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# **An Analysis of the Environmental Planning Framework for Coastal Developments in Fiji's Coral Coast Tourist Region**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a Degree  
in Masters of Philosophy in Resource and Environmental Planning,  
at Massey University.

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## Abstract

This thesis examines Fiji's environmental planning framework with particular reference to tourism development along the coast. This focus is an acknowledgement of the coastal ecosystems upon which the tourism industry depends. However, despite this emphasis, the findings in this thesis could be relevant to all types of development in Fiji. Firstly, the shortcomings of the present planning framework are identified, with particular attention being paid to the sectoral nature of the existing institutional and legal arrangements. The important role of EIA is also discussed and is applied to the situation in Fiji's. Particular attention is placed upon the way the present system does not sufficiently recognise the important role the indigenous Fijian plays in the development planning process. This seems unjust since the indigenous rural dweller is the most affected by tourism developments along the coast and so the case study area, Korolevu, was chosen to provide a typical example of how such large scale, unsustainable, coastal developments have in the past, because of flaws in the present system, were often established with little appreciation for the traditions, protocols and more sustainable environmental management practices of the traditional local people.

Now that the international community is beginning to recognise the importance of providing sustainable development which preserves the environment in the fullest sense, including the cultural environment into which development is placed, the Government of Fiji is starting to recognise the importance of applying such strategies as *Caring for the Earth* (IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1991) and *Agenda 21* (Sitarz 1993) to the situation in Fiji. The findings of this thesis result in various reforms which have the

achievement of sustainable development practices in the Fijian cultural context as the underlying focus. These reforms emphasise the need to recognise and implement indigenous rights into the environmental planning framework at policy, institutional and legal levels. The incorporation of the indigenous Fijian's interests in this framework is an essential component to providing sustainable practices in Fiji. This inclusion can only be achieved by providing meaningful public participation opportunities for such communities. Ultimately, the IUCN/UNEP/WWF (1991) and Sitarz (1993) documents and, in addition, New Zealand's Resource Management Act (1992) collectively provide a useful model out of which the Fiji Government could develop its own environmental management regime which promotes sustainable development through the identification, avoidance, mitigation, and remedying of the many environmental problems encountered in Fiji's coastal environment.

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## List of Abbreviations

AEE	Assessment of Environmental Effects
AMSL	Above Mean Sea Level
CPO	Central Planning Office
DTCP	Department of Town and Country Planning
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMC	Environment Management Committee
EMU	Environment Management Unit
EPS	Environmental Policy Statement
FAO	The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
IPDG	International Pacific Development Group
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
MMC	Mangrove Management Committee
NES	National Environment Strategy
NLTB	Native Land Trust Board
NSER	The National State of the Environment Report
NEWG	National Environmental Working Group
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEC	Primary Environmental Care
PSC	Public Service Commission
RMA	Resource Management Act
RMLR	Resource Management Law Reform
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TPA	Town Planning Area
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USP	University of the South Pacific
WCED	The World Commission on Environment and Development
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature