

Press Release

SEIAPI Solar Conference March 2026
Transitioning to Solar Energy in the Pacific Islands
24th and 25th March, Suva

Over 200 participants from across Europe, the USA, Australia and the Pacific attended the inaugural conference of the Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands (SEIAPI) held on the 24th and 25th of March at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva.

The theme for the conference was *Transitioning to Solar Energy in the Pacific Islands* which is very relevant considering the current fuel crisis, which is likely to be prolonged and disruptive. The conference was officially opened by Minister of Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport, the Hon Ro Filipe Tuisawau. He noted that for Fiji, this transition is not a distant aspiration. The Government of Fiji is committed to achieving 100 per cent renewable electricity generation by 2035, and net-zero emissions by 2050. Fiji has identified about F\$ 2 billion in investment to make this happen — half directed at 165 megawatts of new solar capacity and battery storage, with the remainder supporting hydro, biomass, wind, and geothermal development. Energy Fiji Limited is leading the delivery of this programme.

Many people tend to think of solar as a minor part of energy supply. Within the Pacific islands, however, it has been doubling about every three and a half years for well over a decade and this rapid growth is expected to continue. Globally renewable energy accounted for 90% of the increase in electricity supply in 2025, and most of this was solar.

As SEIAPI chair, Peter Johnston noted in his opening remarks, solar energy continues to grow and improve, and is quickly becoming a mature, key regional industry, which will increasingly dominate the energy sector, while reducing costs, enhancing our energy security and improving our resilience to climate change.

This conference differed from many others held in the Pacific because it had a focus on industry – SEIAPI is a Sustainable Energy ***Industry*** Association. Forty speakers discussed what has been done and what the Pacific industry should do, in partnership with governments, power utilities, development agencies, educational organisations, financiers and others to facilitate, improve and accelerate the transition away from petroleum fuels in the region.

During a panel session Mr Nicholas Murphy (Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade); Ms Roxanne Castelein (European Commission); Mr Jonathan Pryke (Asian Development Bank) and Mr Vineil Narayan (United Nations Development Program) spoke about the innovative projects they are implementing to support the transition. During a session on financing the transition, Mr Paul Makumbe. (Director,

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Sunergise International); Nicholas Wolf, (Market Development Facility) and Mr Mosese Nabulivou (SEIAPI) discussed how private finance and banks will need to provide sufficient finance to help the Pacific Island Countries reach their 100% renewable energy targets.

Other sessions concentrated on the development of frameworks to improve the quality of energy systems and services for the sustainable energy Industry, technical issues and the challenges faced by the small but growing industry within the Pacific.

However, the highlight of the conference was a *Women in Solar* panel session. Prior to the conference, *Its Time Foundation* took 20 women from the University of South Pacific, other institutions and Industry to Waya Island. They were the first all-woman solar installation team in the Pacific and they installed a solar PV system on the buildings at the Ratu Naivalu Memorial School. An entertaining video is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijKgkszrU-Y>.

Prior to the conference *Its Time Foundation* also held a women's empowerment day which included the students and influential women from Fiji and Australia. All participated in the women in solar panel session.

Following the success of the transition to solar energy conference, SEIAPI plans to organise similar annual events to support the industry in working with the Pacific Island Countries to help them meet their ambitious 100% renewable energy RE targets.

Photos Attached

- 1 Hon Ro Filipe Tuisawau opening the conference
- 2 and 3 Audience
- 4 Donors panel Session: Peter Johnston, Vineil Narayan, Jonathan Pryke , Ms Roxanne Castelein and Mr Nicholas Murphy
5. Students and participants from women's empowerment Day
7. Women in Solar panel session: Michelle Tyler-Smith, Loma Mataika, , Fiona Dace-Lyn, Lily Pejkić, Sereana Cabemaiwai, Vasiti Talakubu, Oliana Nayago, Lauren Hamilton, Julianne Verma
- 8 Conference group Photo