

TALANOA TOKTOK

Official Publication of the Pacific Conference of Churches

It's a reality



Sinking feeling ... woman on Tarawa, Kiribati gets on with life as sea waters rise

Urgent need to address sea level rise

CLIMATE change action will take on a new urgency this year as communities across the region battle rising sea levels.

In Kiribati, where the highest point is a mere three metres above sea level, salt water intrusion has become more prevalent.

"Sometimes you have intrusion, and a king tide at the same time and there's water everywhere," said researcher, Reverend Dr Cliff Bird.

"But the people get on with life, some waiting for

water levels to recede by spending time on social media."

Pacific Conference of Churches General Secretary, Reverend James Bhagwan, said communities across the region battled climate change in their own way.

"Our work this year will be on research to help the most vulnerable in the region, especially keeping them safe," he said.

"It will not be easy."



Dangerous path ... the sea has claimed acres of land at Togoru in Fiji

Trouble in paradise

PACIFIC youth will attend a special school as the region claws back against climate change.

Work is underway at the Lomana Na Vulagi Farm 90 minutes from Suva, Fiji to create classrooms for a Pacific eco-school.

The current schedule should see the first Eco-School Class take place in June 2023, Students will study food security, disaster reduction, organic fertilisers and

responsible land use..

Regional students will initially attend on-line and the course syllabus is in the design process.

Lomana Na Vulagi is an off the grid farm which will provide revenue for the Pacific Conference of Churches and a learning platform for its members.

By 2024 the facility should be able to accommodate 20-30 students on site for a month-long course.

Disaster focus for workers

A RENEWED focus on Disaster Risk Reduction means a new position at the Pacific Conference of Churches.

The PCC will recruit staff to conduct DRR training workshops in Fiji as a pilot programme before creating activities in the region.

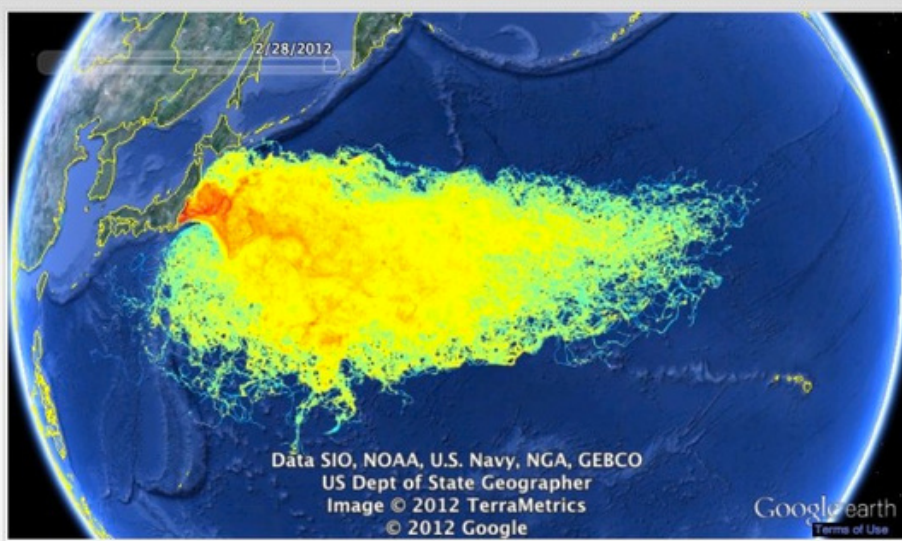
New links will be forged between churches and the State to support the DRR work.

Nauru study in place

A STUDY of issues on Nauru will determine the next phase of work on the Central pacific atoll.

A Pacific Conference of Churches team consulted the local church and community in preparation for increased activity on social justice issues including self-determination, gender-based violence and economic models.

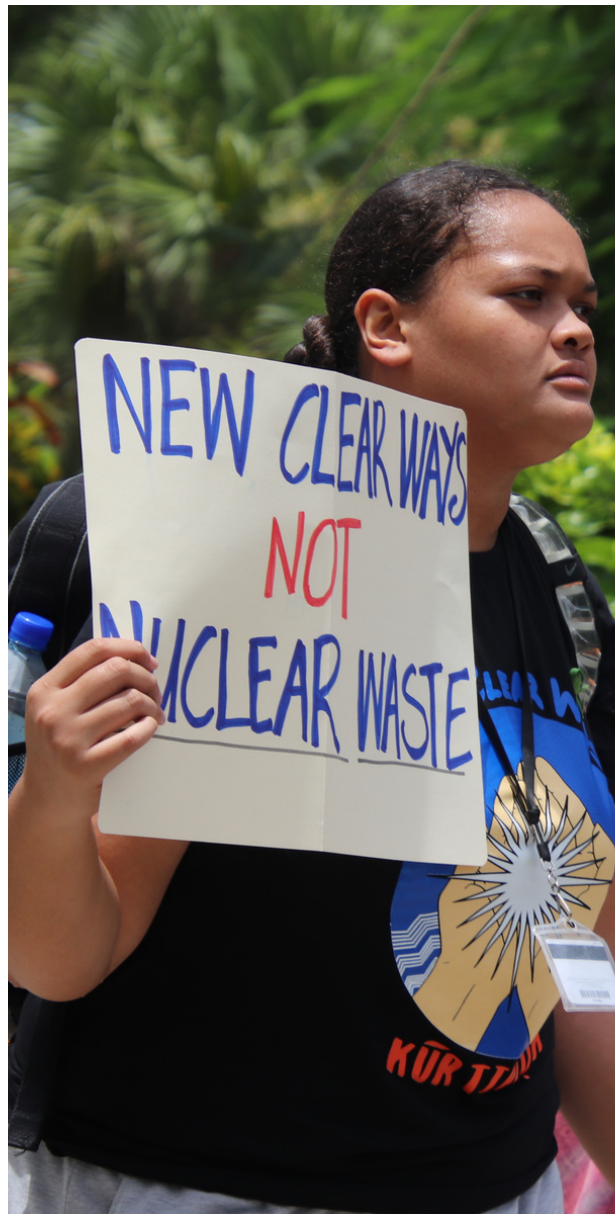
Fallout over Japan's waste



AN image showing the spread of nuclear waste in the Pacific after the Fukushima disaster

Young speak out

PACIFIC islands must find solidarity in the fight for nuclear justice. Student groups from Fiji, Kiribati, Maohi (French Polynesia) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands gathered at the University of the South Pacific to share nuclear injustice experiences supported by the Pacific Conference of Churches through the Marshall Islands Students Association.



STUDENT groups have hit out at attempts by Japan to release water from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific.

More than 1.25 million tonnes of treated waste water was to have been released in April but conservation groups have pushed back, forcing Japan to reconsider.

The International Atomic Energy Agency claims the waste is safe, supporting similar assertions by the Japanese government. Three reactors at the nuclear plant failed in 2011 in the aftermath of an earthquake and tsunami.

Contaminated water was stored in 1000 steel tanks for later treatment and distribution.

Japan says the liquid has been filtered several times through a complex process and is safe.

But experts - including the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission - believe waste water released into the ocean will severely impact fish stocks and the health of islanders. Activists have wanted a nuclear-free region since the 1970s.

Exciting times ahead

THE Pacific Conference of Churches' 2023 General Assembly will be an exciting event. Moderator, Reverend Dr Tevita Havea, said Kanaky (New Caledonia) would offer time for reflection on indigenous knowledge, contextual theology and improvement in social justice issues. "In fact, we are looking at a revival which will enrich our churches and help our people pursue the perfection of Christ," Havea said. "The local church is planning some exciting reflections based on rich



Right to assembly PCC staff visit Kanaky for preparatory talks

history of thousands of years living in the Pacific. "They are also involving women and youth in every

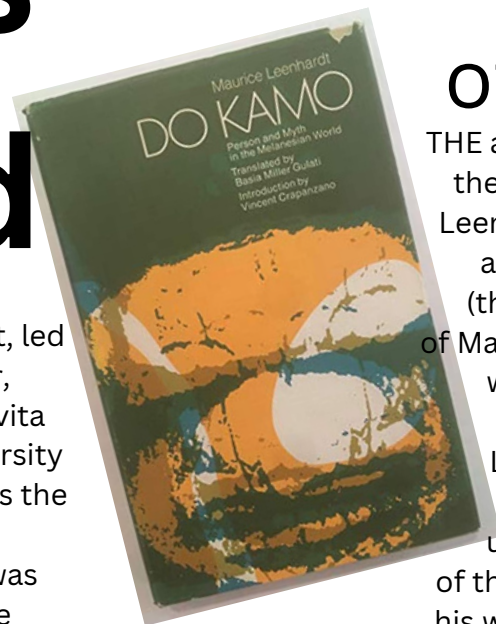
aspect of the preparations, including liturgy and music." Havea visited the Eglise Protestante

de Kanaky Nouvelle Caledonie, a PCC member church, which will host the assembly in November.

GA plans go ahead

PLANS for the 2023 PCC General Assembly are on schedule. The event will be held at the Universite de la Nouvelle Caledonie on Nouville. Delegates will be accommodated on the university campus.

PCC Management, led by Moderator, Reverend Dr Tevita Havea, met university officials to discuss the event. Havea said he was grateful to the territorial government for its support.



In search of truth

THE anthropologist and theologian, Maurice Leenhardt, first wrote about Do Kamo (the True Identity of Man) after decades of working in New Caledonia. Leenhardt had a complete understanding of the Kanak mind and his work will be part of PCC General Assembly focus.