

May Issue # 16

Climate Change Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister

SPC EU GCCA; PSIS Rarotonga Reef Monitoring

The Rarotonga Reef Monitoring Project kicked off on the 15th May led by Dr Teina Rongo Climate Change Advisor. Why coral reef monitoring?

According to scientific research and analysis, coral reefs are important structurally for the protection of low-lying coastal areas from strong wave action as well as from erosion. Reefs also provide, food, recreational activities, medicinal products and a major attraction for the tourism industry. With increasing global climate change affecting marine eco systems such as ocean acidification, eutrophication and coral bleaching, these once robust and strong reef systems are being degraded. Considering that the Cook Islands constitute of tiny islands surrounded by reefs in a vast ocean, the reefs around each island is critical as a first defence mechanism against the forces of cyclones and sea surges. Hence, early detection of degradation on the reefs will assist with the planning of future projects to ensure that our reef ecosystems are resilient to the impacts that are both human induced and natural.



The survey team pictured here at the Avarua harbour before heading out on their first dive. From left to right, Dr. Teina Rongo, Teariki Rongo, Barbara Hanchard, Ben Tautu, Jacqui Evans, and Graham McDonald (seated) (Photo by Barbara Hanchard).

The reef monitoring will examine acute and slow onset changes to the marine environment that is either linked to climate change or human activities. Information gathered will be used to monitor and

guide climate change adaptation actions consistent with the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) and the Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change (JNAP). It will also complement the long term climate and water quality data collected by the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR), Ministry of Health, Meteorological Services and the National Environmental Services who will also assist to elucidate factors driving changes on the reef. Importantly, information collected will certainly contribute to the planning of Marae Moana (Cook Islands Marine Park). This is a short-term project over a ten day schedule pending on weather conditions. Climate Change Cook Islands hopes to extend this project to the rest of the Cook Islands, subject to funding accessibility says Climate Change Advisor, Dr Teina Rongo.

Rauti Para tablet training, Rarotonga

The tablet training project for seniors funded by SPC EU GCCA; PSIS and the SRIC Adaptation Fund took place at Te Atukura from the 28th April -2nd May. A total of twenty seniors embraced the opportunity to learn to use the tablet. Since there were only ten tablets left from previous training in the southern islands the group was divided into two separate classes of ten. All classes were taken by Ms Pua Hunter Director of ICT assisted by Courtney Papatua, IT student from the Ministry of Education.



Senior citizens on Rarotonga learning to use the tablet 28th April-2nd May (Photo by Celine Dyer)

Seniors learned the different features of the tablet with the different applications and its many uses. Bluetooth, photo and face book were favourite applications the seniors enjoyed the most. As a result Ms Pua Hunter Director of ICT Division, of the Office of the Prime Minister offered to set up a learning

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centre in the ICT office where the Rauti Para seniors can come in during working hours to use the tablet. The Rauti Para project responded by donating four tablets to ICT for the initiative. Building partnerships with stakeholders who offer services to our seniors is always welcoming to the Rauti Para Kumiti. It is hoped that this initiative will encourage more senior citizens to take up the opportunity to up skill themselves in line with modern technology that will keep them connected with families and friends overseas. Another aspect of the project is to encourage the sharing of traditional, cultural and environmental information from the elderly to the younger generation, a common practice amongst Cook Islanders.



Ms Pua Hunter Director of ICT received the tablets from the SRIC Manager Mr William Tuivaga 2nd May 2014 (Photo by Courtney Papatua)

Outboard Motors bound for Rakahanga

Finally, the long awaited outboard motors for Rakahanga has arrived and waiting to be shipped.



Five outboard motors sitting at Avatiu harbour ready for shipment to Rakahanga 20 May 2014 (Photo by Robert Matapo)

The outboard motors were requested by the people of Rakahanga through a proposal from the SRIC Focal Point Mr Nga Takai. The intention of the five outboard motors is to further develop and grow the dry fish industry of Rakahanga. The five villages on the island will each receive one motor to power their locally made wooden boats constructed by the villagers. These wooden boats are specifically designed in response to changing wave conditions experienced by the local fishermen. The initiative is to capitalise on the tuna season, adapt to the changing ocean conditions and provide economic benefits for the villagers that will better prepare them for future climatic changes.

This project is funded by the SRIC Adaptation Fund coordinated by Climate Change Cook Islands.

Are Pa Metua receives tablet training

The Rauti Para tablet training project funded by SPC EU GCCA; PSIS and SRIC Adaptation Fund was extended to Are Pa Metua on Tuesday 20th May. Since four tablets were donated to Are Pa Metua from the project, the ICT team of Ms Pua Hunter and Ms Courtney Papatua from the Office of the Prime Minister were only able to train four persons in each session. A special blessing ceremony was conducted by Pastor Ngarima George before the tablets were put into use. The seniors will undergo the same training program that was previously delivered in the southern Cook Islands, however, the only exception being that they are not restricted to time as the ICT staff will be on call to assist seniors at Are Pa Metua when required.

The initiative from the Rauti Para project is also to set up an internet cafe for our senior citizens at Are Pa Metua where they will be able to access the internet as part of their day activity.

Hopefully, more seniors will be encouraged to venture out of their homes and take advantage of this service at Are Pa Metua.

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Ms Courtney Papatua training seniors at Are Pa Metua 20th May (Photo by Celine Dyer)

SRIC Adaptation Fund Water Tank Project

The SRIC water tank project for Aitutaki, Atiu and Palmerston islands is finally a reality. After a year of wrestling with stakeholders, the tanks have finally arrived and awaiting shipment to their respective destinations. These initiatives evolved from proposals put together by the respective Focal Points on each island following a proposal writing workshop by SPC EU GCCA; PSIS which they undertook in 2013. Focal Points from these islands identified the needs on their respective islands and put in a proposal to the SRIC Programme to alleviate these needs. As a result, the proposals were accepted by SRIC under the management of William Tuivaga the Programme Manager.



Mr Tere Marsters and Mr Robert Matapo showcasing water tanks bound for Palmerston Island, 19th May 2014 (Photo by Robert Matapo).

The final hurdle to the project is the shipment of the water tanks, which according to Pa Enea Officer Robert Matapo will be shipped on the first boat travelling to Palmerston island.

Biodiversity Day 22 May 2014.

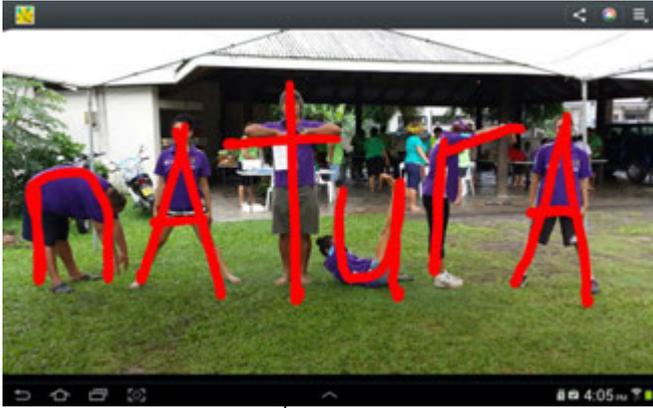
The braves from Climate Change Cook Islands and ICT division both from the Office of the Prime Minister took on the challenge to participate in the biodiversity day organised by the National Environmental Services. Celebrating and learning about our biodiversity and environment is important to appreciate and value these species that share our environment which sometimes we forget, and such programs serve as a reminder. Lessons learnt from this exercise made us realise how little we know about the different species that live around us, their value, and how dependent we are on each other for survival in an environment impacted by climate change and human influence.

Congratulations to NES for organising a great event!



Pua Hunter, Robert Matapo, Michelle Forster, Mitchell Tutangata, Courtney Papatua and Celine Dyer after completing a challenge at Te Atukura 22nd May 2014

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Team spelling challenge 22nd May 2014, biodiversity day



Mr Rongo and Mr Anitonia being assisted by Ms Courtney Papatua at the ICT (Photo by Celine Dyer)

Beyond the Rauti Para Tablet Training

Participants from the Rarotonga Rauti Para Tablet Training continue to frequent the ICT Division of the Office of the Prime Minister to continue with their tablet training. As seen above, these two participants are regularly utilising the services offered to seniors by ICT.

Kura Kuriri

Mr William Tuivaga is off to Fiji to attend the EU GIZ and SRDP meeting from 26th May – 6th June.

Ms Celine Dyer, Climate Change Cook Islands and Ms Lavinia Tama, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management are off to attend the UNFCCC meeting in Bonn from 30th May to 16th June. They will also be joined by Ms Diane McFadzien from SPREP and Ms Linda Siegele as Technical Advisors to the delegation.

Ms Ana Tiraa, Director of Climate Change Cook Islands, Dr Teina Rongo, Climate Change Advisor from the Office of the Prime Minister, Ms Dorothy Solomon and Ms Rangi Mitaera from Ministry of Marine Resources will be attending the SPC EU GCCA; PSIS meeting in Niue from the 23rd – 27th June.

Ms Maria Tuoro from CPPO, is off to the 'Strategy on Climate & Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific' (SRDP) meeting in Fiji from Monday 2nd – 4th June and will be joined by Mr William Tuivaga from Climate Change Cook Islands.

MORE PHOTOS FROM RAUTI PARA PROJECT!



Participants at the Rarotonga Rauti Para tablet training which was held at Te Atukura grounds 28th April – 2nd May 2014



Ms Teresa Arneric and Ms Tamara Schudosky, at the Rarotonga tablet training workshop, 28 April – 2nd May 2014

Till next time...Kia Manuia!