



# PACIFIC FUTURES DIGITAL STUDENT RESEARCH WORKSHOP

Preparing our region for the next pandemic: Australia, New Zealand, South Pacific Islands countries and territories

				FRIDAY 25 JUNE			
10.00	09.00	08.00	06.00	<b>Introductions and Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledgment of Country (Sven Schottmann &amp; Eleonore Laine-Forrest)</li> <li>French language welcome (Eleonore Laine-Forrest)</li> <li>English language welcome (Sven Schottmann)</li> <li>TBC (representative, Embassy of France in Canberra)</li> </ul>			
10.10	09.10	08.10	06.10	<b>Opening Remarks and Framing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anthony Tutugoro (Lecturer, Université de la Nouvelle-Calédonie)</li> </ul>			
10.20	09.20	08.20	06.20	<b>New Caledonian cultural showcase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veïma (New Caledonian-niVanuatu singer and UNC student), accompanied by Robin Canac (Teacher, Conservatoire de Musique et de Danse de la Nouvelle-Calédonie)</li> </ul>			
10.30	09.30	08.30	06.30	<b>Student panel 1 – SOCIAL SCIENCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agathe Stephan (“Un autre monde pour demain : État des lieux de la pandémie Covid-19 en Nouvelle-Calédonie et solutions pour préserver le lien social tout en vivant avec le virus”)</li> <li>Dominic McCarthy (“Regional business and the impact of COVID-19”)</li> <li>Sarah Mengshan Xu (“The international student experience during COVID-19 and lockdowns in Australia”)</li> </ul>			
11.00	10.00	09.00	07.00	<b>Student panel 2 – HEALTH &amp; TECHNOLOGY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Samuel Sebastian (“Public health, social security and local tourism initiatives: Some regional scenarios”)</li> <li>Hillary Mafutuna &amp; Audrey Rouvone (“La gestion de la crise sanitaire en Nouvelle-Calédonie”)</li> <li>Nina Roxburgh (“Preparing for increased reliance on digital health tools for pandemic responses and lessons from the failure of COVID-19 contact tracing apps”)</li> </ul>			
11.30	10.30	09.30	07.30	<b>Student panel 3 – DIGITAL AND LEGAL CONUNDRUMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shae Plant (“Declaring a ‘state of emergency’ when you’re not considered a State”)</li> <li>Liam Hall-Muir (“Strengthening national health systems in the Southwest Pacific region”)</li> <li>Leah Monk (“Digital connectivity to future-proof the region”)</li> <li>Branden Tovo (“Impacts of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 On Minerals Extraction Sector in the Pacific region”)</li> </ul>			
12.00	11.00	10.00	08.00	<b>Student panel 4 - PREVENTING THE NEXT PANDEMIC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carla Fischer (“Looking into the future: Emerging global trends in the post-pandemic Southwest Pacific region”)</li> <li>Boma Kai Barney (“Getting the basics right: Early learnings from COVID-19”)</li> <li>Marisha Kawas (“Food Safety in response to the control measures during and post-COVID-19 pandemic”)</li> <li>John Komek (“Sustainable livelihoods of small farmers’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic: A case study of the Southwest Pacific countries”)</li> </ul>			
12.30	11.30	10.30	8.30	Talanoa - Summary and conclusion (20 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anthony Tutugoro leading a digital and analogue “geste d’au revoir”</li> </ul>			
12.50	11.50	10.50	08.50	Finish			



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## Student panel 1 – SOCIAL SCIENCE

### UN AUTRE MONDE POUR DEMAIN : ÉTAT DES LIEUX DE LA PANDÉMIE COVID-19 EN NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE ET SOLUTIONS POUR PRÉSERVER LE LIEN SOCIAL TOUT EN VIVANT AVEC LE VIRUS

(SOCIAL SCIENCE – NEW CALEDONIA)

Agathe Stephan (agathe.stephan@etudiant.unc.nc)

Le coronavirus 2019, dit la covid-19, a fait son entrée dans nos vies il y a près d'un an et demi en modifiant notre quotidien d'une façon totalement inédite. Jusqu'à présent en Nouvelle-Calédonie, le virus a été maintenu sous contrôle grâce, entre autres, à la mise en place d'une quatorzaine et d'une bonne gestion des arrivants sur le « Caillou ». Ainsi, en dehors de deux périodes de confinement d'une période d'un mois environ qui se sont déroulées à un an d'intervalle (mars-avril 2020 et mars 2021) la population a réussi à vivre normalement, soit « comme avant », contrairement à la majorité des autres pays du monde. Selon les propos de nombreux scientifiques, si ce virus est le premier à avoir modifié notre façon de vivre, il ne sera sûrement pas le dernier. Les raisons avancées sont principalement environnementales (déforestation, dégel du permafrost, etc.)

Allons-nous devoir modifier nos habitudes sociales et nous organiser différemment face à de nouvelles épidémies ? Est-ce que ces bouleversements mondiaux ne devraient pas nous amener à revoir notre façon de vivre ? Ce travail commencera par se concentrer sur la façon dont les Calédoniens ont vécu lors de leurs deux confinements, ainsi que sur les contraintes inhérentes à cet arrêt de la vie active auxquelles ils ont dû faire face. Cette première analyse permettra de mettre en perspective la situation calédonienne avec ce qui se passe au niveau planétaire, lorsque l'activité humaine ralentit, voire s'arrête totalement. Enfin, il s'agira de présenter les différents groupes de personnes qui s'organisent pour préparer le monde de demain en pensant et en agissant différemment. Selon ces derniers, le monde capitaliste et consumériste dans lequel nous évoluons court à sa perte.

### REGIONAL BUSINESS AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

(SOCIAL SCIENCE – PACIFIC GENERAL)

Dominic McCarthy (dom@dommccarthy.com)

The South West Pacific should prepare and respond to the next pandemic by learning from lessons from COVID-19. The business community within the region has been significantly impacted by lockdowns, border closures and health restrictions. These challenges have been further exacerbated by the minimal assistance provided by governments to respond to the situation. According to Pacific Trade Invest's Pacific Business Monitor, the recent survey of businesses in February 2021 shows 79% of businesses had reported a negative impact from COVID-19, down from 86% in the last survey.

Businesses remain uncertain about the future, with 82% saying poor cashflow was their top challenge. The survey highlighted that receiving financial support, reviewing the financial position of the company, diversifying their business offerings and improving online-commerce capabilities were the top four initiatives they need support with. My research article will explore the COVID-19 impacts on the business community across the South West Pacific, from small to large enterprises. The article will outline and propose recommendations for better preparing and responding to the next pandemic.

### THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE DURING COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWNS IN AUSTRALIA

(SOCIAL SCIENCE – AUSTRALIA)

Sarah Menshan Xu, University of Newcastle

(Mengshan.Xu@uon.edu.au)

This is a case study of the Language Centre at the University of Newcastle that had transitioned the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) from traditional classroom-based teaching to an online program under the COVID-19 pandemic. When the 'study from home ELICOS' program had been launched, the teachers delivered daily lessons through online platforms, including Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate and Microsoft 360 Teams, to students who intended to acquire a certain level of English proficiency. Attention had been specifically drawn to the different perspectives toward the virtual classrooms from both teachers and students in the English as a Second Language (ESL) context.

The main sources of data for this study were in-depth interviews, to investigate how the online ELICOS was perceived. Interviews data were collected through Zoom platform over a month from ten students who enrolled in the intermediate or upper-intermediate classroom, and two teachers who took charge of the classes. The findings gave us an understanding of how well the teachers and the students adapted to the online environment and indicated some difficulties may be encountered especially during the 'breakout room' session in the Zoom forum, as well as suggested ways of mitigating such challenges in language classrooms in a post COVID-19 educational landscape.





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## Student panel 2 – HEALTH & TECHNOLOGY

### PUBLIC HEALTH, SOCIAL SECURITY AND LOCAL TOURISM INITIATIVES: SOME REGIONAL SCENARIOS (HEALTH & TECHNOLOGY – PACIFIC GENERAL)

Samuel Sebastian, University of Newcastle  
(samuel.sebastian@uon.edu.au)

As a medical student, I've learnt and experienced first-hand the impact of COVID-19 on communities, even with the few cases in Australia. However, the Pacific is particularly vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic, especially with the destruction of the tourism industry accounting for one in four jobs. Not only does the pandemic affect the economic and social security of the South West Pacific region, it poses a significant risk for countries with overburdened health systems. According to the 2017 Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goals Outlook, the region is falling behind on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially in the domains of healthcare, industry, and infrastructure.

In order to combat and prepare for the next pandemic, there not only needs to be greater investment in healthcare, but further emphasis on social security schemes and local tourism incentives. Yet, tackling the pandemic will require strategic planning and geo-political collaboration, including the consideration of travel bubbles, COVID vaccination passports and rapid COVID testing on arrival. Although these measures are vital in rescuing the Pacific's struggling communities, long term economic growth can only be achieved by controlling the pandemic through a lens of public health and addressing the Sustainable Development Goals.

### LA GESTION DE LA CRISE SANITAIRE (HEALTH & TECHNOLOGY – NEW CALEDONIA)

Hillary Mafutuna and Audrey Rouvone,  
Université de la Nouvelle-Calédonie  
(hillary.mafutuna@etudiant.unc.nc;  
audrey.rouvone@etudiant.unc.nc)

L'ambition de cette communication est de mettre en lumière la chronologie de la gestion de la crise sanitaire en Nouvelle-Calédonie depuis le mois de mars 2020, d'une part, les raisons qui ont fait de la Nouvelle-Calédonie un territoire covid-free jusqu'en mars 2021, d'autre part. La dimension îlienne sera ainsi étudiée afin de mettre en lumière la force insulaire de cette petite île du Pacifique sud, tout comme les failles apparentes du protocole mis en place qui auraient, en tout état de cause, permis la réapparition du virus en mars 2021.

### PREPARING FOR INCREASED RELIANCE ON DIGITAL HEALTH TOOLS FOR PANDEMIC RESPONSES AND LESSONS FROM THE FAILURE OF COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING APPS (HEALTH & TECHNOLOGY – PACIFIC GENERAL)

Nina Roxburgh (nina.roxburgh@gmail.com)

In the current and future pandemics, people across the South West Pacific will be faced with governmental and public health authority requests to use digital tools and personal data for contact tracing, containment, safety measures and epidemiological data collection. While many populations have a willingness to engage with digital health applications and services for personal gain, evidence shows that during the COVID-19 pandemic digital technologies like contact tracing apps were shunned by the public, and in particular with Australia's COVID Safe contact tracing app.

There are several possibilities for why people did not feel comfortable downloading a contact tracing app as opposed to other personal fitness, health and wellbeing apps used in daily life; lack of trust in government, lack of transparency in app development and open source code, concerns of privacy and security, proper informed consent, and lack of access to smartphones (especially for populations more vulnerable infection) among many other issues. Understanding the barriers individuals experienced with public health digital tools such as contact tracing apps could help us in preparing for future pandemics, in particular, to ensure that digital technology can effectively support public health efforts.



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## Student panel 3 – DIGITAL AND LEGAL CONUNDRUMS

### IMPACTS OF THE CORONA VIRUS DISEASE 2019 ON MINERALS EXTRACTION SECTOR IN THE PACIFIC REGION

(SOCIAL SCIENCE – PACIFIC GENERAL)

**Branden Tovo, Papua New Guinea University of  
Technology**  
(17301605brto@student.pnguot.ac.pg)

The economy of Papua New Guinea is dominated by agricultural, forestry, fishing, minerals and energy extraction sector. Mining is a significant source of exports and foreign exchange earnings. In March, Oktedi Mining Limited suspended its operation for 2 weeks due to increased Covid-19 cases at the mine site and Western province, the shutdown had cost about 210 million kinas (\$59million USD) of revenue, directly hitting foreign currency inflows to the country. So despite the boost that mining companies give to the economy of a country, it might still face short term complications in times of a Pandemic.

Mining Activities provides employment, generate substantial economic output and government revenues in the countries where they operate. Mining bears a number of additional taxes and royalties as well as the taxes paid on employment and profits which are common to most sectors in the economy and thus stabilizes the economy of a country. Many jobs were lost and business houses closed during the global pandemic, affecting individual households that entirely rely on earnings from the mine workers and businesses. The finalized report will consist of detailed discussion mainly on the economic, social and political impacts of Covid-19 on Mining in the Pacific region.

### DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY TO FUTURE-PROOF THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC REGION

(SOCIAL SCIENCE – PACIFIC GENERAL)

**Leah Monk (leahrmonk@gmail.com)**

A major strategic focus for Australia is stepping up the role it plays in the Pacific, where its key priorities include improving social and economic opportunities for Pacific Island Nations (PINs), particularly Pacific women. COVID-19 has significantly impacted socio-economic and gender inequality by exacerbating the digital divide, with PINs being considerably affected due to their remoteness and lack of digital connectivity. This is because PINs have less accessibility to measures other countries have relied on throughout the pandemic, including remote working, e-health, and continuing work in the era of social distancing (World Bank, 2020). Furthermore, COVID-19 has inordinately impacted women in many ways, including the adoption of additional unpaid labour and reduced economic opportunities (Pacific Women, 2020). Access to the digital economy provides women with alternative income sources, mitigating some gendered impacts of COVID-19. In order to ensure PINs are better able to respond to future pandemics and remedy the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, I propose improving digital connectivity and increasing digital literacy needs to be a key focus for regional actors. Prioritising digital connectivity addresses a key need of the Pacific region, future-proofing PINs against future pandemics, and addressing inequalities caused by the digital divide.

### STRENGTHENING NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEMS IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC REGION

(SOCIAL SCIENCE – PACIFIC GENERAL)

**Liam Hall-Muir (lthallmuir@gmail.com)**

Covid-19 has had a major impact on the nations of the south-west Pacific islands nations in the areas of economic and social aspects of society. Due to the lockdowns and a ban of non-essential travel, tourist-based economies and labour mobility-based economies have taken a financial hit. Most Pacific island communities rely on seasonal work/remittance from larger economies and foreign tourism for local jobs. Due to lockdowns many workers have found themselves either trapped in a foreign country or at home unable to return home to see family or to leave for financial opportunities. This has greatly impacted the social fabric of society, which in the Pacific is typically a community-oriented culture. Due to financial stress and increased food insecurity this has led to an increase in domestic violence and a feeling of distress amongst entire communities.

For the future, the focus for south west Pacific nations will be on risk management, with an immediate focus of strengthening the national health system to handle future outbreaks. Prioritise strengthening community and social institutions. Through strengthening of institutions there is a need to develop independent assessment capabilities so sound decision making for crisis management can be made by governments regarding risk.

### DECLARING A 'STATE OF EMERGENCY' WHEN YOU'RE NOT CONSIDERED A STATE

(SOCIAL SCIENCES – NORFOLK ISLAND)

**Shae Plant, Queensland University of  
Technology (shaepplant@gmail.com)**

On 29 January 2020, Queensland declared a Public Health Emergency due to COVID-19. On 15 March 2020, Western Australia declared a state of emergency. On 16 March 2020, so did Victoria, and the ACT. On 17 March 2020, Tasmania. On 22 March 2020, South Australia.

On 25 March 2020, NSW passed the COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures) Act 2020. Caught between these decisions sat a remote island in the South Pacific. This paper looks at how Norfolk Island, an external 'Australian' territory, which had recently lost the right to govern itself, tried to protect itself in a global pandemic.





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### Student panel 4 - PREVENTING THE NEXT PANDEMIC

#### LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE: GLOBAL POST-PANDEMIC TRENDS IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC (HEALTH & TECHNOLOGY – PACIFIC GENERAL) Carla Fischer (carla.marinefischer@gmail.com)

According to Yale scientist Nicholas Christakis the pandemic will play out in three parts and finally end in 2024 - we are currently in the intermediate period which began in March 2020 and will end in 2021; this is a period of epidemiological shock which entails massive transmission leading to societal shutdown and dramatic changes in our daily life behaviour. Christakis predicts that we will enter a period of recovery for our society, economically and socially, which is currently starting for the environment for instance for the first time in 80 years the salmon population in Columbia river is spawning, whales have come back to the Atlantic Ocean after more than 100 years, the ozone hole over Antarctica has closed and the Elephant population in Kenya has doubled due to decrease in animal poaching. We need to assure when we come down back to normal life these will be preserved through building infrastructure to ensure peace and promote sustainability through a fair market. Lastly sometimes during 2024 well likely to reach the post-pandemic period - which could be like the roaring 20s - societal euphoria, a renewed purpose for many and a leap in medical advancement due to increased funding after the pandemic. It is expected that technology behind the Pfizer vaccine could lead to a possible MS breakthrough. Yet, what Nicholas Christakis missed is that these times might differ in different environments as there have been new mutations forming in places in Asia, and Europe.

#### FOOD SAFETY IN RESPONSE TO THE CONTROL MEASURES DURING AND POST COVID 19 PANDEMIC (SOCIAL SCIENCE – PACIFIC GENERAL) Marisha Kawas, Papua New Guinea University of Technology (18500526maka@student.pnguot.ac.pg)

The corona virus is a deadly disease that is transmitted from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneeze. The pandemic disease not only caused numerous deaths but also left a devastating impact on global economies. A nation's food supply is susceptible to this fatal disease. Although there is not any evidence on its transmission through food, the workers and facilities, and equipment where food is produced, processed, packaged and distributed are at a vulnerable state. Almost all food industries establishes standard operating procedures such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCPs) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs). Training of employees on food safety is a prerequisite program included in all HACCP plans of a food industry. Employees in such major industries have to be trained not only on covid-19 safety measure but also on post pandemic events. Implementing standard procedures in controlling of covid-19 in food production areas will create a food supply chain that is flexible in responding to the spread of the pandemic or any future pandemic in a way that will not alter or cause fluctuations in the price and quality of food products.

#### GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT – EARLY LEARNINGS FROM COVID-19

##### (SOCIAL SCIENCE – PACIFIC GENERAL) Boma Kai Barney, Papua New Guinea University of Technology (bomakaibarney@gmail.com)

The South West Pacific regions is not ready for the next pandemic strike, thus certain steps need to be taken in preparation for the pandemic. For starters, the Pacific region needs an independent, Pandemic Review Commission that will deliver an objective, a political assessment of what went right and what went wrong in the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Its members should be predominantly public health experts, scientists, and medical professionals, but they should also include experienced public- and private-sector leaders and industry leaders. Pacific communities experience poor access to healthcare, significantly higher rates of communicable and non-communicable diseases, lack of access to essential services, sanitation, and other key preventive measures, such as clean water, soap, disinfectant, etc. Most local medical facilities, if and when there are any, are often under-equipped and under-staffed. South West Pacific Islander families tend to live in large, multi-generational, and close-knit homes. So if one family member gets infected, self-isolation is difficult and the ripple effects could be harrowing. As lockdowns continue, with no timeline in sight, families face food insecurity and other social issues. Many Pacific islanders work in traditional occupations and subsistence economies or in the informal sector are adversely affected by the pandemic.

#### SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS OF SMALLHOLDER FARMERS' RESPONSE TO THE RECENT COVID 19 PANDEMIC – A CASE STUDY OF THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC COUNTRIES

##### (SOCIAL SCIENCE – PACIFIC GENERAL) John Komek, Papua New Guinea University of Technology (20800140joko@pgs.pnguot.ac.pg)

Smallholder farmers of the South West Pacific will have to perceive sustainable livelihood accepting change. The challenge of the covid 19 pandemic, and how different nations have responded varies greatly depending on individual nations strengths and opportunities to manage the impacts of covid 19. With high levels of uncertainty to provide possible focus ahead of time, certainly, life will never be the same. Smallholder farmers who make up more than 80% of the total population of people living in the South West Pacific nations, contribute anonymously to sustainable livelihood. This research aims to address the importance of smallholder farmers sustainable livelihood in the South West Pacific. The expected outcome from this study is the output from utilizing the SWOT analysis tool, which appears to be a relevant strategic tool for measuring the capabilities of smallholder farmers. The SWOT analysis will enhance proper strategic planning learning from how smallholder farmers across the South West Pacific have encountered the current pandemic to better enable them in withstanding the unpredictable effects and changes presume encountering another pandemic in the near future.