# How Indigenous Systems and Emergent Leadership in the Tourism Sector in Vanuatu Contribute to Resilience in the Face of Shocks

**A research report presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of International Development at Massey University | Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, New Zealand**

**Wade Gadsby**

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## Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic severely challenged the tourism-dependent economies of Small Island States. Vanuatu's international borders were closed for two years and, with tourism income making up almost half of the country's GDP, the people of Vanuatu had to adapt to survive. Historically, Pacific Island nations have adapted and worked well through crisis events, and this study examines how Pacific people have utilised Indigenous resilience systems to respond to recent shocks. In particular, it examines how 'emergent leadership', defined in the literature as managing uncertainty and mitigating crisis factors (Hunt, 2019), can help to achieve resilience in the face of crises. The research sought to define key components of both emergent leadership and resilience in the tourism sphere in Vanuatu, and it highlighted the role that emergent leadership plays within the Tourism Resilience Framework – a novel approach to operationalising an Indigenous values set in the tourism sphere. This research found that there were certain key factors that contributed to resilience in Pacific contexts, specifically: traditional knowledge (*kastom nolej*); the informal economy (*kastom ekonomi*); and Plan B (*vanua*). These factors have been central to past adaptation in the face of crises and could inform future responses to shocks and stressors. It also found that emergent leadership materialises in a crisis, showcasing the traits of a comprehensive understanding of the situation, adaptability, passion, and also through the use of storytelling as a means to convey change – particularly in the instances of slow-burn crises. The interaction of emergent leadership's traits and key factors of resilience are portrayed through a pawpaw tree metaphor, illustrating how they inform the necessary elements of effective adaptation in the face of shocks and stressors.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Indigenous, Tourism Resilience Framework, Indigenous Systems, Pacific Tourism, Emergent Leadership, Adaptability, Crisis.

## Acknowledgements

| | |
|---|---|
| He honore | *All honour* |
| He kororia ki te atua | *All glory to God* |
| He maungaronga ki te whenua | *Peace across the land* |
| He whakaaro pai ki ngā tangata katoa | *Good thoughts to all people* |

‘E aha te kai ō te rangatira? He kōrero, he kōrero, he kōrero’

This cheeky but insightful proverb asks ‘what is the food of the leader/chief?’ and answers, ‘it is talking, it is talking, it is talking’. The simplistic interpretation is that all leaders do is sit around and talk and nothing else! However the deeper meaning is in the triple repetition of ‘he kōrero’. Similar to other languages, repetition changes the focus to mean something much deeper and adds emphasis. The further interpretation means to talk in depth – to convey knowledge and insight, and in doing so there is the sharing and sacredness of power and authority in knowledge. In the Māori worldview, knowledge is highly respected and protected and was often kept sacred. So in honouring te āo Māori and our Indigenous brothers and sisters of the Pacific, I honour the efforts of those who have informed the knowledge base that we have so readily available. In particular, I acknowledge the Indigenous knowledge systems that have been, and are available to us, yet we often ignore… not knowing that some of the people that have gone before, really have had a lot of good to say.

It is the business of everyone to gain knowledge, although that puts on us the responsibility of learning of this knowledge, utilising it appropriately and lastly – not forgetting it but passing it down. Proverbs 15:14 (NLT) states:

The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.

Firstly, I’d like to thank my Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ. I feel like there has been a divine thread of opportunities that enabled me the circumstances (such as the Marsden grant and other things) to take on this Masters project – which happened to be a dream of mine but one that I had ‘put to bed’ given the busyness of life and the challenges that children, a construction business and a non-profit organisation demand. I’m truly thankful to have an able body and mind.

A big thank you to Regina Scheyvens and Apisalome Movono, my kaiako who have guided me on this project. Thank you for taking me under your wings and allowing me this opportunity. I've enjoyed our chats. Of special note, Regina Scheyvens, I have thoroughly enjoyed our numerous Zoom kōrero. Despite swatting away my attempts at referring to you as 'Aunty', the dedication you've invested, even amidst sickness, holidays and work life challenges is inspiring. Ngā mihi maioha!

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A huge thank you to those that shared of their time, resources and knowledge in the collation of this material: Jerry Spooner, Cherise Addinsall, Leonid Vusilai, Votausi Mackenzie-Ruer, Norah Rihai, Pastor Joshua and Lillian, Chef Joshua, Loid and Kalin Albert, Nik and Greg Laing, Tousong Kalsong, Morris Kaloran. I appreciate all the knowledge and insight you have passed on and assisted with. Also to the Regenerative Vanua team, the Live and Learn team, and the various Vanuatu government departments and peoples that answered my queries with smiles and patience.

I'm also grateful for the prayer support my whānau have given me, including my Mum and Dad, and Josh and Rosie Palliser – and to all the others who have studied at a Masters level and have given me knowing looks and words of empathy.

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## List of Bislama Words

| | |
|---|---|
| Aelan ekonomi | Informal reciprocal economy |
| Aelan kakae | Traditional food |
| Fullap tumas | Too full, overfull |
| Kakae | Food (general) |
| Local kakae | Locally sourced food |
| Kastom | Tradition |
| Kastom nolej | Traditional knowledge |
| Kastom ekonomi ekonomi) | Informal reciprocal economy (much the same as Aelan |
| Nakamal | Meeting house |
| Natangura | A palm tree with a strong long thin leaf used for a thatch roofs |
| Storian | Discussion (two or more) |
| Waet-man | White skinned person (not of Vanuatu) |
| Vanua | Used interchangeably to mean village, community, traditional clan /customary land area. Most often used to which a person or group is connected to |
| Voes lo Aelan kakae | Voice of Island food |

## Foreword

While in Vanuatu doing research a discussion with a research participant (Norah Rihai) on the topic of resilience one day deviated off into her background as a scientist and her fascination with cells. It ended up with us concluding that resilience in practice was much like the role of a cell adhesion molecule, pectin.

In scientific study, pectins are an interesting component due to the fundamental role they play in plant life, growth and regeneration. In technical terms, pectins mediate and regulate the necessary cell wall adhesion which allows plant cells to bind together throughout their life. Outside of science, pectins are a binding agent, a coagulant that is formed through the structure of pectic acid – often used in jams and marmalades, and occasionally in medicines. Functioning much like a glue, pectins are nature's way of holding differing cells together as they grow, reform and reorganise throughout a plant's life cycle. Pectins are the cohesion agents that equip plant-life and can be useful for months and years even after the death of the plant itself. Notably, pectins help the human body process foods more efficiently and have a number of associated health benefits (Daher & Braybrook, 2015).

Two tropical fruits rich in pectin are banana and pawpaw. These fruits are a staple food in the Pacific Islands that often grow in abundance, yielding fruit year-round. Such is the versatility and accessibility of these fruits, that they are often all an individual needs for sustenance during the day. In the past I've seen young construction workers arrive at the job site with either one large pawpaw or a stalk of bananas (likely collected on the way to the worksite), and this was the sole food during the full day's work.

During my fieldwork in Vanuatu, December 2023, there was much talk about banana and pawpaw coming into season, largely due to the prices they were fetching in the marketplace. The twin cyclones, Judy and Kevin in March 2023, had decimated these crops due to their high fruit yield and low density supporting structures. These fruits, typically not valued highly, had been dearly missed from the diets of many Ni-Vanuatu and the anticipation of having banana and pawpaw fruits back in rotation was a source of happiness. For those whose fruit plants were ripening early, the unusually high Vatu (Vanuatu currency) being received for their purchase was an additional source of joy.

After my discussion with Norah Rihai on about pectins, I arrived back at my beach bungalow went down  a lengthy ‘rabbit-hole’ of reading different scientific journals, learning that pectins are part of the properties that form cell adhesion and that tropical fruits are laden with pectins. When reflecting on how bananas and pawpaw are high in pectins, I realised there was a link to resilience, in terms of how societies survive crisis situations due their close bonds. I also noted that the loss of these pectin-rich fruits from the Ni-Vanuatu diet for the last nine months had left people feeling the ongoing effects of cyclones Judy and Kevin, and that there was a longing for things to be back to the way they were in the past.

Pectins are central to resilience of the plant world. They are there long after the plant has died and their role in cell adhesion as a plant grows and transforms is fundamental to holding and binding and supporting life – just as societies demonstrate resilience by drawing on cultural bonds and acting together collectively when tackling adversity and adapting to shocks.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Motivation and Rationale

Vanuatu may be one of the happiest places on earth, ranking in the top four countries of the Happy Planet Index (Happy Planet, 2023). The Happy Planet Index examines life expectancy, wellbeing and the ecological footprint data of 152 countries, taking a GDP-free view on how nations are thriving in a sustainable way – and Vanuatu does extremely well. Not only are the Ni-Vanuatu (Indigenous people of Vanuatu) happy – they are kind and welcoming, further making the scenic Pacific island paradise of Vanuatu a sought-after destination for tourism.

Having travelled to Vanuatu many times previously, both as a tourist and with the construction-focused Non Government Organisation (NGO) I work for, I have personally witnessed how Vanuatu also scores highly on a seemingly opposing report – taking first place for the world's most disaster-prone country (Garschagen et al., 2016), and certainly it has faced a number of shocks in recent years. Post tropical cyclone Pam – a Category 5 cyclone that crippled infrastructure in 2015 – the nation has seen: the Island of Ambae evacuated due to volcanic eruption; the Covid-19 pandemic which saw the country's borders closed for two years; twin Cyclones Judy and Kevin and 6.6 magnitude earthquake in March 2023; and recent governmental instability with three changes of government in one month (Wiradi, 2018; Movono & Scheyvens, 2022; Al Jazeera, 2023). All of these shocks create challenging circumstances for the Ni-Vanuatu people, particularly those involved in the tourism sphere. However despite these challenges, Vanuatu as a nation retains its hopeful charm and cheeky smiles, offering idyllic holiday experiences to over 200,000 tourists each year (Air Vanuatu, 2022; Vanuatu Business Review, 2024).

Given the threat and somewhat ongoing nature of these disturbances, Vanuatu's tourism sphere could be labelled a precarious place to survive: importantly, surviving and being able to bounce back are two different matters. The ability to bounce back post crisis – and in Vanuatu's case, to a series of recent crises – gives prominence to the notion of resilience. Resilience is the ability to respond efficiently and effectively to a shock or stressor (Holling, 1973). It is in the juxtaposition of happiness among Ni-Vanuatu in the face of shocks and stressors that informs

the research undertaken for this report. Intending to showcase measures of resilience unique to the Vanuatu tourism context, this report attempts to pinpoint in detail how these factors of resilience contribute to responding efficiently and effectively post crisis.

## 1.2 Research Aim

The aim of this research is to explore how tourism stakeholders in Vanuatu adapt in the face of sudden shocks, in order to identify contributing factors to resilience.

**Objective i.** Investigate the concepts of resilience and understand the interrelated links to adaptability, sustainability and vulnerability.

**Objective ii.** Understand how specialists see adaptation and resilience as being best supported in Small Island States (SIS).

**Objective iii.** Investigate and identify emergent leadership in Vanuatu and its potential to support resilience building.

## 1.3 Structure and Chapter Outline

The initial chapter of this research report explains to the reader the juxtaposition of how Vanuatu is both a happy nation while simultaneously being fraught with shocks and stressors (Garshagen et al., 2016). The notion of resilience is mentioned in order to draw the reader into what is being unveiled through the following chapters. Chapter 2 discusses Pacific tourism, the complex nature of this system, and its role and impact in the lives of Pacific peoples, notably in Vanuatu. Questions are raised as to future tourism trends in light of the Covid-19 pandemic's enforced tourism pause, noting how externalities plague the industry and the potential of bouncing forward sustainably.

The literature review follows, with Chapter 3 reviewing the functions and nature of resilience in people and organisations. Providing an overview of resilience theory initially and exploring resilience as a social-ecological system, Movono, Scheyvens and Ratuva's Tourism Resilience Framework (2023) is then explained before identifying contemporary factors that are currently

eroding resilience structures. Chapter 4 examines the methodological approach taken to selecting participants and gathering fieldwork research data in a culturally relevant and informed manner. This is followed by an overview of the ethical issues and processes relevant to the fieldwork. Chapter 5 is the first part of the findings. From a desktop inquiry, a subset of the resilience literature is unpacked in understanding the role of emergent leadership and how emergent leaders differ from typical leaders in that they emerge from crisis. A case study of a Melanesian (Fijian) tourism operator who showcased emergent leadership in crisis is unpacked with detail provided on emergent leadership traits and factors of resilience. This then forms the pretext to the resilient emergent leader participants who are the focus of the findings in later chapters.

Chapter 6 documents motivations and actions of emergent leaders in the Vanuatu tourism sector, in the face of change and challenge. Chapter 7 highlights the sources of resilience that emergent leaders and others draw from during times of difficulty, ending with a diagram of how resilience and emergent leadership actions are coupled together. Chapter 8 connects the findings and shows how research objectives were achieved. A conclusion to the overall research is provided in Chapter 9, highlighting the major themes of the report. Overall this report seeks to shed light on tools and processes that may inform others about why the Pacific tourism sector (and notably Vanuatu) is happy and resilient despite the prevalent risks. The report recommends further study into the transition of emergent leaders post crisis and posits that emergent leaders become ‘agents of change’ in a post crisis setting by harnessing learned resilience measures.

# Chapter 2: Pacific Tourism

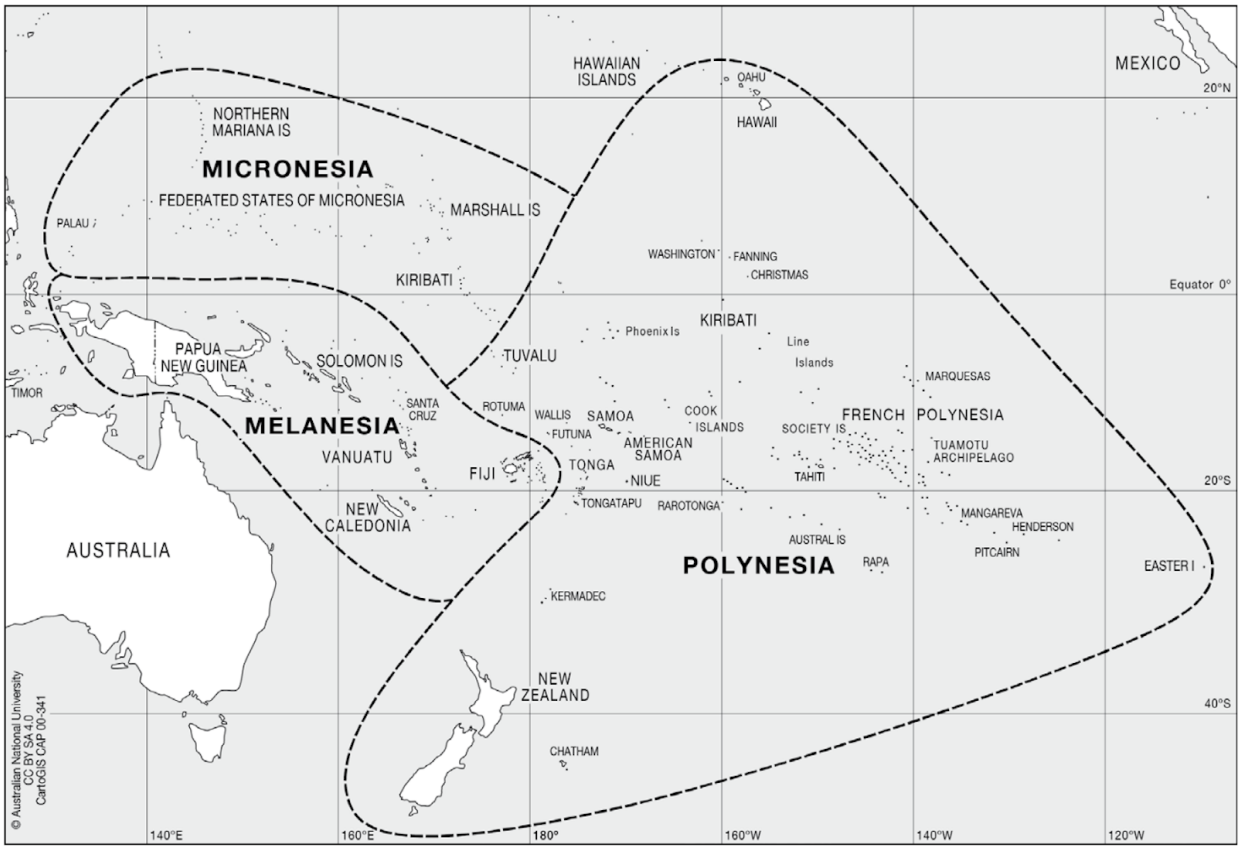
## 2.1 Introduction

An overview of Pacific tourism is provided in this chapter by outlining some of the key points of the culture and geography of the Pacific in an attempt to briefly contextualise a Pasifika worldview. Following, a breakdown on tourism and its role in the Pacific is provided – in particular to showcase the tensions at play and some of the challenges associated with it. The final third of the chapter reviews Pacific tourism in the post-pandemic pause that brought a stop to virtually all tourism enterprises for a season.

## 2.2 Pacific Geographical and Cultural Context

Home to the world's largest ocean, the Pacific covers an area of 155,000,000 square kilometres, covering 30 percent of the earth's surface, with 0.1 percent of the world's inhabitants (Goldberg, 2017; Haberkorn, 2008). Fifteen countries and areas are home to the 6.6 million Pacific Island people who reside there, situated across 25,000 different islands (Moore et al., 2010). Aptly named Pacific (which means peaceful, due to its calm waters), it is known for three culture groupings of people, Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian, which European explorers categorised (Figure 1) to geographically make distinctions between different them (Campbell, 2006; Howe et al.,1994).

**Figure 1: Pacific Island Geography and Major Cultural Groupings**




(CartoGIS Services, n.d.)

Smith (1999) states that Indigenous peoples can be defined by a network or kin, that they are connected and associated with land and actively identify themselves as Indigenous peoples. Smith (2005) adds that Indigenous peoples carry complexities, are not a homogenous group as they are self-defining. Durie (2006) adds that the term 'Indigenous' can be explained as those who reside in and have their histories associated with land prior to colonial contact and colonisation. Further adding to the notion of Indigeneity, Durie (2006) explains that natural environments, spirituality and human wellbeing are all inseparable; this is to be found over the expanse of all the Pacific Islands.

Regarding spirituality, Christianity is widespread across the Pacific and traditional and black magic spirituality also exist in differing degrees (Haluza-Delay, 2014). A oneness with nature and spirituality informs worldviews and knowledge production in ways that have challenged those with differing backgrounds. A recent example of this was of interviewees in Tuvalu who felt no concern about climate change because of their connection to God and the Biblical promise that the earth will not flood again (Haluza-Delay, 2014).

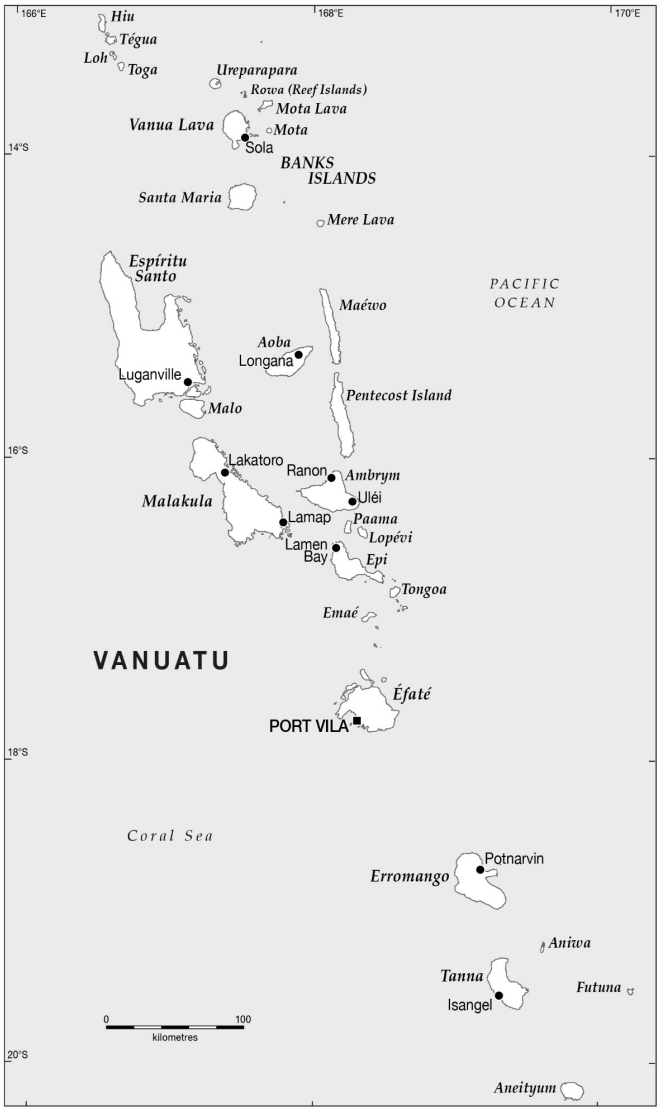
Knowledge systems throughout the Pacific have surprised (and sometimes perturbed) Western scholars in their proficiency and insight. For example, in the 1860s, Anglophones criticised the style and positioning of traditional houses in the Pacific, however it was not until European structures were established there that the reason became evident. The low-lying thatch (*Natangura* leaf) houses that had steep roofs held together with sennit (laced lashing of dried fibre) and which were built in a virtually airtight manner, were superior in almost every way to the introduced European style of housing throughout the cyclone season. This was made particularly evident when traditional houses maintained a low pressure, rather than that of the European structures which pressurised and blew to pieces (Turner, 1861; Campbell, 2009; Campbell, 2006). Interestingly recent studies have shown that this traditional form of housing also reduces the amount of cyclone fatalities. Due to corrugated iron and the heavier, more modern construction materials contributing to the deaths of people in Vanuatu post Cyclone Pam, the government is now encouraging people to rebuild with the cyclone resistant traditional designs that survived the Category 5 storm in 2015 (Handmer & Iveson, 2017).

This example of traditional construction knowledge is but one of the many insightful processes that Pacific Island peoples have at their disposal through Indigenous community structures. These facets of Indigenous knowledge are still informing academia today. This report is especially interested in how this knowledge inspires resilience and learnings as it is passed down through generations. It is this holistic worldview and Indigenous knowledge base that many Indigenous tourism stakeholders are informed by and draw from, both in Vanuatu and across the Pacific.

## 2.3 Vanuatu Context

Situated between the South Pacific Ocean and the Coral Sea, Vanuatu lies directly north of New Zealand and due east from Cairns, Australia. This archipelago is home to 330,000 inhabitants spread over 65 of its 80 islands (World Bank, 2017).

**Figure 2:** Map of Vanuatu




(Mapsland, 2024)

The Indigenous population are Melanesian, with over 74% of the population living in rural settings (World Bank, 2022). The economy is largely bolstered by tourism, agriculture, livestock and financial services – Vanuatu is a tax haven and a 'flag of convenience' which allows international companies and shipping agents to take advantage of financial freedoms and less strict protocols (Van Fossen, 2015). Tourism makes up the bulk of Vanuatu's GDP with nearly half of it stemming from this industry (Scheyvens & Movono, 2020; Coke-Hamilton, 2020).

## 2.4 Tourism and Adaptation in the Pacific

Pacific Island destinations have an associated beauty to them. With arguably some of the finest scenery in the world and being described as a postcard-perfect holiday destination since the colonial era (Pratt & Harrison, 2015). However, the Pacific also has an abnormally high amount of risk factors which make succeeding in the tourism industry a formidable challenge for any person, group or business entity (Moreno & Becken, 2009). Surviving in the face of these threats, often defined by development theorists as vulnerabilities, Pacific tourism is as complex as it is picturesque (Harrison, 2015; Moreno & Becken, 2009; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2018).

The intricacies of Pacific tourism are highlighted by a number of scholars. Baggio (2007) considers tourism as an evolving and adapting system with many factors that influence the whole, while Movono, Scheyvens and Ratuva (2023) consider Pacific tourism as a complex adaptive system in that there are dynamic entities that depend on, affect, compete and share with each other in the same setting. This system involves an agglomeration of processes that include formal and informal economies which exist across Small Island States (SIS), with their low population numbers, semi-isolated regions, and often simplistic infrastructure these factors add to the challenging dynamics, however this by no means should undermine the strength and capabilities of the Pacific peoples – rather it is a demonstration of adaptability and sheds light on the ability and strength to be self-determined in the face of challenges (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2018).

Pacific tourism has a unique set of risks that impact its existence, and Becken et al. (2013) outlines how this susceptibility to risks, both realised and unrealised, define the level of vulnerability on the system as a whole. Pacific tourism's relationship with weather is contentious in that it is both highly dependent upon it, yet also highly impacted by it (Murphy, 2013). Tropical storms are a seasonal occurrence in the Pacific and can be extremely destructive on tourism infrastructure (Becken et al., 2014; Murphy, 2013). Natural hazards like tsunami and earthquakes are also prevalent (Luetz & Nunn, 2020), as seen with the 2009 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that battered much of the southern coasts of Upolu and Savai'i in Samoa (Borrero, 2009). Nations such as Vanuatu have had multiple tsunami threats in recent years, as well as active volcanoes causing widespread issues in 2017 (Niroa & Nakamura, 2022) and again in February 2023 (Sharma, 2023). Becken et al. (2014) underscores island economies as being particularly vulnerable to natural hazards due to their coastal

situation, which is considered as having a higher exposure to the elements. Naturally, the environmental vulnerabilities are at the forefront of awareness, however Becken et al. (2014) also considers political, social and economic factors of vulnerability that exist in tropical island destinations. With public sector risk assessment policies being less available when compared to higher populated and resourced locations, the onus falls on the private sector to be aware and have a preparedness against the threats that are prolific in this sector (Becken et al., 2014). Unrealised threats to Pacific tourism, like that of the recent Covid-19 pandemic, have had far-reaching consequences (Connell, 2022). Tourism across the Asia-Pacific region recorded a loss of 94% of international tourists in 2021, compared to 2019 (World Tourism Organisation 2022). "This is no trivial fact for our Pacific Island neighbours whose population and economy rely greatly on international tourism revenue" (p.5). On top of the already existing and somewhat predictable threats inherent in Pacific tourism, this vulnerability has challenged the resilient nature of this industry to its core.

Pacific tourism could and has been labelled with pejorative terms such as 'fragility', although this is not the full picture of Pacific tourism. Yes, it is vulnerable to factors of risk such as disasters and crises like that of the Covid-19 pandemic, but in opposition there are factors of economic, cultural, community, infrastructure and capability that increase resilience (Sheppard & Williams, 2016) and thereby lessen vulnerability. Factors from both sides need to be explored in providing a holistic picture of Pacific tourism and the strength exhibited in the face of shocks and perturbations.

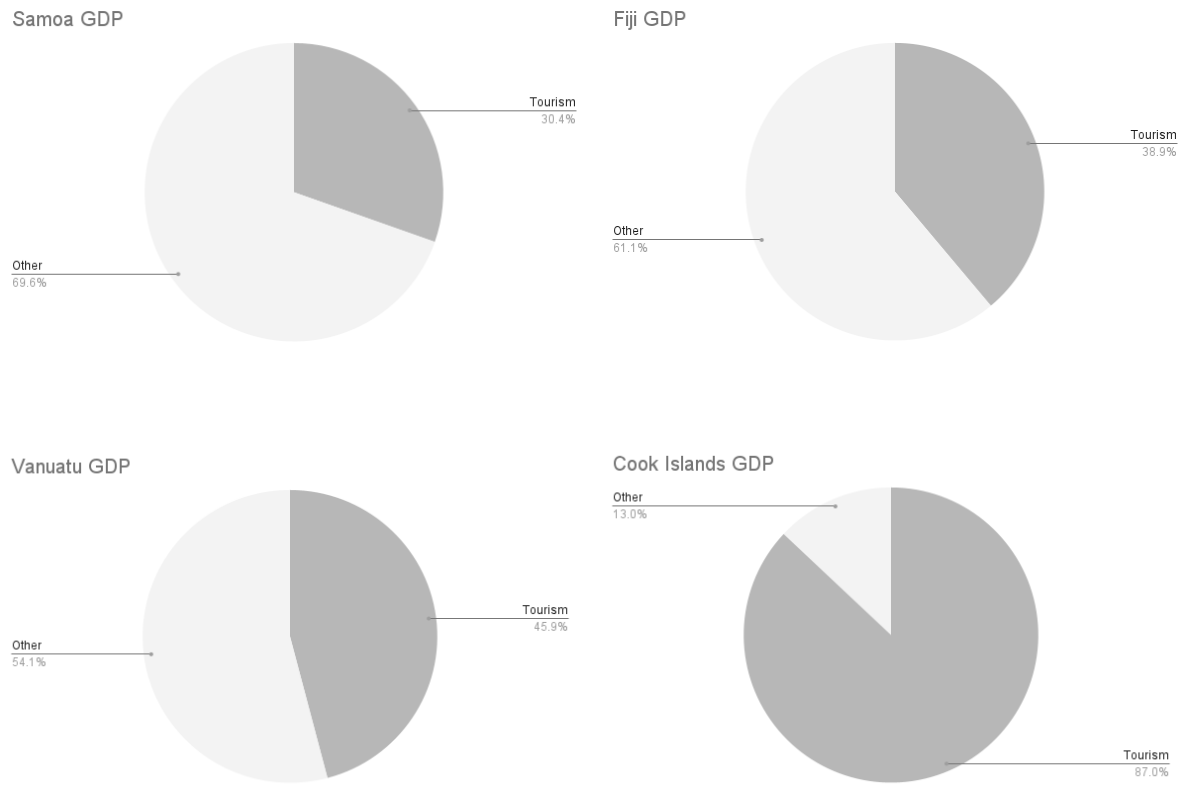
The tourism sector, or sphere as Cochrane (2010) describes it, is one of interlinked relations that spans economies, geographies, environments and even social constructs. It is a great example of a complex system in action, which allows academics and practitioners insight into the social and political ramifications of shocks or stressors, and the dynamics of adaptive measures utilised in the resilience process. As a Socio-Ecological System (SES), the tourism sphere can also be analysed through the resources it draws upon, both societal and environmental (Becken, 2013; Ostrom, 2009). It is in drawing from these resources that we witness, in novel ways, *learned resilience* contributing to decision-making for adaptable future reactions to new disturbances. Recorded accounts of those in Pacific and Asian tourism sectors reinforce this view. Gede, an employee from a tourism enterprise in Bali, states, "I am not going to go back to work in tourism full time. Maybe 50/50. I will keep the farming job"; he did this to supplement formalised employment with growing natural produce (Firdaus, 2020).

New adaptive measures are ensuring diverse livelihoods and are utilising Indigenous knowledge to inform sustainability in the tourism sphere through creative approaches to harnessing available resources (Becken & Loehr, 2022). In turn, these measures can prove to be environmentally, societally and economically beneficial.

## 2.5 Pacific Tourism in a Post-Pandemic Reality

Often referred to as small island developing states (SIDS) the Pacific island relies on tourism as an economic means (Addinsall, 2017; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2018). The Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu have a heavy reliance on the tourism industry which contributes to between 30% and 87% of the GDP, so when the Covid-19 pandemic halted tourism across the world (Afwa et al., 2021), tourism-dependent Pacific islands were the hardest hit by travel restrictions (Filho et al., 2020). Figure 3 below showcases the proportion of tourism revenue as a percentage contribution to GDP of the respective nations prior to Covid-19, in 2018.

**Figure 3:** Proportion of Tourism Income of Four Tourism Dependent Pacific Island Nations




(Gadsby, 2024. Based on Movono & Scheyvens, 2022; South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2019.)

The profound drop in tourism-generated income in these island destinations saw a dramatic dent in the economy. In Vanuatu's case, this continued for the two years of closed international borders, while other destinations such as Fiji and Samoa were also completely closed for a time (Boyd et al., 2020; Connell, 2022). Adventure tourism operator Mark Phillips, residing in Vanuatu's capital of Port Vila, stated recently, "Everyone was in a very precarious financial position because of the borders being closed for so long" (Wilson, 2023, para. 6). Some entrepreneurs creatively adapted during Covid-19. A luxury remote island in Fiji offered exclusive quarantine-free accommodation for a fee of $42,000 per night, and others offered their tourism businesses to locally based tourists at discounted rates (Connell, 2022). Many others were forced to close their doors and lay off staff, with staff resorting to utilising their social capital, land and community networks instead of their wages for support.

## 2.6 Sustainability in the Tourism Sector

With the pandemic pause (the pause that the Covid-19 pandemic brought about), concerns about tourism's negative impacts were being further brought to light. Stories emerged like that of Venice's canals running clear once again (Braga et al., 2020); of villages, communities and Non Government Organisations (NGOs) clearing out years of rubbish from clogged waterways in Bali (Kusuma, 2021); and of those in the Pacific enjoying an overall improvement in the health of the environment and their personal wellbeing (Scheyvens, Movono & Auckram, 2023). These stories have showcased that a change is needed, and consequently a necessary action away from old modes of operation to adapt for sustainable futures. Becken (2021) takes a similar stance, stating "Tourism brings many economic, social and cultural benefits. But it's time the industry seriously reconsiders its business model" (para. 4), and the reasons for this stance are multifaceted.

Concerns regarding negative externalities of the tourism sector have been thorough and have spanned decades (Mattyasovsky, 1975; Murphy, 2013). In identifying the raft of these externalities, Ketz, et al., (2019) identifies the concept of over-tourism and the sociocultural demand that cruise ship tourism puts on a host community. Although cruise companies boast a low destination footprint, damage to marine ecosystems with sewerage and waste water pumped into the ocean is still of concern. On average, cruise ships dump 45,000 litres of sewerage and 640,000 litres of water each day – all of which ends up in the ocean (Ketz, et al., 2019, p.3). More recently, Moscovici (2017) has brought to light the number of fines that cruise corporations are receiving due to smog contributions in coastal communities, through air pollution from engine exhaust gases and the incineration of 75-85% of their onboard garbage. Saarinen (2019) contends that although tourism creates employment, poor employment arrangements of long hours, low pay and live-in employment seasons have effects on family ties and degrade societal and cultural structures. Bramwell (2011) has described the dangers of governance when neo-liberal ideals minimise the role of the local and state processes in favour of privatisation. The lack of accountability in tourism-related areas then leads to overloaded local infrastructure and environmental concerns with little regulatory repercussions or avenues available for those directly affected by these specific issues (Addinsall, 2017; Schilcher, 2007). With up to 90% of Pacific tourism profits flowing out of the nation they were earned in and back to countries like Australia and New Zealand Stefanova, (2008) highlights the financial 'leakage' problems. This reinforces views like that of Addinsall (2017) and Schilcher (2007)

about the repercussions of tourism being left with the host nation and the positive effects enjoyed by outsiders. The concept of sustainability in tourism was initially heralded as an exciting and anticipated revelation (Hall, 2011) that should alter the discourse and the ramifications in future tourism development. However, it has been been 13 years since it was stated that "sustainable tourism must be regarded as one of the great success stories of tourism research" (Hall, 2011, p.649) and yet despite the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), tourism is still being critiqued for some of its unsustainable impacts.

While economic and environmental impacts are typically more explicit through their direct and observable tendencies, societal impacts are equally valid, and can produce long-term flow on effects to cultural elements, family and social networks (Brida & Zapata, 2010; Hall, 1994). Due to their less visible nature, these social impacts can go on unchecked until the host destination actually becomes antagonistic to tourism in its entirety (Saarinin, 2019). In 1975, Doxey created the Irritex scale which informs the irritation index metrics of the model to convey the level of irritation that social impacts are exerting on a host community. This tool and others can assist in quantifying the social impacts before they progress to a state of antagonism. In more recent years with the rise of new forms of tourism like that of AirBnB accommodation, couch surfing and 'woofing' (trading accommodation for labour, usually on farms, in an attempt to get closer to a host community (Gilli, 2022)), the domain of the tourist has extended into the 'everyday life' sphere of host communities. In some instances, communities have become overly frustrated with the impacts of tourism and this has led to daily allotted tourist quotas, in other instances, tourism operators have had to move to different regions altogether (Montevago, 2019). Conversely, positive impacts from tourism can include regeneration of the environment, a greater awareness of the importance of culture and associated cultural sites of significance, as well as economic benefits, and much more. As Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva (2023) state, it is about taking what is good, reflecting on past practices and addressing what the pandemic has prominently laid bare, as a driver of productive adaptive change.

## 2.7 Neo-Liberal Versus Sustainable Tourism – Bounce Back or Bounce Forward

Bouncing back to the neo-liberal hegemony of a growth-oriented tourism sphere perpetuates the existing negative tourism externalities (Hutchison, Movono & Scheyvens, 2021; Reksa et al., 2021), whereas some innovative tourism ventures are bouncing forward, leading the way into fresh tourism opportunities that are showcasing adaptation and sustainability through the likes of eco-tourism, agritourism, food-tourism and other conscious consumer initiatives that include Indigenous values (Bellato & Pollock, 2023; Carr, 2021; Hutchison, 2021). These models challenge traditional linear economic models where resources are merely consumed and disposed of, perpetuating negative social and environmental impacts – however, as Everingham (2022) reaffirms, this does not "mean taking away from job growth or well-being. On the contrary, these models are forging innovative agendas for growing economies in more diverse ways" (p.104). One such example is the likes of Regenerative Vanua, who are working with government agencies to promote and coach regenerative tourism and food-tourism initiatives throughout rural communities in Vanuatu now that many tourism trained people have returned to their home communities (Everingham, 2022; Movono & Scheyvens, 2022).

Although it is not possible to organise tourism without it having an impact (Saarinin, 2019), impacts can be mitigated and nullified through regrouping and utilising innovative strategies that can proactively address key economic, social and environmental externalities. These are the productive approaches to the necessary change that Becken (2021) calls for in a truly sustainable tourism sphere.

## 2.8 Conclusion

Pacific tourism, offering many idyllic holiday destinations, exists in a complex and unique set of tensions understood as a social-ecological system. Components of culture, environment and geography enrich SIS and yet also have risk factors attached to them that challenge Pacific tourism. Specifically, issues of remoteness, weather dependence and extreme weather vulnerability (most notably, cyclones) continue to affect and challenge this sphere. However, the Pacific is home to some extraordinary elements – namely a strong knowledge base that aids in the resilient response of thriving amongst the shocks and challenges, with the ever-present negative impacts of tourism and the relief that the environment had during Covid-19.

The pandemic pause provided a time of reflection for many in the tourism industry. The future of the tourism sector lies ahead with two definitive resilience options; to bounce back to the old growth oriented tourism structure; or to adapt, innovate and diversify, drawing from traditional knowledge to sustainably bounce forward (Reksa et al., 2021).

# Chapter 3: Resilience

## 3.1 What is Resilience?

Such is the versatility of the word ‘resilience’ that it is used across multiple professions. Google’s Ngram Viewer, which highlights the frequency of word usage, shows a 400% increase of the word ‘resilience’ in published books since 1990 (Google Ngram, 2023). Although initially developed as a theory in the 1970’s by Holling to describe ecological systems changes (Holling, 1973), it has since been developed and refined, most recently with Movono, Scheyvens and Ratuva’s (2023) novel model that explores indigenous concepts and Pacific tourism inside a stakeholder framework (shown in Figure 4 below). Resilience has now become a buzzword and Brown (2014) describes its recent overuse in policy as pervasive. As it is with most buzzwords, there tends to be a broad range of meanings associated with its definition (Stumpp, 2013; Dehghani, et al., 2022).

Orchiston et al.’s definition of resilience succinctly states that it is “the ability of a system to maintain its identity and adapt its essential structure and function in the face of disturbance” (Orchiston et al., as cited by Fabry & Zeghni, 2019, p.95). A typical view of resilience is the function of being able to bounce back effectively and efficiently to a shock or a stressor that threatens welfare (Constas et al., 2020). However, Walker (2020) adds to this by implying that bouncing back to a former position assumes a static process – rather, it is necessary for a learning component to be involved in order for a system to be truly resilient. In this process, a system's resilience is not simply maintained but it is developed in a “dynamic process of thinking, reflection and change” (Scheyvens et al., 2020), suggesting bouncing forward rather than bouncing back, as a more informed description (Ketter, 2022).

Richardson (2002) explains how the conceptualisation of resilience has come through three waves of theory. The first wave simply identified resilience as characteristics that a person possesses. Specific characteristics have been identified as grit, faith and hope (van Breda, 2001). Werner & Smith (2001) measured an individual's resilience in the ability to resource others for reciprocal benefits, also citing ‘strong faith’ to be a core component of one's personhood. The second wave of theory sought to explain resilience as a process of adaptation, from the individual's ability to the outworking of, involving external influences in the process.

In this light, resilience is seen as evolving and able to be determined or ignored (Richardson, 2002). The third wave adds to the others by including the intricacies of organisations and communities and the notion of motivational forces which intersect factors of resilience (Richardson, 2002). In this light, resilience is understood as a complex and fluid construct, instigated and influenced through individuals and groups with a predestined optimistic outlook to overcome disturbance (Richardson, 2002; Werner & Smith, 2001; Lengnick-Hall, 2011). This is helpful in understanding resilience in a Pacific tourism context to not simply be a matter of individual traits, but a dynamic and holistic process that has community and cultural components interlaced with it.

### 3.2 Pacific Tourism as a Social-Ecological System

Fabry et al. (2019), in discussing resilience, states that "being resilient is not a status but a frame of mind" (p.97). When this 'frame of mind' influences the group (or community), there is a cross-pollination of sorts which blends the capabilities and characteristics of people with cultural capital and organisational (or group/community) processes. Movono et al. (2017) describes Pacific Island communities as existing in social-ecological systems (SES) which foster group resilience in dynamically profound ways and these dynamically profound processes can beneficially inform resilience in the face of and after-effects of crisis. The process of informing resilience hints at components of reorganisation and learning, blending what Richardson (2002) explains as the organisational construct of resilience with a Pacific worldview. When looked through a tourism system lens, this can be viewed as a thriving system that is prepared, has adaptive response, and is equipped to recover and adjust following sudden shocks (Sommer et al., 2016).

Socio-cultural elements have a determining effect on resilience. Vanuatu's Indigenous, collective society allows for a collective approach to adapting to disturbances. Scheyvens, Movono and Auckram's Advanced Frangipani Framework of Wellbeing (2022) links social and cultural elements to wellbeing inside a greater environmental context, and these social systems are resources of resilience that can support the tourism sphere when it is under strain. These kinship structures have assisted in the reorganisation and sharing/trading of resources when lockdowns and border closures meant no visiting tourists (Scheyvens et al., 2020), as well as in rebuilding in the face of cyclone damage like the recent twin cyclone event earlier

in 2023 (Wilson, 2023). Reksa (2021) surmises that socio-cultural factors of resilience have been significant for SIS in their past and will be even more necessary in their future. Movono & Scheyvens (2022) adeptly explain social systems in the Pacific in relation to resilience as a "zone of stability entrenched within cultural practices, allowing for the harnessing of various forms of capital" (p.128). Cultural capital, socio-cultural resilience and community resilience are all social labels which back up the Indigenous nature of collectivism in bolstering the function of resilience (Cochrane, 2010; Gheuens et al, 2019). Indigenous communities in the Pacific have strong social bonds that inform and enforce cultural identity (Movono & Becken, 2018) and therefore community involvement is imperative to resilience and to the function of sustainable futures in the Pacific context (Gheuens et al., 2019).

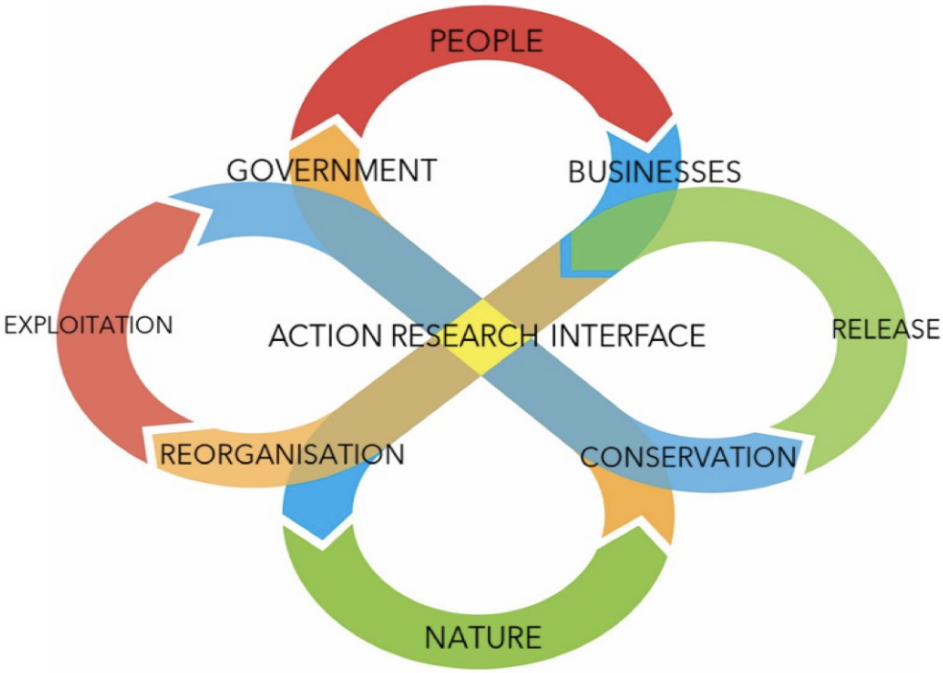
### 3.3 Resilience Theory

Theories abound in understanding resilience. In considering the formation of resilience, whether individually or collectively, van Breda (2001) identifies two determining factors in how resilience is formed. These are acute and chronic adversity factors, while Somers (2009) defines passive and active resilience concepts. The *acute adversity* factor of van Breda and the *active resilience* concepts of Somers share similar theory in that they utilise a post-crisis reflection and an informed learned process that assists future resilience through being better equipped and resourced to adapt to risk, threats and adversity. The *chronic adversity* and *passive resistance* concepts, also sharing the same vein of theory, refer to a real-time learning of resilience in the face of the shock and the strain-tested ability of being able to bounce back without the time variable of hindsight (Somers, 2009; van Breda, 2001). The two tiered factor of informed resilience through adversity, dissects the layers of resilience in providing a more concise understanding.

Another lens through which to view resilience is through complex adaptive systems theory (Fath et al., 2015). Examining multiple tourism stakeholders and their contributions, connections and creative input through the 'Tourism Resilience Framework' (see Figure 4), sheds light on the inter-relational dynamics of time, stakeholders and the resilience process at large. Founded by Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva (2023), this framework considers a holistic view on resilience by complementing the adaptive cycle of the Hollings Loop (Holling, 1973), which showcases a horizontal feedback loop, identifying *exploitation, conservation, release*

and *reorganisation* (further explained in Chapter 5) as the four main stages of dynamic change. To this resilience model, a vertical stakeholder loop has been added with social and ecological components to better illustrate the Pacific tourism context and to philosophise the Indigenous epistemology of nature and people interacting hand in hand. The junction of the vertical and the horizontal elements, the 'action research interface', highlights succinctly how elements of nature, business, government and people can all inspire reorganisation and operationalise resilience on the whole (Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva, 2023).

**Figure 4:** Tourism Resilience Framework




(Movono, Schyvens & Ratuva, 2023)

### 3.4 Resilience and Adaptation

Resilience depends upon the capability of a system "to self organise, learn and adapt" (Fabry & Zeghni, 2019, p.104). It is the observability of subsequent actions to absorb, mitigate or nullify vulnerabilities that showcase adaptive actions. Closely related to resilience, adaptability differs in that it is the ability to make a responsive change. Adaptability can benefit resilience, though adaptability does not necessarily imply being resilient (Walker et al., 2004). A resilient destination, such as Vanuatu, draws from the outworking of adaptive governance for it to retain

and build upon its capabilities (Fabry & Zeghni, 2019). Adaptive governance ensures the learning process of resilience is maintained and the practical outworking of this sees capabilities and past experiences used as so-called stepping stones in developing further resilient structures. An adaptive system is one that is both reflexive and collaborative, and an interesting consequence is that these systems often challenge stagnated hierarchies which have previously stifled creative adaptation in repeated crises (Dredge, 2018; Hartman; 2016; Voss & Kemp, 2006). Therefore, adaptation is a necessity and can also be a contentious counterpart to resilience.

In a practical sense, resilience is a panarchy of elements (Holling & Gunderson, 2002) that collectively feed into a resilient and sustainable tourism sector (Berkes & Ross, 2016). Biggs et al. (2012) state that sustainable tourism management has resilience at its core and that even though resilience, sustainability and adaptation are often squeezed into the same box, it is easier to understand the relationships of these three as an intermingled spectrum (Zanotti et al., 2020). Pocinho et al. (2022) have drawn strong connections between resilience and wellbeing and note how wellbeing flows from resilience – pointing to a possible further element of the intermingled spectrum which all work together in overlapping layers in equipping and assisting tourism stakeholders in confronting uncertainty (McManus et al., 2008) and proficiently addressing disturbances (Doan et al., 2022).

### 3.5 Traditional Resilience Structures and Contemporary Erosion

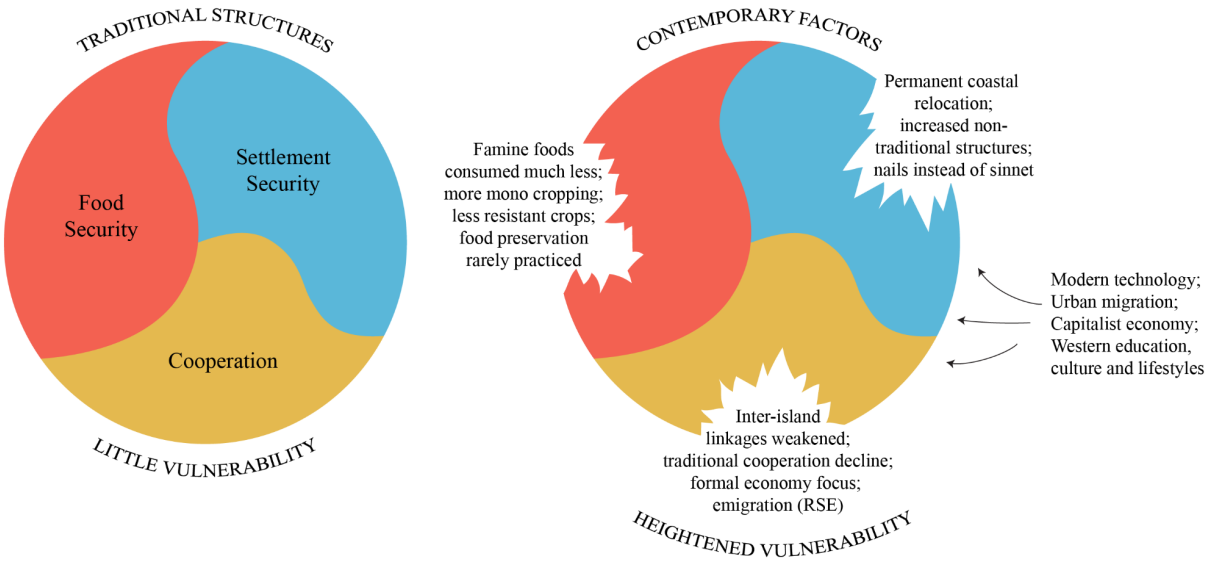
Three traditional practices are highlighted by Campbell (2009) to be the core of Indigenous Pacific resilience. These are listed as (a) food security, (b) settlement security, and (c) cooperation. Food security is seen in the planting of diverse vegetables and fruits in a regenerative fashion which, though seemingly haphazard, kept the gardens in balance with different crop varieties intermingled. Yams and breadfruit were baked and stored in various ways to be kept for years (Campbell, 2009; Turner, 1861). Settlement security is largely surmised by the building methods, placement and design of traditional structures that are still today heralded as the most safe and secure way to be cyclone resistant (Handmer & Iveson, 2017). Cooperation refers to the traditional society's process of reciprocal exchange and obligations. At times chiefs enforced certain outcomes such as growing a particular crop for

traditional ceremonies, and the network of exchange even spanned across multiple islands (Campbell, 2009).

A breakdown of these systems has been seen following a trend towards modernism, in which the ramifications equate to an undermining of traditional resilience structures. Highlighted below in Figure 5, are the effects of these contemporary factors on food security, cooperation and settlement security. A dependence on international assistance post disaster has seen many of the traditional practices of disaster relief decline – notably lessening resilient practices like that of utilising famine foods and food preservation techniques (Jackson, 2020). An elderly man from the northern Vanuatu island of Moto Lava stated, in 1980, that there were only two or three people left alive that knew the process of extracting sago from palm – a key source of sustenance for post cyclone survival when all other food crops were destroyed. Other traditional methods like this have also been lost (Campbell, 1990). Ultimately, international food aid has had a degrading effect on Indigenous practices and is therefore replacing Indigenous knowledge (Jackson, 2020). Settlement security has been undermined with the reliance on imported building materials and methods of construction. Mixing old techniques with new materials has ultimately left houses more vulnerable to cyclones (Vrolijks, 1998), particularly without the traditional seasonal relocation away from the coastal areas. Pelling & Uitto (2001) identify how modernism plays a role in elevating the 'individual' above the community, changing traditional hierarchical structures and although providing a temporary relief from *kastom* obligation and reciprocal cooperation this, in the long term is also eroding resilience systems (Pelling & Uitto, 2001).

Other factors are also eroding resilience according to researchers. Pierce & Hemstock (2022) have stated that "western education, a capitalist economy, and urban migration" (p.42) are modern factors that have led away from tradition. While not necessarily negative in practice, over an extended period these factors have further eroded traditions that have supported resilient processes. Elaborating further, Pierce & Hemstock (2022) and Handmer & Iveson (2017) note that traditional knowledge throughout the Pacific is valued less among children and teenagers due to a greater interest in Western education, culture and lifestyles. The prevalence of modern technology such as smart phones that have instant information accessibility features is also a factor that is challenging traditional knowledge and its value within the younger generations.

**Figure 5:** Traditional Resilience Structures and Contemporary Erosion Factors




(Gadsby, 2024. Based on Campbell, 2009.)

Paradoxically, the locally led response to Vanuatu's Tropical Cyclone (TC) Harold that occurred during the pandemic in April 2020 was cited a success due to its return to traditional methods of emergency relief. Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, the emergency response was led from in-country and this necessitated that resources and solutions were drawn from traditional networks and practices. This was a response led by the Malvatumauri (National Council of Chiefs), and Chiefs from the island of Tanna supplied produce to those affected on other islands (Pierce & Hemstock, 2022), coordinating and drawing from traditional practices to the crisis response – like that of ages past. An international respondent stated that the humanitarian response to meeting the needs of the vulnerable was much better than prior cyclone efforts where international aid agencies were more present (HAG, VANGO, 2020). Nalau, McNaught & Dalesa (2020) highlight how Vanuatu has traditional knowledge and resilience systems in place for these types of crises and that valuing these systems is key to effective Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies.

## 3.6 Conclusion

Resilience as a descriptor is used often and in many differing contexts. Known most simply as *bouncing back*, resilience also has complexities, tensions and multi-tiered elements in its makeup. Being observed in individuals and organisations, resilience can be exhibited in traits, actions and structures, such as Indigenous cultural processes that underscore social-ecological systems in practice. Responding efficiently to a shock or stressor, with a learned and appropriate response, highlights resilience and also adaptability – and often used together, the elements of resilience adaptation and sustainability can be better understood as a spectrum of components that make up a healthy and responsive system which harmoniously cohabitates in addressing various forms of vulnerability. Pocinho et al. (2022) alludes to the intimate partnership between wellbeing and resilience, which further feeds the theme of a healthy system. Resilience factors and vulnerabilities work on an opposing axis so that a net increase in resilience equals a decrease in vulnerability.

The more recent erosion of traditional resilience factors has highlighted a loss in the practice of resilient cultural systems (Campbell, 2006; Handmer & Iveson, 2017; Pierce & Hemstock, 2022), although reports from disaster relief, post TC Harold, cited Indigenous systems being reutilised with better outcomes than prior International aid efforts (HAG, VANGO, 2020). Ultimately this showcases that, despite resilience being undermined by modern ways of living, there is still a fundamental role that traditional resilience plays in effective responses to crises. As noted by more than one author, resilience is endemic in the culture and way of life of Pacific peoples (Addinsall, 2017; Campbell, 2006; Nalau, McNaught & Dalesa, 2020).

# Chapter 4: Methodology

## 4.1 Introduction

Now that Chapters 2 and 3 have discussed Pacific tourism and resilience and shown how these two work together within the Indigenous Pasific context we move into the original data collection component of this research. This chapter outlines the processes of planning, selecting and gathering of data for this research report. Situated within an already established, multi-sited, qualitative based approach led by Dr Apisalome Movono and Professor Regina Scheyvens from Massey University, this research specifically seeks to investigate stories of emergent leadership amidst crisis and how these contribute to resilience.

Detailing the methodological approach used in Vanuatu over the months of November and December in 2023, this chapter initially provides context for the pre-existing project that this research sits within. Following this, detail is shared on the culturally relevant data collection process that I used, and the remainder of the chapter informs how the components of ethics, positionality, fieldwork and limitations have populated and shaped the findings to come.

## 4.2 Background

The larger three-year Marsden-funded project in which my research is situated, explores the unique and intricate nature of Pacific tourism's adaptability in the face and somewhat constant threat of sudden shocks, like that of Covid-19 and the recent twin cyclones in Vanuatu. Ultimately, this broader three year project focuses on answering the question: *How can tourism be reimagined to ensure resilience and sustainability in the face of current shocks and future perturbations?*

The end goal is in broadening the knowledge base of adaptability and resilience in the tourism development arena through the following four key research objectives:

1. *Analyse government and private sector responses to the crisis in tourism*
2. *Explore adaptive patterns and signs of community resilience in Fiji and Vanuatu*
3. *Investigate emergent leadership and its potential to further radical innovation in resilience building*
4. *Identify pathways for transforming tourism practice in the Pacific*

**Appendix A:** Reimagining South Pacific Tourism Information Sheet 2022-2025

My research fits into the confines of these previously established parameters, honing in on objective 3. Guided by Dr Apisalome Movono and Professor Regina Scheyvens in this process, I had a number of pre-organised contacts in Vanuatu who were familiar with the themes of resilience, Pacific tourism, adaptability and vulnerability, which enabled me to segue into data collection quite smoothly.

### 4.3 Ethics

Prior to fieldwork I completed the two-step Massey University ethics process, undertaking the Development studies in-house ethics review process which included an online form that considered a thorough review of all potential ethical concerns. A discussion of the fieldwork process with advisors Regina Scheyvens and Rochelle Stewart-Withers greatly assisted my fine-tuning of the balance of ethics without creating ethical dilemmas. My main takeaway here was to ensure informed consent but not to presume that everyone is literate. Secondly, I submitted a low risk ethics notification and I received approval with the notification number 4000028354.

Having travelled to Vanuatu many times previously, I am familiar with much of the culture and the subtleties of exchange in communication. Multiple attempts to contact Vanuatu's Cultural Centre to submit an application for research were unanswered, however at the time of travel the Vanuatu government had changed governments three times in four weeks. With prior research approval given for the duration of the Marsden project (within which my study)), I concluded that I had been as ethical as one could be in stating my intentions prior to fieldwork.

In the final few days prior to travel, I was invited to be part of a six-day intensive workshop with a number of key informants during a consultation workshop. I happily obliged and considered this invitation to be an added and convenient ethical green light. I completed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAT) safe travel documentation for the purpose and duration of my fieldwork in Vanuatu.

Being privy to the *Reimagining South Pacific Tourism* information sheet, I utilised this in informing consent alongside the consent form. This two-page document conveys clearly that research will be collated and drawn from for study purposes and outlines the participants' rights in the interviewing process. It is attached as Appendix A. I was careful to obtain informed consent and participants were emailed consent documentation a week in advance, prior to my arrival in Vanuatu (attached as Appendix C). With all participants, I provided a paper consent form to fill in and I communicated the process orally – particularly in the village settings being careful to not assume that everyone was literate in English. All interviewees provided consent (either verbally or written), and in the guidance of Banks & Scheyvens (2014) I would also confirm consent at the completion of the interview, given the duration and the nature of the *storian*[1] process where all manner of things were discussed. Twice at the concluding of the discussions, in readdressing the informed consent process, interviewees asked to have certain statements removed – to which I obliged. With the Marsden consent forms being available and with prior ethics approval, one interviewee noted that I had both the bureaucratic stamp of approval and also an added accountability to Dr Apisalome Movono whom they knew personally and held in high esteem.

[1] *Storian* is the Ni-Vanuatu process of knowledge sharing in a semi structured approach that allows for discursive dialogue between participants and interviewees (Addinsall, 2017) – much like the Pasifika concept of *Talanoa.* See also section 4.5.2

Drawing from Massey University's Pacific Research, Guidelines and Protocols, I adopted the Pacific Research Principles into my approach and coupled this with the notion of embodying the role of a learner throughout the process. These are the principles I am aspiring to:

1. *Respect for relationships (utilising cultural and emotional intelligence)*
2. *Respect for knowledge holders (understanding, respecting and sensitivity to knowledge sharing)*
3. *Reciprocity (honouring people for their contributions)*
4. *Holism (integration of physical, social, environmental, cultural and spiritual elements)*
5. *Using research to do good (showing integrity, honour and being wise to potential ramifications)*

**Appendix B:** Massey University, Pacific Research Guidelines and Protocols (n.d.).

With these principles in mind, I also acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems (*kastom,* as it is known in Vanuatu), taking care to honour the Vanuatu Cultural Research Policy's guiding principles which mimic the Pacific Research Principles above, valuing reciprocity of exchange and a 'learning' stance to research, as opposed to an already informed one. Practising this, I am sharing back to participants their input prior to submission of my research report, which is an additional measure to safeguard those participants' knowledge. See 4.8 for further reciprocity detail.

## 4.4 Reflexivity and Positionality

Being aware of myself as an outsider I knew it would be difficult to interpret data with an unbiased mindset. In realising these limitations, I planned on regularly reflecting in an attempt to minimise these potential biases that I bring from my own culture, worldview and privilege. With a Christian and Māori heritage and having undertaken previous construction-based projects in Vanuatu over the past 10 years with an NGO that I work for, I do feel relatively at home in Vanuatu. However, positioning myself without the 'tradie' (tradesperson) position that I usually operate within is a different challenge. Wearing a collared shirt and carrying a clipboard was not something I ever imagined myself doing. This fed into insecurities such as

legitimacy and heightened the feelings of an outsider complex. Being unsure how my presence may potentially bias responses, I focussed on building solid relationships with those that I engaged with, adopting the role of a learner. In this way I was able to be open and honest rather than attempting to be seen as a smooth and professional researcher.

Reflexivity, according to Nightingale and Cromby (1999), outlines an approach in which the researcher takes care to dissect knowledge gained with the subtle biased influences that are inherent in all researchers. Being aware of one's own positionality, limitations and even insecurities in the research process is an essential trait to addressing bias (McLennan et al., 2014). A practical way to be aware of and address subtle biases was through the use of a field journal, documenting the field research in real time, as Stewart-Withers et al. (2014) suggests. This is a practice I started one week prior to fieldwork, to enforce the habit.

## 4.5 Fieldwork

### 4.5.1 Entry into the Field

The fieldwork for this research was based in Port Vila, Vanuatu. My wife and our two boys (aged 3 and 6) also travelled with me but only stayed for the first two weeks, while I stayed on an additional week, leaving on the 17th of December just as the pawpaw and banana fruits were coming back into rotation after not being available for almost a year due to cyclone damage – as noted in the foreword. The duration of the fieldwork was 20 days, staying in the Pango Village at Efalfale Bay. Every day there was someone to chat to about resilience, either spontaneously in my walks through the village, or in pre-organised meetings.

My pre-established contact, Jerry Spooner, had arranged for me to meet him two days after arriving and settling in, and with a quick time change at the last minute, what I thought was going to be my first interview turned into me introducing myself and talking about resilience to a panel of government ministers and Regenerative Vanua's project team. Following this, I was invited to take part in Regenerative Vanua's intensive theory of change workshop – a week-long high level planning strategy with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), which also included Vanuatu Government Departments, foreign consultants and members of the NGO's, Regenerative Vanua and Live & Learn.

Being keenly aware that I was an outsider and not having the usual social enabler of being a tradesperson as with my past work experience in Vanuatu, I chose to continue attending the week-long workshop, and used this process to learn and adapt and make relationships – although by the end of the week I was exhausted and had no succinct data except a few pages of handwritten notes hastily recorded between workshop sessions. In the following two weeks I was able to maximise those relationships however, thanks to the opportunities Jerry Spooner provided and others I met, ultimately recording nine quality interviews alongside many informal and impromptu talks with locals in triangulating this new-found data. Although I was unable to interview Jerry Spooner at the time due to his workload, the snowballing effect of referrals were more than enough when added to the other four interviews and *storian* sessions that organically appeared through casual conversations in the field.

### 4.5.2 Data Collection Process

Qualitative research is the process of exploring and understanding a particular social context in its natural setting (Stewart-Withers et al., 2014). With the focus being Vanuatu, it was necessary to travel there to gain this level of understanding. Being a part of the environment, and for a small time sharing in its *kastom* and ways of life, positioned me to observe the 'natural setting' that Stewart-Withers et al. (2014) alludes to in the research process.

Interviews of individuals, and small groups when deemed appropriate, were to be conducted following the Pasifika-relevant concept of *'storian*' – a term in the Bislama language prominent throughout Vanuatu for "chatting, yarning or swapping stories" (Crowley, 1995, p.235). Similar to that of *talanoa* in other parts of the Pacific, interviews are semi structured allowing for a discursive dialogue to emerge. This process aids in a greater depth of discussion and knowledge sharing through the dialogue process, as interviewees as well as participants are expected to be emotionally engaged (Nabobo-Bbaba, 2006, as cited by Stewart-Withers et al., 2014) – not separate. With *storian* being familial across the social layers of ni-Vanuatu and a relevant tool used in *kastom* practices, there are fewer obstacles to engagement, fostering a conducive environment for knowledge sharing. I planned for *storian* as my sole approach due to its flexibility to both individuals and groups, and its ability to be tailored to more formal or

less formal settings, as needed in the field. All of my questions were open-ended and I included small stories about myself during the introduction, to develop rapport with participants.

I used a collection of data recording processes, favouring voice recordings when participants were comfortable with this, and hand-writing notes in some interviews. One of the *storian* sessions began in an impromptu setting and although tempted to secretly record during our discussions, I instead recorded my own voice memorandum immediately following the session, taking note of all the key points and adding the few quotes that I had hastily written on my phone during the talk. Table 1 below lists the style of interview and names and position of those who shared information with me during this time.

**Table 1:** Table of Research Participants

| **Interview approach** | **Name** | **Position or title** |
|---|---|---|
| Zoom interview | Dr Cherise Addinsall | Project Lead, ACIAR |
| Face to face interview; Zoom interview | Votausi Mackenzie-Reur | Owner, Lapita (and local produce wholesaler) |
| Face to face interview | Morris Kaloran | Secretary General, Shefa Province |
| Face to face interview; follow up *storian* | Norah Rihai | FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) |
| *Storian* – island drive | Leonid Vusilai | Restaurant Owner |
| *Storian* – cafe | Tousong Kalsong | Entrepreneur (Eratap community) |
| | Nik Laing | Head of Primary (Port Vila International School) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Greg Laing | Project Lead (Build Stronger Vanuatu) |
| *Storian* – village | Pastor Joshua | Pastor (Tanna community) |
| | Lillian | Village Elder (Tanna community) |
| *Storian* – evening in village *nakamal* (meeting house) | Mr Albert | Builder (Build Stronger Vanuatu) |
| | Mrs Albert | Voluntourism Project Lead (Love Vanuatu) |
| | Nik Laing | Head of Primary (Port Vila International School) |
| | Greg Laing | Project Lead (Build Stronger Vanuatu) |
| Face to face interview | Chef Joseph | Chef / Restaurant Owner (Marketplace) |

Table 1 lists the names of all participants in the way they chose to be named, and I have used the titles they provided to give context to the wide range of participants. Two interviews were conducted via Zoom to follow on from previous discussions. Cherise Addinsall reviewed the consent form and chose to verbally consent on the Zoom interview. I was still in Vanuatu but she had travelled to Australia at that stage. Votausi Mackenzie-Reur had previously signed the consent form, however our interview was cut short and this was reconvened a week later while she was on the island of Espirito Santo. Morris Kaloran and Norah Rihai were both interviewed over lunch that I provided and chose to sign the consent forms. Although there was back-and-forth in the conversation, the process seemed more of an interview than *storian*, likely because of their immense wealth of knowledge – like that of Dr Cherise Addinsall.

Leonid Vusilai was not interested in the paper consent process and was happy sharing with me on multiple occasions. On a drive around the island of Efate I was able to have a thorough *storian* session with him and upon being dropped in the village, I immediately made my own voice recording based on all the discussions that we had.

The interview with Tousong Kalsong was over a lunch meal during the weekend. I chose to invite Greg and Nik Laing along for the *storian* as they had met Tousong prior and I thought it may have been too socially awkward given the snowball referral and not having previously met prior to the interview. Nik Laing aided in the social fluidity of the discussion and I was happy with my decision as, even though I led the *storian* session, Tousong's answers were all directed to Nik – the other woman in the group. Tousong provided verbal consent, as did Greg and Nik Laing.

The longer *storian* sessions with Pastor Joshua and Lillian, and then following with Greg and Nik Laing and Mr and Mrs Albert, were all agreed to on verbal consent. Although I took notes, I had to have multiple follow-up conversations to clarify important pieces of information.

The final interview in the kitchen of Chef Joseph's small marketplace restaurant was a highlight as he served us Vanuatu-sourced beef brisket and yellow-fin tuna steaks. Asking questions about his transition from being a chef at Warwick Le Lagon hotel to his small market place restaurant seemed to make Chef Joseph's day. Swatting away my questions about consent, he proceeded to discount our meal and only asked that we tell everyone about his succulent Vanuatu beef brisket!

### 4.6 Reciprocity

Smith (1999) highlights the value of returning what is Indigenous to those who are its gatekeepers. In the process of researching in Vanuatu, I planned to treat the research gathered like a physical object to be shared back to those participants once the findings are established. Smith (1999) also states that "sharing is a responsibility of research" (1999, p.161), for it not to be hidden away but that in its sharing, further knowledge is pollinated. Lanier (2000) identifies a thorough understanding of reciprocity to be a measurement of cultural intelligence (otherwise known as CQ). I have contact details for all of the participants, some who have

become new friends. I plan to send this research paper to those who asked, and email correspondence with one participant post-*storian* has led to them sharing more of their research and knowledge which has already enriched the forming of this document. Following *kastom* protocol and staying inside the bounds of the Pacific research guidelines, I was careful to demonstrate reciprocity to participants by showing respect, gratitude, and providing complimentary meals and coffees, and sometimes in more specific ways – such as offering the accommodation I had as a space for an online symposium. In almost every interview, *storian* or Zoom, the participants gave of their time and their resources generously and I feel compelled to honour their contributions to the best of my ability.

Examples of how I was blessed more than I gave after interviews:

- Votausi Mackenzie-Reur from Lapita Cafe invited a group of us to her home and catered us an extensive meal after our week's meetings.
- Leonid Vusilai drove me halfway around Efate because he didn't want me to catch the bus after one of our *storian* sessions.
- Lillian gave me the first pawpaw of the season. Her pawpaw tree had not borne any fruit in the nine months post-cyclone, which had decimated her village.

These acts of generosity, affected me both at the time and in reflection. I have been inspired from this research process to return to Vanuatu in 2024 to honour the relationships formed and share the research findings in person, alongside the further building projects that I will be undertaking with the NGO that I am a part of.

### 4.7 Data

In analysing the data, I typed out all voice recordings word-for-word, as well as all the pages of notes – taking regular timestamps and adding my thoughts in bold around subjects, quotes and items that drew interest. Following O'Leary's "drilling in and abstracting out" process (2017, p.263) of taking raw data, organising, reducing, finding connections, building thematically and then attempting to make everything understandable, I was able to code the data into approximately ten differing themes across the nine interview/*storian* sessions. I used simple colour-coded highlighting that established patterns and allowed for easy analysis in the

guidance, read over all data multiple times, and sought clarification through triangulated, post-fieldwork follow up questions (Stewart-Withers et al., 2014).

## 4.8 Conclusion

The research collected was primarily through the discretion of Jerry Spooner and his contacts, as he was the key informant for this research. Coincidentally, fieldwork in Vanuatu matched the schedule for Regenerative Vanua's theory of change week-long workshop and I attended these sessions for a week. The relationships formed at this time during the teamwork planning exercises, the breakout sessions, and the lunches, benefited my research process greatly in the weeks following. My initial concerns of being stuck in planning workshops and unable to interview anyone for the first half of my fieldwork excursion were dwarfed by the rich discussion, interviews and extended *storian* sessions that snowballed from those initial relationships.

# Chapter 5: Findings I: Emergent Leadership as a Function of Resilience in Pacific Tourism Economies – A Desktop Discovery

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter makes up part one of the three findings chapters, exploring the roles and key traits of emergent leadership that mark it as distinct from conventional leadership. This findings chapter is informed via a desktop enquiry, noting the differentiating factors that include adaptive capabilities, working within fluid and imperfect information situations in the domain of uncertainty, and ultimately learning from the situation at hand to inform greater resilience. This provides a reference point for the field research findings in Chapter 6 and 7. Initially providing an overview of leadership, the chapter progresses to showcase how emergent leadership is unique, as it evolves in a crisis situation. Links are drawn with resilience, and Figure 6 provides insight into how emergent leadership surfaces as a positive element of Movono, Scheyvens and Ratuva's (2023) Tourism Resilience Framework, introduced previously in Chapter 3 (Figure 4).

## 5.2 Leadership

An effective leader is characterised as an individual who is able to mobilise a collection of people towards a shared vision, ultimately achieving progress towards that end (Collins, 2009). Leadership is a driving force of purpose and direction that our societies need to have in order to thrive and survive – and most notably during times of upheaval. Living with the ramifications of the challenges that our world has recently faced, leadership is a fundamental component to how organisations, people, economies and governments react and then respond to the challenges faced, while balancing stakeholder demands (Wu et al., 2021). There are many studies on what constitutes a good leader and what traits are necessary (Jaques, 2007; Maxwell, 2007; Mitroff, 2001), however this positioning of leadership rhetoric struggles to elaborate on the context of crisis leadership. This is due to uniquely identifiable principles that, while may cover some leadership fundamentals, also branch out into their own field of study. Pierce (2009) surmises this topic as Emergent Leadership During Crisis (ELDC) to further

define this nuance. In order to respond more effectively to future crises, it is important to consider ‘crisis leadership’, ‘emergent leadership’ or ELDC as a distinct phenomenon in the leadership abstraction (Wu et al., 2021).

## 5.3 Emergent Leadership

Emergent leadership takes this notion of leadership but adds in the element of a shock or disturbance to a system, and it is here that these two approaches diverge due to the specific factors that crises involve – both for a leader and those being led. A crisis is said to involve an unusual disruption to operation and uncertainty inside a time of urgency (Sommer et al., 2016), and in this setting there is less stability than what is typical in usual leadership interactions. Jaques (2007) underscores this difference in that crisis leadership is non-linear, unpredictable, and requires an almost entrepreneurial nature of reflexivity and adaptation to swiftly changing circumstances. Dunn (2020) explains how emergent leaders respond to these rapid changes with adaptive intelligence by tackling problems in a unique construct when compared to typical leadership approaches. Hunt (2019) highlights the complexity of crisis leadership in that, amidst a crisis, people are stressed, emotional and irrational, and are more prone to outbursts against leadership. Leaders in these circumstances need to be able to manage the strains put on them by people and convey confidence despite ambiguity of direction and potentially their own concerns and fears (Chabau, 2010, as cited by Hunt, 2019). Managing uncertainty and mitigating the factors of a crisis is effective crisis leadership in action (Hunt, 2019).

Leadership originating amidst a crisis is otherwise known as emergent leadership (Hunt 2019; Pierce, 2009; Pine, 2018). Challenging the existing norms of a leader's functionality, emergent leadership demands a greater requirement of skill sets. In particular, it is in the rising to meet the challenges of a new crisis that these new leaders are realised, hence the term ‘emergent’. A recent study, ‘Emergent Leaders in Crisis’ (Anderson, 2018), has shown that emergent behaviour is both organisational and individual, and that it collectively addresses the functions of: dealing with stress; decision making amidst uncertainty; and the adoption of responsibility. These key areas were identified throughout a number of crisis situations that included the wildfires in California and the Haiti earthquake response. Emergent leadership can be collective, individual, institutional or non-institutional, and although the basic tenets of leadership such as motivation of others and communicating of the vision remains, the role

encompasses a greater complexity, spurred on by the spontaneous nature of a crisis. Pierce (2009) considers adaptability a necessity in the spontaneous leadership of ELDC, due to the need to be reactive to swiftly changing environments. Emergent leadership differs from typical leadership in that it is birthed in the process of crisis – "emerg(ing) as individuals and the organisation attempt to meet the challenges and uncertainties" (Hunt, 2019, p.124). While Kickul, & Neuman (2000) cite extroversion, openness to experience and cognitive ability as three necessary traits, Pierce (2009) recognises the importance of discipline and loyalty of the ELDC amidst their teams in maximising the odds of success. Chabau (2010) and Mitroff (2001) add that a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the situation is a key component of ELDC. The challenging terrain of emergent leadership amidst a crisis requires a number of skills that are above and beyond the typical leader's duty, responsibility and ability, underscoring both the difference and the necessity of emergent leadership.

In the aftermath of crises, it has been observed that emergent leadership is a key component to the flow-on effects of successful adaptation (Anderson, 2018; Boin et al., 2013). Consequently, when leaders fail to exhibit emergent behaviour in a crisis, they're often instead known for failure. As Tracey (2021) states, "The true test of leadership is how well you function in a crisis" (p.65). The phenomenon of emergent behaviour is realised in the swift adoption of new roles and responsibilities, adaptation to new surroundings, and perseverance through appropriate actions that minimise the impacts of the event (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Pierce, 2009; van Breda, 2001). Such prominence is placed on these initial actions that successful emergent behaviour is said to have a strong link to the fabric of resilience, highlighting the capabilities and adaptive ability of that system (Hunt, 2019; Fath et al., 2015). Effective crisis management through emergent leadership "saves lives, protects infrastructure, and restores trust in public institutions" (Boin et al., 2012, p.81), while conversely, the opposite is true.

## 5.4 Emergent Leadership in Pacific Tourism

In a post-pandemic setting, many Pacific tourism operators have transitioned towards more sustainable and diverse income streams (Kalsakau, 2020). Setareki Ledua, sharing the Melanesian culture of Vanuatu but in the neighbouring island of Fiji, is a poignant example of an emergent leader taking stock of the situation and pivoting his tourism enterprise in an innovative, adaptive and sustainable way.

### 5.4.1 Literature Case Study – Emergent Leadership in Crisis: Setareki Ledua

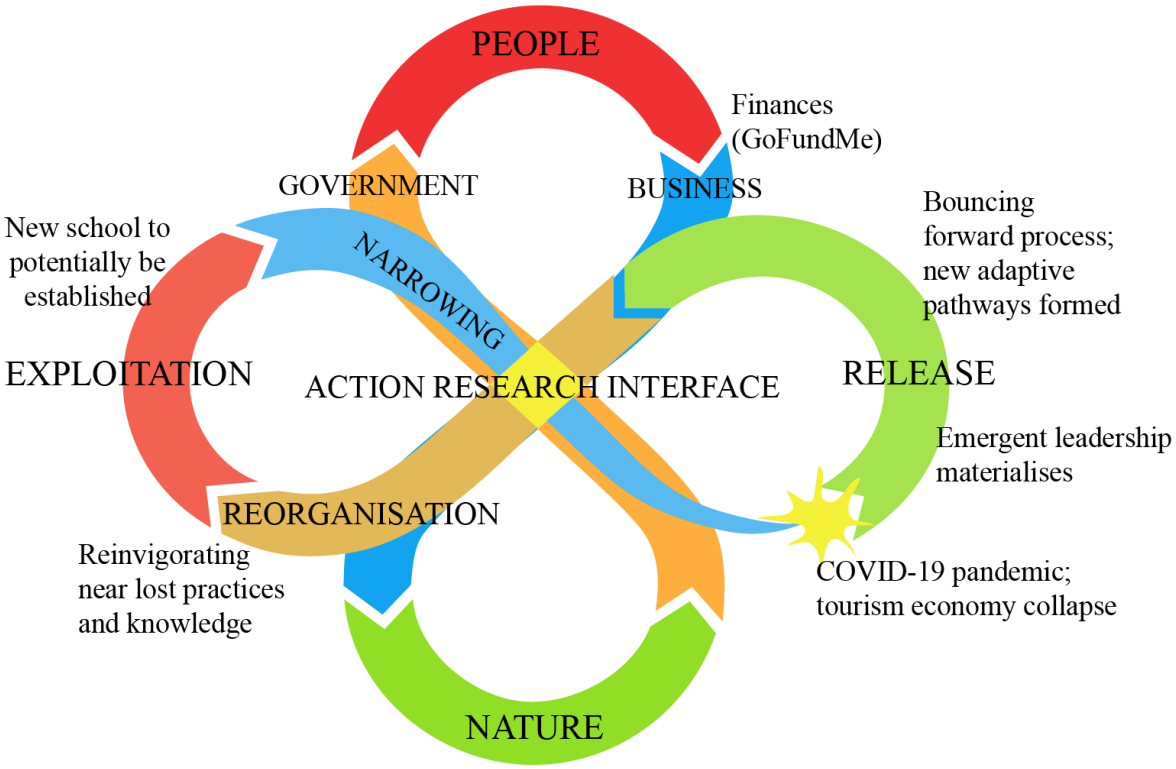
Setareki Ledua, a traditional Fijian seafarer, operated a small tourism enterprise on Viti Levu that took tours on a Drua – a traditional twin hull canoe. With the pandemic putting a sudden stop to all bookings, Ledua and his workforce were without income. Taking an optimistic approach to the pandemic's effect on his business, Ledua took the opportunity of spare time and created a plan to reinvigorate Indigenous sea-faring practices of his ancestors by visiting his ancestral roots in the Lau Islands – a place where the traditional sea-faring Fijian craftsmen originated. Many of these traditional practices have been lost in recent years as tourism employment has taken precedence over cultural ways of living. The voyage back to the Lau Islands in the wake of the lost tourism economy rebirthed ancient practices of knowledge sharing and exchange. Ledua states that if there is a gap between generations, then important knowledge can be lost. "It's really important for us to keep these traditions alive" (World Tourism Organisation, 2022, p.62). Ledua and his team of inspired seafarers spent two months in the Lau Islands exchanging seafaring knowledge, learning much of the almost lost traditional crafting practices for Drua. Ultimately, both the Lau community and Ledua's team were enriched in this exchange. Plans have since been put together to develop and resource a programme to educate the next generation in this traditional Fijian craftsmanship once again (Mitchell, 2020; Simpson, 2020; World Tourism Organisation, 2022).

### 5.4.2 Case Study of Emergent Behaviour of Setareki Ledua Inside the Tourism Resilience Framework

Emergent leadership is a phenomenon that can also be explored in the 'Tourism Resilience Framework' (Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva, 2023), shown previously in Chapter 3 and modified below to showcase the conception, necessity and intricacies of emergent leaderships role inside a resilient system. Typically, as a system narrows its focus, factors of resilience are traded for efficiencies. We have seen this in Pacific tourism's growth over the last few decades which has left it overly reliant on international tourism (Movono & Scheyvens, 2022). With Pacific tourism almost entirely ceasing during the Covid-19 pandemic, we see what Holling (1973) refers to as 'sudden collapse'. As highlighted in Figure 6, the collapse of the tourism economy became the release phase after a long conservation phase of tourism growth. This conservation period had produced efficiencies but inversely also a susceptibility to shocks

(Movono & Scheyvens, 2022). The release phase sees "emergent coordinators (leaders) set the stage for learning, adaptive capacity, and reorientation of a resilient system" (Fath et al., 2015, p.3), and it is only in preparedness and the actions of emergent leaders that can advance the system through to being able to adapt and re-organise successfully (Fath et al., 2015). During the release stage, new adaptive pathways are formed and undertaken and those without prior positions of leadership are often thrust into the forefront of demanding situations when others fail to respond efficiently (Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva, 2023; Schweinberger et al., 2014).

**Figure 6:** Tourism Resilience Framework: Emergent Leadership Case Study Context of Setareki Ledua




(Gadsby, 2024. Based on Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva, 2023.)

With an optimistic outlook, Ledua, embodying these attributes, was able to navigate the release phase (pandemic crisis) in creatively re-thinking his Pacific tourism enterprise, exemplifying what theorists like that of Ketter (2022) refer to as bouncing forward. Having a keen awareness of the issues at hand, Ledua's adaptive intelligence highlights emergent behaviour through leadership (Anderson, 2018) that has risen to meet the demands of the situation. By conveying confidence to mitigate stressors, establishing and communicating vision amidst uncertainty and

harnessing a sense of responsibility for both the situation, the team, and the vision, Ledua has enacted Anderson's (2018) crisis leadership three key components to success. In Ledua's practical outworking of these three components, he has reinvigorated the near-lost traditional knowledge of sustainable Drua construction techniques and reorganised the system and his enterprise, showcasing a resilient, adaptive and sustainable pathway that others may want to follow. In harnessing the strengths and opportunities presented to him and his team, the project was innovatively financed through members of the public via an online fundraising platform (Mitchell, 2020). Future plans in place to establish a formal training facility will ensure this traditional knowledge is passed on to others also.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Setareki Ledua's actions, portrayed through the Tourism Resilience Framework (Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva, 2023) informs how emergent leaders are birthed from crisis situations and released during the system collapse stage – initiating novel pathways and attracting followers in reforming and reorganising adaptive responses. Being a fundamental component of resilience, emergent leaders serve greatly in difficult circumstances, encompassing key roles in saving people's lives (Boin et al., 2012) and playing a determining role in the successful process of adapting in a crisis response. The complex nature of resilience in action cannot be simply traced to one person's input, although the case study of Ledua highlights his role – in reality it is a system wide collective response connected to an individual instigator, which has profound effects in the aftermath of crisis situations.

Different from typical leadership, emergent leaders require a unique approach and skill set. An adaptable and expedient decision-making process that is flexible enough to cope with fluid circumstances, as well as a comprehensive understanding of the situation and passion which in turn inspires followership, ensures a successful outcome.

# Chapter 6: Findings II : Profiles of Emergent Leaders in Vanuatu

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights three profiles of emergent leadership behaviour in the tourism sector of Vanuatu, thus helping to achieve objective iii: *Investigate and identify emergent leadership and its potential to further support resilience building.* Data was collected during fieldwork in November and December 2023, through interviews with both Leonid Vusilai and Votausi Mackenzie-Reur. These two individuals have found prominence as agents of change in their respective fields – Vusilai as a restaurant owner and consultant, and Mackenzie-Reur as a cafe owner, nutritionist, farmer and ambassador for locally sourced produce. Regenerative Vanua has also been highlighted as an organisation that embodies emergent leadership. Interviews and *storian* sessions with the Regenerative Vanua team discuss how they pivoted during the pandemic to a regenerative agritourism focus.

Both the individual traits and organisational traits of emergent leadership are unpacked in a Vanuatu context. The three profiles of Leonid Vusilai, Votausi Mackenzie-Reur and Regenerative Vanua present an up-close look at who they are, what they are doing and what drives them in their respective quests as leaders and agents of change in Vanuatu. It concludes with the four traits that were prominent in their successful emergent leadership roles of facilitating adaptive change in their respective fields.

## 6.2 Profile: Leonid Vusilai

Leonid Vusilai is a young, aspiring Ni-Vanuatu restaurant owner, father and husband who lives in the capital Port Vila, on the island of Efate. Growing up on the island of Ambae in the Penama province, Vusilai is the son of a chief and is passionate about the *kastom* way of life – living off the land and the sustenance that it provided throughout his childhood and teenage years, and which has reinforced the value of the traditional way of life in Vanuatu.

> We had all we needed in our *vanua* [village, community, traditional clan and kin land area] there, everything we ate was from the land or the air or the ocean, all within a few

> minutes' walk of our house and was always there… and with my mother's cooking… everyone turned up for the taste. Even now I can't beat the taste that my mother can provide just from what is in the garden.

Moving to Port Vila after high school, Vusilai had initially planned on becoming a pilot, however was convinced by his late father to attend culinary school. He recalls his father's words:

> What are you going to do once you're finished being a pilot? You might have a lot of *Vatu* [local currency] but your life will have been made up in the skies above and not in the *vanua*. They'll have no need for you once you get to a certain age, however *kakae* (food) will always be needed. Every living person has to eat, and even if they can't eat, then someone still needs to feed them. Make your life with a necessity like food and you'll always be needed and will have an income. If you come back home at the age of 50, what are you going to have?

In reflection, Vusilai discusses both the wisdom of his late father and his influence:

> A lot of those guys that went to Fiji [for university] are going to different schools – doing *waet-man* [white skinned/foreign] education but in the process are colonising their minds, are losing the knowledge of the forefathers, forgetting about the old ways. I've done five years in culinary school and it was in the first six months that I was able to start drawing from this knowledge to provide some income for my life – unlike those other guys. Now I have cars, land and have branched off into consultant work as well, and they're only just getting started and it's cost them a lot of money too. I'm glad I listened to my father.

After winning Season One of the 'Pacific Food Revolution' – a televised show in eight countries that competitively showcased different Pacific cuisines – 'Chef Leo' is now a household name. Soon after the show aired however, the Covid-19 pandemic occurred which drastically reduced tourism and subsequently, many opportunities in the culinary sphere were also limited. This did not stop Chef Leo (Vusilai) who adaptively branched out from the typical role of a chef, channelling his culinary skills and newfound fame into working with an agritourism initiative through Vanuatu Skills Partnership from Farm to Table (VSPFT) that

inspires rural bungalow operators with local cuisine upskilling. Involved also with the Sanma Agriculture Food Trade Association (SAFTA) which connects farmers and chefs to create local supply chains of quality produce, Vusilai is using his platform to challenge using imported produce and to work with local produce suppliers instead. Labelled the *voes lo Aelan kakae* (voice of Island food) (Macumber, 2023), Vusilai now works as a consultant and a not-for-profit advisor, which includes training and advocacy. Passionate about his values and his culture, Vusilai is working towards revitalising the value of traditional cuisine. He states that this passion has now been fanned into a "wildfire". He explains:

> And we see locals within their communities apologising for their food culture – I've worked with the tourism operators and the bungalow operators, community members, hospitals and schools and even in the community and in the homes when visitors come in, they're always apologising for the traditional dish or local food from the garden and it's something for me as a local chef and local cuisine ambassador that I'm most ashamed of… people apologising for their own identity. Our story is not being told right so we've become the victims of that mindset, that our food is [seen as] not good enough. And so for most of the tourism operators I've worked with, that mindset is that a visitor must have bread and coffee on the table, it is the exact menu everywhere you go to, which in reality when we look back into our culture… we had those different traditional dishes for breakfast and they had, and have purposes… and a lot of that food for purpose has been lost over time due to that process of what we refer to as colonised mindsets, that we think that our food is not good enough and so we have to bring in the imported products so that visitors can enjoy that. And so in time, the stories have been lost.

This passion has recently led Vusilai to many of the outer islands around Vanuatu, promoting innovative ways to inspire local cuisines and revitalising both the value of local cuisine and the flavours too.

> We are starting to see a change now and I know that it's my part to do what I can to help and assist others and this is what I do, and I know my dad would be happy looking down… We've made the plate [of local food] more sexy now [cheeky laughter].

### 6.3 Profile: Votausi Mackenzie-Reur

While Vusilai has been dubbed the *'voes lo Aelan kakae'* (voice of Island food), Votausi Mackenzie-Reur has been referred to as the 'Queen of Vanuatu Cuisine' because of her work as the managing director of Lapita – a company that is known for supplying Vanuatu natural, organic and traditional foods. Functioning as a catering enterprise and an organic foods wholesaler, Lapita's products are stocked throughout Vanuatu's tourist and produce stores with Lapita food-bars also served on the national airline. Mackenzie-Reur is not simply a successful business woman, she is also a mother and a wife, a television co-host and a passionate advocate for local foods, with a mission to only eat locally sourced products. Her business also has similar standards, with a minimum of 80% of ingredients being locally sourced. Speaking about Lapita as a business, Mackenzie-Reur says:

> It's a very simple concept, it's really like nothing fancy about it, it's about believing that our local food is okay and we look after the soil and it will look after you and that's what my business is centred around - using and adding value to local product, but ensuring that they're not processed in such a way that are harmful to the user. I try my best to make sure that 80% of my products that I work for are made in Vanuatu… I struggle with that, I strive for that and I am achieving that as well!

Mackenzie-Reur is also a proud nutritionist and was in the process of studying community nutrition when she became fascinated with just how high in nutrition traditionally prepared meals were. In comparison to the cheaply imported, mass produced, highly processed wheat and sugar-based products that have become staple food items throughout Vanuatu and the Pacific, the organic and traditional cuisine is extremely healthy. It also does not contribute to obesity, blood and heart issues and the stunting problems like that of the unhealthy imported foods. It is clear to see that this fuels her ambition. "Stunting is *not* [strong emphasis] a crisis that we should have here in Vanuatu" – a comment that was said very matter of factly during one of the larger *storian* sessions which cut the flow of conversation and left us all considering the weight of her words.

This passion, coupled with the realisation that Vanuatu cuisine has a lot to offer, has become the driver for both the business and the advocacy efforts that Mackenzie-Reur undertakes

around nutrition and its associated benefits. In discussing how family, business and a vision work together, she talks about her husband:

> He believes in what I'm doing and he probably sees that if I stop doing this I will not be happy in any other job [laughter]! He's really good at supporting me in that sense… it's really sad cos [sic] sometimes I think it's too much for my family, what I do – but I try, they know that I live and breathe what I preach.

Proudly speaking about her producers and farmers, Mackenzie-Reur asks if I have seen people walking around town eating peanuts in bunches recently, to which I answer 'yes'. The following question and statement is, "I bet you've never seen that [previously] in all your years in Vanuatu!" and in thinking about this I realise it is true. Seeing me ponder this, she continues:

> We've taken something sad and turned it into a positive. *Local kakae* has been perceived to be only *aelan kakae* and it is different here in Vila. If you're in Vila you eat imported *kakae* but that is changing now. We are not ashamed to eat peanuts in Vila now – it's a big thing! Mindsets are slowly changing, Wade [followed by a moment of pause and reflection].

Leading the way in wholesaling produce of *nangai* (an almond nut – *Canarium Indicum*) and peanut has had unique challenges. Exemplifying risk-taking through being entrepreneurial, challenging entrenched mindsets, dealing with fluctuating supplies, and all the while being committed to her farming supplies, Mackenzie-Reur shares how she has adapted farming techniques to minimise the risk of cyclone affected produce:

> I have a relationship with my suppliers, a commitment to them, the relationships are important to me. I'm not alone in this. If I don't strive, it affects all my employees, their families and my suppliers too. It's an ongoing effort to support the interactions of other businesses. We have had to invest in a buffer farm [a backup supply farm to supplement supplies due to cyclone disruption] as well as diversified farming techniques and suppliers so that cyclones do not cease the supply of things like the *nangai* nut. We've got land now that is sheltered differently to our farmers, so that the cyclones can't cease our nut supply. We are re-establishing farms and crops to provide Vanuatu peanuts and *nangai* nuts which were not being mass produced after cyclone damage in 2015.

Continuing on, about a recent agritourism initiative she's been working on with the goal to diversify livelihoods in rural areas through tourism – particularly now that tourism is picking up again post pandemic lockdowns.

> You know Wade, Covid has helped us change this story, people are returning to the land now and the work we were a part of recently, was with 30 ambassadors [mostly rural agritourism small enterprises]. We taught them some innovative ways of cooking local *kakae*. It's nutritious and reinvigorates passion in them for their *kastom*… and it helps to provide an income too.

Votausi Mackenzie-Reur explained to me that she is content in her work and is looking to inspire other young female entrepreneurs in the future, highlighting how she can offer assistance to those who are brave enough to ask for it, just as she did. Mackenzie-Reur has highlighted adaptive and emergent leadership in her actions – establishing diversified farming initiatives; creating new supply chains for produce; educating others in small business; and capitalising on the Covid-19 crisis as an opportunity to 'change the story' around local produce and its value in nutrition.

### 6.4 Profile: Regenerative Vanua

Regenerative Vanua is a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) based in Vanuatu with members, connections and projects throughout the Pacific. Explaining who they are on their website, Regenerative Vanua states:

> We support Indigenous Pacific people to be meaningfully engaged in tourism, while raising their pride in their food and farming heritage, and ensuring land sovereignty (Regenerativevanua.org, 2023).

Operating like an ecosystem of interrelated functions, each individual on the Regenerative Vanua team brings unique skill sets – sharing the collectives focus to bring more than a token sustainability stamp to the work they undertake. There's a strong desire to go a step further

than simply being ‘sustainable’, and that’s where the concept of regeneration stems from. In talking to Norah Rihai, one the Regenerative Vanua team, about this, she states:

> We sacrifice because we believe in what we do [here]... Being passionate about something helps you stay committed through the struggle, eh, and the smiles we see through these regenerative tourism initiatives keep us energised.

Within the regenerative approach of giving back more than what is extracted from the environment, Regenerative Vanua are working within rural communities (*vanua*) through the likes of agritourism and food tourism initiatives to establish diversified livelihoods that are without the negative impacts occurring in substantial parts of the tourism sphere.

Focused specifically on rural settings in Vanuatu, the organisation sees Indigenous knowledge and systems as a pathway for being climate resilient and something that can inform the tourism sector on developing more equitable tourism models. Regenerative Vanua’s focus is on a positive change at the *vanua*/community level through rural agritourism projects, advocacy and training around traditional food and farming techniques – encouraging the use of traditional foods and produce rather than resorting to the imported and costly products, which are largely unfamiliar in rural Vanuatu settings. Regenerative Vanua are a thriving NGO and a leading organisation in their field, informing the Vanuatu government on their sustainable tourism strategy, being key organisers in the Pacific Tourism Association and the International Agrotourism Alliance, as well as contributing on a global scale through networks like that of the Global Agritourism Network (GAN) and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). Recently they won the Global Island Innovation Award for the 'Most Transformational Government Sustainability Initiative'.

### 6.4.1 Emergent Leadership in an Organisational Context

Initially being involved in sustainable tourism approaches, the Regenerative Vanua team became frustrated when they witnessed large, unsustainable tourism companies finding loopholes to tick the sustainability box and continue operating as usual. The Covid-19 pandemic became a pivot point where Regenerative Vanua showcased their leadership in a unique light. Cherise Addinsal, Regenerative Vanua’s Strategic Mentor, discusses:

> During the pandemic we noticed that the Chamber of Commerce were putting out hashtags in Bislama, #lifeihadnaow [meaning life is currently challenging]. Incidentally it is mostly run by expatriates and foreign-owned businesses, and those kind of hashtags were putting out there that the locals were suffering now that the borders were closed, however in the rural areas we found that to be the opposite. They were very, very, very, supportive of the borders being closed! And what we were seeing in response was many chiefs calling out and saying the best thing the government can do is to 'get our people home – pay for them to get back to their homes, their *vanua*… Put them on a plane and cover their expenses to get home'. I thought that was so interesting at the time hearing that – to come home because urban migration is ridiculous [i.e. very high] in the South Pacific and a lot of people are migrating to urban areas and a lot of that is fuelled by the tourism industry… So to see this message 'put them on the plane and come home', I was very intrigued to look into that a lot more and that is where the agritourism program was born.

The agritourism initiative is a diversification of a livelihoods project. With mass tourism not being a guaranteed income source and with questions about its long-term sustainability as seen in light of the recent pandemic, particularly for Indigenous communities, there is a place, a scope and the opportunity for tourism to help sustain rural livelihoods also. "Tourism is a booming business but only in a very targeted part of the country, and there is much 'leakage' due to these larger tourism enterprises being owned by 'expats'", Executive Director of Regenerative Vanua, Jerry Spooner states. Spooner is known for some of his remarks about mass tourism and one of the more famously cited quotes is, "It's time to demand a rebellion against business as usual. It is imperative that we consider how our travel impacts destinations and Indigenous communities" (Tuuhia & Harrison, 2023, para. 4).

Agritourism points tourists to another path – one that is sustainable, regenerative, benefits Indigenous communities, and is a much more authentic tourism experience. Addinsall states, "For us we don't really see agrotourism as a niche form of tourism – we see it as a resilience strategy that benefits all involved". Regenerative Vanua has now transitioned from being a tourism sustainability entity to one that fosters regenerative tourism through their agritourism and food tourism projects. This pandemic-led pivot has showcased emergent leadership behaviour in an organisational context, taking a crisis situation and finding opportunities

amidst the turmoil to reform and adapt in an innovative fashion. While mass tourism isn't disappearing anytime soon, as Addinsall states, "I don't want to develop any more sustainable tourism – not in the islands. There's enough… there's enough."

## 6.5 Conclusion

The findings from these emergent leaders and their behavioural traits were consistent across four main areas in their responses to crisis situations. Notably, the Covid-19 pandemic is the primary crisis which informs these findings, although the ongoing slow-burn crisis (Rejec & Dujovski, 2013) of poor nutrition associated with undervaluing local foods (and its flow on effects like that of stunting and NCDs) has also driven Vusilai and Mackenzie-Reur in their prospective emergent actions.

The first of the four main traits exhibited was having a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the situation at the time of crisis. The second aspect was that of adaptability and flexibility amidst uncertainty. Being able to communicate and make decisions in a turbulent crisis context is unique to emergent leaders. Thirdly, possessing passion and drive, and being able to consistently and confidently motivate others when stressors are present is another valuable attribute. The fourth component to emergent leadership was that of storytelling as a form of advocacy which, as often stated in the findings, assumed responsibility for the situation and was ultimately used to rewrite the story in the process of moving out of a crisis.

The first trait of significance in emergent leadership was possessing a comprehensive understanding of the crisis situation at hand. The findings showed that these leaders were equipped with knowledge prior to the crisis which was able to be drawn from expediently. Leonid Vusilai's strong Indigenous knowledge and values fed his charisma for challenging the trends towards imported unhealthy *kakae* and, when the need for chefs dropped suddenly in the pandemic pause, he was able to draw from this knowledge and innovate. Votausi Mackenzie-Reur's comprehensive understanding of nutrition, farming and business is perfectly aligned with being able to inform well-structured decisions and promote the work she is undertaking. In Regenerative Vanua's case, it was a comprehensive understanding of multiple

issues, most significantly the nexus of need between Indigenous community values and the tourism sphere, that led them to pivot to agritourism.

Reflected across all three of these emergent leaders was a propensity for making strong decisions when a crisis or crossroads was presented – adapting to the issue at hand. All three cases have highlighted differing degrees of adaptability through pivoting after finding themselves in spheres that were not the first choice, yet thriving nonetheless. Vusilai moved away from the typical culinary career pathways amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and adaptively branched out into roles of consultancy and advocacy. Utilising his skills from being a chef in a resort through to a TV sensation and a budding restaurant owner, Vusilai has pivoted to now being involved in projects where he is making the plate look 'more sexy' in revitalising *kastom* cuisine, advocating and sharing knowledge throughout rural communities of Vanuatu. Mackenzie-Reur became an entrepreneurial business woman in a heavily patriarchal society that is now purchasing land and growing buffer farms of differing nuts so that they have cyclone-proof supply, as well as educating others in nutrition and diversified farming techniques that are more cyclone resilient. Regenerative Vanua pivoted from sustainable tourism initiatives to working in rural communities with agritourism development projects. The actions to boldly adapt characterise their leadership at critical moments and showcase, in part, why they have been successful in their endeavours.

The third trait drawn from the findings is passion which drives motivation in emergent leaders. Seeing this exemplified in the Regenerative Vanua team members, who have sacrificed for what they believe, one of the team stated "the smiles we see… keep us energised". Vusilai talks about his passion becoming a "wildfire" because he believes wholeheartedly in what he is undertaking. Mackenzie-Reur exemplifies this also, and her family supports her endeavours because of her motivation and commitment. It was noted that passion increases commitment and aids in perseverance.

The final theme, common throughout the three case profiles, is that of storytelling. When discussing with Mackenzie-Reur, she concluded that she has been assisting in 'changing the story'. Another instance of effectively changing mindsets is Vusilai with his role in reinvigorating traditional dishes, making them appealing rather than a dismissed second option to Westernised foods. Similar to the notion of *storian,* retelling of the story and addressing when the story is "not being told right" (Leonid Vusilai, personal communication, Dec 5th,

2023) was a common theme that arose often in discussion. ‘Storytelling’ could similarly be labelled advocacy, however I’ve chosen to keep this word because of the broader function that storytelling has in the Indigenous context of Ni-Vanuatu life, and the importance placed on this concept by each participant.

These four elements of emergent leadership behaviour – adaptability, passion and drive, a comprehensive knowledge of the challenges and systems at play, coupled with storytelling as advocacy – showcase the essential tools that enable emergent leaders to adapt and portray resilience through situations of crisis in a Vanuatu setting.

# Chapter 7: Findings III : Sources of Resilience in Vanuatu

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter unpacks components of resilience characteristic of Vanuatu. There are resources that emergent leadership draws from in predicating the behaviour presented in the prior chapter, and these factors are explored within.

Utilising Objective iii once again – to *Investigate and identify emergent leadership and its potential to further support resilience building* – this chapter draws from extended *storian* sessions with the emergent leaders Leonid Vusilai, Votausi Mackenzie-Reur and Regenerative Vanua – while triangulating through a further six *storian* interviews with tourism workers, voluntourism staff, elders, pastors and government employees. All participants inform the three common themes identified as being key sources of resilience: the *aelan ekonomi* (island economy), the *vanua* (community/land) and *kastom nojij* (traditional knowledge). The chapter concludes by summarising how these three resilience factors cohabitate and bolster both the emergent leaders and those they inspire.

## 7.2 Island Economy / *Aelan Ekonomi*

As an outsider looking in, it can seem that there is not a lot of money in the typical village setting. However, a deeper and more entrenched system is operating and it may well be more extensive than the economy that trades in *Vatu* (local currency). The *aelan ekonomi*, also referred to as the *kastom ekonomi* or the informal economy, is a complex system of social interactions that includes trading and exchange, provision, giving and receiving, and cultural expectations around gift-giving through *kastom* protocol and practices. One of the interviewees from a government department discusses the *aelan ekonomi*:

> Embedded in us is that informal nature [of reciprocity], so we put in the effort because we know it's gonna [sic] come back to us. We invest in that! But it is coming back to us, we know that… maybe in a different form. It's a type of reciprocity – when it

> happens, it'll come back. You're not rich but you have us and it's easy to ask because we have the history of when you ask. It's not just for fun, it's because you have need.

Votausi Mackenzie-Reur explains the *aelan ekonomi* as a function of society that is greater than simply buying and selling. It includes a stronger value on the role of people in the exchange. "We are the opposite of the Western economy: we value relationships and depend upon each other in mutually beneficial ways."

Secretary General of the Shefa Province, Morris Kaloran, stated in one of the *storian* sessions that the *aelan ekonomi* is part of being ni-Vanuatu. It is being aware of the needs of others as well as yourself. He states:

> We walk together as a group. When someone falls down, we are there to pick him up, that's the way we work. Everyone carries him to reach the destination. It doesn't matter how long the journey takes if we have each other to depend on – we rest, recover and continue on forward. In contrast, doing it alone, you end up dying alone – no one to call on for help. This promoting of individual societies draws away from the *kastom* practices of old. Some choose to be independent to become rich, but what is rich? I am rich in my relationships – I'm not poor when it comes to *vanua* [community]. I have other resources that are just as necessary. You can have thousands of *Vatu* but can you source a pig tusk for a wedding ceremony? Those are difficult to find and you need more than *Vatu* for things like this. The way we work together means we all help out, so after a cyclone you are helping me rebuild my house and tomorrow, everyone is helping rebuild yours – and we go on like this.

The give and take of the *aelan ekonomi* is based on reciprocity and the leverage of family and kinship lines, although not everyone who takes also gives. Leonid Vusilai explained how this informal economy intersects with his life and with his newly beloved Ford Ranger on one of the outings he was driving me to:

> It's great having the blessing of a truck but it's also a curse because of the *kastom ekonomi*, you know?
> Me: *No, what do you mean?*

> Well, the only time I can say no to anyone that wants the use of my truck is when I'm already *fullap* [full] doing favours and out for other family members. Dropping people off all over the island, collecting firewood and things. That's what we invest into though [the *aelan ekonomi* of reciprocity] because that is our way of life and our culture.
> Me: *Can you say no?*
> No, we don't say no. It's the old ways, give and take. It's our resilience. But I want this truck [Ford Ranger] to be resilient so I never lend it out [laughter]. Even if I say 'don't go collect firewood', I know that they would go and load it up *fullap tumas* [too full] and the back deck would break, so I always go driving and help my family and friends but it means I don't have any time – always driving! [annoyed and laughing simultaneously]

### 7.3 Safety Net / *Vanua*

Another concept often shared in discussions was that of the *vanua* itself. Lovingly deemed 'Plan B' or 'Safety Net', this facet of resilience provides a fall-back option in times of crisis. Throughout the pandemic, many people returned to their *vanua* (their traditional village community) after losing their jobs. Cherise Addinsall talks about the small island of Aneityum (Mystery Island) where the people had been particularly reliant on cruise ships for their livelihoods for well over a decade. With the Covid-19 pandemic, this suddenly halted. Addinsall states:

> Aneityum is the most interesting case study because it's got the highest visitation of tourists in the country through cruise tourism, and if you're thinking per capita it's even more. So Mystery Island gets the same number of cruise ships as Vila, because it's a stop on the way back to Sydney. They even get the big ships, the 6,000 passenger ones stopping there, so they get *huge* numbers of tourists and there was all this talk that they would suffer and what we saw was right when the borders were closing… [off the record discussion]. And everyone thought that they'd suffer [during the pandemic] because that's all they are used to you know. After the last 12-15 years they've been getting cruise ships, they're notoriously known for not growing food anymore. There's no food [growing] on the island and they eat all imported food and have the highest rates of NCDs [Non Communicable Diseases] in the country. They're very reliant on

> imports because no one is farming because they don't have time. And the chief comes out a couple of months later after the borders were closed and he goes, 'our people are fine, we've gone back to Plan B, we're back to our gardens, we've developed, built a market house, we're sharing goods, bartering goods. We know how to be resilient'. And it was just mind-blowing that they implemented this strategy, even though they'd been away from it for over a decade, rebooted it, and the only way they can do that is if the land is in their hands. If that land had been alienated like the plans for Lelepa Island with Royal Caribbean[2] – they wouldn't have that Plan B. When too much of the land is not in the hands of the people who are not locals, then they don't have that Plan B. So that's the beautiful thing about Vanuatu that we love and a lot of areas in the Pacific, is that they still have *kastom* land and it's the only thing, the only defence, communities have.

The *vanua* can be a 'Plan B', a defence and a sense of identity that one has. It was a general consensus amongst *storian* discussions that the Māori word for land, being 'whenua', is very similar to *'vanua'*, and with the likened component of tūrangawaewae (the place where culture, land and person exist in unison (Durie, 1998)), being understood well. Although not having a word in *Bislama* (national language of Vanuatu) to translate tūrangawaewae to, the notion of identity being situated within a community *vanua* is also a distinctly Ni-Vanuatu understanding, as it is also across the Pacific. Overton and Scheyvens (1999) unpack the complexities of the notion of *vanua* to also include elements of spirituality, connectedness, history through genealogy, and stewardship of the sacred as a precedent for sustainable development. Secretary General of Shefa Province, Morris Kaloran states:

> In short, how they survive… It is the *vanua* network. We live simply. If we wake up and have breakfast, have a rest sometime in the day and have one shell [of kava] in the evening, we are happy. We are resilient because we have the safety net of the *vanua*.

He continues after a deviation in the discussion:

[2] The Royal Caribbean Cruise Company planned to buy Lelepa Island and turn it into a holiday destination with its own amusement park however there has been pushback from Ni-Vanuatu peoples who are concerned with the lack of consultation. The Chief of Lelepa Island, Reuben Natamatewia has recently stated that any visits from Royal Caribbean cruise ships will come with conditions that must include working closely with him (Aru, 2022).

> But when you go back to the *vanua*, everything is free. A place to stay, wood to build with, plants to eat and animals to hunt, all for free. How do you describe paradise? This is it. Yes, there are social parts to the idea of *vanua* – you might get a hard time if you haven't been back to the *vanua* for a long time, but actually the older generation are happy when we return home – they encourage you [thoughtful pause], after giving you a hard time [cheeky laughter].

Reflecting on the role of the *vanua* in ni-Vanuatu society, Cherise Addinsall says:

> Particularly in Western countries, we're so detached from our communities now… our biggest problem in Western society is that we are not trusted with nature, we're separate from it, we have to lock it up and visit it on the weekends. You know, we're not to be trusted in it. I find that really mind blowing for me, how we've become disconnected from our own life source!

### 7.4 Traditional Knowledge / *Kastom Nolej*

*Kastom* knowledge was referred to numerous times throughout the *storian* interviews. There was a low-level consensus that many of the problems faced in Vanuatu society today are a reflection of having turned from old ways. It was noted that the disregarding of age-old wisdom is largely motivated by the current technological advancements. There is also a realisation that many of the older ways have merit and those that are acting outside of this wisdom are doing so at their own peril. Morris Kaloran, states:

> We had our *kastom* knowledge renewed in Covid because the younger generation had to be taught by the older people. I'm committed to my *kastom* knowledge, learning from my elders, I pay them high respect and make sure I travel back home to keep that connection strong. The knowledge is held with the elderly. Everyone knows the impact of becoming an individual. My family are my savings, my safety net – but if you're on your own, you die alone.

The value of *kastom* knowledge being appropriate and beneficial even in modern times was witnessed during the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. Those unable to return to their

*vanua* had a particularly difficult time compared to those that had the 'Plan B' option. Leonid Vusilai shares an ancient proverb that exemplifies this:

> "Always listen to the old man because he's seen the light first". The older generation's advice is good, we should use this and not ignore it. I'm blessed because I took his advice.

(This proverb refers to the early rising of the elders whilst the younger men typically sleep in – but also alludes to history as the ancestors who embraced Christianity and to the older generation going through adolescence and have gone through and learnt it all earlier.)

Votausi Mackenzie-Reur elaborates on the value of *kastom* knowledge and new knowledge and using the best of both:

> What we have is really important and Indigenous knowledge systems have sustained our *vanua* for centuries – and some of those *vanua's* are very small, so we can use this as we go forward and pass them on to our younger generations. We can use this knowledge to lead the way in tackling future crises. But don't get me wrong – we take some of the new and mix it with the old *kastom* knowledge and new knowledge is important. It's not one or the other, we can have a nice new toilet in a *kastom* community without losing anything important! [laughing and further comments about *kastom* toilets having no place in her future].

Cherise Addinsall also shares value on traditional knowledge:

> I'm fully aware that we're dealing with modern problems and increased challenges and that traditional knowledge alone isn't enough, but I do think that knowledge should always be the driver. It should be what's in the driver's seat and that Western knowledge, scientific knowledge, should be taken with a grain of salt. How can it support knowledge systems that we know have been the key to their resilience, but how can that knowledge come in to support, not replace and deal with the issues that we are dealing with now?

### 7.4.1 Examples of *Kastom* Knowledge

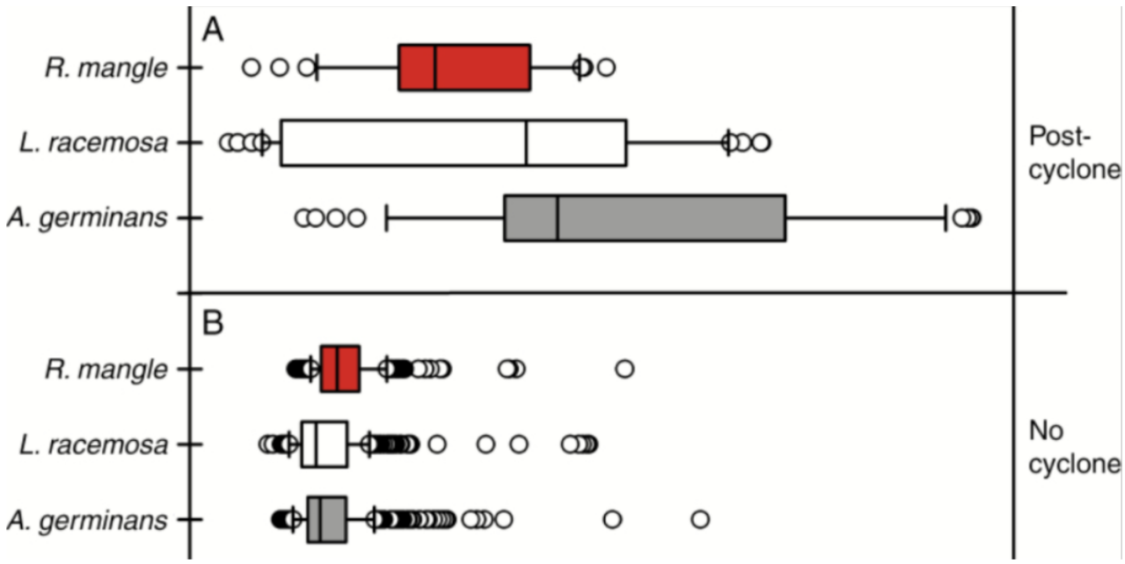
Some interesting examples were found during the course of the *storian* sessions about old *kastom* knowledge having very accurate insights, despite the limitations of past technologies. Cherise Addinsall recounts a discussion with a Chief on the island of Maewo:

> They're still gardening the ways they always have. They're known as the 'Island of Water', and when I spoke to the chief and said I noticed you haven't cut down anything in your upper catchment, it's all thick bush, dark bush, and he said, oh yeah, cos [sic] then we won't get rain! I'm like… Southern Cross University scientists were writing about this just ten years ago! Wow. But he just said it matter-of-fact, 'cos [sic] we won't get rain for our trees if we cut down things in our upper catchment'. Yeah, so his knowledge wasn't lost – they know how to live within their resources and for me this blew my mind!

Further notes from a *storian* session with two Ni-Vanuatu voluntourism staff highlighted the prediction of cyclones through *kastom* knowledge, which I had passed off as old wives tales. They recounted, "We know that when the Mangoes flower early and if Banana trees flower early also, or are laden away from the sun, that there is going to be a cyclone season." I later found that the studies of Dyer (1945) and Derrick (1951) prove this to be a factual predictor, and an ancient and Pacific-wide knowledge that gives a longer preparedness than that of a modern weather report.

Another sentiment that was mentioned by more than two interviewees was the Ni-Vanuatu adage of "cyclones sweep the reef and comb the forests" – alluding to times when nature has to clean itself and reset, and that there is difficulty in the cyclone season but also new life around the corner. Due to hearing this on more than one occasion, I looked into mangrove forests, given that they are both a forest and live on or extremely close to reefs. The findings from Krass & Osland (2020) (Figure 7) show that in three different species of mangroves, the sap flow-rates post cyclone are 400-600% of what they were prior to the cyclone. In this specific study case, Hurricane Wilma's 'combing of the mangrove forest' has produced an abundance of new growth and the mangroves are consequently stronger and more healthy now.

**Figure 7:** Sap Flows in Cyclone Affected Mangrove Forests




(Krauss & Osland, 2020, p.220)

Further to this, a pastor in a community talked about the ancient practice of circumcision and how, after cyclone events, the *kastom* ceremonies had to wait until the taro crops were regrown and harvested. I was informed that taro is part of *kastom* because of its healing properties which allow for healing without sickness of the boys aged between 5 and 8 years old after circumcision. Taro leaf has been medically proven to reduce bacterial infection and is well known for its antibiotic properties (Padzil et al., 2021).

## 7.5 Conclusion

It is important to understand the place of *kastom nolej*, the *aelan ekonomi* and the *vanua* as fundamental structures of support that inform resilience in the Indigenous Ni-Vanuatu way of life. These tripartite components provide the foundation for resilient adaptation in the face of crisis and also undergird the roles and actions of emergent leadership. *Kastom nolej* has proved itself in multiple scenarios, showcasing insight and wisdom that is still difficult to comprehend, given that modern technologies to prove such knowledge were unavailable to previous generations, shown through cyclone prediction techniques, food preservation, and resilient and

sustainable construction methods. The *aelan ekonomi* has an important role in its reciprocal nature. Elements of culture and obligation are embedded in it, which makes it a system that is difficult to opt out of (as in the case of Vusilai and his Ford Ranger), but is an available resource when financial resources are unavailable. In modern times the *vanua* has sometimes been secondary to urban migration and paid employment opportunities, however it was in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic where the *vanua* was a safety net for many whose employment through the tourism industry was lost – and returning to the *vanua* (Movono, Scheyvens & Auckram 2022) provided what was necessary for living without the costs typically associated with urban living. These resilience structures have supported the people of Vanuatu for centuries past, and also recently in the face of the pandemic pause and the twin cyclones Judy and Kevin.

# Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusions

## 8.1 Introduction

This research was undertaken to explore how tourism stakeholders in Vanuatu adapt in the face of sudden shocks, in order to identify contributing factors to resilience. In the process of understanding factors of resilience, the role of emergent leadership has been highlighted in terms of how it takes this whole paradigm to the next level by drawing from resilient measures and adding to them specific leadership traits in a time of crisis, which magnify these aspects of resilience and lead the way through creative adaptation for others to follow.

This chapter discusses how the findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 intersect with the previous literature review chapters on Pacific Tourism and Resilience in regards to the research objectives. As a reminder to the reader, the objectives of the research were to investigate the concept of resilience and links to adaptability, sustainability and vulnerability; to draw from literature on how adaptation and resilience are best supported in Small Island States; and, most importantly, to investigate and identify emergent leadership and its potential to further support resilience building in Vanuatu.

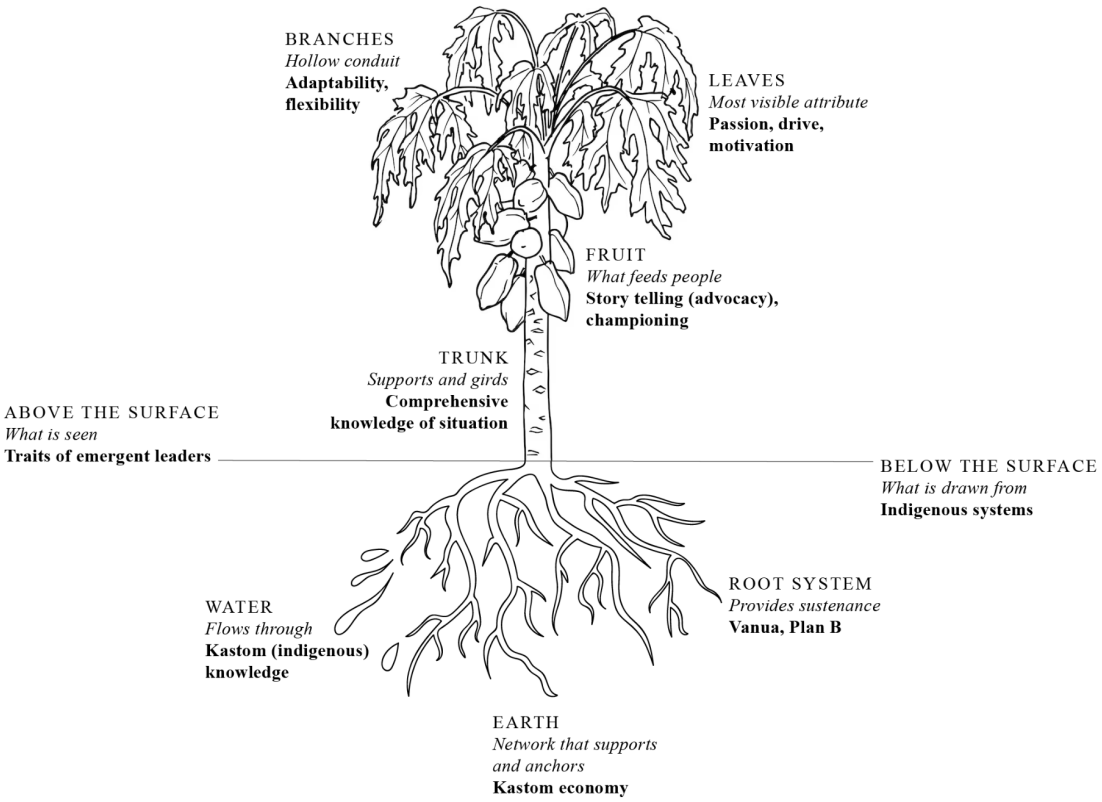
This final chapter thus showcases how emergent leadership can be conceptualised through a pawpaw tree illustration, discussing how Indigenous systems (three components of resilience in the Findings) and emergent leadership characteristics inform resilient responses. The illustration is compared with ideas from wider literature. The role of emergent leadership in slow-burn crisis situations is presented and the chapter mentions where further research could be explored, concluding with the core tripartite features of Indigenous resilience, and how these systems support emergent leadership.

## 8.2 Emergent Leadership – A Metaphorical Analogy

Understanding emergent leadership in the Pacific Island context of Vanuatu requires a dualistic insight into both the resources drawn from and the actions or traits enacted. Using a metaphorical analogy of a pawpaw tree, Figure 8 below depicts the differing tools in the arsenal that equip emergent leaders in their function as agents of change in a crisis. A distinction between the dual nature of emergent leadership shows Indigenous systems of resilience as the below-ground parts of the pawpaw tree, whereas the above-ground aspects of the tree symbolise the emergent behavioural traits.

In the context of Vanuatu's emergent leadership, both the Indigenous resilience systems and the behavioural characteristics highlighted are needed to encapsulate emergent leadership in its entirety. Starting from the bottom and working upwards, the picture denotes what is below the surface (water, earth and the root system) as *kastom* knowledge, the *kastom* economy and the *vanua* consecutively. These three underground components are key areas of resilience available not only to emergent leaders, but everyone in Vanuatu given that they have connection to their Indigenous lands and community. *Kastom* knowledge, taking the role of water in this instance, informs actions and has an upward flow as it feeds into what is above ground, such as the 'comprehensive knowledge of situation'. The *kastom* economy functions as a highly efficient network of trading, sharing and reciprocity largely devoid of financial exchange. The *vanua* operates as a Plan B – an available resource base and source of connectivity without discrimination. The above-ground elements of the pawpaw tree symbolise the things more significant to emergent leadership behaviour. While these elements are available to everyone, it is in the collation of these four above-ground leadership traits being coupled with what is underground that informs a holistic picture (in this case a pawpaw tree) of the arsenal of attributes and resilience resources that emergent leaders draw from and enact in moments of crisis. Much like a pawpaw tree which exists inside and draws from the greater ecosystem of the environment, emergent leaders also do not exist in isolation.

**Figure 8:** Pawpaw Tree Context: A Metaphorical Analogy of Emergent Leadership in Vanuatu




(Illustration by author.)

In drawing from the literature and comparing the prominent emergent behaviour traits above, Chabau (2010) and Mitroff (2001) consider a comprehensive knowledge of the situation at hand (the pawpaw trunk) to be of strong importance. All three emergent profiles exhibit that sound knowledge and high mental capability have aided their decisions amidst both the turmoil and expediency of crises they have faced. Jaques (2007), Hunt (2019), and Sommer et al. (2016) all allude to the factor of adaptability (pawpaw branches) of leaders to respond effectively in the changing circumstances of a crisis. This has been seen particularly exemplified in Regenerative Vanua's pivot during the Covid-19 pandemic, transitioning away from sustainable tourism approaches into rural tourism projects that are sustainable, regenerative in nature, and draw from Indigenous resilience measures that already exist. The passion and drive (pawpaw leaves) that was documented throughout the interviews and *storian* from multiple accounts, supports ideas from general leadership theory as highlighted through Collins (2009) and Wu et al. (2021) – but also ties in with what Pierce (2009) and Boin et al.

(2012) surmise, in that effective Emergent Leadership During Crisis (ELDC), through its determination, draws forth other team members' contributions to persevere until a successful outcome is realised.

The storytelling component (highlighted as pawpaw fruit) wasn't found in the literature directly, although there were close parallels with the likes of Anderson (2018) who described responsibility as one of the key three-part crisis leadership fundamentals. Responsibility puts the emergent leader in a similar position as being a champion for a crisis solution which happens to be part of the descriptor documented in the story-telling component of the pawpaw tree in Figure 8. Of note is that, of Andersons (2018) three-part emergent behaviour fundamentals, the remaining two – 'conveying confidence and mitigating stressors' and 'establishing and communicating vision amidst uncertainty' – fit appropriately alongside the leaves and branches (passion, drive, motivation, adaptability, flexibility) components of the pawpaw tree illustration in Figure 8, which further reinforces support from the literature.

Regenerative Vanua has furthered the notion of Anderson's (2018) research that emergent leadership can also be organisational and not just an individual's attributes. In fact, all emergent leaders in the findings have stated that they have drawn from organisational and social reserves in their humble accounts of doing what they excel in and are gifted at because it is needed – not because of financial incentives. Pierce (2009) takes special note of loyalty and the strong bonds in emergent leadership and the roles of contributing team members. Realising that although one person may be the foreperson for the received praise, Pierce (2009) explains that it takes a team of leaders, that are depended upon and drawn from, to feed the emergent leadership process through challenging situations.

## 8.3 Tripartite Resilience Measures

The findings presented a tripartite set of resilience measures that are available to everyone in the Vanuatu context on the premise that they still maintain connection and association with the *vanua*. All participants shared the same components of resilience that were forefront in their minds. It must be stated that, situationally, it is possible that findings were slightly skewed given the period in which the interviews were undertaken, as Vanuatu was still only just being able to harvest staple crops again after the twin cyclone damage that occurred earlier in the

year. The three major components of resilience can be explained in a set as Indigenous resilience systems undergirded and bound through kinship connections and comprising the following: access to *vanua* (also referred to as Plan B); the informal economy; and traditional knowledge systems. Cherise Addinsall stated when quoting the words of a Chief from a tourism-dependant island, amidst the Covid-19 cancellations of all foreign visitors:

> "Our people are fine, we've gone back to Plan B, we're back to our gardens, we've developed, built a market house, we're sharing goods, bartering goods. We know how to be resilient".

Indigenous systems and traditional ways of living in Vanuatu are in fact steeped in resilience (Campbell, 2009; HAG VANGO, 2021; McMillen, et al., 2014; Overton & Scheyvens, 1999; Pierce & Hemstock, 2022; Turner 1861). The competency of resilience has been showcased in light of the wake of Covid-19's pause, confirming Campbell's (2006) sentiment that even in the face of famine and cyclones, Pacific Island communities are able to resiliently bounce back. Campbell (2006) cites three slightly different components to the makeup of resilience when compared to the findings – those being food security, settlement security and cooperation. Cooperation can easily be understood as the informal economy or *kastom ekonomi,* as it's often referred to, where goods and services are traded in reciprocal and customary exchange – and this confirms the findings exactly. Emphasising this concept, the Tourism Minister of Vanuatu recently stated that the *kastom ekonomi* is an indispensable component to the "diversity, resilience and wellbeing of local communities" (Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy, 2021-2025, p.iii), and particularly useful in response to future shocks and stressors. The *vanua* (Plan B) and *kastom nolej* are not exactly what Campbell (2009) refers to as the two further components of resilience (food and settlement security), however there are enough similarities to concisely state that the findings have indeed confirmed literature – just in a more contemporary light given the recent pandemic pause and the extensive role that the tourism sphere exhibits in Vanuatu, and in many Pacific nations. *Kastom nolej* indeed covers food security and settlement security, with examples highlighted like that of the traditional food preparation and long term storage techniques with sago and yam alongside the *natangura* thatch cyclone resilient housing structures. Unfortunately, this very knowledge is currently being undermined – possibly making it the most imperative to regenerate. Comments by research participants and the Fijian case of Ledua, draw specific attention to re-establishing traditional knowledge because without it there is an increase in vulnerabilities.

Across the spectrum of resilience, adaptation and sustainability, there is a 'push-pull' effect when it comes to contextualising vulnerability. A reduction of resilience and its associated components leads to an increase in vulnerabilities (Campbell, 2009), or as Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva (2023) demonstrate in the Tourism Resilience Framework, a prolonged conservation phase leads to efficiencies but also to added vulnerability. Of concern is the undermining of resilience structures as occurs most notably with the younger generation (Pierce & Hemstock, 2022; Handmer & Iveson, 2017) where the flow-on effects of modernisation, colonial impacts and Westernised culture have degraded what is precious in Small Island States. Campbell (2009), Fath et al, (2015), Jackson, (2020) and research participants Addinsall, Kaloran, Ledua, Mackenzie-Reur and Vusilai all agree with this sentiment and have shared extensively their concerns. Morris Kaloran relayed to me that a silver lining had emerged during the pandemic pause in that *kastom* knowledge was renewed because many young people had to be taught by their elders at this time with practical and age-old practices that ensure resilience when there was a lack of finances in the nation of Vanuatu. Another hopeful sentiment was shared by Mackenzie-Reur that, despite some of the small plots of land that some *vanua* communities inhabit, they have sustained a vast amount of people across generations – and through passing this *kastom nolej* down to the younger generations, they can keep modern luxuries like that of flushing toilets, yet maintain the ancient practices and systems that allow for life and communities to flourish sustainably.

## 8.4 Emergent Leadership in the Case of 'Slow-Burn' Crises

There seems to be a gap in the literature about how long an emergent leader remains emergent, and how long a crisis period is perceived to be. A particular example is that of the NCD's in Vanuatu, where the Government of Vanuatu (Vanuatu  Ministry of Health, 2021) stated that there has been an NCD crisis for over a decade. Naturally, it could be stated that Voutausi Mackenzie-Reur and Leonid Vusilai are acting inside a crisis situation with their respective *kakae* initiatives in combating NCD's – although this sort of slow-burn crisis differs from that of the acute crisis that the Covid-19 border closures put on the tourism sphere, in which timelines and pressures were much more condensed. Further study would be beneficial in these long term slow-burn crisis scenarios and emergent leadership behaviour – in particular, providing detail around the duration period in which leaders remain emergent.

It was found that both Mackenzie-Reur and Vusilai favoured a greater emphasis on the storytelling aspect of the emergent leadership construct highlighted in Figure 8, when compared to Regenerative Vanua and the Setareki Ledua case study. The component of storytelling stems from a strong passion, but is distinct in that it explains how emergent leaders can figuratively 're-write the stories' (in the words of Mackenzie-Reur and Vusilai) in enabling change. The literature does not cover this directly, however the concepts of indigeneity and the facets that are unique in social-ecological systems throughout the Pacific (Durie, 2006; Movono, Scheyvens and Ratuva, 2023) mean that traditional practices like that of *storian* (the process of transferring knowledge in oral discussion settings) support this as a unique identifier to Pacific emergent leadership. An additional factor of note is that Mackenzie-Reur and Vusilai are both actively involved in tackling this slow-burn NCD crisis situation in Vanuatu, addressing nutrition deficiencies and restoring pride in local cuisine. Links in storytelling and slow-burn chronic crises could be further explored to populate longer term emergent leadership attributes in future literature.

## 8.5 Other Areas Where Research is Needed

Another element not quantified in literature is when an emergent leader simply adapts with their approach to a more sustained and normal pace of the environment post-crisis, taking up more typical forms of leadership. Citing Dunn (2020), there are particular elements to decision making in a crisis that differs from long term leadership, so it seems logical that at some stage this process will revert to a standardised approach, and it is possible that this may be a part of the reason why participants in the findings referred to themselves as agents of change as opposed to emergent leaders. Somers (2009) touches slightly on the post crisis setting, that reflecting and learning from past actions and mistakes can further inform future resilience in being resourced to adapt to future risk, threats and adversity – although nothing was said about an emergent leader transition or wind-down. There remains an interesting opportunity for further study into the ongoing roles and nature of emergent leadership behaviour ambiguity between post crisis and a return to normalcy.

## 8.6 Conclusion

In addressing the aim and objectives of this research, it emerged that the most effective way that tourism stakeholders in Vanuatu can support resilience is to take stock of the Ni-Vanuatu Indigenous systems that have benefited the nation and its people for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. As Campbell (2009) previously stated, the Pacific is resilient because it has Indigenous processes and a keen connection to the environment. It was also noted that any sense of vulnerability is due to an erosion of these traditional processes. This resilient Indigenous system is tripartite in nature, consisting of: investing in the informal economy (*kastom ekonomi*) by being part of the community (not just a bystander) and honouring the reciprocal exchange process which builds into the resilience network that Pacific people maintain and draw from; having a Plan B *(vanua)* as a stable and predictable resource base to fall back on in times of upheaval; and the role of Indigenous wisdom *(kastom nolej)* in both the individual and organisational settings which eventuate in greater wellbeing. *Kastom nolej* has proven to be sustainable, resilient and reliable even in modern situations like that of the tropical cyclone Harold response. The promotion of traditional, locally sourced and sustainable construction techniques as a cyclone resilient (and safer) option by the Vanuatu government further populates the notion that government, people and nature are all stakeholders in informing resilience in the tourism sphere (Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva, 2023).

It has been made evident through the findings and literature that the behaviour of emergent leaders has benefited the nation and tourism sphere amidst recent crises including the pandemic and cyclones Judy and Kevin. Such is the role of emergent leadership inside the greater concept of resilience, that without it, a system lacks the full ability to create new adaptive pathways for others to follow in, in the process of bouncing forward into reorganising and exploiting new opportunities for resilient future livelihoods. As shown in Movono, Scheyvens & Ratuva's (2023) Tourism Resilience Framework, emergent leadership's crucial function is made manifest at the point of crisis when things seem the most catastrophic and out of control. The four acknowledged emergent leadership traits from fieldwork research that are supported by literature are as follows:

- Being well informed, prepared and knowledgeable in key areas of both the vulnerabilities and strengths – an active resilience stance.
- Possessing an adaptive and flexible leadership competency. Adaptive intelligence allows for decision making, communication and networking amidst fluid crisis situations.
- Being committed, passionate and motivated about the cause to in turn motivate others forward.
- Utilising advocacy through storytelling to rewrite, retell and inform the change in active resilience and preparation for future events.

The decisive and expedient actions of research participants amidst differing crisis situations exhibited a robust framework of emergent traits that, when utilised in conjunction with the tripartite resilience system, provided a powerful and holistic response to complex and fluid scenarios with innovative, sustainable and successful outcomes. An interesting note is that the role of emergent leadership has not been to lead those in Vanuatu on a new path of crisis management or insight – it has simply been in the drawing from old knowledges and processes such as the *vanua* and the informal economy, to inspire resilience in the face of shocks and perturbations.

There is a concern that there are only so many shocks that a system can withstand in a short period of time due to the timeframe of being able to bounce back effectively (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2022) – or in some cases to bounce forward with new innovative processes. However, to date, Vanuatu has been an extremely resilient nation. The Covid-19 pandemic pause was a perfect storm to test Vanuatu's resilience structures from multiple angles. Having recently graduated out of the list of Least Developed Countries (Brien, 2019) and showcasing a thorough (and, reportedly, more successful than previous INGO led responses) national-led emergency response to tropical cyclone Harold, Vanuatu has the resource base necessary in terms of resilience, adaptability and sustainable processes to stand amidst future shocks and perturbations and to address disasters and emergencies like they have done in times past. This is not to say that foreign aid is unwelcome in the future, but that local processes and factors of resilience should not be negated, but rather be further explored as the number of crises has seemingly increased in recent years.

## 8.7 Resilience is the Pectin

Resilience is the pectin of society. Pectins, produced richly in many tropical fruits and notably in banana and pawpaw, are the perfect metaphor of how cells in a system maintain adhesion despite the dynamic changes of life in growth, transformation and disruption. Like pectin, resilience binds, supports and undergirds Ni-Vanuatu society, because in the face of ongoing potential adversity, communities and peoples must lean on each other to survive and thrive. This was witnessed when islands unaffected by tropical cyclone Harold came to the support of those that were facing its devastating effects, and also in many different stories throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The effects of recent crises caused strain, adversity, heartbreak and loss, yet resilience is not about the absence of trial and crisis – in fact it occurs in the face of these. It is in both chronic 'slow-burn' and acute adversity that resilience is formed, learned, showcased, and drawn from – much like the way that plant life draws from pectins in its growth life cycle.

It has been noted that Vanuatu is one the happiest, and yet one of the most disaster prone nations on Earth. I would like to suggest that because Vanuatu has faced so many crises throughout their history, that there has been much practice in adapting resiliently. Vanuatu's metaphorical pectin is now so rich that bouncing back and reforming innovatively might be part of Vanuatu's DNA – and therefore a major contributor to that source of happiness. Pectin is not unique to the fruit of Vanuatu, it can be found throughout the world in many different species, yet its principles remain the same. The seeds to these cohesive bonding structures that inform resilience are available to us all – it is just that Vanuatu are very familiar with sowing and reaping this particular type of harvest.

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БАЛКАНОТ МЕЃУ МИНАТОТО И ИДНИНАТА: БЕЗБЕДНОСТ, РЕШАВАЊЕ НА КОНФЛИКТИ И ЕВРОАТЛАНТСКА ИНТЕГРАЦИЈА, 185.

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## Footnotes

1. *Storian* is the Ni-Vanuatu process of knowledge sharing in a semi structured approach that allows for discursive dialogue between participants and interviewees (Addinsall, 2017) – much like the Pasifika concept of *Talanoa.*

2. The Royal Caribbean Cruise Company planned to buy Lelepa Island and turn it into a holiday destination with its own amusement park however there has been pushback from Ni-Vanuatu peoples who are concerned with the lack of consultation. The Chief of Lelepa Island, Reuben Natamatewia, has recently stated that any visits from Royal Caribbean cruise ships will come with conditions that must include working closely with him (Aru, 2022).

## **Appendix A:** Reimagining South Pacific Tourism Information Sheet

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

**Reimagining South Pacific tourism: harnessing resilience and sustainability in a world of increasing disorder**

**INFORMATION SHEET**

**Introduction**
The research is led by Dr Apisalome Movono from Massey University, who has extensive experience examining issues of tourism, adapation and community development in the Pacific. He is supported by Massey colleague, Prof. Regina Scheyvens, and Distinguished Prof. Steven Ratuva from Canterbury University.

**Project Description**
This research asks the following question:

- how can tourism be reimagined to ensure resilience and sustainability in the face of current and future shocks?

Many Pacific Island countries were highly reliant on tourism revenue pre-COVID-19. Thus, the re-establishment of tourism, but in more equitable and sustainable ways, is essential for economic survival. This is especially so for Fiji and Vanuatu, which gained 45% of GDP pre-pandemic from tourism. This study will focus on these two countries which share similar experiences of shocks such as severe tropical cyclones, political uncertainty and the current pandemic-based tourism impacts.

There are four key research objectives:

1. Analyse government and private sector responses to the crisis in tourism
2. Explore adaptive patterns and signs of community resilience in Fiji and Vanuatu
3. Investigate emergent leadership and its potential to further radical innovation in resilience building.
4. Identify pathways for transforming tourism practice in the Pacific.

**Invitation**
We are inviting you to participate as we would value drawing on your experience and insights to help build our understanding of about how communities and tourism industry stakeholders have adapted to the pandemic and other shocks, and your thoughts on how tourism can be re-imagined to provide better future outcomes.

You have either been asked to participate in:

- an individual interview (up to 1 hour)
- a group talanoa (up to 2 hours)
- a stakeholder workshop (half-full day)

**Data Management**
The information you provide will be kept confidential and stored safely. All data, including interview recordings and notes, will be stored in the research project's password-protected Dropbox site.

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

School of People, Environment & Planning
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand. **T** +64 6 350 4343 **F** +64 6 350 5737. **http://pep.massey.ac.nz**

**Participant's Rights**

We would be delighted if you agreed to participate, but please be assured that you are under no obligation to do so. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- *decline to answer any particular question;*
- *withdraw from the study at any time;*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*
- *ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.*

**Project Contacts**

If you have any questions about this research please contact the following investigators:


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Api Movono | Steven Ratuva | Regina Scheyvens |
| Mobile: +64 [redacted] | Mobile: +64[redacted] | Mobile: +64 [redacted] |
| A.Movono@massey.ac.nz | steven.ratuva@canterbury.ac.nz | R.A.Scheyvens@massey.ac.nz |


**Committee Approval Statement**

*This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. The Ethics Notification Number is: 4000025626. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz*

**Appendix B:** Massey University, Pacific Research Guidelines and Protocols (p.12)

PACIFIC RESEARCH AND POLICY CENTRE

PACIFIC KNOWLEDGE RESEARCH HUB

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

# PACIFIC RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

## RESPECT FOR RELATIONSHIPS

Ensuring that cultural protocols and processes are followed throughout the research process. Respect for research participants is exercised and grounded in humility, the roles of gatekeepers and elders are appropriately acknowledged and confidentiality is respected.

## RESPECT FOR KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

Ensuring that Pacific knowledge, aspirations and wellbeing are integral to research design, research processes, outcomes and outputs. Both research partners and research participants are prioritised as knowledge holders and a participatory approach is adopted in seeking informed consent.

## RECIPROCITY

Ensuring that reciprocity is an integral part of the research process and participants and communities benefit from the research. Reciprocity can encompass gifts, time and service and extends to accessible dissemination of research findings.

## HOLISM

Ensuring the interconnected nature of the physical, social, environmental, cultural and spiritual aspects of research with Pasifika and Pacific communities is understood and acknowledged.

## USING RESEARCH TO DO GOOD

Ensuring that the wellbeing of Pasifika and Pacific communities and their environment is of central importance in why and how research is conducted, at the same time as ensuring that the research is rigorous and scholarly. The goal of research beneficence applies to both the integrity of the research process and the potential research outcomes and impact.

For more information please contact
the Pacific Research & Policy Centre PacificResearch@massey.ac.nz
or visit our website http://www.massey.ac.nz/prpc

12 | PACIFIC RESEARCH GUIDELINES & PROTOCOLS

## **Appendix C:** Consent Form

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

**Reimagining South Pacific tourism: harnessing resilience and sustainability in a world of increasing disorder**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being recorded.

I would like to be referred to in this study in the following way (fill in your preference):

- My name and title e.g. ……
  - (e.g.Michael Maiava, Rainforest Lodge owner, Fiji)
- My title or a descriptor e.g. ……
  - (e.g. Lodge owner, Fiji)

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

I would/would not like a summary report of the findings sent to me on completion of this research.

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Full Name - printed** .....

**Email address:** .....

**Mobile number:** .....

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School of People, Environment & Planning
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