

# PACIFIC RESILIENCE

HOW FUNDING FOR CLIMATE ACTION  
STRENGTHENS OUR REGION



**OXFAM**  
Aotearoa

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Zealand's funding for climate action is an essential lifeline for communities across our Pacific region.

This report shows the positive difference that climate funding from New Zealand has made since this support was increased from 2022. Funding from New Zealand is directly improving the lives of tens of thousands of people across the Pacific, while increasing collective resilience to the accelerating impacts of climate change.

Renewing this commitment, with new funding from 2026, would build on the strong relationships that have been forged with governments and communities in the Pacific and beyond.

If we continue the trend of ramping up funding for climate action, New Zealand could be on track to meet our fair share of the assistance promised to lower-income countries, including here in the Pacific.

New Zealand must keep our promise to help our Pacific neighbours, who have done nothing to cause the climate crisis, but are already feeling the worst of the effects.

As this report shows, the New Zealand Government's funding for climate action in the Pacific makes a significant contribution to the collective resilience of our region.

Let's keep up the good work.

# KEEPING NEW ZEALAND’S PROMISE TO THE PACIFIC

From 2022 to 2025, communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis have benefited from over a billion dollars raised by the New Zealand government. This funding is a lifeline for our neighbours in the Pacific to maintain resilience in the climate crisis, with clean water, climate-smart agriculture and preparation for disasters.

This funding for Pacific communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change isn’t charity. It’s a promise that New Zealand has made, together with other richer countries, based on our greater historical responsibility for climate change. It’s a promise we must keep.

Our government sets a world-leading example by providing all of our public climate finance as grants, not loans, with the majority supporting communities in the Pacific to adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

The funding for climate action that New Zealand provides is more vital than ever. Oxfam research shows that two-thirds of the climate funding currently promised to lower income countries is loans, meaning that rich countries are profiteering from the climate crisis. The focus on loans, often at commercial rates, also means that community needs for adaptation are being ignored and under-funded.<sup>i</sup>

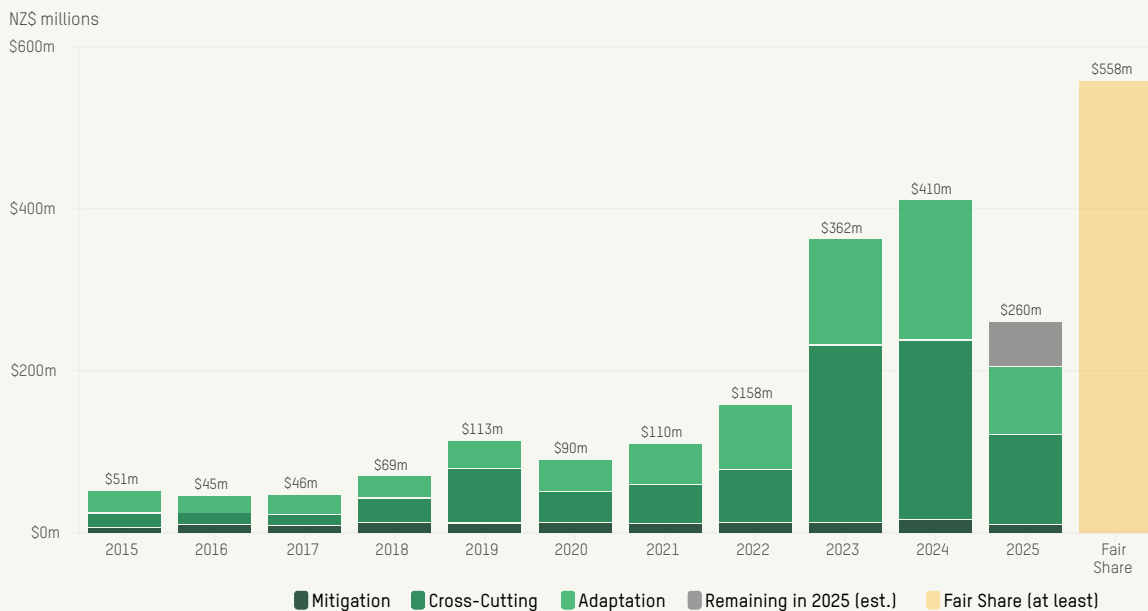
In this bleak global landscape, where rich countries are turning their backs on the suffering they have caused,

climate funding from New Zealand has been a small ray of hope for Pacific communities.

As the impacts of the climate crisis in the Pacific continue to accelerate, now is the time for New Zealand to keep our promise to support our neighbours. In 2024, Oxfam Aotearoa and World Vision NZ published a joint report showing that the New Zealand Government needs to continue to increase climate funding, to do its fair share of the global effort.<sup>ii</sup>

The findings of the report were endorsed by the Council for International Development (CID), with an open letter signed by the Council and 22 member organisations calling on the Government to scale up climate finance to at least \$558 million a year, in addition to other development assistance.<sup>iii</sup>

Ramping up international climate funding to meet New Zealand’s fair share would enable programmes funded by New Zealand to continue the momentum of recent years. In 2021, the New Zealand Government announced its biggest climate finance contribution to date: \$1.3 billion for the four years from 2022 to 2025.<sup>iv</sup> While \$500 million of this commitment was drawn from existing development assistance budgets, the \$800 million of climate-dedicated funding represented a \$500 million increase from the \$300 million of climate finance provided in the previous period.



**Figure 1: New Zealand’s Climate Finance - towards our fair share**

Source: Analysis of transaction-level data on actual disbursement, published by MFAT and the International Aid Transparency Initiative, as of October 2025. Fair Share calculated by Oxfam Aotearoa and World Vision NZ.<sup>vi</sup>

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/25668397/>



Photo: Rachel Schaevitz/Oxfam

All of the \$800 million in climate-dedicated funding is allocated to projects with a principal objective of adapting to or mitigating the effects of climate change. The remaining funding counted as climate finance represents the mainstreaming of climate objectives into development programs, either as a principal or a significant component of the activity.<sup>v</sup>

This new funding enabled a step change in New Zealand's commitment to supporting climate action in the Pacific. From 2022, new programmes started moving through MFAT's process of consultation and design to begin delivering support to communities, especially those in the Pacific facing challenges in adapting to climate impacts. From 2023, the delivery of this new support intensified, with spending more than double that of any previous year.

This increase signalled a new trend in New Zealand living up to its promises to the Pacific. If commitments beyond 2025 had been set in advance, allowing programming to continue to ramp up, New Zealand would have been on track to meet its fair share of international climate finance commitments.

But progress appears to have stalled. With no further funding for climate finance announced in the 2024 or 2025 budgets, the new programmes have started to wind down. New Zealand's climate contributions are now on the downhill side of the 2024 peak, with the current trend showing a ramping down of spending that mirrors the earlier ramp up.<sup>vii</sup>

This volatility of funding creates a problem for Pacific efforts to adapt to climate change. Programmes that have just started to reach affected communities are now at risk, with the uncertainty of further funding making it difficult to follow best practice of long-term planning, stable delivery, and meaningful participation by local communities.

The lack of a commitment to international climate funding beyond 2025 is also a risk for New Zealand's reputation. Even though baseline funding for Official Development Assistance (ODA) actually increased in the 2025 budget, this was more than offset by the drop-off in funding specific to climate programmes. This meant that international reports, from the OECD as well as Oxfam, have listed New Zealand alongside the United States and UK as countries that have cut international assistance in 2025.<sup>viii</sup>

With Pacific countries facing uncertainty and a likely shortfall in funding from traditional partners, including USAID, it is more important than ever for New Zealand to provide steady and reliable support. During a trip to Washington, DC in 2025, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, raised the potential impact of a 'gap or vacuum' left by declining US support in the Pacific:

**It leaves the Pacific seriously exposed unless, of course, like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific step up.<sup>ix</sup>**

In announcing the 2025 budget, in which baseline ODA funding was increased but no additional climate finance was announced, Minister of Finance, Nicola Willis, acknowledged that 'the Minister of Foreign Affairs has made a very strong case for more funding, and this will be looked at in future.'<sup>x</sup>

As current and future Governments decide on funding commitments to climate action in the Pacific, in a context of increasing need and accelerating climate impacts across our region, it is important to understand how the surge in funding since 2022 has benefited communities in the Pacific.

## KEEPING UP THE GOOD WORK

The New Zealand Government’s delivery of climate finance has set the global standard. All funding from New Zealand is provided as grants.<sup>xi</sup> This avoids adding to the growing burden of debt created by other governments that count loans as climate finance. New Zealand also prioritises support for adaptation, especially for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific, helping to fill a major global gap in support for these communities of the frontlines on the climate crisis.

Oxfam Aotearoa’s main recommendation to the New Zealand Government on international climate finance is to keep up the good work. With further commitments to climate finance beyond 2025, the programme can continue to grow from strength to strength. **By continuing the trend of year-on-year increases in funding for climate action, New Zealand would soon be on track to funding our fair share of global climate efforts and would make a major contribution to ensuring the resilience of our Pacific region to the accelerating impacts of climate change.**

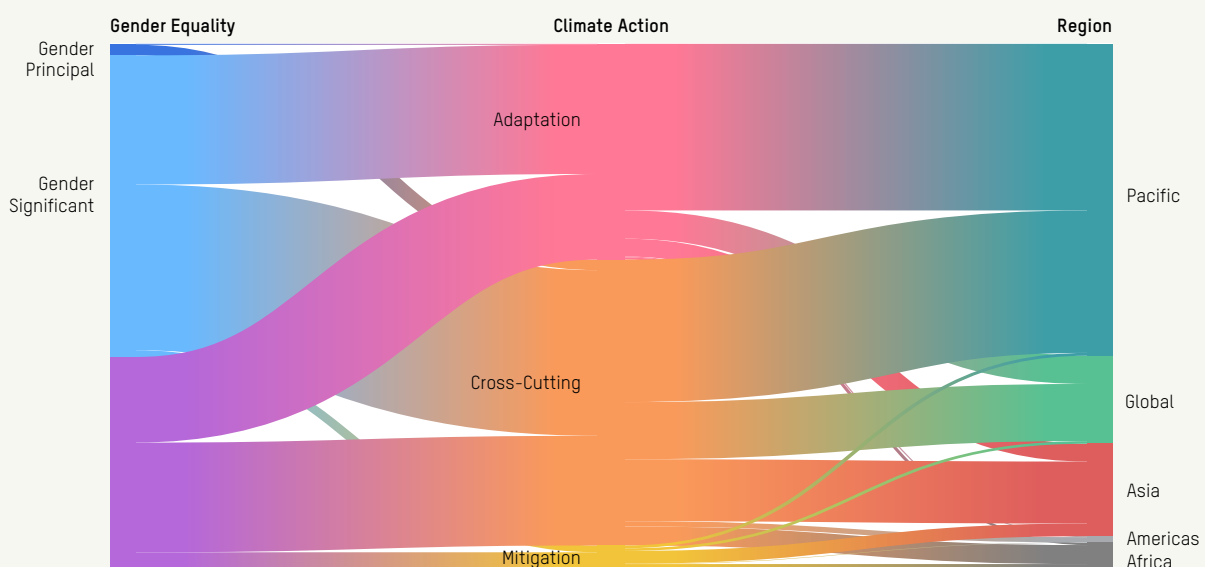
New Zealand’s climate finance programme for 2022 to 2025 was set up with a promise of at least half of the funding going to the Pacific. It has more than delivered on that goal, with 59% of funding to date supporting climate action in the Pacific region, in addition to other funding that supports New Zealand’s neighbours in Asia, including Timor-Leste, and support for global programmes to assist developing countries.

New Zealand also promised to allocate at least 50% of funding to supporting communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The climate finance programme has again overdelivered on this goal, with 87% of funding to date supporting adaptation. This includes 41% of funding delivered through projects mainly focused on adaptation and 54% described as cross-cutting because they support adaptation as well as the goal of reducing emissions to mitigate climate change.<sup>xii</sup> For example, a renewable energy project could help a remote community reduce reliance on diesel generators, while also increasing resilience to climate events that disrupt fuel supplies.

57% of New Zealand’s climate funding is delivered through programmes with significant outcomes that promote gender equality. However, only 2% of New Zealand’s climate programmes have a principal focus on gender equality, falling short of the 4% target set in the Climate Finance strategy.<sup>xiii</sup>

Only three programmes that received New Zealand climate funding had a principal focus on gender equality: base funding for UN Women; a programme implemented by UN Women to increase access to renewable energy in South-East Asia; and Oxfam Aotearoa’s Kōtuiti programme, promoting women’s participation in community efforts to adapt to climate change in the Pacific. New Zealand should build on these efforts with a renewed climate funding commitment that increases support for programmes with a principal focus on gender equality.<sup>xiii</sup>

**Figure 2: New Zealand’s Climate Finance (2022-2025) supports climate action and gender equality, across the Pacific and beyond**



Source: Analysis of transaction-level data on actual disbursement, published by MFAT and the International Aid Transparency Initiative, as of October 2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/25656234/>

Tens of thousands of people have directly benefited from improved resilience to climate change because of New Zealand's climate finance programme, since funding was increased in 2022. In budget year 2023–24 alone, MFAT reported that 79,900 people had directly benefited from climate action funded by New Zealand. This was a dramatic increase from the 5,900 people who had benefited in the previous year, showing the major impact of the ramped-up programmes enabled by the new funding.<sup>xv</sup>

For instance, more than 20,000 people across eight Pacific countries have better access to fresh water as a direct result of projects funded by New Zealand as part of a programme coordinated by the Pacific Community regional organisation. Programmes funded by New Zealand supported communities to repair or replace their rainwater harvesting systems, backed up by installation of new groundwater sources, desalination units, water storage and water quality monitoring equipment. In just one of these projects, six schools in the Marshall Islands were supplied with safe and reliable drinking water, benefiting over 2000 students.<sup>xvi</sup>

Climate finance from New Zealand contributes to scientific cooperation across the region to better understand and respond to the impacts of climate change on the Pacific Ocean, through support for the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science.<sup>xvii</sup> New Zealand has also supported research and awareness-raising activities at the local community level to respond to ocean acidification in Fiji, Kiribati and Tokelau. This project included support for engaging communities in coral restoration in Tokelau and for establishing marine protected areas in Fiji.<sup>xviii</sup>

## Good neighbours become good friends

Climate finance from New Zealand is supporting Pacific governments to meet the needs of their communities in adapting to the effects of climate change, as well as in transitioning to more resilient and renewable energy systems. New Zealand has partnered with the Pacific Community regional organisation, as well as providing flexible budget support for climate action directly to Pacific governments. By increasingly backing the Pacific to determine and deliver their own priorities, New Zealand's climate finance programme is making a significant and widely welcomed contribution to strengthening cooperation across the region.

Reinforcing this contribution to enabling governments in the Pacific region to determine and deliver on their own priorities, New Zealand committed \$20 million of climate finance to the regional Pacific Resilience Fund in 2024. Announcing the contribution at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa, Foreign Minister Peters



*Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters, with a cross-party Parliamentary delegation, opens a New Zealand-funded building for Tuvalu's Ministry of Fisheries in 2018.*

Photo courtesy of MFAT

said that it showed New Zealand 'came prepared not just to talk, but to back it up with some support.' This sentiment was echoed by Prime Minister Luxon, who called on other governments to follow New Zealand's lead and contribute to the fund.<sup>xix</sup>

Climate finance from New Zealand has also provided over \$60 million of flexible budget support for the climate priorities of Pacific governments in the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu and Fiji. These programmes, known as Country Flexible Finance, have been praised by international observers as examples of best practice for supporting lower-income countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change.<sup>xx</sup>

The Country Flexible Finance approach has been described by MFAT as 'reflecting high trust relationships based on the provision of predictable and flexible finance.'<sup>xxi</sup> An MFAT briefing to officials attending the Pacific Island Forum highlighted the programme as 'a direct response [to] calls from Pacific governments to have greater autonomy over their climate response' and noted that 'the programme has been welcomed in the region and cited as an example for other donors to follow.'<sup>xxii</sup>

Working in tandem with the Country Flexible Finance approach, MFAT's Climate Finance Capacity Support Programme (CFCSP) is enabling Pacific governments to improve their systems for managing climate finance, meaning they will be better able to attract funding from other donors. CFCSP operates in 15 Pacific countries, providing direct support for at least 50 public service roles, from data analysts to engineers. This support is made possible by \$8 million in funding so far from New Zealand's climate finance.<sup>xxiii</sup> While the results of this programme may not be as immediately visible as direct support for physical infrastructure projects, there is potential for

significant long-term benefits to the self-determination of Pacific countries. If the funding for this programme can be sustained and scaled up over time, it will support Pacific governments to develop their systems and institutions to manage and report on climate finance, enabling the Pacific to access the resources needed to implement climate action on their own terms.

In the Cook Islands, the Country Flexible Finance approach was applied in 2024 through the Kerekere Moana Partnership, with \$24 million over two years to support climate resilience efforts, including to develop renewable energy and battery systems, upgrade cyclone shelters and improve water security.<sup>xxiv</sup>

In Samoa, \$15 million in flexible climate finance was announced by New Zealand Prime Minister Ardern in 2022, framed as the Samoa – Aotearoa New Zealand Climate Partnership.<sup>xxv</sup> In 2024, the Climate Partnership was reaffirmed as a key plank of the relationship in the Samoa – New Zealand Partnership agreement signed by Foreign Affairs Minister Peters and Samoa’s Prime Minister Fiame Mata’afa.<sup>xxvi</sup>

In Tonga, \$8 million in flexible climate finance from New Zealand provided a major boost to the National Climate Trust Fund, which was set up to support small-scale and community-based activities for climate adaptation.<sup>xxvii</sup>

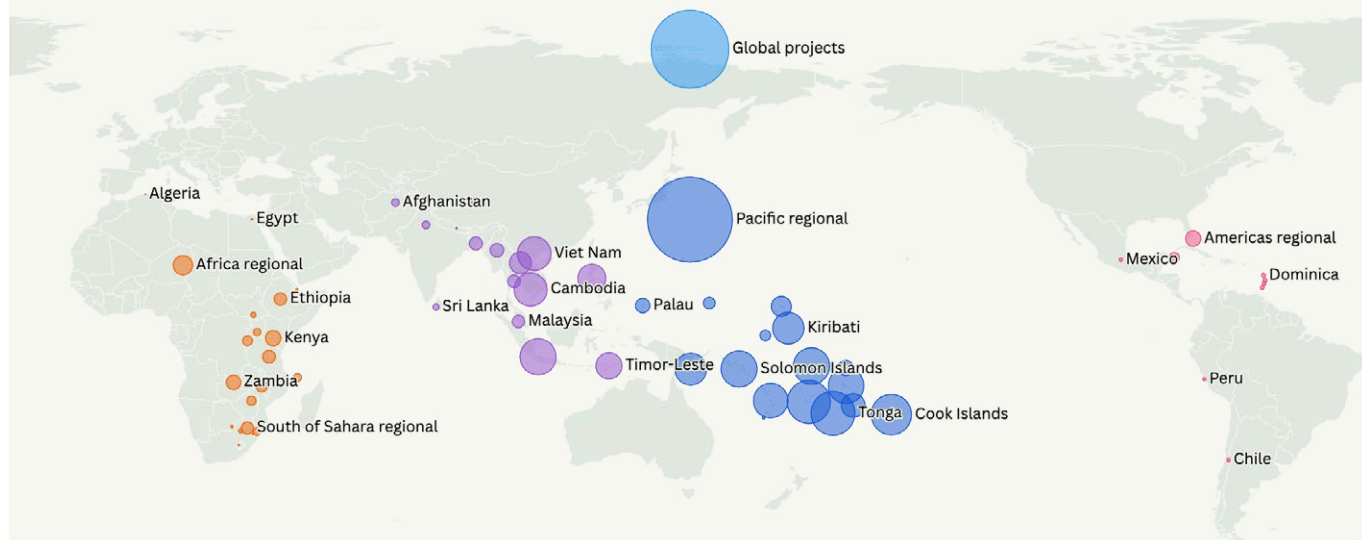
In Fiji, New Zealand committed \$20 million of flexible climate finance in 2023, described by Foreign Affairs Minister Nanaia Mahuta as a demonstration of Aotearoa New Zealand’s *whanaungatanga* with the Pacific nation. Fiji Prime Minister Rabuka welcomed the commitment, which he said ‘demonstrates New Zealand’s unwavering support and commitment towards Fiji’s national priorities.’<sup>xxviii</sup>

In Vanuatu, New Zealand provided \$8 million in flexible climate finance in 2024. Minister Peters announced the commitment during a meeting with Vanuatu Prime Minister Charlot Salwai, saying the funding from New Zealand demonstrated a ‘shared commitment to building Vanuatu’s resilience.’<sup>xxix</sup>

Each of these Pacific agreements for flexible funding of climate action have been launched with local fanfare, welcomed by everyone from heads of state to local community members, and celebrated as evidence of enduring partnerships with New Zealand. This is a major contribution to the New Zealand Government’s priorities for building peaceful cooperation across the Pacific region.

This pattern of positive sentiment and growing relationships goes beyond the Country Flexible Finance programme and is repeated across the Pacific in each of the 194 programmes funded by MFAT through the International Climate Finance Programme since 2022.<sup>xxx</sup>

Figure 3: Recipients of New Zealand climate finance, 2022-2025



<b>Pacific regional</b>	\$226.1 million	<b>Solomon Islands</b>	\$41.4 million	<b>Papua New Guinea</b>	\$32.1 million
<b>Global</b>	\$190 million	<b>Indonesia</b>	\$41.1 million	<b>Kiribati</b>	\$31.4 million
<b>Tonga</b>	\$60.2 million	<b>Samoa</b>	\$39.9 million	<b>Philippines</b>	\$24.9 million
<b>Fiji</b>	\$58.4 million	<b>Vanuatu</b>	\$37.8 million	<b>Timor-Leste</b>	\$21.7 million
<b>Cook Islands</b>	\$51.5 million	<b>Viet Nam</b>	\$35.6 million	<b>Other</b>	\$167.2 million
<b>Tuvalu</b>	\$42 million	<b>Cambodia</b>	\$34.5 million		

Source: Analysis of transaction-level data on actual disbursement, published by MFAT and the International Aid Transparency Initiative, as of October 2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/25711217/>



# TUVALU



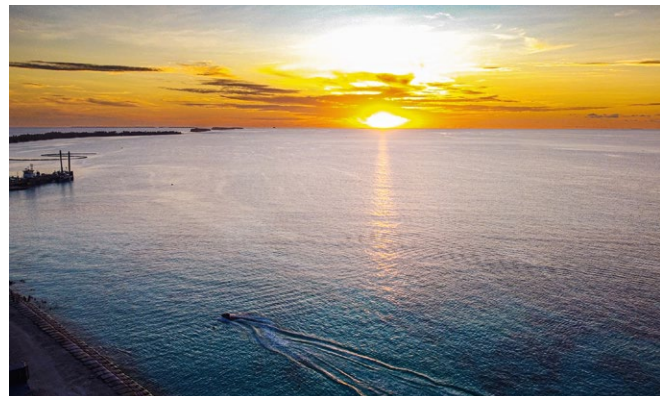
**MFAT’s country plan for **TUVALU** acknowledges that the impacts of climate change are ‘placing increased strain on nearly every facet of life in Tuvalu.’ Addressing the impacts of climate change is identified as a key priority for cooperation between New Zealand and Tuvalu.**<sup>xxx</sup>

Local community groups in Tuvalu are also benefiting from small grants, enabled by climate finance from New Zealand, to support increased resilience to climate change. The small grants will be shared between communities in Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Fiji, enabled by \$2.7 million in funding from New Zealand in 2025.<sup>xxxii</sup>

A previous round of grants, also funded by New Zealand, included support for a community-supported home garden project organised by local women’s organisation Matakainga Lukuga. With training and support from the nursery staff at Tuvalu’s Department of Agriculture, community members raised their own seedlings for planting at members’ homes. This project helped to reduce reliance on imported vegetables and promoted local resilience, including while Tuvalu’s borders were closed during the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Support for community initiatives to grow food locally will

continue to be needed as Tuvalu faces challenges of drought and salt-water intrusion, made worse by climate change.

Communities affected by water scarcity across Tuvalu’s outer islands, as well as on the main island of Funafuti, are benefitting from the latest activities funded by New Zealand to provide improved water storage tanks, with training to support local maintenance. This activity to maintain access to fresh water for communities is one of many supported by New Zealand climate funding in Tuvalu and other Pacific countries, coordinated by the Pacific Community.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Previous funding from New Zealand supported the Tuvalu Government to better predict droughts and activate management plans to conserve water and maintain sanitation.<sup>xxxv</sup>



All photos: Gitty Yee/TuCAN



Young people in Tuvalu are actively involved in their community's efforts to build resilience to climate change, working to restore coral reefs and improve water supplies through projects run by local youth organisation Fuligafou.

Mesepele Lauti, from the islands of Funafuti and Nanumea in Tuvalu, is Coordinator of Fuligafou. Having started as a volunteer herself, she now works to involve other youth in volunteer action for climate resilience, while promoting youth empowerment, community spirit and gender equality.



Fuligafou's coral restoration work is supported by climate finance, including from New Zealand, as part of the Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project. Mesepele describes how the youth volunteers collect coral varieties that can thrive in the changing ocean conditions to cultivate and replant to regenerate the

reef. She explains the importance of coral reefs for life in Tuvalu:

*“As a Tuvaluan, our food resource is mostly from the sea. Corals are really important to us. They are the homes of many reef fish. Also, they can provide food for other sorts of fish. And they can also act as a barrier or a wall, that during cyclones when the tide is very harsh, corals can actually help prevent large or big impacts of waves coming towards the land. So corals are very important although they're very small and sometimes forgotten about.”*

Like many young people in Tuvalu and around the world, Mesepele feels strongly about the injustice at the heart of the climate crisis, where the people most affected are those who have done the least to cause the problem. Her message for the governments of rich countries is simple: 'You have a responsibility. And for now, there's no time for words, we just need action.'

Fuligafou is a member of the Tuvalu Climate Action Network (TuCAN), a partner of Oxfam Aotearoa through the Kōtui Programme, supported by funding from MFAT, including climate finance. A renewed climate finance commitment from New Zealand could mean continued support for the vital climate adaptation work of community-based organisations like Fuligafou and TuCAN.



# SOLOMON ISLANDS



MFAT's country plan for the **SOLOMON ISLANDS** identifies the impacts of climate change as a core focus:

*We share the Solomon Island Government's concerns about the widespread threats of climate change to people, environment, livelihoods, the national economy and security.*<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Climate finance from New Zealand contributes to the key priorities of climate adaptation and disaster preparedness identified in the plan. The New Zealand-funded Climate Finance Capacity Support Programme is currently supporting two staff in the Climate Change Division of the Solomon Islands Government to work on rolling out Integrated Vulnerability Assessments (IVAs) to communities on each of the island groups.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Oxfam Aotearoa's partner organisation, the Solomon Islands Climate Action Network, has also been supporting the assessments, which involve an inclusive process for communities to discuss and map their needs for improved resilience across the domains of human and environmental wellbeing. A strength of this approach, which has also been trialled in other Pacific countries, is the focus on ensuring that all community members have a voice, including women, disabled people, elders and youth, so that the community as a whole feels ownership of the assessment and can then participate in adaptation planning. By combining participatory approaches with other evidence, trained assessors work with the community to score areas of vulnerability on a matrix, allowing for prioritisation of needs and comparability across communities, as well as gathering stories and images to record the local challenges and impacts of climate change.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

In addition, the New Zealand Government has committed \$15 million of climate finance to the Solomon Islands' Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) facility designed by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). LoCAL builds on the existing Solomon Islands Provincial Capacity Development Fund (PCDF) with additional funding for projects that support communities to plan and implement inclusive climate adaptation. As with existing PCDF grants, funding will be released to provincial governments in tranches, based on successful performance in managing and distributing funds to the local communities.

Oxfam Aotearoa's local partners are optimistic that this approach to funding will help to ensure the funding gets to where it is needed most at the community level.



In the southern part of Malaita in the Solomon Islands, the West 'Are'Are Rokotanikeni Association (WARA) has been organising women in their communities for over 25 years. WARA's work for women's economic empowerment and social leadership is founded on a strong basis of women-led community organisations, including a network of savings clubs. From these roots in the community structures of the area, WARA has been able to engage with traditional male leaders in the Council of Chiefs, leading to more opportunities for women's voices to be heard, and more recognition of the important roles women play in village life and leadership.

Joyce Kasiwai says that life in her village has been difficult, especially since increased saltwater intrusion has affected her gardens, destroying her patch of swamp taro. Joyce credits WARA with giving her the strength to carry on, with funding and training from her local savings group helping her to start a small business baking cakes for sale.

Janet Reho, another WARA member, lost her house in a cyclone. With her savings from her local WARA group, Janet has been able to rebuild. Her new house is built on a raised platform with reinforced foundations, so it will be more resilient to the floods and storms that are becoming more frequent due to climate change.



# PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Climate Finance makes a major contribution to the shared goals of New Zealand’s partnership with the government of **PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PNG)**. MFAT’s country plan for PNG includes Climate Resilience as one of the main priorities, alongside progress on gender equality, improved livelihoods and inclusive governance.<sup>xxxix</sup>

In the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, climate funding from New Zealand enables Oxfam to work with local communities to improve their access to fresh water.

Gathering water in the highlands has always been a big job for women, who walk for hours at a time, carrying heavy containers back to their families. Now, changes in the weather and more frequent droughts have made access to fresh water even more unpredictable and difficult, increasing the burden on women.

Local staff from the Oxfam office in Goroka work with communities in the highlands to plan and build gravity-fed water systems to bring water into the villages. Oxfam provides the materials and communities do the work themselves to build the systems, with support from Oxfam’s local staff. This means that the community itself owns the project, and local people know how everything works and how to fix it.



Oxfam Aotearoa’s support for communities in Papua New Guinea to gain access to fresh water is made possible by generous donations from our supporters, boosted by funding from the New Zealand Government, a portion of which comes from climate finance. A renewed commitment to climate finance from New Zealand could enable Oxfam and our local partners to scale up the vital work of bringing life-changing water supplies to remote villages in Papua New Guinea and across the Pacific.



Maigao Nigo, who works with the Oxfam team in Goroka, says that this makes a big difference to ensure that communities can continue to benefit from fresh water for the long term:

*“From the last visit that we did with our communities and speaking to them, they said it’s our need and we are going to take ownership and look after it.”*

When Maigao visited Aotearoa in 2025, she spoke about her work with communities at the *TokStori for Climate Justice* event hosted by Oxfam Aotearoa and AUT’s Manakau Campus. Maigao told us that involving local communities also helps to make the best use of funding, so that water can reach as many families as possible:

*“When we looked at how to get the water tanks up to the hills, we could have used a helicopter. But that would have taken our whole budget just for one village. So we talked to the people and they agreed to help us bring the tank along the walking track.*

*The hills there are very steep and muddy. We were struggling to pull the tank up with ropes! It was hard work, but it was worth it, because now we can bring more tanks to other communities.”*

Communities set the priorities for water, often to supply a clinic and school as well as a communal tap and hygiene block. Local ownership also means there is space for innovation.

In one village, a local farmer, Somano, saw an opportunity to make use of the extra water draining from the overflow pipe on the village water tank:

*“When the water first came, I planted my first garden here. It was this garden, in this plot of land, I watered it and sold it. From that, in just one day, I earned about 30 Kina (NZ\$12).*

*We see that it is life-changing. Now that we have a water supply, our lifestyle has changed, and the water can support us—for example, buying clothes for our children or soap, or at least supporting them with school supplies like pens and books when the teachers send them to buy something. We can buy and support them. So we can see that since the water came, our lives have changed.”*



# TIMOR-LESTE



Research by Oxfam has shown that funding for climate action in **TIMOR-LESTE** has largely overlooked the need to prioritise gender equality, with only 2.4% of climate funding prioritising gender equality as a principal objective.<sup>xi</sup>

New Zealand's climate funding to Timor-Leste has so far followed the same pattern, with only Oxfam Aotearoa's projects having a principal focus on gender equality. On the positive side, 90% of the climate funding has a significant objective of gender equality. This shows the result of efforts to mainstream gender equality into climate programmes, alongside the need for more progress on supporting activities that specifically target gender equality and inclusion as primary goals.<sup>xii</sup>

A top-level strategic goal of the MFAT country plan for Timor-Leste is to support 'increased resilience to the intensifying impacts of climate change.' Climate finance from New Zealand is making important contributions to Timor-Leste's ability to adapt to climate change, including reducing the risks from disasters and supporting climate-resilient agriculture.<sup>xiii</sup>

Thanks to the increased funding available through New Zealand's climate finance programme, Oxfam Aotearoa's Hamriik project was fully funded by the New Zealand Government. With a renewed climate finance commitment from New Zealand, impact seen in places like Laku-Fuan and Kabana could be repeated all over Timor-Leste, and throughout the many communities in the Pacific where climate change is increasing the struggle to access fresh water.



With funding from New Zealand Climate Finance Programme, Oxfam Aotearoa's Hamriik project works with low-income families in Oecusse and Liquiça, Timor-Leste. The 650 households in the project are learning new techniques for climate-smart agriculture with local partners including the Timorese permaculture organisation Permatil.

In the small settlement of Laku-Fuan, village chief Jose Antonio Taaqui has seen his community struggle during the dry season, when the nearest water sources run out by the end of October each year. For months during the dry season, families had to walk for hours to muddy wells a long distance from their homes.

With the support of Oxfam Aotearoa and MFAT's climate finance programme, villagers were able to install a water tank and work with a local partner organisation on water conservation techniques.

*“Before, community members had to walk around two kilometres, spending up to two to three hours per day fetching water. So, they have no time to do other activities. Now they have closer access to water.”*



Now, each family has clean water piped to their homes.

Korrie Kolo is proud of the work she and her neighbours did to prepare the groundwork for the new water tank. She is still amazed at the luxury of having her own running water. Pointing at the tap outside her neighbour's house, she laughs: 'Even that tap over there - we don't collect water from there... because we have our own here!'



Working with a local partner, the nearby community of Kabana has built terraced gardens to share and conserve water from the limited local sources. One of the farmers, Amelia Abi, explains how the community works together to maintain the water supply that they collectively benefit from:

*“When planting, everyone works on their own vegetable bed. But when it comes to water source, we all work*

*together, men and women, and women with disabilities, people with disabilities, we all work together.”*

Now that she doesn't have to walk long distances to gather water, Amelia has enjoyed having more time to spend in her garden. She says that learning new farming techniques has given her a sense of pride and achievement, bringing the community closer together.

*“I enjoy it more when we work in the farm together, because it is fun. Also, each of us are working on our own beds. Yes, I like that.”*

Visiting from Oxfam Aotearoa, Rachel Schaevitz saw that Amelia and her neighbours would work in the terraced garden in the mornings and by midday, with the hot sun overhead, would retreat to the shade of the trees to rest and share lunch. Asked what she liked to do now that she had more free time to herself, Amelia's neighbour was happy to show off the woven artwork she was working on in the afternoons. When finished, she will be able to sell it at the market for the equivalent of a month's income selling produce.



Now that their harvests have increased with the improved irrigation, women in the village are also earning extra income from selling their surplus vegetables. Amelia says that on a good day she earns about NZ\$2.50. After buying some things for her family, she always tries to put at least \$1 aside with the women's savings group that she and her neighbours run, with support from another local Oxfam partner.

The experiences of the villagers of Laku-Fuan and Kabana show the power of locally-led approaches to climate adaptation that prioritise the inclusion of women, disabled people, and whole communities. Korrie, Amelia, and their neighbours have shown that with the right community spirit, and with the right support, adapting to climate change doesn't have to mean making do with less. It can mean everyone thriving together, in shared abundance.

## CONCLUSION

*Now is the time to keep our promise to fund climate action.*

New Zealand's funding for climate action is already doing so much good in communities across the Pacific and beyond.

Since 2022, the climate finance programme has strengthened the New Zealand Government's reputation and relationships with our Pacific neighbours, directly benefited tens of thousands of people, and contributed to the collective resilience of our region.

**To keep up the good work, the New Zealand Government should:**

- **renew New Zealand's climate finance commitment with new funding from 2026.**
- **continue the trend of ramping up funding to meet New Zealand's fair share of climate assistance promised to lower-income countries.**
- **continue to provide all public climate finance as grants, with a focus on locally-led approaches to climate adaptation for communities in the Pacific.**
- **prioritise more funding for climate programmes with a principal focus on gender equality, building on the existing support for programmes with a significant gender equality objective.**

# APPENDIX

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<sup>iv</sup> New Zealand Government. 2021. New Zealand increases climate aid contribution. <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealand-increases-climate-aid-contribution>.

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<sup>vi</sup> In line with New Zealand's general reporting approach, disbursements for projects with principal climate relevance are counted at 100% value, while projects with significant climate relevance are counted at 30% value, except for disaster risk reduction activities, which are counted at 50%. To determine final values for climate-relevant spending for reporting to the UN, the New Zealand Government refines these allocations using project-specific data, as well as imputed shares of multilateral funding, neither of which are accounted for here. Funding remaining in 2025 is a minimum estimate, based only on the remainder of the \$1.3 billion four-year commitment. This is likely to increase when other climate-relevant aid spending is included.

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<sup>x</sup> Sam Sachdeva. 2025. Govt's climate aid reduction 'betrayal' of Pacific, NGOs say. Newsroom. 23 May 2025. <https://newsroom.co.nz/2025/05/23/govts-climate-aid-reduction-betrayal-of-pacific-ngos-say/>.

<sup>xi</sup> All programmes funded directly by New Zealand, or receiving specifically tagged funding, are entirely grant based. In addition, New Zealand provides base funding to multilateral financial institutions, including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, that issue loans for climate-relevant projects. A portion of this lending is counted towards New Zealand's climate finance, based on imputed shares for climate relevance calculated by the OECD.

<sup>xii</sup> Calculated from climate finance transaction data published by MFAT and the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

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<sup>xvi</sup> MFAT. 2024. Minister of Foreign Affairs' Report, p212.

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