

Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands

Palau hosts 32nd PPA Conference



Group photo of Engineers Workshop attendees



More than 250 people attended the 32nd Pacific Power Association Annual Conference that was held from 22 to 25 September at Ngarachamayong Cultural Centre, Koror, Palau. The attendees included PPA member utility CEOs, engineers, PPA Allied Members (companies supplying goods and services to the utilities), development partners, affiliate members (universities and institutes) and Palauan government ministers and ambassadors. The theme for this year's conference was "Smart Grids and Digital Transformation in Energy".

The conference officially kicked off with a dynamic and engaging first day with the following parallel sessions: CEOs retreat with donors; PPA Board of Directors Meeting; Engineer's Workshop; informal allied members meeting. These were followed by the welcoming reception by the host utility, the Palau Public Utilities Corporation (PPUC) and the opening of a trade exhibition. Day 2 began with a strong sense of purpose and regional unity as delegates gathered for the official opening. Afterwards, there were again parallel sessions. There was the main conference with presentations by the World Bank (On early market engagement for solar PV/BESS & mini-grid procurement in FSM & RMI); Allied Members & Q&A. There was also a continuation of the PPA Board Directors meeting and the Engineers Workshop. The day finished with a cocktail.

The topic for the two-day Engineer's Workshop was "Inspections and Compliance Checks for Solar PV systems (AS/NZS /NEC).

Day 3 included speed networking sessions whereby Allied Members took turns to meet each utility member representative to discuss opportunities for cooperation, followed by a site visit to an ancient village in Palau.

Day 4 continued with interesting presentations by the utility engineers sharing project progress, challenges and Allied Members sharing innovative technologies and clean energy solutions. The parallel engineers workshop continued with representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) presenting on Benchmarking Results/PRISM. Trade-booths and exhibitions were part of the conference. SEIAPI was represented by the Secretary, Mr Sandip Kumar who also conducted the two-day Engineers Workshop on Solar Inspections, supported virtually by Mr Geoff Stapleton who could not attend.

SEIAPI is promoting wider adoption of installation standards, setting up accredited installer training and building capacity of solar inspectors in the Pacific region.

The PPA conference also included the consideration and adoption by the board of a new five-year strategic plan for Sept 2025 - Aug 2029 with a focus on the regional utilities transition to renewable energy. Although there was no formal SEIAPI involvement in the plan, SEIAPI chair (Peter Johnston) led its development along with former EC member Zaeen Khan, who presented the plan on behalf of the team. It was endorsed by the PPA board and may provide opportunities for further PPA/SEIAPI cooperation.

Geoffrey Stapleton's Order of Australia Investiture Ceremony



Geoff Stapleton's award was announced earlier in June during the King's Birthday honours list for 2025. However, the investiture ceremony for the Order of Australia took place on Thursday 25 September at Government House in Canberra. Mr Stapleton was named an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in the General Division and the award was presented by the Governor-General of Australia, Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn.

The award was for Mr Stapleton's "distinguished service to engineering in the renewable and sustainable energy sector, and to ,and to training and development.

Mr Stapleton's list of achievements and groups he was associated with is long and impressive. He has worked in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

His current roles include: Director, International Training for Global Sustainable Energy Solutions; and Executive Officer of the Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands since 2022. He has also been: Member and Chair of the Australian Industry Associations', Standards, Training and Accreditation Committee, 2000-2012; Conference Chair, Solar World Congress, 2020; Initiator and Project Lead, ISES Online Solar Energy Museum; Industry representative on the Sustainable Energy Development Authority Advisory Board, 1996-1999; Member of Australian standards committees since 1993, Australian representative on International Electrotechnical Commission standard committee since 2014 and was Chair, Solar Energy Industry Association of Australia, NSW Chapter, 1992-2002.

The SEIAPI Executive Committee is proud of Geoff's award and would like to thank him for his many contribution to the solar industry as a whole and in particular the Pacific solar industry.

SEIAPI EO Attends STAR-C Validation Workshop in Auckland

A Solar Technology Application Resources Centre (STAR-C) - established by the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) - validation workshop was organised by the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEEE), with funding support by UNIDO on 18 & 19 September in Auckland, New Zealand. The STAR-C component for the PCREEEE region includes establishing solar training centres and equipment test centres. UNIDO funded two consultancies to develop a Quality Infrastructure framework for solar PV including an accreditation/certification scheme for solar practitioners plus the development of solar training curricula.

The objective of the workshop was to present the outcome of the consultancies. Though it was called a "validation workshop", it was more an opportunity to discuss the recommendations from the studies which included an implementation plan for the quality framework. There was insufficient representation from across the Pacific to validate the framework at this workshop. The workshop was organised to take advantage of the Oceania Renewable Power Summit held from 15th to 17th September at the same venue. This provided the opportunity for those from the Pacific Island Countries who attended that summit to stay on for this workshop.

SEIAPI was invited to present on SEIAPI's experience and lessons learned with the development and promotion of the various PPA/SEIAPI guidelines. Geoff Stapleton was funded by GSES to attend the workshop on behalf of SEIAPI. He will develop a proposal on adopting International Electrotechnical Commission IEC, or Underwriters Laboratories (UL) product standards and a discussion paper on adopting installation standards. Once finalised by SEIAPI it is planned to send this to PCREEEE and SPC requesting that it be included for discussion at the energy officials meeting in November.



EU to fund green energy projects in the Pacific

A European Union-funded 15 million euro (about FJD40m) regional electrification agreement with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) is designed to advance inclusive, sustainable, and resilient socioeconomic development in Pacific Island Countries. The project is expected to enhance access to electricity from renewable energy sources in rural communities. The Pacific Regional director of GGGI highlighted the current state of electrification in the region, noting that while the Pacific has a population of about 15.7 million and a combined economy of about \$US45 billion (FJD102b), with about 40 per cent of its people living in poverty. The project's planned benefits extend beyond electricity. For full article, visit: https://edition.fijitimes.com.fj/infinity/article_popover_share.aspx?guid=f490d2c6-5780-4e94-8d0b-0572337895f5&share=true

Pilot waste to energy technology for Cook Islands



There have been many decades of experience in the region with biogas systems that convert organic material (generally animal manure) into gas that can be used for cooking or heating, and fertilisers. Most of the older systems have fallen into disuse due to poor performance or a large effort required, but new approaches are made.

Cook Islands farmers and businesses are piloting a newer technology that converts organic waste into clean cooking gas and fertiliser. Nine farmers and businesses across Rarotonga and Aitutaki can now transform organic waste into clean cooking gas and fertiliser, utilising a new technology trial delivered through the Pacific Horticultural & Agricultural Market Access Plus (PHAMA Plus) programme.

This improved technology aims to help farmers and businesses to improve their farming practices, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and could help develop export potential.

The aim is for the Cook Islands to benefit from cleaner energy, and better local food production through this project. The Australian government supports this work, in partnership with the Cook Islands and New Zealand Governments through PHAMA Plus. For more information, visit: Cook Islands News

Pacific Nations Chart Path to World's First 100% Renewable Energy Region



A discussion paper released in September on the sidelines of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting outlines how the Pacific could potentially become the first region in the world to be powered entirely by renewable energy.

The report, *Powering Up the Blue Pacific: How the Pacific can be the world's first 100% renewable energy region*, was officially launched in Honiara by Feleti Teo, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu's Minister for Climate Change, Energy & Environment, and Taholo Kami, Pacific climate and ocean champion. The paper includes a foreword from President Surangel S. Whipps Jr. of Palau.

The discussion paper concludes that Pacific Island countries could save billions of dollars by switching from imported fossil fuels to locally sourced renewable energy. The transition could cut fuel bills, expand access to electricity, create new jobs, and free up national budgets for sustainable development.

With Australia in partnership with the Pacific bidding to host COP31 in 2026, leaders see this as a pivotal moment. President Whipps said that bringing COP to the Pacific would allow the world to "witness both the climate crisis and Pacific leadership to tackle the crisis." He added that a partnership for a 100% Renewable Pacific could be a landmark outcome of the summit, attracting vital international investment.

The discussion paper is a collaboration between Island Minds Ltd (Vanuatu), the Smart Energy Council (Australia), and the Renewable Energy Council Asia Pacific. It sets out possible pathways to achieve a fully renewable Pacific.

Mosese joins SEIAPI

Through a Market Development Facility (MDF)-SEIAPI collaboration, Mosese Nabulivou started official work with SEIAPI in September, 2025 as the SEIAPI Technical Projects Officer.

The MDF (<https://marketdevelopmentfacility.org/>) is supporting SEIAPI to implement projects aimed at unlocking finance for solar PV through development and adoption of relevant standards. Mosese will be engaged for a 12-18 months period in a consultancy arrangement and will be engaged in increasing visibility of SEIAPI, drafting project proposals, increasing collaboration, contributing to the SEIAPI Strategic Plan and other activities delegated by the SEIAPI Chair and the Executive Committee.



Bio-data

Mosese Nabulivou was until recently a Program Development Officer within Fiji's Ministry of Environment & Climate Change as a national consultant. In this role, he developed bankable project proposals to implement measures under Fiji's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). He holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Environmental Management from Auckland University of Technology and has over nine years of experience in climate change adaptation, environmental infrastructure, and donor-funded project management across the Pacific. He has led initiatives in advancing renewable energy through the development of bankable project proposals, as well as in water security and climate resilience project planning, implementation to close out, with organisations such as the Pacific Community (SPC), UNDP, UNEP, and the Water Authority of Fiji. He is committed to advancing sustainable development and inclusive climate solutions that empower Pacific communities and contribute to a more resilient Indo-Asia Pacific region.

International Conference

6th International Conference on Solar Technologies and Hybrid Mini-Grids to improve energy access
SAVE THE DATE
8-10 April 2026, Mallorca, Spain
www.energy-access-conferences.com

Standards Corner

In recent months, SEIAPI has been conducting webinars related to the current Australia and New Zealand Standards and we will arrange similar webinars for the USA National Electrical Code. To supplement these webinars, the newsletter includes this 'standards' corner highlighting an installation identified during a site visit in the Pacific that does not comply with relevant standards, SEIAPI guidelines or international best practices.



The above photo illustrates conduits not buried properly and not being heavy-duty. This does not comply with the following standard requirement:

- AS/NZS 3000:2018 3.11.2 - Underground wiring systems are classified as one of three categories. The type of cable and form of enclosure determine the category assigned to the underground wiring system.

1) Category A system—where the wiring system is inherently suitable for installation below ground and no further mechanical protection is required.

2) Category B system—where the wiring system is suitable for installation below ground only with additional mechanical protection provided for the cable or cable enclosure.

3) Category C system—where the wiring system is laid within a channel chased in the surface of rock.

In addition, underground wiring systems shall be installed with the minimum depth of cover and protection specified in Table 3.6 (AS/NZS 3000). Refer to figures 3.10-3.17 on the typical arrangements based on enclosure type, mechanical protection applicable, surface covering applicable and so forth. Insulated, unsheathed conductors are not permitted to be buried direct in the ground with no enclosure.

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