



HEALTHCARE
WASTE

E-WASTE

ASBESTOS

ATOLL WASTE
MANAGEMENT

A great start to the new year for PacWaste

Welcome to the sixth issue of PacWaste News and our first for the new year.

The past 12 months have been a busy and productive time for the PacWaste project and this trend looks set to continue in 2017.

We are currently working closely with our partners at the European Union to progress a no-cost extension for PacWaste which, once endorsed, would take the project through to the end of 2017.

This extension, recommended by participating countries at last year's Steering Committee Meeting in Vanuatu, would ensure that our team and project partners have ample time to complete the numerous activities already commenced and deliver the best possible outcomes for the people and the environment of the Pacific.

As well as wrapping up the healthcare waste management, asbestos and atoll components of the project, the coming year will see the implementation of E-waste activities across four countries. The extension will also allow time to ensure robust linkages with the incoming J-PRISM 2 and EDF-11 regional waste management programmes, funded through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and European Union respectively.

Also in 2017, significant efforts will be directed towards progressing additional action in regional disaster waste management activities.

We look forward to continuing our work and partnerships over the coming year and we trust that you will enjoy this latest update from PacWaste. As always, your feedback and comments are warmly welcomed.

Stewart Williams
PacWaste Project Manager
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)



Mr Stewart Williams

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LATEST NEWS



In just six weeks, the ULAB buy-back scheme in Republic of the Marshall Islands saw the collection, safe packaging and export of 515 batteries. Photo: T.Hartley/SPREP

E-waste activities gain momentum

Globally, E-waste is a growing problem that has negative effects on both human health and the environment. In the Pacific, efforts to manage this hazardous waste stream are complicated by challenges such as limited access to disposal points, recycling markets and the high cost of transporting E-waste out of the region.

To address these issues and identify sustainable solutions, PacWaste is trialling a range of small-scale and locally targeted E-waste management activities.

In Vanuatu, PacWaste has forged partnerships with the Department of Environment Protection and Conservation (DEPC) and RecycleCorp Vanuatu Ltd to collect and recycle E-waste in Port Vila. The free E-waste collection service will operate on a trial basis until March 2017.

In Republic of the Marshall Islands, PacWaste has partnered with the Majuro Atoll Waste Company (MAWC) to introduce Used Lead Acid Battery (ULAB) buy-back scheme through which community members can take old batteries to a central site and be paid for them, by the weight.



Students in Majuro are using the lokwe Bag to clean up their schools. Photo: RMI EPA

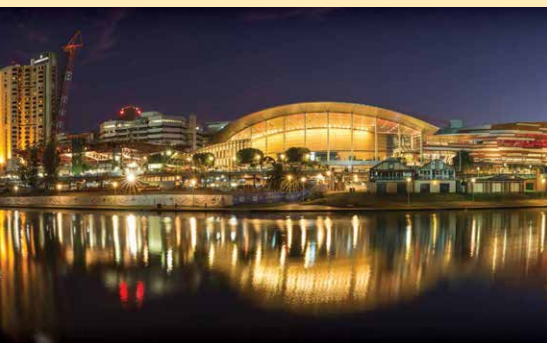
Shifting public attitudes towards waste in Majuro

The recent launch of PacWaste's lokwe Bag initiative in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands has seen numerous local partners working together to complement and cross-promote behaviour change and awareness-raising activities.

Through the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) 'Clean Schools' programme, for example, information about the lokwe Bag has been incorporated into school-based outreach activities.

In October 2016, students from Majuro Middle School used lokwe Bags to clean-up their campus. With the support of the EPA and Majuro Atoll Local Government (MalGov) the school is developing an Action Plan for improving waste management and has been provided with wire trash bins to facilitate this important task.

Also in October, around 100 volunteers mobilised through PacWaste's NGO partner Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI) to hold a lokwe Bag Community Clean-up Day during which 500 lokwe Bags full of rubbish were collected from ten different locations in Majuro.



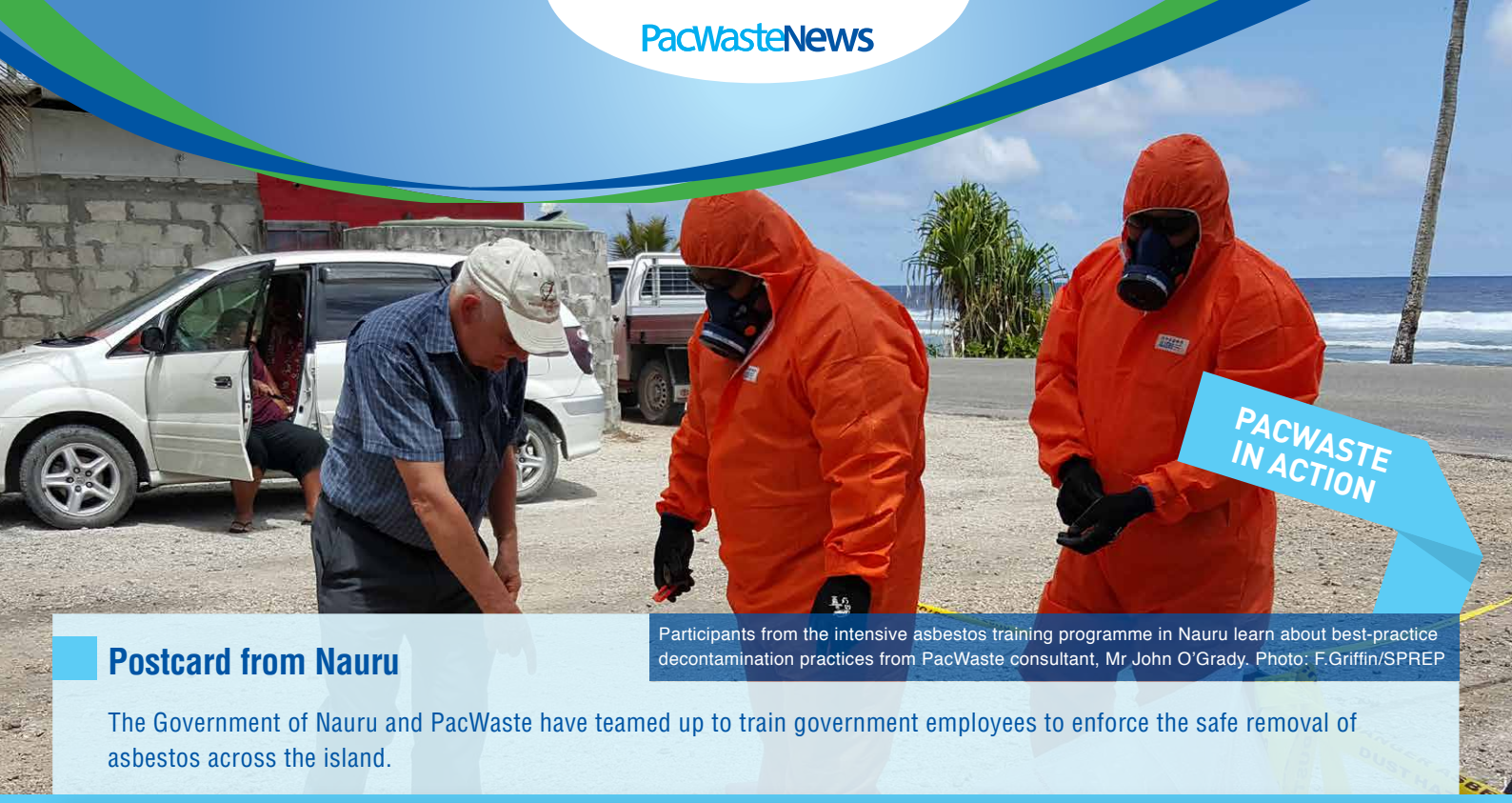
The third International Conference on Asbestos Awareness and Management featured sessions on approaches to asbestos management around the world and the move to a worldwide ban on asbestos production and use. Photo: ASEA

PacWaste showcased at international conference

PacWaste's programme of work in the area of asbestos was highlighted at the third International Conference on Asbestos Awareness and Management held in Adelaide from 13–15 November 2016.

Organised by the Australian Government's Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA) the conference brought together hundreds of local and international experts in asbestos management, health, advocacy and governance.

During the day one plenary session, international keynote speaker, Ms Lesley Jane Onyon (Regional Advisor, Occupational and Environmental Health, WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia), praised the work of PacWaste and noted the project's ongoing collaboration with WHO to raise awareness of the dangers of asbestos in the Pacific region.



Postcard from Nauru

Participants from the intensive asbestos training programme in Nauru learn about best-practice decontamination practices from PacWaste consultant, Mr John O'Grady. Photo: F.Griffin/SPREP

The Government of Nauru and PacWaste have teamed up to train government employees to enforce the safe removal of asbestos across the island.

In October 2016, 12 representatives from Nauru's Department of Commerce, Industry and Environment, relevant government sectors and interested community representatives attended an intensive training programme in the safe removal, storage and handling of asbestos materials. These fully trained individuals will now be charged with the task of ensuring that Nauruan contractors undertaking asbestos removal works on the island are, at all times, adhering to international best-practice.

PacWaste's regional baseline asbestos survey, conducted in 2014, found a substantial quantity of asbestos in Nauru, most of which is in the form of asbestos-cement in roofing and cladding on houses and buildings. There are also some stockpiles of asbestos waste and unused asbestos material. Significantly, these materials have deteriorated with age which makes them a higher risk to human health.

Ms Mavis Depaune, Acting Secretary of the Department of Commerce, Industry and Environment in Nauru explains that addressing asbestos is a high priority for Nauru:

"The Government of Nauru is committed to taking action to address the issue of asbestos and has already commenced activities, in coordination with the government housing project, which involves the removal of asbestos from dwellings across the island. This training from PacWaste will ensure that these activities are undertaken in a manner which will ensure the health and wellbeing of workers and the people of Nauru."

The training programme included hands-on exercises such as setting up an asbestos removal zone and safely packaging asbestos roofing sheets and loose debris using the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safe removal techniques. Following the training programme, PacWaste also assisted the department in the development of a Cabinet Paper proposing the setting up of an asbestos management regime in Nauru.



Participants practice setting up a safety cordon and signage in preparation for a practice asbestos removal activity. Photo: F.Griffin/SPREP



The 12 graduates from the intensive asbestos training programme in Nauru will be in charge of ensuring that all asbestos removal works are conducted using international best-practice.

USEFUL LINKS



In order to protect Pacific communities from exposure to airborne asbestos fibre, the awareness campaign will target all individuals who are exposed to potential risk.

Asbestos: Be aware and take care

Work is underway on the development of educational materials for the PacWaste project's upcoming regional asbestos awareness campaign. The overarching objective of the campaign is to increase public awareness of the health risks associated with asbestos, particularly in the under 40 age group.

Resources being prepared include fact sheets, posters, banners and stickers. These materials will be released at a national level through a series of asbestos awareness events being coordinated by local counterparts.

For more information about the campaign, please contact Amber Carvan on amperc@sprep.org



Eco-friendly paper briquettes divert paper and cardboard from the landfill, save trees from being chopped down for firewood and generate revenue and jobs for people in Majuro. Photo: T.Hartley/SPREP

Majuro's eco-friendly fuel gets the thumbs up

A scientific study commissioned by PacWaste has found recycled paper briquettes to be an eco-friendly alternative to commercially available stove fuel.

The study compared emissions generated from recycled paper briquettes – manufactured in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands – with commercially available forms of fuel made from coal, wood-pulp and wood chips.

Researchers from the Queensland University of Technology and the International Laboratory for Air Quality and Health found that the emissions generated by the eco-friendly briquettes were comparable to commercial fuels, making them just as safe to use as other commercial products.

Full details of the laboratory findings are published in a PacWaste Technical Report which can be downloaded from the SPREP website.

Coming up

- Launch of Iokwe Bag collection service (RMI): 30 January 2017
- Healthcare waste management training (Federated States of Micronesia, Tonga, Palau, RMI, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste): February–June 2017
- Container deposit legislation and recycling fund commences (RMI): February 2017
- Commencement of asbestos works (Tonga): March 2017
- PacWaste Steering Committee Meeting: June 2017
- J-PRISM 2 Inception Meeting (Solomon Islands): June 2017

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Our vision: *The Pacific environment – sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.*

