

Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands

SEIAPI Chair's Update



Finally, it is pleasing to report that construction of the Pacific solar training centre at USP in Suva, with finance arranged by SEIAPI, is nearly complete and the rooftop PV system and the battery storage system will be installed soon. We would like to thank Sungrow, TCL Sunpower and Victron Energy for their donation of equipment to the centre for conducting practical training. We also thank Solar Juice and CBS Power Solutions in helping SEIAPI import the equipment.

Peter Johnston, Chair
SEIAPI Executive Committee

SEIAPI Solar Conference Update

SEIAPI's membership continues to increase. At the time of writing in late February, we now have 54 paid members of which 33 are Industry, 17 Associate and 4 Manufacturers. We warmly welcome our new industry member (Pernix (Fiji) Pte Ltd) and new associate members (Off grid Solar NZ Ltd – New Zealand).

As noted in last month's message, in January, SEIAPI submitted a proposal for support from philanthropic foundations through the Global Solar Council for about USD1m over three years to help SEIAPI improve services and become more financially sustainable. We have just learned that SEIAPI was not included in the initial list of industry bodies for funding. However, we may be at the top of the list for the next round of funding, although at a lower level than we submitted. We will revise our proposal as required and keep members informed as this develops.

Due in part to fund-raising efforts and organising the March conference, work on our strategic plan has been delayed. The conference organising committee has been working diligently to finalise speakers and the programme details. As of late February, we have fourteen sponsors, who we thank for their support.

Work continues on developing documentation for financial institutions for approving solar system financing and SEIAPI has visited Tonga and will visit Samoa in March to advise and consult on the needs of their financial institutions.

We thank the Australian-funded Market Development Facility (MDF) for its support in this and other areas of our work. We continue to work with the International Solar Alliance, advising on their STAR-C endeavour to provide PV training facilities in PICs in Vanuatu and elsewhere, and in advising Tonga on solar training equipment.

The clock is ticking and our email inbox is "buzzing" with notifications of conference registrations and queries. At the time of writing, over 150 people have registered with 14 sponsors on board. With no surprise, the conference will be a cracker with well-known international and local speakers. The conference organising committee has been aligning the speakers and the bulk of the program is ready. The conference program can be downloaded from the following link: <https://www.seiapi.com/wpcontent/uploads/2026/02/SEIAPI-Conference-Program20-Feb-26-1.pdf>

The early bird registration finishes on 28 February 2026.

The SEIAPI solar conference will be held from 24th-25th March 2026 at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva, Fiji. SEIAPI is pleased to acknowledge the 14 sponsors without whom this conference would not have eventuated.



SEIAPI MARCH CONFERENCE 2026 ANNOUNCEMENT

Theme: Transitioning to Solar Energy in the Pacific Islands

After 15 years since its formation, the Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands (SEIAPI) is pleased to announce our first ever SEIAPI Conference to be held at the Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva (Fiji) on Tuesday 24th and Wednesday 25th March 2026, with the theme Transitioning to Solar Energy in the Pacific Islands.



The venue: Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva



SEIAPI supported training centre at USP Pacific TAFE

The Conference will bring together SEIAPI members, non-members, solar and other sustainable energy companies and stakeholders for a two-day event featuring technical presentations, product exhibitions, and networking opportunities. About 100 participants are expected including energy departments from Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), key development agencies assisting PICTs with sustainable energy and financial and industry stakeholders. The conference will include presentations from local and international experts, solar companies and development agencies. There will be a small exhibition from the conference sponsors.



Buakonikai Primary School (Rabi) Courtesy Its Time Foundation

The conference aims to showcase local innovations, foster collaboration, and explore global perspectives to strengthen the Pacific's transition to sustainable energy and enhance the visibility of the Pacific's solar industry. It will address some of the key issues faced by the solar industry within the PICTs including:

- Challenges facing solar companies in the Pacific
- Policy and regulatory barriers
- Labour shortages and capacity building needs of workforce
- Pacific women in solar energy
- Case Studies
- The renewable energy transition



Tuvalu Airport Terminal: Courtesy CBS Power Solutions

The conference fee is lower for those registering early.

Early bird. Register before 28th February 2026:

FJD 300 SEIAPI members, development agencies, Government agencies, NGOs

FJD 700 Non SEIAPI Members from Industry

Late registration after 1st March 2026:

FJD 400 SEIAPI members, Development agencies, Government agencies, NGOs

FJD 800 Non SEIAPI members

The registration fee includes morning/afternoon teas, lunches and a networking reception at the end of day 1.

For further information or if you would like to register or obtain a copy of the sponsorship package, please visit: <https://www.seiapi.com/seiapiconference2026/> or contact SEIAPI on secretariat@seiapi.com

SEIAPI Tonga Workshop



SEIAPI's February meetings and workshop in Tonga brought together financial institutions and sector participants to assess solar financing readiness and shape future capacity building priorities. Meetings with ANZ Tonga, SPBD Tonga, and the Tonga Development Bank indicated strong interest in renewable energy but also revealed key barriers, including the absence of dedicated solar finance products, limited grid integration infrastructure, and reduced lender confidence due to past installation failures. These themes were echoed during SEIAPI's strategic planning session, where members called for expanded solar installation training, structured certification pathways, and formal recognition for licensed solar installers. With growing demand for professional development and regulatory alignment, SEIAPI's work in Tonga is helping build the foundations for a more reliable, inclusive, and professionally accredited solar sector across the Pacific.

Australia invests an additional \$550 million in critical infrastructure in the Pacific

Australia is deepening its long-term commitment to high-quality, critical infrastructure across the Pacific and Timor-Leste, with the announcement of an additional \$550 million in official development assistance (ODA) grants for the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP).

Announced by Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong during a meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika on 27 January 2026, the additional funding strengthens the AIFFP's capacity to back Pacific-led priorities and support high-quality, climate-resilient infrastructure that delivers lasting benefits for communities and economies across the region.

The new funding brings the AIFFP's total facility financing to \$4.55 billion, comprising a \$3 billion loan cap and \$1.55 billion in ODA grants.

The additional \$550 million has not been pre-allocated and will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in close consultation with our Pacific partners.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

February 2026

REnew Pacific's first project in Marshall Islands



Reproduced from: [REnew Pacific website](#)

Australia is supporting clean, reliable energy access for remote communities in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, with the country's first REnew Pacific project set to deliver solar power to 19 primary schools across Arno, Ebon and Mili Atolls.

The project was announced by Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong and Minister for Pacific Island Affairs Pat Conroy during a visit to Australia this week by the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Her Excellency Dr Hilda Heine. It marks a major milestone as Australia's first REnew Pacific project in the Marshall Islands and the first investment by the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) in the country.

Delivered by UNICEF Australia alongside UNICEF Pacific, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Training, including the Public School System, and the Environmental Protection Authority, the project will solarise every primary school across these outer island atolls, where schools currently have no access to electricity.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Solar dominates RE power capacity additions - IRENA

The total installed capacity of solar PV reached 1865 GW globally by the end of 2024, representing a remarkable increase from 710 GW at the end of 2020. Over 451 GW of new solar PV capacity was added in 2024 alone, representing the largest addition of any renewable energy source and accounted for over three-quarters of all renewable capacity additions in 2024. Solar PV has accounted for the largest share of renewable power capacity in 2023, surpassing hydropower.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

A Fifth of PV Panels May Degrade Early

Around a fifth of solar panels examined in a new study fail much faster than expected and some may last for only half their anticipated lifetime.

Research from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) has assessed nearly 11,000 PV systems globally with up to 20% performing 1.5 times worse than the average. Most solar systems are designed to last around 25 years, with system performance typically declining by around 0.9% per year. However, for some systems, useful life could be just 11 years. They could lose about 45% of their output by year 25.

The extreme degradation observed in some panels is not related to climatic conditions such as hot climates. There are three major reasons for the early failures:

- 1) interconnected failures, where different types of problems interact with each other on an individual panel. For example backsheet (a protective layer on the rear of a module) damage can result in junction box failure due to moisture, or cell cracks or corrosion.
- 2) rapid failure of relatively new modules due to manufacturing defects or material flaws.
- 3) Minor flaws (hairline crack in a cell, imperfect soldering) resulting in a sudden severe performance loss at a random point.

There may be a need for: i) different testing standards to help to ensure more resilient types of modules, ii) better understanding of factors contributing to module failures to develop early detection system and improved design robustness, and iii) testing authorities to be informed of real-world degradation patterns across diverse climates and consider combining stress tests to better replicate outdoor operating conditions.

Source: Hidden solar system degradation reduces useful life from 25 years to 11: research (30 Jan 2025)

[READ MORE HERE](#)

33rd Pacific Power Association Conference and Trade Exhibition

19-22 October 2026

Shangri-La Hotel, Sigatoka, Fiji.

Visit: <https://www.ppa.org.fj/>

International Conference

6th International Conference on Solar Technologies and Hybrid Mini-Grids to improve energy access

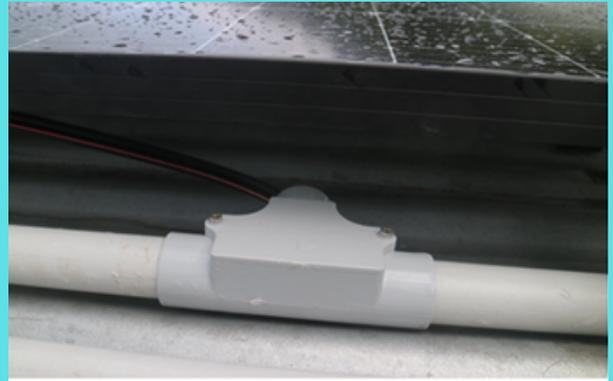
SAVE THE DATE

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. We plan similar webinars for the USA National Electrical Code. To supplement these webinars, the newsletter includes this 'standards' corner highlighting an installation issue identified during a site visit that could be improved to meet relevant standards, SEIAPI guidelines or international best practices.



The above photo shows that the cable entry into the conduit is not sealed. The following standard states:

- AS/NZS 5033:2021 Clause 4.4.5.1 Conduit systems used for PV cables, all parts shall be sealed appropriately (by using methods such as glue, or cable glands) unless otherwise stated by the manufacturer.
- AS/NZS 5033:2021 Clause 4.4.7.2.3 Where a continuous conduit system has a section that is in an outdoor environment, and that terminates into an enclosure containing conductor terminations, any open ends of the conduit system shall be sealed with a gland conforming to Clause 4.4.7.2.2.

A correct practice would be to use an end-of-conduit cable gland to terminate the PV cable on the roof, however, it would be useful to find out how readily available the end of conduit cable gland accessories are in Pacific hardware stores.



The Pacific solar industry is still evolving and we might have access to such accessories soon. Other alternatives will be to use sealants to prevent water entry through the open ends of the conduit. SEIAPI plans to prepare a technical guide with photos to show good and poor installation methods.

For more updates, please visit <http://www.seiapi.com> or email on secretariat@seiapi.com. Follow us on LinkedIn - Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands - SEIAPI LinkedIn page