



Photo: C. Iacovino/SPREP

Welcome to PacWaste News

On behalf of the PacWaste team, I would like to welcome readers to this new publication through which the European Union and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) will be providing regular updates on the Pacific Hazardous Waste Management (PacWaste) project.

Collaboration is at the heart of the PacWaste project, and the European Union – SPREP PacWaste partnership is an outstanding example of how collaboration can make a significant difference to the health of the Pacific island people and the environment.

Since its inception in 2014, PacWaste has achieved some outstanding results. In Fiji for example, our emergency asbestos clean-up at the Tamavua Twomey Hospital in Suva resulted in the removal of dangerous asbestos, providing hospital staff and patients with a safe work environment and peace of mind.

Similarly, following the devastation caused by Tropical Cyclone Pam, PacWaste was able to provide disaster coordinators with the confirmed location of public and commercial buildings containing asbestos. This information was vital to clean-up crews who could use the information to either avoid such premises or to use equipment to safeguard their health.

With implementation activities well underway across our four priority areas of asbestos, E-waste, healthcare waste and integrated atoll waste management, we anticipate a great deal of positive PacWaste news to report over the coming months.

We hope that you enjoy this newsletter and we look forward to receiving your comments and feedback.

Mr Jesús Laviña
Head of Section for Natural Resources and Infrastructure
European Union Delegation for the Pacific, Suva.

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LATEST NEWS



As part of the healthcare waste management training at Labasa Hospital, participants undertook a practical 'walk-through' exercise to assess existing healthcare waste management systems. Photo: E. Vanderburg/SPREP

Regional healthcare waste management training launches in Fiji

Specialised training in the management and disposal of healthcare waste commenced in July 2015 at four hospital sites across Fiji. The training targets individuals who, in the course of their employment, are involved in the handling, disposal or management of healthcare waste. The instruction, based on a 'train-the-trainer' model, ensures that participants are able to provide training to others in the future.

The Fiji-based training was a precursor to the regional PacWaste initiative which will see a similar training package delivered across 14 Pacific island countries, and Timor-Leste, over the next 12 months.

Read more [here](#) or contact [Elizabeth Vanderburg](#) for more information.



To minimise the risk of asbestos exposure in the Pacific, PacWaste has prioritised the removal of asbestos at 73 sites across 11 countries. Photo: Amol Lal

Proposed USD 2 million asbestos interventions detailed

Following the successful completion of a Regional Asbestos Baseline Survey, PacWaste has undertaken an asbestos risk management methodology assessment to prioritise the project's regional interventions for asbestos removal. Because of the very large number of sites found with asbestos during the survey, those with the highest potential risk have been prioritised for attention.

The proposed programme of works identifies 73 separate interventions across 11 countries, however, the final number of locations will not be finalised until after the tender evaluation process is complete. Interventions will typically involve the removal of asbestos materials and wastes by trained experts using specialised equipment, followed by secure transport and safe disposal including international export.

Read more [here](#) or contact [Stewart Williams](#) for more information.



Through PacWaste, inadequate or non-operational incinerators such as this one at Tungaru Hospital on Tarawa, Kiribati will be replaced with new and efficient equipment to protect the health of people and the environment. Photo: Trevor Thornton

First steps towards new, efficient and safe incinerators

Contracts were awarded in August 2015 for the provision of 26 high temperature healthcare waste incinerators which will be installed across 12 countries participating in the PacWaste project. These incinerators, equipped with secondary combustion chambers, will ensure that infectious waste, sharps, pharmaceutical and anatomical waste can be disposed of effectively and safely.

Through the provision of these incinerators, human and environmental health will be protected from the harmful dioxins and furans created through the practice of low temperature or open burning.

Read more [here](#) or contact [Stewart Williams](#) for more information.

Postcard from Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands



Following the preparation of a baseline study on status and options for solid waste management on Majuro Atoll, work has commenced on the development of an integrated atoll solid waste management system for the atoll.

PacWaste's Solid Waste Project Officer, Tim Hartley, gives us an update on some of the exciting activities that are slated to take place.

One of our priorities in Majuro is to establish a mechanism for the safe collection and removal of Used Lead Acid Batteries (ULABs). ULABs are one of the most common toxic domestic waste items in the world, and here on Majuro Atoll there are thousands of ULABs accumulating each year. Currently only about 10% of batteries arriving in the Republic of the Marshall Islands are being removed, so that means that there are a lot more lying around.

Through PacWaste, we're planning to set up a buyback fund so that we can purchase these ULABs from the general public and then export and sell them to battery recycling companies in other countries. The proceeds of the export sales will be added back into the buyback fund. Our aim with the buyback fund is to achieve a 90% battery removal rate. It's an ambitious goal but it's certainly achievable.

In addition to capitalising the fund, PacWaste will assist in the provision of safe battery handling training and equipment, and develop MOU's between the key stakeholders.

While Majuro Atoll has a waste collection service it is quite severely under-resourced. For example, of the approximately 4000 households in Majuro, 50% have an official 'wheelie bin' and a regular collection service, 25% also get serviced, but do not have an official bin so they use shopping bags or cardboard boxes to hold rubbish, and 25% do not receive any collection service at all.

The residential collection service is currently a free service. However, as the statistics above show, it is not a fair service, with most households not getting any service or an official bin. The wheelie bins are expensive to replace when they're damaged, so we expect that within five years there will only be a handful left. In order to provide a fairer, sustainable collection service with coverage across the whole atoll, a pre-paid garbage bag system has been proposed.

Through this system, specially designed garbage bags will be available for purchase from stores throughout the atoll for a small cost. A proportion of the sale of the bags will go to the waste company to pay for the collection and disposal costs – allowing them to expand their collection services across the atoll.

The bags will be gradually phased in, and it is hoped that by Fishermans Day next year (4 July, 2016), they will be fully adopted throughout the atoll, with the other non-official bins being phased out from collection.

For more information about the integrated atoll waste management programme on Majuro, please contact [Tim Hartley](#).

Pre-paid garbage bag systems have worked well in other atoll environments, such as on Tarawa, Kiribati. Photo: Alice Leney



The lead in Lead Acid Batteries is extremely toxic. Long-term exposure to even small amounts can cause brain and kidney damage, hearing impairment, and learning problems in children. Photo: Alice Leney



USEFUL LINKS



New resources available on revised PacWaste website

The PacWaste website has recently been updated to meet the changing needs of the project's stakeholders. You can now easily find a complete collection of PacWaste resources, including promotional materials, circulars, tenders and more in our new resources section. We will be adding to this section over the coming months with future issues of PacWaste News as well as PacWaste Country Profiles for all participating countries.

Visit the new resources on the [PacWaste website](#).

Documentary tells the story of PacWaste's emergency asbestos clean-up in Fiji

During the Fiji asbestos survey, PacWaste experts identified high risk friable asbestos fibres at the Tamavua Twomey Hospital in Suva. After the asbestos risk was identified, PacWaste worked immediately to arrange an emergency clean-up of the hospital. Within days, the most dangerous asbestos has been removed – a major win for both staff and patients, as well as the environment.

See the short documentary *PacWaste in Action: Emergency Asbestos Clean-up in Fiji*.



Coming up

- ❑ Third Annual PacWaste Steering Committee Meeting and Workshop: *19–23 October 2015, Tarawa, Kiribati*
- ❑ Healthcare waste training, Kiribati: *October 2015*
- ❑ Request for Tenders (for asbestos interventions) to be released: *October 2015*
- ❑ Healthcare waste incinerator installation: *by December 2015*
- ❑ Pre-paid bag implementation in Majuro: *by December 2015*

PacWaste News

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