

Healthy Environments, Resilient Communities

The vital role of sanitation for
improving climate resilience in the
Pacific

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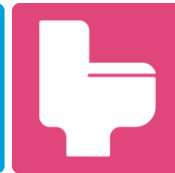
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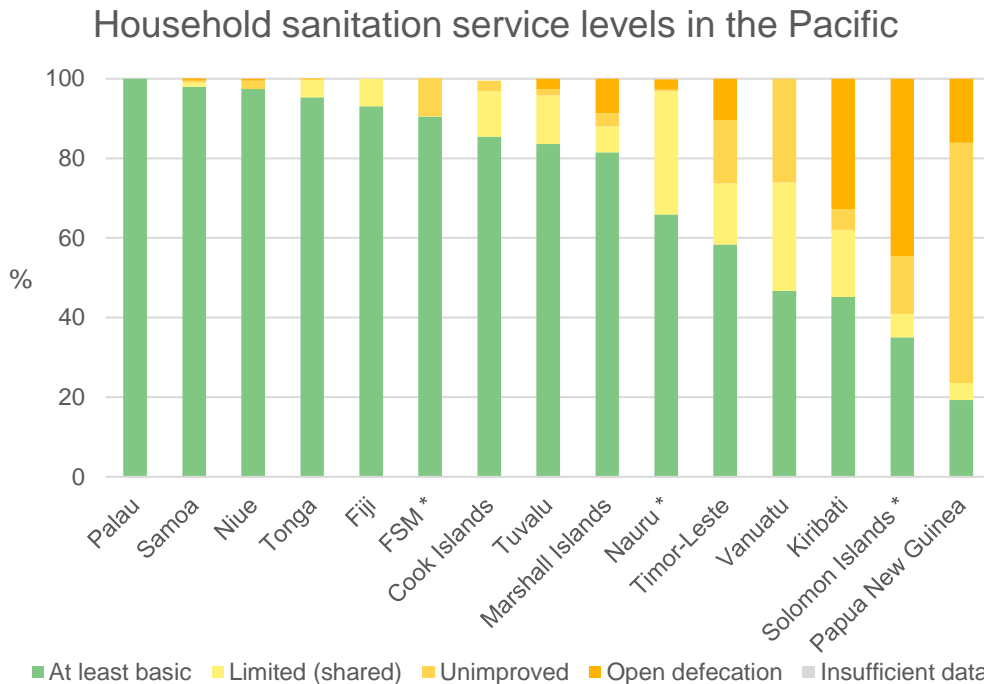


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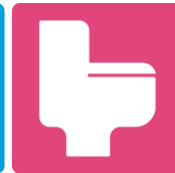
Sanitation in the Pacific is off-track and it's not improving fast enough



- 70% of the population lack access to basic sanitation
- 40% of schools have no sanitation service at all.
- The Cook Islands is the only country with basic sanitation in most of its health care facilities.
- Sanitation gains have historically been outpaced by population growth.
- Open defecation rates are increasing in Papua New Guinea faster than any other country in the world.



Climate change causes significant economic and non-economic impacts on sanitation



Economic Losses:

- Income
- Physical Assets

Non-Economic Losses:

- Individuals
- Society
- Environmental

Sanitation is critical to sustainable development and climate resilient communities and ecosystems



- **Public health concerns** from outbreaks of sanitation-related diseases such as cholera, typhoid and diarrhoeal disease.



- **Child stunting**, which impacts almost half of children under five in Timor-Leste and PNG, and has lifelong impacts on their wellbeing, educational attainment and economic opportunities.



- **Educational attainment** – sanitation access in schools helps reduce student absenteeism and drop-out rates, especially among girls.

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Freshwater resource protection – particularly in low-lying atoll states such as Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands.



Climate vulnerability – in urban areas of Fiji and Vanuatu where inadequate sanitation contributes to the growth of informal settlements into flood-prone areas.



Tourism and the economy – poor sanitation may reduce the appeal of tourism sites and impact on the productivity of workers.



Environmental health – Poor sanitation impacts the environmental health of lagoons, reefs and fisheries.

Entry points for the step change required for climate-resilient sanitation in the Pacific



Policies & planning

Adequate & appropriate financing

Contextually appropriate & regulatable service models

Multi-sectoral collaboration & collective action

Engaged & aware sanitation service users

Policies and planning



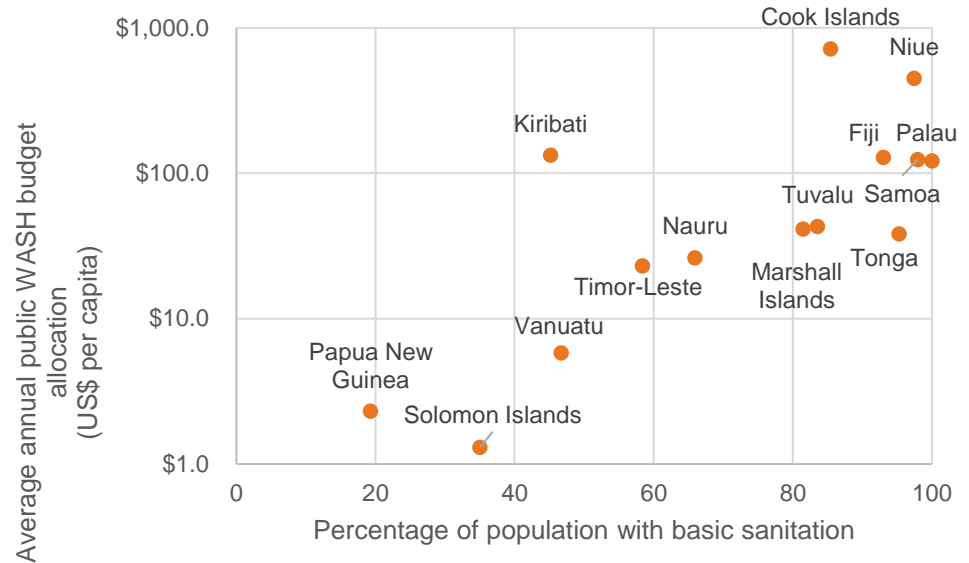
- Pacific Island Governments should lead the development of national sanitation roadmaps.
- Pacific Island Governments should include sanitation-specific actions in National Adaptation Plans.
- Donors, NGOs and research organisations should partner to generate relevant and high-quality evidence and data that governments need to inform sanitation planning and investment.



Financing



- Pacific Island Governments should increase per capita investments in sanitation.
- Pacific Island Governments should advocate for increased donor funding.
- Donors and the private sector should increase the proportion of funding dedicated to basic sanitation systems.
- Donors and the private sector should prioritise funding to strengthen sanitation enabling environments including collaborating around co-financing approaches



The Pacific countries with the highest basic sanitation access are also those with the highest per-capita public budgets for water and sanitation.

Service delivery



- Pacific Island Governments should convene sanitation actors in their country to clarify sanitation service models.
- Pacific Island Governments should urgently accelerate access to basic sanitation services in schools and health care facilities.
- Donors and the private sector should support capacity development of government and sanitation service providers.
- Donors and the private sector should invest in innovation and demonstration of contextually-appropriate service models.



WaterAid/Bernice Sarpong

Collaboration



- Pacific Island Governments should champion collaborative and collective regional platforms for sanitation.
- Donors and the private sector should fund a Pacific sanitation coalition.
- Donors and the private sector should prioritise partnership-based models between sanitation and other sectors.



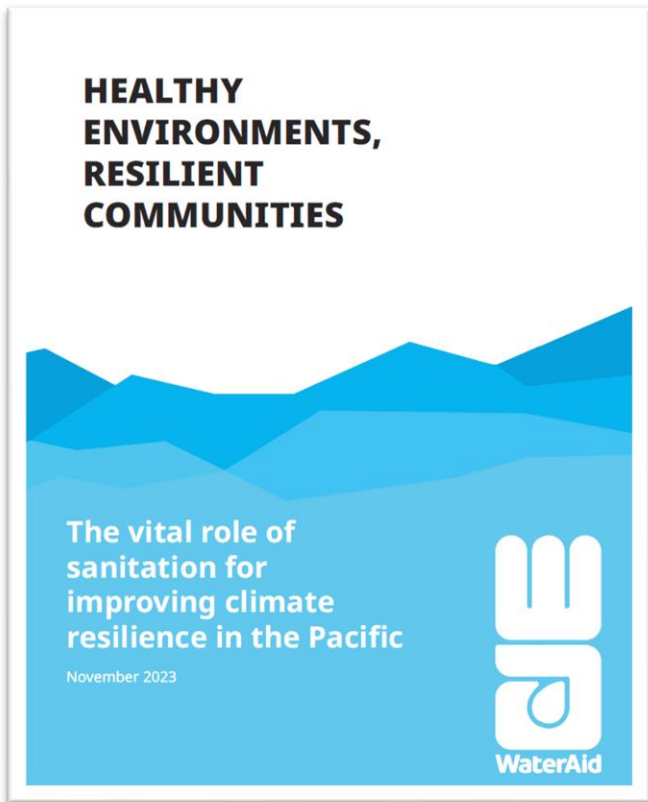
User engagement



- Pacific Island Governments should consult widely and identify vulnerability hotspots to climate change risks.
- NGOs and research organisations should work with communities to shift social norms and community behaviours.
- NGOs and research organisations should support community capacity and awareness building.
- Pacific communities should hold service providers accountable.
- Pacific communities should ensure that community-level decision making is inclusive.



WaterAid/Don Komang





Policy Brief for Pacific Island Governments

Healthy Environments, Resilient Communities: The vital role of sanitation for improving climate resilience in the Pacific

It is well known that the climate crisis is a water crisis, however the links between climate change and sanitation are often less acknowledged and understood. Climate change is significantly impacting sanitation services across the Pacific, however climate-resilient sanitation also holds the key to poverty alleviation and improving the resilience of communities to climate change. Unless Pacific Islands Governments lead a concerted and cooperative effort to prioritise and mobilise resourcing towards sanitation access, the 2050 Strategy's vision of a resilient, healthy, equitable and prosperous Pacific cannot be realised.



Nov 2023



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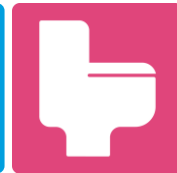
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Thank you!



"Safe sanitation underpins the very feasibility of Pacific Island Countries ... our national and international development goals are unlikely to be met without increased advocacy and financial support for water and sanitation, which will require renewed leadership and investment at the national, regional and international level."

Pacific Island Country Statement to the 2nd Asia-Pacific
Water Summit,
20 May 2013

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Q/A

Reflections

- What does this mean for the water sector in New Zealand?
- How can the Water Sector in NZ support climate resilient sanitation access in the Pacific?

E.g. partnerships, funding, knowledge sharing, innovation, access to information

- What additional information and data is required to help the New Zealand Water Sector to be more engaged in issues related to sanitation access in the Pacific?
- What other aspects of WaterAid's work would you be interested in hearing more about?