



Photo: Fiona Goodhall



Mr Kosi Latu

Introduction

With half the year having flown by already, 2016 is already proving to be a very successful year for PacWaste.

The healthcare waste component of the project is delivering strong results with four of the 26 new incinerators installed and commissioned. Healthcare waste management training has already been undertaken in three of the 15 participating countries with the remainder to take place over the next six months.

PacWaste's valuable asbestos research and planned interventions have been attracting [significant media attention](#) across the region. The safe removal and disposal of more than 37,000 square metres of high risk asbestos from 11 countries is expected to be complete by the end of this year.

In Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands, we are preparing for the launch of the used lead acid battery (ULAB) buyback programme and for the new pre-paid garbage bag scheme which, along with a number of other PacWaste initiatives, will place Majuro at the forefront of atoll-friendly sustainable waste management practices.

Also, I am pleased to report that Letters of Agreement have now been signed for all the project's E-waste and ULAB activities which will be taking place in six Pacific island countries.

Throughout all these achievements, it has been very pleasing to see SPREP's partnership with the European Union deepen and strengthen. The recent [acknowledgement of the SPREP/EU model of collaboration](#) by the visiting European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Mr Neven Mimica goes to show that the strength and benefits of the PacWaste model of partnership is being acknowledged beyond the Pacific region, and deservedly so.

Kosi Latu
Director General
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

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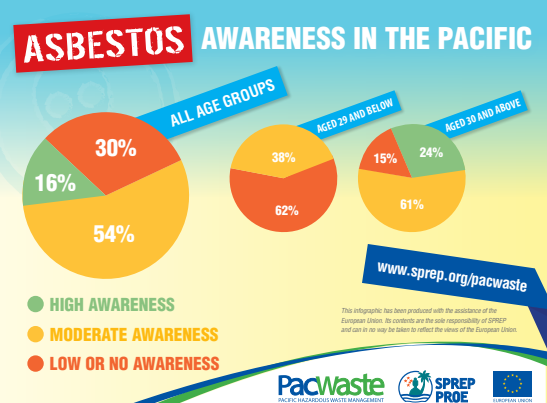
The provision of the PacWaste incinerators will improve the proper disposal of healthcare waste across the Pacific. Photo: E.Vanderburg/SPREP

New incinerators to improve public and environmental health across the Pacific

PacWaste has reached another important milestone with the **installation and commissioning of state-of-the-art healthcare waste incinerators** in Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

These high temperature incinerators will ensure that biohazardous waste in the Pacific region will be treated in accordance with international best practice. The four incinerators, installed at Tungaru Central Hospital (Kiribati), Vaiola Hospital (Tonga), Princess Margaret Hospital (Tuvalu) and Vila Central Hospital (Vanuatu), are the first of 26 to be provided by PacWaste to the Pacific region's key hospitals and health clinics.

As well as providing a mechanism for the safe disposal of healthcare waste, the new incinerators will reduce the quantity of dangerous airborne contaminants, like dioxins, that previously occurred through the uncontrolled or low temperature burning of healthcare waste.



The PacWaste asbestos awareness survey has shown an urgent need to raise awareness in the 29 and under age group.

Awareness survey highlights importance of educating young Pacific islanders on asbestos

Results from PacWaste's survey on **asbestos awareness in the Pacific islands** have revealed that six in ten people, aged under 30 years, admit to having little or no knowledge about the dangerous mineral and its associated health risks. The survey, believed to be the first of its kind in the Pacific region, has also indicated strong public support for a regional ban on asbestos containing materials.

Overall, around one in three survey respondents said that they had very low or no knowledge of asbestos. However, when these results are examined with reference to age, they reveal that more than 62% of those aged under 30 have little or no awareness of asbestos. This means that they have self-selected as either never having heard of asbestos or to recognising the word but not knowing what it is.

Run over a period of three months, the online survey attracted responses from 14 different Pacific island countries and territories. When age is not taken into consideration, the survey showed that 70% of respondents had a high or moderate knowledge of asbestos and 30% had little or no knowledge.



Working on communications tactics to help make Majuro safer and cleaner for all. Photo: A.Carvan/SPREP

Investing in community engagement for project success in Majuro

In April this year, representatives from government and community organisations gathered in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands to discuss a **communications and public engagement plan** for the roll-out of new waste management initiatives as part of the pilot integrated atoll waste management component of PacWaste.

At the workshop, participants worked with the PacWaste team to identify key audiences and the best methods of contacting them. They also discussed some of the barriers to successful implementation and role played different arguments and counter-arguments, for each target audience group.

PacWaste will be working with communities and organisations in Majuro to roll-out a pre-paid bag system over the coming months. The scheme will see waste collection services expand to include all households in Majuro. It will also promote the segregation of green waste and incorporate a used lead acid battery (ULAB) buyback scheme.



This healthcare waste incinerator was provided with the support of the European Union



Secretariat of the Pacific Region Environment Programme

PacWaste

European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Mr Neven Mimica, with The Hon. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu and Mr Andrew Jacobs, European Union Ambassador for the Pacific, at the formal handover the PacWaste healthcare waste incinerator to Princess Margaret Hospital in Funafuti. Photo: Fiona Goodhall

Postcard from Funafuti, Tuvalu

Exciting changes are afoot at Princess Margaret Hospital in Tuvalu. The country's only hospital, and the primary provider of medical services for all outer islands, is at the centre of healthcare waste and asbestos removal activities undertaken by the PacWaste project.

Princess Margaret Hospital, located in Funafuti, is a busy 50 bed hospital that services approximately 11,000 people every year. With an annual average occupancy rate of 100%, the hospital generates an estimated 100 kilograms of healthcare waste each week.

Until recently, this waste was transported to the local landfill to be burned twice weekly in a single chamber wood-fired incinerator. Once burned, the ash from the incinerator would be deposited at the landfill. Unfortunately though, due to lack of reliability and the low temperature of incineration, the harmful healthcare waste from Princess Margaret Hospital was not being treated to an acceptable standard.

During PacWaste's 2014 survey of current healthcare waste management practices in Tuvalu, it was noted that sharps were clearly visible in the ash and that pharmaceutical waste had been dumped at the landfill without being treated in any manner.

This disposal of untreated healthcare waste can have a devastating impact on the environment, especially in atoll locations, like Tuvalu, where there is so little distance to the groundwater lens. From a human health perspective, the untreated healthcare waste at the landfill in Funafuti posed a serious threat to local communities who have open access to the landfill and regularly access the site to dispose of their household waste and to scavenge.

Through PacWaste, the hospital has recently received a new high temperature, dual chamber incinerator which emits negligible emissions and can therefore be based conveniently on site at the hospital. The package of support also extends to specialised healthcare waste management training for the staff at Princess Margaret Hospital along with personal protective equipment, signage and secure storage systems.

Ms Susana Telakau, Director of Solid Waste Agency of Tuvalu (SWAT), says that the new equipment and training is very significant to the staff at the hospital – and indeed to the people of Tuvalu: "It's important that people have faith in the quality of their medical care, and the importance for patients to see that waste is being correctly segregated and stored cannot be underestimated. The new incinerator will make a huge difference to the burden of work required to treat waste at the hospital and will ensure that the hospital staff will have the capacity to dispose of medical waste in accordance with international best practice."

Princess Margaret Hospital is also the site of planned asbestos removal activities in Tuvalu, with planning underway to safely remove and dispose of 20 square metres of asbestos debris from the hospital grounds.

The hospital's old wood-fired incinerator had been moved to the landfill due to complaints about the smoke and strong odour it produced. Photo: Trevor Thornton



During the 2014 PacWaste healthcare waste survey, ash and untreated healthcare waste was clearly visible at the landfill. Photo: Trevor Thornton



USEFUL LINKS

Communication Guidelines for PacWaste Partners



The new guide provides detailed information on branding and approval protocol for PacWaste funded activities.

Guidance for partners on PacWaste communications

A new publication has been produced for organisations and agencies that have signed agreements with PacWaste to partner on the delivery of activities. The guide outlines the branding and approval protocol for any communication materials to promote activities that have been funded – in whole or in part – by the project.

In preparing this guide, efforts have been made to keep it as simple as possible. The aim is to provide project partners with creative freedom, while still ensuring that branding and donor obligations are fully met. The guide, along with a number of other useful resources, can be [downloaded from the Promotional Materials section](#) of the PacWaste website.

SPREP and European Union celebrate Europe Day

From 10-13 May, representatives from SPREP, including Director General Mr Kosi Latu, joined special guests from across the region to participate in Europe Day celebrations in Suva. PacWaste was well represented at the event and the project's educational materials proved to be very popular with students and teachers from the 13 participating schools.

You can read more about the event and see some [excellent photos from the celebrations](#) at the Facebook page for European Union in the Pacific. While you're there we urge you to like and follow this page (www.facebook.com/DelegationOfTheEuropeanUnionForThePacific/) for future social media updates from our key donor.



PacWaste was well represented at the Europe Day event. Pictured above from left-right: Mr Jesús Laviña (European Union), Ms Amber Carvan (SPREP) and Ms Ileana Miritescu (European Union) at the opening celebrations of Europe Day in Suva. Photo: A.Solofa/SPREP

Coming up

- ❑ PacWaste Steering Committee Meeting (Vanuatu): 18–20 July, 2016
- ❑ Cleaner Pacific Roundtable (Fiji): 25–28 July, 2016

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