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**Profile of the Institute of Marine Resources (IMR)
in Solomon Islands**



PROFILE OF THE *INSTITUTE OF MARINE RESOURCES (IMR)* IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Background

The University of the South Pacific (USP), founded in 1968, is a regional university owned and operated by twelve Pacific Island countries and territories. The main Laucala Campus is in Suva, Fiji, and there are smaller centres in Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The University comprises several Schools, Departments, a Marine Studies Programme and Seven Institutes.

The Institutes

The main role of the Institutes is to apply the skills, equipment and other resources of the academic schools – particularly tasks relating to regional development. Because the Institutes are not directly involved with teaching under-graduates, they are better able than the schools to respond to regional requests without disrupting the University's academic programme. The Institutes do, however, provide research, training and employment opportunities for post-graduate students at the M.Sc. and Ph.D. levels.

In addition to post-graduate supervision and teaching, the Institutes are responsible for developing short course programmes and vocational training relevant to regions. They are expected to initiate and design new research and development programmes with other regional bodies and institutions, and with other universities. They are also encouraged to earn revenue by through consulting; for example in undertaking site surveys or compiling environmental impact assessments.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, the University Council decided upon a policy of decentralisation. It proposed to relocate the Institute of Marine Resources and other parts of the University to different island states. Accordingly the Law School was relocated to Emalus Campus, Vanuatu (leaving the allied Institute of Justice and Applied Legal Studies in Suva); and the School of Agriculture was relocated to Alafua Campus in Samoa (leaving the Institute of Research, Extension and Training in Agriculture in Fiji).

The Institute of Marine Resources (IMR)

Currently the smallest Institute at USP is the Institute of Marine Resources (IMR). It was, however, established in 1978 – initially based in a flying boat hanger at the old RNZAF base at Laucala Bay. The IMR was the precursor to the University's current Marine Studies Programme, that, as a result of substantial Japanese aid, now has excellent teaching and research facilities on the lower campus at Laucala.

For financial and other reasons, plans to move the Institute of Marine Resources to Honiara in the Solomon Islands were delayed. In the interim, the rapidly developing Marine Studies Programme (MSP) at Laucala Bay, Suva, eclipsed IMR which now

falls under the aegis of that very successful Programme. It is likely that USP's current "Atoll Research Programme", which is based in Kiribati, will soon become part of IMR.

To facilitate the relocation of IMR, the Solomon Islands Government agreed to provide a suitable site for the campus and to develop core facilities in Honiara. This undertaking was called Phase 1. (Vanuatu also provided a site and core facilities for the Law School).

In 1993 staff from USP visited Honiara to try and locate a suitable site for the IMR Campus, preferably somewhere along the Honiara foreshore and not too distant from the Division of Fisheries (with whom it was hoped IMR would become affiliated). All likely foreshore sites in Honiara were, however, deemed unavailable for such development by the (then) Solomon Islands Government. So an alternative site was provided 25 km northwest of Honiara at Aruligo. This level, 3.13 ha site, on an old Coconut Plantation has a road frontage of 400m, and a fringing reef of 5.1 ha. The site is adjacent to an aquaculture research facility owned by the International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM).

In 1995 a Director of IMR was transferred from USP to Honiara in preparation for the impending move. In 1997 he was replaced by another Director who also liaised with the Solomon Islands Government, particularly during the construction of Phase 1. The Current Director, Cameron Hay, recently from the Cawthron Institute, Nelson, New Zealand, arrived in May 1999.

Phase 1

On 28 May 1999 the Aruligo site and core facilities (Costing \$SID 1.2 million) were gifted by the Solomon Island Government (SIG) to the University of the South Pacific. Three concrete buildings were built by Fletcher Kwaimani to USP specifications. They comprise:

- (a) a one and a half storey building that could be either a small residence or office building,
- (b) a one and a half storey resource building (comprising a small laboratory with two upstairs offices) and,
- (c) a single storey workshop.

Additionally, SIG paid for two new generators (60 and 40 Kva), items of furniture and whiteware, security fencing, accommodation for security guards, and two 2,000 gallon fibreglass water tanks reservoirs. A bore hole drilled at the western end of the site established that there was water at about 3-4 m depth. The site was graded and levelled.

Phase 2

USP has applied for EU funding to build: additional laboratories, conference and vocational training facilities, student dormitory (hostel) accommodation, communal kitchens a recreational area (eg gymnasium) and a boat launching ramps or wharf.

It is envisaged that when this Phase 2 is completed, that there will be accommodation and facilities for up to 24 post-graduate students with at least six academic staff and support staff.

The students will be drawn from USP (mainly those coming through the Marine Studies Programme) and also from other universities eg from PNG, Guam, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.

Inevitably, because of the geography of the region, the IMR will establish field stations on other islands.

Current Staffing

Currently USP has made provision for four academic and two support staff and for temporary staff for IMR in the Solomon Islands as follows:

Director	<i>Filled</i>
Professional position (Lecturer level)	<i>Vacant</i>
Professional position (Lecturer level)	<i>Vacant</i>
University Fellow	<i>Filled</i>
PA to Director	<i>Vacant</i>
Technician	<i>Vacant</i>
2 security guards	<i>Filled</i>

[The Atoll Research Programme in Kiribati has three full-time staff plus wage workers]

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