Therefore, focus of the NDA has now shifted to institutional arrangement being developed to take on board project concepts and proposal.
- MFEM is nominated by the NDA to become an accredited entity with the GCF. MFEM is currently working with the NDA and the Fund on the necessary arrangements to become accredited.
- The NDA had submitted government's support (Letter of no-objection) for ADB to partner with government to implement a national Renewable Energy project to increase Te Aponga Uira's battery storage capacity to allow private sector investment in Renewable Energy.
- The above proposal approved, \$USD12 million dollars agreed by the Board of the GCF for the project.

2017:

- GCF and climate change products are being finalised to increase awareness.
- Second Readiness Proposal formally submitted by the NDA. This proposal requests access to funds to support MFEM's direct access to accreditation, the continuation to strengthen the NDA, and the development of a Country Programme (list of nationally prioritised project concepts).
- The amount of the Second Readiness Proposal is valued at \$USD600, 000+
- The NDA has identified and nominated the Bank of the Cook Islands as an additional, potential financial institution to be accredited to the GCF. The NDA and DCD will support the banks efforts going forward.
- Signed Agreement between Cook Islands Government and the Green Climate Fund on the Privileges and Immunities of the Green Climate Fund

Melina Tuiravakai reports on SRIC CC

Over 45 projects were implemented in the Pa Enua by the end of 2016. Of these 16 were under the small grants programme on 7 islands which included, fishing, agriculture, water, house tie-down and community safety jackets. There were 10 tourism projects started on three islands, Atiu, Mitiaro and Mangaia. In the first quarter of 2017 there

are currently 58 projects, 18 new, 40 continuing and 5 completed. Completed projects includes, jam and chutney food processing and composting and mulching on Atiu. Signage boards for cultural heritage and tourism sites on Mangaia, Pitaka Hare Natura on Penryhn and the Pukapuka fencing project. The good news is that SRIC programme has been approved for extension for another year to the 1st May 2018.

Rima Moekaa reported on the Third National Communications which at the moment is awaiting for the second tranche of funds from UNEP. The team has commenced working on the national component of the report. A coral bleaching video was produced and aired on local television over 10 slots and posted on the climate change face book page.

Other reports included Gender update by Ruth Pokura. The gender policy is up for review in April, new priority areas will be on disaggregated data by sex recognising the different roles of men and women. Charlie Ave reported on behalf of Health, accordingly mosquito borne diseases has been drastically reduced since Health received new equipment through the SRIC CC programme. They are seeking funding support to purchase rat poison for the eradication of rats before it becomes a problem. Jackie Ewans gave a brief update on the Marae Moana progress, thus far, the proposal to determine each island's seaward boundary is ready to submit for Cabinet approval.

Mana Etches gave an update on the geo-portal intended to provide information based on how our Pa Enua population is adapting to the risks of natural disasters and climate change. It not only identifies vulnerable buildings and the location of vulnerable people, but also identifies areas that are hazard prone in the event of a natural disaster. In relation to climate change, geoportal can help to minimize the negative impacts to natural disasters such as droughts cyclones by providing information that can be more easily assimilated by public end users.

The first key benefit of the systems that have been built for the geoportal is that it can represent databases into "spatial information" or maps. Secondly, it can centralize maps reports and other information which is normally scattered within government ministries and external partner organisations such as SOPAC, SPC. The data and related information is often difficult to locate and access because of restrictions, and formats are usually inconsistent and incompatible with each other. Thirdly, sources of information are often not acknowledged so that intellectual property is not ascribed to the appropriate source. Neither are there policies in place, relating to the privacy aspects of data-sharing to assure contributors of the confidentiality of the information they are providing.

The information system is currently being deployed from the Cook Island Government Network. The geoportal project consists of a survey inputting data into the database, the analysis of the data onto geo-maps and reports, the placement of this information onto the website, and ultimately the incorporating access to this information onto the e-government portal.

The three islands of Ngaputuru (Mauke, Atiu, Mitiaro) have been surveyed and it is intended to continue with the rest of the islands of Mangaia and Aitutaki and the northern group within the next few months.





A Trip to Maungatea

Two of our Climate Change team joined in with Te Ipukarea Society for a bird surveying expedition to Maungatea. Bird surveying techniques enables one to count and record a specific specie. Resident bird wildlife and conservationist expert Gerald McCormick was on hand with two other experts from off shore. The bird species *Pterodroma heraldica* or as it's commonly known as the Herald Petrel is both native and a resident breeder on Rarotonga. It is traditionally known to Cook Islanders as

'Koputu' or in some areas 'Ko'utu'. The team endured the climb for two hours and between 3 and 4pm managed to count 4 herald petrels with about 6 chases seen between two birds during that time. It is possible the chases are displays of mating rituals.



OPM team of James Kora, Rima Moekaa from Climate Change and Charlene Hoff from Policy and Planning.

Kura – Kuriri

The Nassau Focal Point, Pamanini Tuatai is awaiting to return to Nassau on the next boat with materials for the Nassau visitor's centre, 10 vakas and vaka shelter.

Thomas Taime the Penryhn Focal Point is working from the SRIC office on hydroponics for Penryhn.

Rakahanga Focal Point Una Panapa is also in Raro for training and working on projects for Rakahanga.

Till next time...KIA MANUIA!!