



Navigating Pacific Futures: Intersecting Traditional Knowledge with Contemporary Challenges for Sustainable Development

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Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, and distinguished guests,

I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples. I pay my deepest respects to their Elders — past, present, and emerging — whose enduring connection to this land serves as a powerful reminder of the deep spiritual, cultural, and historical ties that bind us to the places we call home. Their wisdom and resilience continue to inspire and guide us as we walk together on this journey of learning and understanding.

It is a profound honour to stand before you today at The Australian National University (ANU), a distinguished institution and a gathering place for minds dedicated to the study and advancement of the Pacific region. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the organisers of this annual lecture of the ANU Pacific Institute, whose dedication to fostering dialogue and mutual understanding between our islands and the wider world has brought us together on this significant occasion.

Today, I come before you not only as the Vice-Chancellor of the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) but as a fellow Pacific Islander. My journey across these lands and seas has been shaped by a deep respect for the wisdom of our ancestors and a resolute belief in the potential of our shared future. The Pacific Islands, with their vast oceans and rich cultural heritage, are more than just places on a map — they are living, breathing embodiments of our collective identity, resilience, and hope.

My own path has been deeply influenced by personal experiences. My father passed away when I was young, leaving me to navigate the challenges of life early on. It was a struggle, but it also became an opportunity to learn invaluable lessons of survival and resilience. I had the privilege of learning from the feet

and hands of my great-grandmother, who was born before the arrival of Christian missionaries, and from my grandparents, who lived and grew up with former head-hunters. They were steeped in culture, deeply connected to the land and sea, and they imparted to me the knowledge and values that have guided me throughout my life. Their teachings, rooted in the traditions and wisdom of our people, have shaped my understanding of the world and continue to inspire my work today.

Overview of the topic

Today, I invite you to embark on a journey across the vast and vibrant seascape of the Pacific, where ancient traditions meet the pressing challenges of our modern age. The theme I bring before you is *'Navigating Pacific Futures: Intersecting Traditional Knowledge with Contemporary Challenges for Sustainable Development'*. This theme is not merely a topic of discussion, but a call to action — a recognition that the wisdom of our ancestors holds the key to unlocking a future that is both resilient and sustainable.



Source: ANU.

Our journey will traverse several key areas: traditional knowledge and governance, education and capacity-building, environmental stewardship, economic development and innovation, regional cooperation, and the Centre for Islands Futures at SINU. Each of these areas is a vital thread in the tapestry of our shared Pacific future.

Traditional knowledge and governance

As we navigate through the vast archipelago of the Pacific, we find ourselves anchored in a realm where the past and present are woven together by the enduring thread of traditional governance. In the Pacific Islands, traditional governance is not merely a relic of a bygone era; it is the living heart of our communities, a guiding star by which we chart our course through the complexities of modern life.

Traditional governance structures in the Pacific are steeped in the wisdom of our ancestors, who understood that leadership is not just about power, but about responsibility — to the land, to the sea, and to the people. These structures are built on principles of respect, reciprocity, and communal decision-making. They are the vessels that have carried our societies through centuries of change, ensuring the preservation of our cultural identity, the equitable distribution of resources, and the maintenance of social harmony.

In today's world, where the forces of globalisation and development press ever closer upon our shores, the importance of these traditional governance systems has only grown. They offer us a compass — a set of values and practices that can guide us as we navigate the challenges of sustainable development. Across the Pacific, we are witnessing innovative efforts to integrate traditional governance with modern legal and political frameworks, ensuring that our cultural heritage remains a living, guiding force.

Yet, as we sail deeper into these waters, we encounter challenges. Legal pluralism, where multiple legal systems coexist, can lead to conflicts and contradictions. The challenge lies in ensuring these systems operate in harmony, complementing each other to serve the best interests of our communities. Another challenge is cultural preservation amidst rapid change, as modernisation threatens to overshadow the traditions that have sustained us for generations.

However, within these challenges lie great opportunities. By creating hybrid governance models that draw on the strengths of both traditional and modern systems, we can build a governance framework that is not only culturally relevant but also adaptive to the changing needs of our people. The integration of traditional knowledge into environmental governance offers a powerful tool for sustainability, providing valuable insights into maintaining ecological balance. By fostering dialogue between traditional leaders and state authorities, we can create a legal landscape that is coherent, fair, and reflective of our diverse cultural contexts.

Education and capacity-building — SINU's Living Labs and the Institute for Islands Futures

In the heart of the Solomon Islands, where lush landscapes meet the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, an innovative approach to education is taking root — place-based learning. At the Solomon Islands National University, education is seen not merely as the transmission of knowledge but as the embedding of that knowledge within the soil, culture, and experiences of our people. This approach transforms the environment, culture, and history of our islands into living classrooms, where students engage with their surroundings in meaningful and transformative ways.

This philosophy, which mirrors the dynamism and diversity of the Pacific itself, draws from the wisdom of our ancestors, who learned from the land and sea, and integrates these teachings with modern educational practices. The result is a curriculum that is both relevant and enriching, where students are active participants in solving real-world problems and contributing to their communities.

Central to this approach is the integration of indigenous knowledge into the educational curriculum. This knowledge, passed down through generations, encompasses everything from traditional agricultural practices to cultural rituals that bind our communities. By embedding this wisdom into our curriculum, we not only preserve our cultural heritage but also empower the next generation of Pacific Islanders with the tools they need to navigate future challenges.

However, while we anchor our education in tradition, we must also align with global standards to meet the demands of a connected and competitive world. Balancing local relevance with international recognition is a delicate act — one that requires maintaining our cultural identity while ensuring our graduates are equipped to thrive globally. At SINU, we are acutely aware of these challenges. The world is rapidly changing, and the demands on our graduates are evolving with it. International standards provide a benchmark to ensure our students receive a quality education that is respected worldwide, yet achieving this without diluting the local significance of our curriculum or losing the unique perspectives that make Pacific education distinct remains a key challenge.

To address this, SINU is actively pursuing global accreditation and recognition. This effort is not just about meeting external standards; it is about creating a curriculum that reflects the best of both worlds — the depth and richness of Pacific knowledge and the rigour of global education. We are forging partnerships with international institutions, engaging in rigorous self-assessment, and continuously refining our programs to ensure they meet the highest standards of excellence.

Within SINU's vibrant campus lies the Centre for Islands Futures, established out of a deep understanding that the Pacific, with its unique vulnerabilities and extraordinary potential, requires innovative solutions grounded in our rich cultural

heritage. The centre envisions a Pacific where traditional knowledge and modern science work in harmony, where sustainable development is a lived reality, and where our islands thrive amid global challenges. The centre's mission is to address critical issues facing Pacific Island communities by fostering research, innovation, and collaboration tailored to our unique context.

The centre's success depends on collaboration and support from partners both within and beyond the Pacific. In this spirit, I extend a warm invitation to the ANU community and other institutions around the world to join us in this vital work. The challenges facing the Pacific are not just regional issues; they are global challenges that require global solutions. By partnering with the Centre for Islands Futures, you can contribute to groundbreaking research and innovative projects with the potential to transform not only the Pacific but also other regions facing similar challenges. Together, we can harness the collective wisdom, knowledge, and resources of our institutions to create a sustainable, prosperous future for the Pacific, deeply rooted in the values that have sustained our communities for generations.

At SINU, we recognise the immense value of traditional knowledge and are dedicated to integrating it with contemporary scientific research. One of our key initiatives is the establishment of Living Labs in various communities across the Solomon Islands. These Living Labs serve as real-world environments where students, researchers, and community members collaborate to test and implement sustainable practices. They focus on place-based learning, where participants engage directly with their environment to understand and address local challenges. By integrating indigenous knowledge with modern science, we aim to develop innovative solutions that are culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.

These Living Labs are not only educational hubs but also centres for community engagement, where local wisdom is valued, and new ideas are tested in real-world settings. Through these collaborative efforts, we aim to empower communities, foster resilience, and promote sustainable development across the Solomon Islands. SINU has partnered with the Indigenous Knowledge Institute (IKI) to establish the Centre for Islands Futures. This collaboration exemplifies our commitment to blending traditional knowledge with contemporary scientific approaches, strengthened by collaborations with Nia Tero and Arizona State University, which bring a wealth of expertise and resources to support our initiatives.

The scope of our agreement with IKI encompasses a wide range of projects, programs, and initiatives that align with the educational and national development goals of both SINU and IKI. These include securing funding for research through joint grant proposals, organising annual master classes that attract global fee-paying students, developing and delivering advanced educational content, exploring commercial opportunities to support SINU's sustainable

operations, and establishing the Centre for Islands Futures as a hub for research, education, and community engagement.

In furtherance of our educational goals, we are developing a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) program comprising four courses over one year. This program is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Solomon Islands' cultural and environmental heritage, alongside advanced skills in indigenous methodologies and applied education. The courses will cover epistemological diversity, indigenous epistemology, the history of Solomon Islands, customary land and political economy, conservation practices, and the drivers of climate change.

The Centre for Islands Futures will serve as a model of interdisciplinary research and education, championing the integration of traditional knowledge into modern academic frameworks. Through our innovative Postgraduate Diploma program and community-focused initiatives, we are committed to fostering a resilient and sustainable future for Solomon Islands and the broader Pacific region. By valuing and leveraging our cultural heritage, we can lead the way in climate resilience and sustainable development.

In July 2023, we had the distinct honour of hosting Laurene Powell Jobs, the widow of Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Inc. and the visionary behind the iPhone. Her visit highlighted the rich cultural and environmental heritage of Solomon Islands and underscored the importance of preserving traditional knowledge. During her visit, she explored the Baru Conservation Area in the mountains of East Kwaio, where the people continue to wear traditional garments known as 'kabilato'. She also swam in the pristine waters of Waihau River, located within the Waihau Conservation Area in West Are Are, Malaita. Furthermore, she visited the Kolobangara Biodiversity Area in the Western Solomons and Tetepare, the largest uninhabited island in the Pacific.

In Wahau, Malaita Province, we aim to explore indigenous guardianship. In Takataka, the focus will be on cultural preservation, while Ferafolia will delve into the new economy. In Gounafiu and Busurata, the emphasis will be on indigenous agriculture. Malango, Paraniju, and Soli will concentrate on returning to place, and Olotsara, Komarindi, and Nini will examine indigenous tourism. Tetepare and Rendova will highlight conservation seascapes and the story of the Ngali nut. Kulu and Rannoga will emphasise indigenous languages, while Imbu Rano, Kolo, and Poitete will focus on the forest and life. Taumako and Heheilavoi will celebrate oceanic voyaging, Laulasi and Niu Leni will explore island engineering, Ontong Java and Pelau will address atoll futures, and Makira and Banana Island will showcase indigenous food.

Each of these locations will offer unique insights and learning opportunities, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the diverse ways in which traditional knowledge and practices can inform and enhance modern approaches to sustainability and resilience. Through these Living Labs, we can foster a

greater appreciation for the rich cultural heritage of the Solomon Islands and its invaluable contributions to global knowledge.

These Living Labs serve as dynamic incubators for place-based learning, where students and researchers engage directly with their environment and the custodians of traditional wisdom. By immersing themselves in the daily lives and practices of these communities, participants gain a profound understanding of sustainable living and environmental stewardship. This hands-on experience fosters a deep respect for traditional practices and the resilience they offer in the face of modern challenges.

Each location within the Living Labs initiative offers unique insights and learning opportunities, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of how traditional knowledge and practices can inform and enhance modern approaches to sustainability and resilience. This initiative aligns with our broader educational goals at SINU, where we strive to integrate indigenous knowledge with contemporary scientific research, bridging these two worlds to develop innovative and culturally appropriate solutions to the pressing issues posed by climate change.

Laurene Powell Jobs' visit not only celebrated the cultural richness of the Solomon Islands but also reinforced the importance of preserving and leveraging traditional knowledge as a key component of sustainable development. Her engagement with the Living Labs initiative exemplifies the potential for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing the complex challenges of our time.

The concept of the Centre for Islands Futures and the Living Labs aligns with the strategic thinking behind our draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Pacific Climate Change Centre, hosted by SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme). This collaboration underscores our commitment to integrating traditional knowledge and practices into our educational frameworks, particularly in the context of climate change adaptation and mitigation. The planned project titled 'Living Labs: Integrating Traditional Knowledge in Graduate Programmes for Climate Resilience' aims to blend traditional wisdom with academic research, establishing SINU as a leader in interdisciplinary research and graduate education. The collaboration focuses on developing graduate programs that incorporate traditional knowledge and are based in rural communities, transforming these communities into immersive 'Living Labs' for education and research.

Key objectives include fostering academic inquiry rooted in traditional knowledge, developing new graduate courses, engaging rural communities as educational partners, and ensuring these courses meet accreditation standards from SITESA (Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority), Australia, and the United Kingdom. The methodology will employ multi-modal research, incorporating cross disciplinary studies and fieldwork within these Living Labs. Research domains will encompass traditional agricultural systems,

coastal ecosystem management, and sustainable fisheries. The collaborative framework will emphasise academic partnerships, community engagement, policy advocacy, and securing funding to support these initiatives. We are progressing and eagerly anticipate working with the Pacific Climate Change Centre (SPREP) to implement the Living Labs concept.

Climate change and environmental stewardship

As the sun rises over the vast Pacific Ocean, it casts a golden light on a region that is as breathtakingly beautiful as it is uniquely vulnerable. The Pacific Islands, with their azure waters and verdant landscapes, are at the forefront of the global climate crisis — a frontline where the impacts of climate change are not a distant threat but a present reality. Here, where the land meets the sea, the challenges of rising sea levels, intensifying storms, and shifting weather patterns are felt with an immediacy that few other regions experience.

The Pacific Islands are, in many ways, the canaries in the coal mine of climate change. Our nations, dispersed across the largest ocean on the planet, face existential threats from the very elements that have sustained us for millennia. The rising seas encroach upon our shores, threatening to swallow the land that holds our homes, our histories, and our identities. The warming oceans disrupt the delicate balance of our marine ecosystems, upon which so many of our communities depend for their livelihoods. The intensifying storms and changing rainfall patterns challenge our ability to grow food, access clean water, and protect our people.

Yet, in the face of these daunting challenges, the Pacific Islands have not been passive victims. Our ancestors, who navigated these vast oceans with only the stars as their guide, have passed down a legacy of resilience, adaptation, and deep environmental stewardship. This legacy is now being called upon as we confront the climate crisis, blending the wisdom of traditional practices with the insights of modern science to forge a path towards survival and sustainability.

Across the Pacific, we see traditional practices being revitalised and adapted to meet the demands of a changing climate. In some communities, ancient techniques for building resilient coastal infrastructure — using natural materials and knowledge of tidal patterns — are being reintroduced and combined with modern engineering to protect against sea-level rise. In agriculture, traditional knowledge of crop rotation, intercropping, and water conservation is being integrated with scientific research to develop climate-resilient farming practices that can withstand the unpredictable weather patterns brought on by climate change.

But it is not only tradition that guides us. Modern science plays an equally critical role in our climate adaptation efforts. In Solomon Islands, for example, community-based monitoring programs, supported by cutting-edge technology, are being used to track changes in marine and terrestrial ecosystems,

providing valuable data that informs local conservation efforts. Renewable energy initiatives, such as solar power projects, are being implemented to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mitigate the impact of climate change on our islands.

In these ways, the Pacific Islands are not just vulnerable; they are also innovative, drawing on a rich tapestry of knowledge that spans generations to address the most pressing environmental challenges of our time.

Economic development and innovation

As we shift our focus from the environment to the economy, we find ourselves confronted with another set of challenges — those of economic development in a region marked by geographic isolation, limited resources, and small, dispersed populations. The Pacific Islands, while rich in culture and natural beauty, face significant hurdles in building economies that are robust, diversified, and capable of providing for the needs of their people.

Geographic isolation presents one of the most formidable barriers to economic development in the Pacific. The vast distances that separate our islands from global markets increase the cost of trade, limit access to essential goods and services, and hinder the flow of information and technology. This isolation is compounded by limited natural resources, which restrict the capacity for large-scale industrial development and make our economies heavily reliant on a narrow range of sectors, such as fisheries, agriculture, and tourism. However, these vital sectors are increasingly under threat from the expanding extractive industries that often operate with little regard for environmental sustainability. The unchecked activities of mining and logging have the potential to deplete our resources, disrupt fragile ecosystems, and jeopardise the livelihoods that depend on the very land and sea that sustain us. This tension between short-term economic gains and long-term environmental stewardship presents a critical challenge for the Pacific as we strive to protect our natural heritage while pursuing sustainable development.

Yet, within these challenges lie opportunities for innovation. The Pacific Islands have long been resourceful, finding ways to turn limitations into strengths. In recent years, we have seen a growing emphasis on developing innovative approaches to economic development that are tailored to the unique circumstances of our region.

In the fisheries sector, for example, Pacific Island nations are leading the way in sustainable management practices, using cutting-edge technology to monitor fish stocks, enforce regulations, and ensure the long-term viability of this critical industry. Agriculture is another area where innovation is taking root, with efforts to develop climate-resilient crops, improve food security, and promote organic farming practices that are both environmentally sustainable and economically viable.

Technology also holds great promise for the future of Pacific economies. The advent of digital platforms

and mobile technology is opening up new possibilities for entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and access to global markets. E-commerce, digital banking, and mobile applications are beginning to bridge the gap between remote communities and the wider world, providing new opportunities for economic growth and development.

Regional cooperation and international engagement

In the vast expanse of the Pacific, where the ocean binds us more than it separates us, regional cooperation is not just a strategy — it is a lifeline. The Pacific Islands, though diverse in culture, language, and history, share common challenges that transcend borders. From the relentless threat of climate change to the pressing need for sustainable economic development, the issues we face are too great for any one nation to tackle alone. In this context, regional collaboration becomes not just important, but essential — a powerful force that amplifies our collective voice and strengthens our ability to shape our own destiny.

When Pacific Island nations come together, we tap into a deep well of shared wisdom and experience. We draw strength from our common heritage, and we find solidarity in our shared aspirations. Regional collaboration allows us to pool our resources, coordinate our efforts, and stand united in the face of global challenges. It empowers us to speak with one voice on the international stage, advocating for the unique needs and perspectives of our region.

The significance of this collaboration cannot be overstated. Whether it is through regional organisations like the Pacific Islands Forum or through bilateral agreements and partnerships, our ability to work together is key to addressing the myriad challenges we face. From managing our shared ocean resources to negotiating climate action commitments, regional cooperation is the cornerstone of our resilience and our future prosperity.

Academic institutions, such as The Australian National University and the Solomon Islands National University, play a pivotal role in fostering this collaboration. These institutions are not just centres of learning; they are bridges between nations, where knowledge is shared, ideas are exchanged, and solutions are developed. Through research, policy development, and capacity-building, ANU and SINU are helping to create the intellectual and institutional frameworks that support regional cooperation.

But as we strengthen our regional ties, we must also be mindful of the broader global shifts that are reshaping the political and economic landscape in which we operate. The world is in a state of flux, with power dynamics shifting, economic paradigms evolving, and new challenges emerging at an unprecedented pace. These global changes have profound implications for the Pacific region, impacting everything from trade and security to environmental sustainability and cultural preservation.

Pacific Island nations must be proactive in their responses to these global shifts. We cannot afford to

be passive recipients of change; we must be active participants in shaping it. This means building strategic alliances that align with our long-term interests, ensuring that our voices are heard in international forums, and engaging with the global community on our own terms.

Conclusion

As we bring this journey to a close, let us reflect on the rich tapestry of themes that have woven together the narrative of our shared Pacific future. We began by exploring the profound role of traditional knowledge and governance, recognising that the wisdom of our ancestors continues to guide us as we navigate the complexities of modernity. This wisdom is not a relic of the past but a living, breathing force that informs our decisions and shapes our communities.

We then delved into the transformative power of education and capacity building, particularly through place-based learning at the Solomon Islands National University, where the very landscapes and seascapes of our islands serve as both classroom and teacher. This approach is not simply about imparting knowledge; it is about embedding that knowledge within the cultural, environmental, and historical contexts that define us as Pacific Islanders. By embracing this philosophy, SINU ensures that education is dynamic, relevant, and deeply rooted in the lived experiences of our people.

Central to this educational model is the integration of indigenous knowledge into the curriculum. This knowledge, passed down through generations, encompasses traditional agricultural practices, ecological stewardship, and cultural rituals that have sustained our communities for centuries. By incorporating these teachings into modern academic frameworks, we are not only preserving our cultural heritage but also empowering our students with a holistic understanding of their environment — one that is critical for navigating the complex challenges of the future.

However, our commitment to tradition does not preclude us from embracing global standards. We recognise the need to prepare our graduates to thrive in a connected and competitive world. This requires a delicate balance — one that honours our unique cultural perspectives while also aligning with international benchmarks for academic excellence. At SINU, we are actively pursuing global accreditation and recognition, ensuring that our students receive an education that is both locally relevant and globally respected. This effort involves forging partnerships with international institutions, engaging in rigorous self-assessment, and continuously refining our programs to meet the highest standards of excellence.

Through initiatives like the Centre for Islands Futures and the establishment of Living Labs in various communities, we are also expanding the scope of education beyond traditional classroom settings. These Living Labs are real-world environments where students, researchers, and community members collaborate to test and implement sustainable

practices. They are spaces where indigenous knowledge meets modern science, and where new ideas are nurtured through direct engagement with the environment. This innovative approach not only enhances the learning experience but also fosters a deeper connection between our students and their communities, empowering them to become active participants in the sustainable development of our region.

In this way, education and capacity-building at SINU are not just about academic achievement; they are about creating a generation of leaders who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and cultural awareness needed to drive the Pacific Islands towards a future that is both resilient and sustainable.

Our journey led us to the pressing issue of climate change and environmental stewardship, where the Pacific Islands, though vulnerable, are also exemplars of resilience and innovation. Through the blending of traditional practices and modern science, we are finding ways to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of a changing climate, ensuring that our islands continue to flourish for generations to come.

We also examined the challenges and innovations in economic development, recognising the unique obstacles our region faces but also the boundless opportunities for growth and progress. The Centre for Islands Futures stands at the forefront of these efforts, driving research and initiatives that are paving the way for sustainable economic growth across the Pacific.

Our discussion of regional cooperation and international engagement underscored the importance of unity and collaboration in addressing the shared challenges of our region. By working together and engaging strategically with the global community, Pacific Island nations can amplify their voices and influence the global agenda.

But these reflections are not just for contemplation; they are a call to action. The challenges and opportunities facing the Pacific are too significant for any one institution or nation to address alone. It is imperative that we continue to foster dialogue, collaboration, and partnership between Pacific Island nations and academic institutions like ANU. Together, we can share knowledge, pool resources, and develop solutions that are both innovative and deeply rooted in our cultural heritage.

We need more science led by and with indigenous people and scholars — research that respects and integrates the knowledge systems that have sustained our communities for generations. The intersection of traditional knowledge and modern scientific inquiry offers a powerful path forward in our search for sustainable and climate-resilient futures. We must build and strengthen international networks of scholars, indigenous communities, and institutions committed to working towards these goals. This is a collective endeavour that requires closer collaboration, a shared commitment to ethical research practices, and a deep respect for the voices and insights of those who have lived in harmony with these lands and seas for centuries.

I call upon academics, researchers, and institutions to join us in this journey. Let us work together to create a body of knowledge that not only addresses the pressing challenges of our time but does so in a way that honours our cultural heritage and empowers the next generation of Pacific Islanders to lead with wisdom and resilience. The future of our islands depends on the strength of our collective efforts, and the time to act is now.

I urge you all to remain engaged in this vital work, to seek out new opportunities for collaboration, and to support the initiatives that are making a difference in the Pacific. The future of our islands depends on the strength of our collective efforts, and the time to act is now.

As I stand before you today, I am filled with optimism for the future of the Pacific Islands. This optimism is not born of naivety, but of a deep belief in the resilience, creativity, and indomitable spirit of our people. Our rich cultural heritage, combined with our capacity for innovation, positions us not just to survive the challenges of the future, but to thrive in the face of them.

The Pacific Islands are more than just places on a map — they are communities of people bound together by a shared history and a common destiny. And as we move forward, I am confident that we will continue to build a future that is sustainable, prosperous, and reflective of the values that have guided us for generations.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to share these insights with you today. It has been an honour to engage with you on these matters of great importance to our region. Together, let us continue to chart a course towards a brighter future for the Pacific Islands, a future that honours our past and embraces the endless possibilities of tomorrow.



Source: ANU.

Author notes

Professor Transform Aqorau is the Vice-Chancellor of the Solomon Islands National University. He is an accomplished academic and administrator, with over 30 years of experience in a variety of roles at key regional institutions (the Pacific Islands Forum, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and Parties to the Nauru Agreement).

For 24 years, Professor Aqorau served as a legal counsel, eventually rising to the positions of director and chief executive officer. During this time, he gained extensive experience dealing with development issues, and became well-versed in the legal and policy frameworks. As an eminent scholar, Professor Dr Aqorau has published numerous peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters in a range of disciplines, with a particular focus on legal studies.



Source: ANU.

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