



Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific

November 2015

Manager's Message

I'm writing this as the impacts of the 2015 El Niño become more severe across the Asia-Pacific region and our thoughts are with those communities who are having to deal with some very difficult situations. This is also a time when we are reminded of our heightened responsibilities in providing climate information that assists governments, industries and communities with their policies and decision-making.

For COSPPac itself, we are in full swing delivering activities and working towards transition.

The October 2015 Steering Committee and Planning Meeting took place in Fiji and it was great to see everyone there. Some great outcomes came out of the meeting, including the finalisation of the 2015-16 Work Plan and the progress made towards finalising the Transition Plan.

November has been a busy month with delivery of four key activities in the region. The first of the Oceans and Tides Sub-Regional workshops was held in the Solomon Islands. Niue's new tide gauge was launched and the Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council Annual Meeting in Fiji. The celebration of the successful completion of the Climate Malaria Application Project also took place in the Solomon Islands. A snap shot of these activities will be included in the next edition of our newsletter.

I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks to Malcom Foo, who will be leaving COSPPac Program in the coming weeks to work in a different area of the Bureau of Meteorology. Malcolm has been instrumental in managing the Pacific Sea Level Monitoring (PSLM) Program and we are all very sad to see him leave. Stamy Criticos, whom many of you will know, has taken on the role of leading the PSLM and I'm sure will do a fantastic job as he uses his years of experience working in the Pacific.

Until then,

Janita Pahalad



COSPPac Steering Committee at the October Meeting.

Contact

Bureau of Meteorology
GPO Box 1289 Melbourne VIC 3001
700 Collins Street, Docklands VIC 3008
T: +61 03 9669 4158
E: COSPPac_CDC_Unit@bom.gov.au
W: www.bom.gov.au





Kiribati Meteorological Service staff and stakeholders at the 1st National Climate Outlook Forum.

Kiribati Met develops new climate and drought products for stakeholders

By Mauna Eria (Kiribati Meteorological Service)

At the Kiribati Meteorological Service, we are continuing to meet the needs of our stakeholders through the development of two new products, the Drought Update and Ocean Climate Outlook.

We began developing these products in response to stakeholder's requests for more climate and drought information to support their decision making.

I recently visited Melbourne for a COSPPac Climate, Oceans and Communication Mentoring and Attachment Program, and the skills and knowledge I learned contributed to the development of these products. I became aware of the information available and learned how to interpret, use and communicate this information to stakeholders. One particularly valuable concept and skill I have learned is the importance of the process of feedback and how valuable this interaction and new found knowledge can be for developing services and associated products for stakeholders.

At the services and associated National Climate Outlook Forum in Tarawa, Kiribati, we shared our initial draft products with stakeholders, with the purpose of obtaining their feedback. We gratefully received some really valuable feedback and will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure we meet their needs.

Showcasing Pacific Climate Services

By Salesa Nihmei (SPREP)

Capturing, sharing, discussing and writing were just some of the key activities that participants worked through at the recent Climate Services Writeshop in Nadi, Fiji.

Fourteen participants from National Meteorological Services around the region spent five days from 7 - 11 September, working alongside officers from SPREP, WMO, the Finnish Meteorology Institute, SPC and COSPPac, sharing stories and lessons learned about best practices for delivering climate services in their countries.

Through a series of interactive activities, participants worked with their mentors to develop case studies on the application of climate services into sectors such as disaster risk reduction, health and agriculture. The case studies will go through an editing process before being published into a compendium and available as a valuable sharing and learning resource in 2016.



Writeshop participants and mentors.



Pastor Morris Hemu Tafatu, a farmer and elder in Niue.

Traditional Knowledge in Niue

By Rossy Mitiepo (Niue Meteorological Service)

The benefits of our partnership with COSPPac to capture traditional knowledge in Niue has far exceeded our expectations. It is the sharing of this knowledge between elders and future generations that is the shining light.

Ancestors relied a lot on traditional knowledge for weather and climate forecasting in the past. In order to host a ceremonial feast one must plan the seasons to plant crops for a better harvest and abundance. Nowadays, youth are more interested with the latest technologies, their lifestyle is becoming more modernised and gathering food is within reach at a grocery store.

Through the traditional knowledge project, elders can document their knowledge relating to weather and climate. An elder, Mr Morris Hemu Tafatu, explains, "Yams are normally planted from September to October and once it starts to grow, they are then supported by dry vines so they can grow upwards to the sky, which is a sign of vibrancy and abundance in the land. If the vines do not cling onto the supporting pole, it is an indication of strong winds or cyclone soaring over the land".

The traditional knowledge project has supported us in sharing our cultural values with the future generation. Traditional knowledge is an important asset to Niue. One that we will all continue to cherish and share amongst our communities.



Daphne Nalawas, Mauna Eria and Kisoel Posanau at the Bureau of Meteorology in Melbourne.

Confidence boost in communication

By Daphne Nalawas (Vanuatu Meteorological and Geo-Hazards Department)

On reflection, an increase in confidence has been the big winner for me from participating in COSPPac's recent Climate, Oceans and Communication Mentoring and Attachment Program in Melbourne.

The training focussed on developing skills and sharing knowledge to better understand, apply and communicate climate and oceans information to stakeholders. Working alongside Kisoel Posanau (PNG Weather Service) and Mauna Eria (Kiribati Meteorological Service), we learned from each other's experience, as we were mentored by our COSPPac colleagues over a very productive two weeks in August.

Since completing the training, I now have more confidence in preparing Seasonal Climate Outlooks. I am also feeling more confident in communicating climate information to stakeholders. I have utilized some of the skills and tips I learned on how to present messages on El Niño to the outer island communities and felt very confident in doing so.





Stakeholders and PNG National Weather Service staff playing Paying for Predictions at the 2nd National Climate Outlook Forum.

Hands on games for climate education in PNG

By Kisolet Posanau (Papua New Guinea National Weather Service)

“Learning by doing is the way to go!” That is my new motto as I continue to learn about and use different techniques to communicate important climate information to stakeholders. Paying for Predictions - Drought Version is an interactive game COSPPac have adapted from the very popular Red Cross Red Crescent version. The drought version aims to highlight the importance of climate information for climate based disaster risk reduction during drought.

I have played this game a number of times and since facilitated a number of sessions with stakeholders in PNG. The most recent session my colleague Kila Kila and I facilitated was at the 2nd National Climate Outlook Forum in Port Moresby in September 2015.

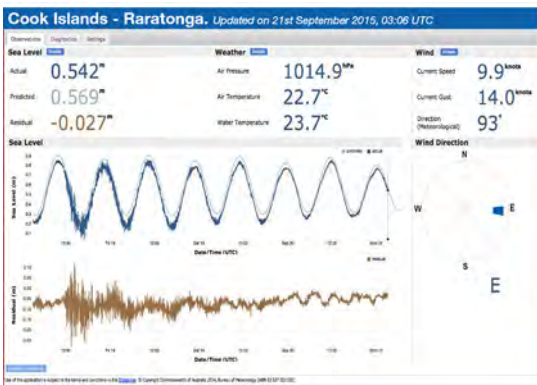
The 18 stakeholders really enjoyed the game and the participatory nature of this style of learning. Significant discussion was held at the conclusion of the game, highlighting the importance of having reliable information and forecasts for disaster risk reduction. I’m really looking forward to continuing to use participatory techniques and games to communicate climate information in the future.

Real Time Data Display in Action

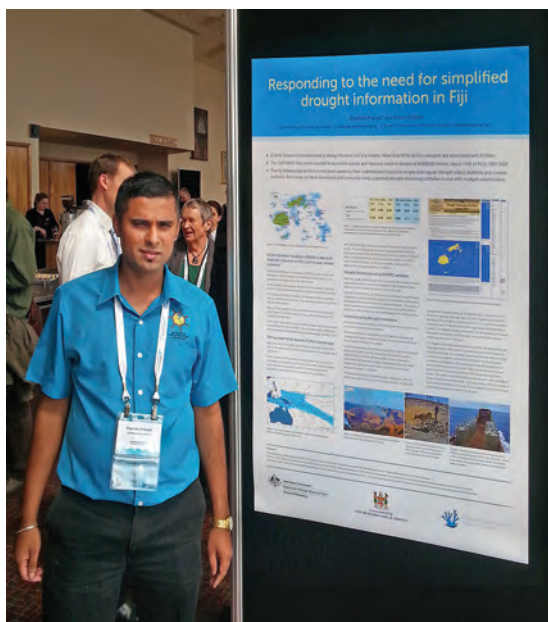
We’ve seen some interesting outputs from the Real Time Data Display (RTDD) during the tsunami that followed the 8.3 magnitude Chilean earthquake on the 16th of September at 22:54 GMT.

Locally, tsunami waves of up to 4.5 metres were generated, and in the hours afterward as the tsunami travelled westward, its signature could be seen across the RTDD throughout the Pacific region. The RTDD distinctly captured the change in sea level at a number of tide gauges, including the Cook Islands, Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu.

For example, in the Cook Islands, the tsunami showed up on the RTDD approximately 13 hours after the initial quake, and at its peak, it added around 15 to 20 cm to water heights, although thankfully at low tide. Then in Tonga, the RTDD showed the tsunami adding 8 cm to water levels about 14 hours after the initial quake. Thankfully the increase in sea levels did not result in any reports of significant impacts on the region.



Real Time Data Display for the Cook Islands on 21 September 2015.



Bipendra presenting his poster on drought information in Fiji at the conference.

Presenting at Greenhouse 2015

By Bipendra Prakash (Fiji Meteorological Service)

It was a great experience attending and participating in the Greenhouse Conference 2015. I really enjoyed the event with so many interesting presentations and discussions on various climate change issues. My poster on “responding to the need for simplified drought information in Fiji” was well received.

The highlight of my trip was the opportunity to present during a panel discussion on the climate change projections and their impact assessments. At first it was a bit nerve racking sitting next to three experienced speakers, however, my presentation went well and it received a lot of positive feedback. It was even more encouraging when a number of scientists came to me personally and said they really enjoyed my talk.

Thanks to COSPPac communications team, my presentation skills have improved tremendously in recent times. I would like to express my heart-felt thanks to COSPPac for making my participation in the conference possible. Thank you also to Simon McGree for all the support, encouragement and assistance during that one exciting week in Hobart, Australia.



COSPPac Climate and Communication Training in Fiji.

COSPPac annual stakeholder survey results—Thanks for your feedback!!!

Capacity development, training and communication were seen by many stakeholders to be some of the most beneficial aspects of COSPPac, as reflected in the results from the COSPPac 3rd annual online stakeholder survey.

The purpose of the stakeholder survey was to better understand how stakeholders feel about our products, training and support.

Another key highlight from the survey indicated that stakeholders also rated COSPPac products very highly – particularly SCOPIC which is considered very important for seasonal forecasting – and for some, it is the only statistical rainfall model specifically for the Pacific that personnel have been trained in.

A special mini-survey on tides and oceans was also conducted with positive results. The survey found that the tide calendars are the most popular COSPPac sea level product (77% Very Useful), followed by the online real time data display (60% Very Useful).

We really value receiving feedback from our stakeholders, so please continue to let us know your thoughts about any aspects of the program.





Maria Ngemaes.

People profiles

Maria Ngemaes – Palau Weather Service

Dilwei or Maria as she is most often called throughout the Pacific is the Meteorologist-In-Charge of the National Weather Service in Koror, Republic of Palau. Maria oversees the entire day-to-day operation of the Palau National Weather Service. Maria loves her job and will do anything for the safety and welfare of her people.

She is a member of many committees ranging from Disaster Management to Education in Palau, as well as a member of a number of committees in the Pacific Region.

Maria loves going swimming with her son on weekends, staying home with her mom and reading Dan Brown's books. She also loves attending the hot bath ceremony for a Palauan woman's first born child.

Maria loves to laugh, enjoys good jokes and is highly motivated to make everyone she meets comfortable. Her energy is derived from seeing her two children and the people in her life accomplish their dreams.



Stamy Criticos.

Stamy Criticos – COSPPac

Stamy has worked for the Bureau for over 40 years starting as a trainee electronics technician and working as a field technician, technical instructor, maintenance support team supervisor and then as the National Maintenance Manager before retiring in 2011.

Retirement lasted for only three months as Stamy realised he missed working in the Bureau and returned as an installation officer with the Pacific Sea Level Monitoring project under COSPPac.

During that time Stamy has upgraded the sea level stations in Vanuatu, PNG, Cook Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru and Tuvalu and also progressed into the Logistics and Installation manager position.

Stamy enjoys family, music, playing guitar, restoration of vintage electronics, computer programming and football. As the new manager of the Pacific Sea Level Monitoring (PSLM) project, Stamy is really looking forward to continuing to work with stakeholders in the Pacific.



Australian Government

Tell us about your work on climate and sea-level

Down here in Melbourne, we'd love to hear about the work you are doing in the sunny islands. If you have attended a terrific climate or sea-level conference, done some interesting work with stakeholders, or even just broken a climate record recently, drop us an email to let us know about it! COSPPac_CDC_Unit@bom.gov.au.