

PACIFIC ISLANDS ENVIRONMENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

A. Excellence in National Leadership in Environmental Sustainability and Conservation

Ian Karika, Cook Islands

Ian Karika is renowned for his leadership and management of the Takitumu Conservation Area on Rarotonga. Under Ian's stewardship of this area he helped spearhead the key initiative to recover the population of a rare native bird - the Kakerori or Rarotonga Flycatcher. This has been called one of the biggest conservation success stories in the Pacific in recent years. He was also part of an important programme to re-establish the Rimatara Lorikeet on the Island of Atiu by transferring birds from French Polynesia.

Ian is also a strong supporter of ocean conservation, and has a firm belief that we need to protect the habitat of our marine life. As President of the Cook Islands Voyaging Society Ian was instrumental in the construction of seven traditional Polynesian voyaging canoes that undertook a historic ocean voyage throughout the Pacific Ocean to the Americas and return. This raised significant awareness on the critical environmental issues affecting marine ecosystems.

His wide experience with environmental organisations includes being president of Te Ipukarea Society - a Cook Islands environmental NGO. With his community and traditional links, Ian has been a significant contributor in strengthening partnerships with Government, including serving as the Chairman of the Rarotonga Environment Authority.

In his letter of support for Ian Karika's nomination the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands said: "As a key national resource person, I have called upon Ian on many occasions for his invaluable advice and support for environmental matters, such as waste management, species and habitat conservation and most recently the establishment of the one million square kilometre Cook Islands Marine Park."

[NOTE: Ian The award was accepted on his behalf by Ian's nieces]

B. Ratu Aisea Katonivere Award for Excellence in Community Leadership in Environmental Sustainability and Conservation

1. Manuai Matawai, Papua-New Guinea – Individual Category

Manuai, who comes from Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, joined The Nature Conservancy in 2006 to coordinate and facilitate conservation and climate change activities in Manus Island. Before joining the Nature Conservancy, he served almost 14 years with the Provincial Fisheries Office as Research Officer after graduating from the National Fisheries College in 1988.

Manuai's work with the communities of Manus has focused on sustainable fisheries and climate change adaptation. In 2004, he spearheaded the first Marine Management Plan in his home village of Pere which eventually led to the development of the first Environment and Conservation Law for the Nali Sopat Penabu Local Level Government in Manus Province. This formed the basis of TNC's community engagement before establishing an office in Manus in 2006.

The success of Pere today as the first community in Manus to have a marine management plan enforced under its own environmental law, can be seen in their reef and fish stock recovering, thus contributing to improving community's livelihood. The success stories about marine management on Pere are now replicated to other coastal communities around Manus.

To promote community action and raise awareness about climate change impacts Manuai built a traditional seagoing canoe named *Climate Challenger*. With a crew of 9 he sailed the canoe more than 5,000 kilometres over 3 months throughout Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The team visited 20 communities, many schools and overall spoke to more than 10,000 people about climate change issues and adaptation.

Manuai is planning another Pacific voyage next year to continue to spread his message, sailing from Palau then to the Marshall Islands before returning to Manus.

2. Nguna-Pele Marine and Land Protected Area Network, Vanuatu – Community/Group Category

The Nguna-Pele Marine and Land Protected Area Network, established in 2002 by four traditional community chiefs, is a nongovernmental organization which brings together 16 indigenous communities on the islands of Nguna and Pele in the Republic of Vanuatu. The initiative promotes the sustainable use of marine and terrestrial resources in 3,000 hectares of community-managed reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove forests and intertidal lagoons, coordinating a network of fishing communities in conducting biological monitoring, environmental education, waste management, and alternative livelihood projects.

The network has set up an efficient and replicable method to build more resilient marine and coastal ecosystems by implementing community managed marine protected areas. Agreements signed with Vanuatu's Department of Fisheries and the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation have already strengthened the involvement of the network in national policies.

The network's achievements include protection of turtles, with the number of green sea turtles and other species observed in the area increasing. The community-based approach has also been effective in the struggle against invasive species. Over 10,000 crown-of-thorns starfish were collected during a 'clean-up campaign competition' coordinated by the network in 2010. This major threat in the past is now well managed by communities who also use the dead crown-of-thorns starfish as a great organic fertilizer for gardening.

Marine protected areas now play a major role in the island's economy with a doubling of the average income for those who shifted from fishing to ecotourism. New projects on food security through a solar drying process, organic fertilization and tree planting already provide benefits by diversifying sources of revenue.

C. Pacific Champion

His Excellency President Tommy Remengesau, Jr – Republic of Palau

[NOTE: Award was received on the President's behalf by Palau Minister for Environment]

H.E. President Tommy Remengesau, Jr. of Palau is a recognised environmental champion. He became Vice President in 1992 and then President from 2000 to 2008. He regained the office of President in the 2012 elections and took office in 2013.

In his role as President, starting in 2000, he envisioned Palau as less dependent on foreign aid and more dependent on sustainably managing its natural resources. Linked to this he promoted the expansion and growth of the tourist industry through his policy and slogan *Preserve the Best and Improve the Rest* for Palau today and for generations to come. In Palau's foreign affairs, President Remengesau has been active in enhancing Palau's presence in the UN and giving his country a global profile amongst the international community through environmental initiatives. His achievements include:

- Initiating the Micronesia Challenge, a ground-breaking multi-country conservation initiative across Micronesia now being replicated in the Caribbean and in the Indian Ocean.
- Along with the President of the Seychelles he is the founding President of the Global Island Partnership and continues to provide leadership and support to this initiative which has catalysed more than US\$130 million for conservation and livelihoods on islands.
- He successfully championed Palau's protected areas network and the green fee which helps to fund it.
- He changed the shark fishing laws for Palau to make it illegal to fish for sharks or to keep sharks caught as by-catch.
- He created Palau's Office of Environmental Response and Coordination – an innovative structure which enabled environmental considerations to be integrated into planning at multiple levels.
- He is a leader in working to ban the destructive practice of deep sea bottom trawling – banning it in Palau and advocating for a moratorium on it at the international level. As a result of his stand on bottom trawling, the practice has been severely curtailed in international waters.
- He is a visionary who is advocating for closure of the commercial fisheries for Palau to ensure the health of the reef and to secure local food security as well as protect long term tourism resources.
- He has led the efforts, through creating a new position in New York of Ocean Ambassador to fight for a specific sustainable development goal on the ocean.

He has been previously recognized for his environmental leadership, including being named a Time Magazine Hero of the Environment in 2007.

D. Lifetime Achievement

1. Audrey Newman, Hawai'i

Audrey has supported conservation in the Pacific region for more than 25 years and she is widely regarded for her passion, vision and commitment to islands.

As Senior Conservation Advisor for TNC's Asia Pacific Region, Audrey's work and commitment resulted in the design and launch of the Global Island Partnership, the Pacific Invasives Learning Network (based at SPREP), the Micronesians in Island Conservation leaders' network, the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation in 1997 and a global network of coaches in Conservation Action Planning.

Audrey was also one of the drafters of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Island Biodiversity Programme of Work. This new programme of work, supported in the region by CBD's 14 Pacific island country members, brought a special focus on island issues in the Convention. All of these initiatives had the benefit of her energy and strategic leadership in their design, funding, mentoring and implementation.

Since retiring from The Nature Conservancy in 2010, she has served as Senior Advisor to the Global Island Partnership and spearheaded Hawai'i Green Growth - a multi-sector collaboration to bring together leaders from clean energy, food security, environment and green jobs to achieve Hawaii's sustainability goals and be a model for integrated green growth.

2. Professor Randy Thaman, Fiji

Professor Randy Thaman is The University of the South Pacific's longest serving academic staff member, joining the University in 1974. Over four decades, Randy has taught, mentored and empowered countless Pacific islanders, many of whom are now regional leaders in natural resource conservation and management throughout the Pacific.

He has conducted research in all the USP member countries, most recently on community-based biodiversity in Fiji, Tonga, Niue Tuvalu and Kiribati, and on the floras of Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru and a number of islands in Fiji. Over the years countless USP students have worked with him on these projects.

Professor Thaman has published widely on a range of topics of importance to the Pacific Islands. His main areas of research include environmentally sustainable development, atoll and small-island ecosystems, biodiversity, agroforestry, Pacific Island food systems, ethnobiology and traditional environmental knowledge, Pacific Island floras, community-based biodiversity conservation, and ecotourism among others.

He is the only Pacific Island member of the newly formed Multidisciplinary Expert Panel of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, a member of the Ramsar Convention Scientific and Technical Review Panel. In 2012 Randy was awarded IUCN Honorary Membership Award at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in recognition of his services.

3. Professor Bill Aalbersberg, Fiji

Professor Aalbersberg first came to Fiji in 1970 with the US Peace Corps and has made Fiji and the Pacific his home ever since.

Bill has been with the University of the South Pacific for more than 27 years where he has served as the Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader in Chemistry and Professor of Natural Products Chemistry before he became the Director of the Institute of Applied Sciences in 1999.

Although he was trained as a bio-chemist, you will likely know Bill best through his work on natural resource management and in particular working with local communities. Bill is one of the co-founders of the Fiji and Regional Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Networks. His work in the field of community based management and integrated coastal management has earned him much domestic and international accolade including the Walter B Jones Memorial and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Excellence Awards for Coastal and Ocean Resource Management in 2005 and, as part of the Fiji LMMA network, the United Nations Equator Initiative Award in 2003.

Bill is much respected by the conservation community for his leadership and understanding of the important role local people play in resource management. He is respected by the local communities for providing them with opportunities to take control of their resources and make better decisions regarding its stewardship. He is respected by his students at USP for the encouragement and mentoring he provides them, and for serving as an excellent role model to young aspiring Pacific conservationists and scientists.