



Pacific Trade Invest
AUSTRALIA

PACIFIC TRADE INVEST AUSTRALIA ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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OUR VISION

“IMPROVING THE LIVELIHOODS OF PACIFIC PEOPLE BY ENABLING DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE BLUE PACIFIC.”

Pacific Trade Invest (PTI) Australia’s Vision is founded on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 – Decent work and economic growth.

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Blue Pacific is facing unprecedented times. Last year was once again shaped by the continuing implications of the global COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, global influences, and inter-related economic pressures. While we are contending with difficult times, these challenges are not insurmountable. The Pacific is not only strong, but stronger together.

Working as one Blue Pacific, we can build economies, create Pacific jobs, and drive development that leaves no one behind. The work of PTI Australia throughout 2021 is testament to the spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and connection yielding remarkable results. Overcoming many hurdles, PTI Australia facilitated over A\$27 million in exports last year and a record A\$14 million in investments. These outcomes were achieved by assisting more than 970 Pacific businesses.

Business development is key to sustainable and inclusive recovery and progress. While navigating the COVID-19 crisis, I commend PTI Australia's fortitude in delivering their core services with outstanding results, while simultaneously innovating with agility.

In line with the Forum Trade Ministers encouragement of creative solutions that build on existing mechanisms and capitalise on emerging opportunities such as digital trade and e-commerce, PTI Australia proactively launched initiatives to support Pacific digital participation. Last year the team ran the *Digital Design Program* in collaboration with graphic design platform Canva and the *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarship program. Both initiatives built specialised skills in business professionals from across the region.

Continuing to recognise the crucial role that traditional trade plays and the impact of COVID-19 on cost and efficacy on supply chains, PTI Australia provided the much-needed *Freight Assistance Package*, that became vital to exporters across the region.

PTI Australia continued to actively work alongside PIF Members' private sectors to provide relief, support, and opportunity. Alongside the global PTI Network, PTI Australia supported the broader Pacific community through the ongoing *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* survey series. These quantifiable regular reports informed governments, donors, regional organisations, and media as to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on businesses in the region. The reports aided our members and partners in advocating for stronger support for Pacific's private sector.

I encourage PTI Australia's ongoing efforts to actively champion Pacific businesses, products, and services within the Australian market, with a particular focus on women-led enterprises and the economies of our region's small island state (SIS). I also applaud the resourcing and capacity support work of PTI Australia through their digital upskilling portfolio. These initiatives create positive change at the grassroots level while expediting the advancement of digital economies within the Blue Pacific region.

Together we work towards a thriving Pacific. Where there is equitable and accessible support for the Pacific people to succeed. On behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, I would like to extend my thanks to the team behind PTI Australia, and the contribution of the Australian Government, for their continued dedication to fostering opportunity in the Blue Pacific.

Henry Puna

Secretary-General
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

TRADE & INVESTMENT COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

It was a great honour and privilege to be PTI Australia's Trade and Investment Commissioner in a year that saw the team continue to innovate and lead through the multitude of challenges presented by the COVID 19 pandemic. Consistently working towards the shared PIFS vision of securing a bright and prosperous future for all Pacific peoples, we remained steadfast in enabling that reality through the development of international trade and investment in the Pacific.

There is no doubt that the COVID 19 pandemic has had an acute and far-reaching impact worldwide. Across the Blue Pacific, many nations felt the devastating health impacts of the pandemic for the first time, demonstrating incredible resilience in their response to the crisis. Almost two full years of global pandemic conditions also had significant implications for PTI Australia's clients and their customers. The volatility of the market and global trading environment meant ongoing disruption to global supply chains, logistics and freight. This saw demand for air and sea freight in both domestic and international trade, far outpacing supply.

Despite a very challenging environment of severe trade and investment constraints, PTI Australia achieved outstanding results. In 2021, we supported 975 businesses across 16 Pacific nations to facilitate over A\$27 million worth of export deals and a record A\$14 million investment deals in the Pacific.

I am incredibly proud of the flexibility and determination demonstrated by the PTI Australia team, who continued to approach the year dynamically, remaining immeasurably adaptable as many of our trade, investment, tourism, and labour mobility programs shifted between physical, virtual and hybrid formats as Australia and the Blue Pacific moved in and out of various lockdowns.

Digital capacity building continued to be an important focus in 2021, with PTI Australia further building upon our existing digital upskilling portfolio. We continued to invest in regional digital development, to support businesses across the Blue Pacific to navigate the new conditions brought about by the pandemic. Understanding the realities for the Pacific's private sector was key, and through the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor*, we ensured nations, agencies and partners were kept informed with data, which also helped us to understand the most effective use of resources.

We continued our ecommerce connector series, last year delivering 37 online workshops across the Pacific region, which focused on driving participation in the growing e-economy. Alongside this, we launched the *Social Media for eBusiness* series, as well as our *Digital Tourism Recovery Readiness* workshops, which sought to improve the online presence of local tourism operators ahead of borders reopening.

PTI Australia could not have achieved these results alone and we acknowledge the important role our global PTI Network and partners play in amplifying our reach and the effectiveness of our work in the Pacific.

As author Roy T. Bennett said, *"every challenge, every adversity, contains within it the seeds of opportunity and growth"*. It is with this in mind that I believe 2021 demonstrated above all else that despite significant global challenges, the seeds of immense collaboration, cooperation and achievement continued to remain visible across the region.

Throughout 2022, we will remain committed to working with our partners to chart a path to economic recovery, creating tangible outcomes for the businesses and people of the Blue Pacific.

Caleb Jarvis

Trade & Investment Commissioner
Pacific Trade Invest Australia



WHO WE ARE

OUR ROLE

The PTI Network is the Pacific region's lead trade and investment promotion agency, tasked by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders to facilitate trade and investment deals between the economies of the 16 Forum Member countries of the Blue Pacific, and the rest of the world.

The PTI network has an extensive market knowledge supported by rich networks in the Forum Member countries we work in; the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands (Marshall Islands), Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

As the Australia-based office in the Network, PTI Australia works towards the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) vision of securing a bright and prosperous future for all Pacific peoples and is funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

OUR CLIENTS

We work with Pacific businesses to facilitate export deals and investment deals.

- Our export clients are businesses in the Pacific looking to grow in the Australian market.
- Our investment clients are businesses in the Pacific looking to secure investment.

OUR PEOPLE & PARTNERS

PTI Australia's strength is the diversity of its people. With diverse cultural backgrounds, our team has a broad range of private, public, and civil society sector experience. As well as our connections with Pacific businesses and international markets, we work closely with a range of government agencies in the Pacific, which have expertise and services that benefit our export and investment customers.

Our key Pacific partners include PIF Member governments and organisations such as national chambers of commerce, investment agencies, and national tourism organisations.

In addition, PTI Australia draws on the expertise of regional and multinational organisations, such as the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus Program (PHAMA Plus), the South Pacific Community (SPC), Market Development Facility (MDF), Pacific Labour Facility (PLF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, IFC International Finance Corporation (IFC), and specialist service providers.

OUR APPROACH

PTI Australia's strategic approach is founded on UN (SDG) 8 – Decent work and economic growth, while supporting UN (SDG) 5 – Gender equality. Our work aligns with PIFS Strategic Outcome C – Increasing Economic Prosperity, and five of DFAT's Making Performance Count – Key Strategic Targets.

Our work is centred on four key strategic pillars to drive Pacific economic growth: Trade, Investment, Tourism, and Labour Mobility. These key strategic areas underpin by seven Core Work Programs (CWPs) that capture our key activities. Our key strategic pillars, and subsequent CWPs, are supported by our environment enabling work, which includes our Research and Capacity Building efforts.

PTI Australia has a culture that nurtures innovation and seeks to maximise long-term and sustainable impact in the Blue Pacific. Our methods stem from principles of agility, resolve, and service. Like many other organisations worldwide, PTI Australia recognises the ongoing rising importance of digital innovation and know-how. As such, PTI Australia is committed to being a digital leader and enabler in the Blue Pacific.



KEY STRATEGIC AREAS

CORE WORK PROGRAMS

CONNECTING
BUSINESSES

CAPACITY
BUILDING

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

DEALS

A white box with a green border containing a green icon of two hands shaking.

Smaller
Island States
(SIS)

A white box with a green border containing a green icon of a mountain range above waves.

SDG 5

A white box with a red border containing the SDG 5 icon: a red square with the number "5", the text "GENDER EQUALITY", and a white female symbol with a cross and a circle.

SDG 8

A white box with a red border containing the SDG 8 icon: a red square with the number "8", the text "DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH", and a white bar chart with an upward-pointing arrow.

MONITORING & EVALUATION
FRAMEWORK

KEY STRATEGIC AREAS

Our key strategic areas reflect our overarching priorities to drive trade and investment in the Pacific. Underlying all our activities is PTI Australia's continued commitment to empowering women in business and supporting the Smaller Island States (SIS) of the Pacific.



TRADE

Growing private sector business sales to the Australian market.



TOURISM

Increasing digital capabilities and promoting the Pacific tourism sector globally.



INVESTMENT

Attracting quality capital to foster sustainable economic growth and prosperity in Pacific countries.



LABOUR MOBILITY

Connecting Pacific people to good job opportunities in Australia.

CORE WORK PROGRAMS (CWPs)

PTI Australia's seven CWPs focus our activity across our four strategic areas:



Promoting export-ready businesses and connecting them with international buyers, including through e-commerce platforms.



Facilitating growth of the Australian Government Pacific labour mobility initiatives through collaboration with the PLF.



Introducing purposefully selected investors to Pacific countries.



Providing promotional support, networks and technical expertise, including collaboration with other Australian Government-funded Pacific programs.



Coaching and mentoring purposefully selected Pacific Island tourism enterprises to use channel management and digital tourism market aggregators.



Contributing information for a better business-enabling environment.



Developing export-capable businesses.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

We are committed to delivering measurable outcomes for Pacific businesses and people. The programs we deliver through our key strategic areas enable a positive impact in the following ways:



DEALS

Facilitating connections that create commercial outcomes for Pacific businesses and people.



SDG 5 - GENDER EQUALITY

Actively supporting women-led businesses in the Pacific.



SMALLER ISLAND STATES

Actively identifying opportunities in trade and investment for Pacific Island SIS.

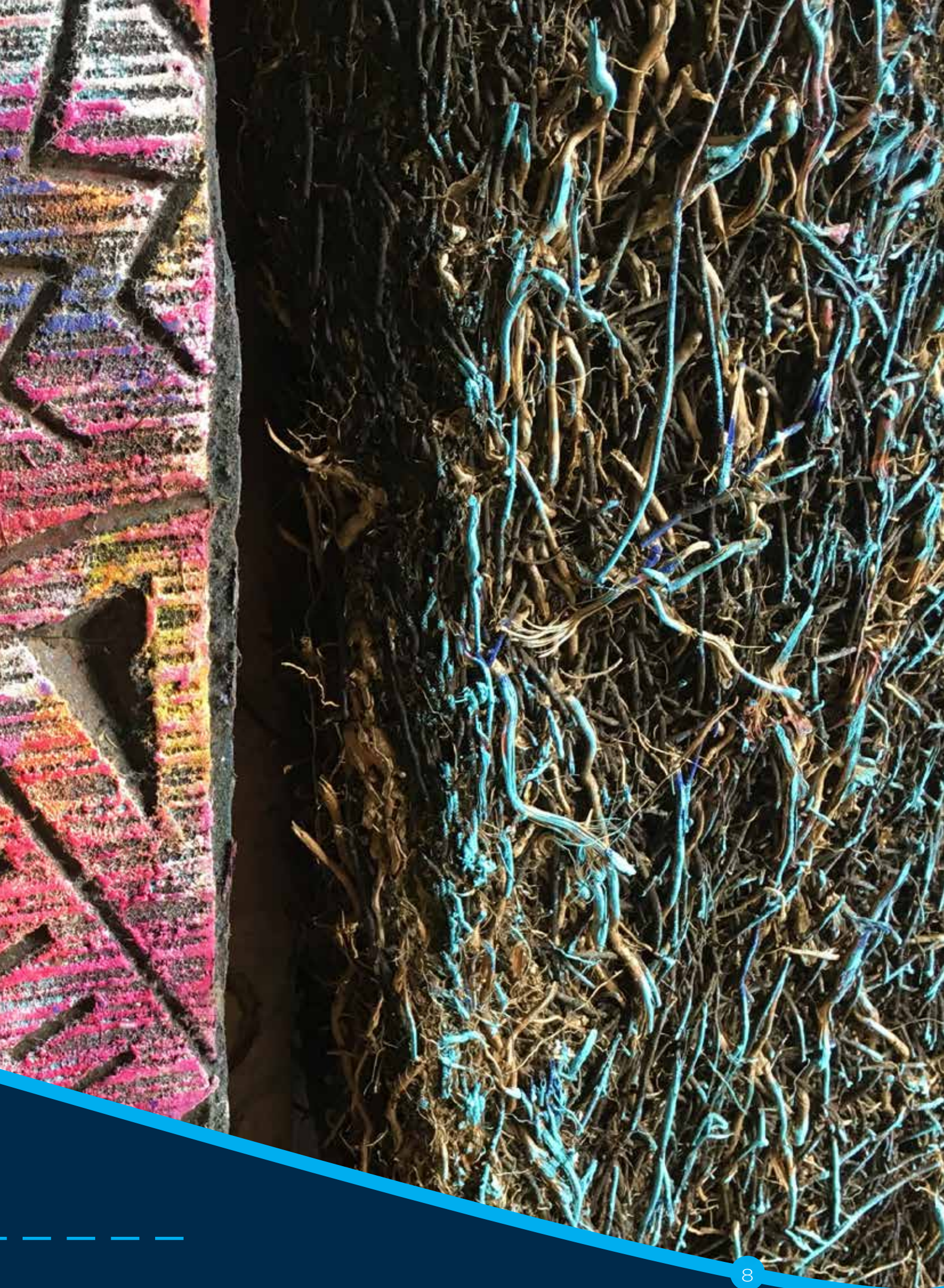


SDG 8 - DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for Pacific people.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

2021 IN NUMBERS

16



countries
serviced

A\$27.14m

exports facilitated



162

export deals



investment facilitated
\$14.66m



17 investment deals
facilitated



38

digital workshops delivered





230

women-led businesses assisted



number of deals for women-led businesses 120



1,047



services provided



27



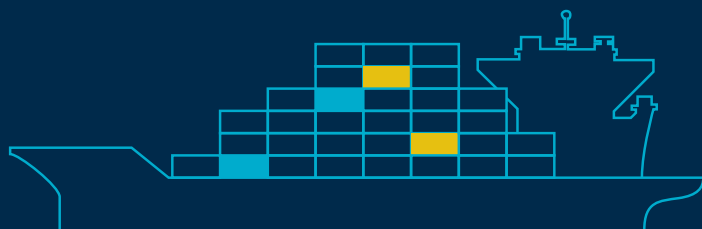
partners engaged



975



businesses assisted



TRADE

SUPPORTING EXPORT GROWTH IN THE BLUE PACIFIC

Trade plays a vital role in global economies. Through our trade services at PTI Australia, we assist Pacific-based, export-ready businesses to enter or grow in the Australian market by connecting them with buyers and distributors, developing their capacity and providing promotional and technical support. Alongside working directly with export clients, we collaborate with key government agencies, and national and private sector organisations to contribute to a better export business-enabling environment.

Underlying PTI Australia's trade work is the understanding that our clients are at varying stages of growth, have diverse goals and, therefore, unique requirements for support. Our services are driven by our daily engagement with clients and ever-deepening insights of the nuanced Blue Pacific.

In 2021, as the impact of COVID 19 continued to disrupt supply chains and local economies and borders were still closed, PTI Australia tailored our services to meet the emerging needs born of the crisis. In March, the trade team launched PTI Australia's *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*, to offset the increase in freight costs incurred since 2020. The Freight Assistance Package was designed to provide tangible relief to businesses in the Pacific during the unprecedented pressures presented by the COVID 19 economic crisis. The package also supported the growth in demand for Pacific goods and services in international markets and the long-term development of ecommerce in the Blue Pacific.

The Freight Assistance Package allowed PTI Australia to support a large variety of businesses – from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to large manufacturers – across a variety of industries, some of which had not used our services before. Coupled with our *Impact Support Program*, which offers Pacific businesses financial support for new equipment, our 2021 support services enabled exporters to scale up production in a more efficient way to drive their export sales.

KEY TRADE OUTCOMES IN 2021

In 2021, we ran several initiatives and facilitated 162 export deals.

- We ran *Social Media Masterclasses* in six countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. These online workshops saw participants from all industries receive world-class training from a certified Facebook Community Trainer on the latest tools and strategies to drive their brands, products, and services to the world via Facebook and Instagram.
- We provided financial assistance to support the establishment of a small-scale coffee cherry buying and processing wet mill in Goroka, Papua New Guinea, which uses best practice to produce high-quality coffee and provide sustainable incomes to the communities in the local supply chain.
- We took part in the launch of the Australian Government's Kava Pilot Phase 2 program, educating exporters and facilitating the commercial importation of kava into Australia.



SUPPORTS



CASE STUDY

FREIGHT ASSISTANCE PACKAGE PROVIDES RELIEF



PTI Australia's 2020 *Pacific Islands Export Survey* revealed that freight costs were one of the top-three barriers to export faced by Pacific businesses. In 2021, this was further exacerbated as COVID 19 began to drastically affect shipping routes and further inflate costs across the region.

To support Pacific exporters through this added challenge, PTI Australia launched the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package* in 2021. This initiative saw 49 successful applicants receive grants of up to a maximum of A\$2,500 per enterprise on a 50/50 cost share basis.

Jeremy Grennell, PTI Australia's General Manager of Export, said the feedback from the Freight Assistance Package has been overwhelmingly positive.

"We are so pleased to witness the incredible impact the Freight Assistance Package has had on SMEs in the Pacific. It has been wonderful to see the grant has also been commended

by our Pacific colleagues and policymakers for its efficiency and effectiveness. During a time where the ongoing effects of COVID 19 have been immensely damaging to businesses in the Pacific, the Freight Assistance Package enabled us to provide tangible and immediate support when it was needed most."

The impact of the continued closure of international borders on Jessica Cassell's boutique social enterprise, Bilum and Bilas in PNG, has been immense. Now exporting internationally, Cassell said PTI Australia's *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package* has provided the business with much-needed support and relief.

"In order to continue, our business has had to switch almost entirely to exporting our products internationally. We struggled to afford the additional cost involved in exporting our products to Australia. Receiving the Freight Assistance Package has significantly eased this pressure and means we can continue to pay staff wages and freight costs without going under."

ATTRACTING HIGH-QUALITY INVESTORS TO THE REGION

Private sector investment is key to further economic growth and bolstering employment opportunities across the Blue Pacific region. High-quality and impactful investment is an enabler for transformational change within local developing economies, maximising the benefits of both new and traditional technologies, innovation, skills, and markets.

PTI Australia works closely with the Investment Promotion Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, and industry bodies of the PIF member countries to connect investment-ready businesses with potential investors. PTI Australia provides confidential services, tailored resources, and promotional support to connect the right investees with the right investors at the right time.

In 2021, the PTI Australia investment team facilitated a record A\$14.66 million of investment for Pacific Island businesses. This remarkable achievement amid unprecedented times is testament to the team's strong relationships across the region and commitment to the championing of the Pacific.

Alongside traditional investment facilitation, our work focuses on impact investment opportunities that have positive social and/or environmental impact on communities across the Blue Pacific.

KEY INVESTMENT OUTCOMES IN 2021

In 2021, we ran several initiatives and facilitated 17 investment deals.

- PTI Australia is proud to have supported the Fijian Drua cement its position in the Super Rugby Pacific franchise in 2021. Through a blended finance model, the Fijian Drua has been successful in securing initial funding through several channels and avenues of assistance. This included PTI Australia's Impact Support Program and investment facilitation services, which are designed to support and encourage impactful Pacific projects in international markets.
- In 2021, following introductions and in-country facilitation by PTI Australia, Good Return's microloan program reached 60 women-led micro and small business owners in Tonga. Further strengthening their position in the region, Good Return opened a Pacific office in 2021, allowing them to further deliver their work across all Pacific countries, including Tonga.
- We continued to support the *Pasifika Diaspora Fund* following proof of concept last year and the fruition of successful diaspora investor projects such as a large-scale development Labasa, Fiji.



SUPPORTS



CASE STUDY

DIASPORA FUND SUPPORTS NEXT GENERATION OF PACIFIC BUSINESSES



Driven by their strong cultural and emotional connection to the Pacific region, the Pacific diaspora in Australia plays a vital role in growing the impact investment space in the Pacific. Following in-country introductions by PTI Australia on an earlier business mission, a group of Australia-based Pacific businesspeople launched the *Pasifika Diaspora Fund* in 2021.

The fund, formed by the Pacific Business, Sports and Entrepreneurs (PBSE) network and supported by Pacific RISE and PTI Australia, is currently based out of Sydney – home to the largest Pacific diaspora community in Australia – and will focus on impact investment and the long-term, sustainable development of social enterprises across the Pacific.

Launching in Sydney with the goal of expanding first into Samoa, followed by other Pacific Island countries, the fund will allow social enterprises to access mentoring and/or financial investment from the Pacific diaspora to grow and develop their businesses.

Co-founder of the PBSE network, Bernard Tuaimau, said the PTI Australia-facilitated business mission to Samoa showcased the calibre of entrepreneurs in the region, highlighting the need to empower the current and next generation of Pacific-based entrepreneurs.

“The business mission exposed us to a totally different part of Samoa we hadn’t seen before. I was blown away by the quality of young entrepreneurs pitching at PTI Australia’s *Pitchfest*. While they were slightly too small for traditional investment, we saw the gap in the Pacific investment market to support early phase start-ups and smaller social enterprises.”

Leata Alaimoana-Roberts, Impact Investment Manager, PTI Australia, said the strength of the fund is through its collectivism, harnessing the power of Pacific people to make a positive impact.

“I’m really proud that PTI Australia has been part of this since the beginning. We can see the long-term impact this fund will have in the Pacific to support the sustainable development of businesses, because the flow-on effect is immense. The *Pasifika Diaspora Fund* provides a pathway for Pacific people to come together and weave our collective strengths, to make a real sustainable difference in the Pacific.

“While traditional remittances play a vital role in Pacific economies, there’s a growing number of the diaspora who are wanting to make a sustainable difference and looking for ways to contribute beyond remittances. The fund enables Pacific people to be involved in the bountiful growth of the Pacific – whether you have \$100 or \$100,000 to invest.”

TOURISM

RESPOND, RECOVER, REBUILD STRONGER

Tourism is an important industry across the Blue Pacific. It is the cornerstone of income and job generation in many of the PIF Member countries we support. PTI Australia works with tourism clients to better connect them with the Australian and global markets, as well as working at sector level to promote national destinations.

In 2021, the COVID 19 health crisis saw the ongoing closure of international borders and the subsequent crippling of tourism-related businesses across much of the Blue Pacific. For some countries, borders opened for the first time in months, bringing both opportunity and new challenges to navigate.

PTI Australia worked with our clients and partners intentionally, with a country-by-country approach.

KEY TOURISM OUTCOMES IN 2021

In 2021, the Tourism team ran 5 specialised workshops across the region to support tourism operators in the recovery of COVID-19.

- We ran successful Digital Tourism Recovery Readiness workshops for clients in countries with opening borders. Led by experts, the sessions trained participants on updating website content, communication of health and safety procedures, booking and cancellation policies, distribution channels, social media presence, and personalised electronic direct mail.
- We actively promoted the Pacific as a yachting tourism destination, sponsoring a breakfast event with Tahiti Tourisme at the Monaco Yacht Show. The event included a seminar promoting the Pacific's diversity, itinerary options, and communicated the COVID 19 protocols in the region.
- We supported the development of Hotel Link Pay, a new online payment solution for the Pacific tourism sector.



SUPPORTS



CASE STUDY

PAYMENT SOLUTION

Throughout the Blue Pacific, the facilitation of online payments has presented ongoing challenges. As one of the least banked regions in the world, payment-processing options traditionally offered by large banks have been inaccessible to many, offering a one-size-fits-all approach, including large security bonds with lengthy set-up times. This lack of a nuanced Pacific-first response has allowed for further disparity in an economic environment heavily reliant on fluid cashflow.

In 2020, the PTI Network's *Pacific Business Monitor* report revealed that improving and implementing online capabilities was the third-highest priority for businesses looking to action initiatives that would support their business, with nearly a third seeking support to sell online.

In efforts to address this growing issue in the Pacific, 2021 saw PTI Australia support the partnership between Koven, an online payment solution provider, and hotel management system, Hotel Link, to develop Hotel Link Pay, a new and innovative payment platform for the Pacific tourism sector.

As part of PTI Australia's Digital Tourism program, PTI Australia facilitated an Online Payment Solutions workshop in partnership



with the Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association, WHL Group, Hotel Link, and Koven, introducing professionals from Fiji's hospitality and accommodation sector to Hotel Link Pay.

Hosting more than 80 participants from across Fiji's travel and tourism sector, the highly successful webinar addressed familiar industry pain points, such as the rigidity of traditional banking solutions, variance found in service fees, large security bonds and lengthy set-up lead times.

Onorina Fugawai, PTI Australia's Tourism and Investment Project Officer, said the Hotel Link Pay product will be an exciting addition to the PTI Digital Tourism program.

"Pacific Trade Invest Australia has strongly supported the development of the Hotel Link Pay product, as we are committed to bridging the digital divide within the Pacific while ensuring ecommerce is as accessible as possible for Pacific operators. We look forward to offering the Hotel Link Pay product to all Pacific tourism operators partaking in our Digital Tourism program in the future."

SUPPORTING GOOD JOBS FOR PACIFIC PEOPLE

The Australian Government's Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) provides opportunities for people from the Pacific to export their skills to Australia, to fill labour shortages in predominantly regional and rural areas. Employee wages and remittances create locally led opportunities for reinvestment in Pacific economies.

The importance of the PLS has been emphasised over the last two years as the COVID 19 pandemic and its resultant international border closures and interrelated economic disruption, increased the need for semi-skilled workers in rural and regional Australia. Sectors such as agriculture, aged care, construction, and manufactured food production, continue to experience difficulties in both short-term and longer-term domestic recruitment. Simultaneously, international border closures due to COVID 19 also negatively impacted Australia's hospitality and tourism industries, reducing demand for workers in this sector.

Through PTI Australia's partnership with the Pacific Labour Facility (PLF), we facilitate and connect eligible Australian employers across key industry sectors, including tourism, health care and social assistance, and non-seasonal agricultural, forestry and fishing, with the PLS process. These connections stimulate investment in the Pacific labour force and deepen relationships between Australia and Pacific countries.

COVID 19 significantly affected Australia's labour force across many sectors. These unprecedented times have led to an intense refocusing of recruitment processes, capacity and needs, going forward. In 2021, PTI Australia communicated regularly with Australian employers to maintain a strong understanding of the changing dynamics of the Australian labour market.

Our promotion of the PLS continues to be managed sensitively, bearing in mind both the extent of job losses and the recruitment difficulties currently being felt throughout Australia. In 2021, PTI Australia took a soft, targeted approach to identify employers who, post-COVID 19, can submit legitimate recruitment plans and move quickly to recruit, so as to support the recovery of regional Australian industries as well as provide good opportunities for Pacific employees.

2021 LABOUR MOBILITY HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2021 PTI Australia assisted two new Australian employers, to lodge applications with the PLS to become Approved Employers under the scheme.



SUPPORTS



CASE STUDY

COVID 19 MAINTAINING A CONNECTION IN RURAL AUSTRALIA



With the COVID 19 pandemic continuing to disrupt industries across Australia, PTI Australia's labour mobility focus in 2021 was on the identification of sustainable employers and fostering connections and awareness of the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) in rural Australia.

In 2021 PTI Australia was pleased to assist two Australian employers, based out of Canberra and Killcare, to lodge applications with the Pacific Labour Scheme to become Approved Employers under the scheme. Throughout this same period, employers in regional New South Wales continued to be mapped, assessed, and contacted to further PTI's plans to provide opportunities for Pacific workers. The team identified and worked with potential employers interested in hiring long-term workers from Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu under the PLS.

PTI Australia also facilitated conversations between employers and the PLS, collecting data and information on the needs and challenges of these regional employers, as well as keeping abreast of the dynamics of the changing labour shortage in Australia, Pacific national border closures, and health and safety considerations.

In November 2021, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne announced the next stage of reforms to the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, providing a single, streamlined program that will benefit employers, workers, and our Pacific family.

The connections and progress made in 2021 has improved employers' positions to submit recruitment plans post-COVID, with sufficient support and facilitation.

Caleb Jarvis, Pacific Trade Invest Australia's Trade and Investment Commissioner, said the PLS provides Pacific workers an opportunity to build their skills and qualifications while being rewarded financially.

"As the number of approved Australian employers grows post-COVID, so too will the number of Pacific workers in Australia. It's my hope that these workers will upskill, taking the experience and financial benefits gained in Australia back to their home countries, take up higher job positions, continue their education, invest in their economies, and contribute to maintaining and protecting the unique environment and cultures of the Pacific."

DIGITAL UPSKILLING ACROSS THE BLUE PACIFIC

PTI Australia complements our key strategic areas by fostering and advocating for improved business-enabling environments across the Pacific. This includes conducting high-quality research that provides governments, donors, and stakeholders valuable data on Pacific private sector challenges, opportunities, and views. Through our research and anecdotal feedback from our clients, PTI Australia advocates for improved trading conditions for exporters and foreign investors at both local and regional levels.

Further encouraging propitious business-enabling environments in the Blue Pacific, 2021 saw our Research and Capacity Building team facilitate a variety of business development initiatives, including the provision of upskilling opportunities, sponsorships and scholarships for Pacific-based business leaders, operators, and professionals.

With the COVID-19 crisis bringing about a renewed emphasis on digital capacity building opportunities, in 2021 PTI Australia invested in regional digital development, building upon our existing digital upskilling portfolio to further support professionals across the Blue Pacific navigate the new conditions and become experts in digital communications tools.

2021 RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021, the Research and Capacity Building team facilitated several specialised digital upskilling sponsorships and scholarships across 14 Blue Pacific countries, focusing primarily on the Small Island States.

- We successfully published eight editions of the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* report in 2021, alongside twenty country-focus reports. As a regular survey commissioned by the PTI Network to understand the ongoing effects of COVID-19 on the Pacific's private sector, this research has consistently provided governments, donors, and stakeholders valuable data on Pacific private sector challenges, opportunities, and views.
- We launched the PTI Australia *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarship program, with 2021 seeing 65 participants complete the bespoke Pacific-focused course. With an initial focus on Small Island States, the program sought to equip participants with the in-depth social media marketing skills required to support business growth.
- We launched the PTI Australia x Canva *Digital Design Program*, collaborating with global digital design platform Canva to provide tailored training and sponsorships to Canva's professional suite of visual communications tools to 52 Pacific professionals.



SUPPORTS



CASE STUDY

EMPOWERING SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERTISE



Within the COVID-19 era, digital connectivity became ever important given its ability to sustain economic activity whilst preserving social distancing. Even as lockdowns ease and border closures are lifted across the globe, engagement in ecommerce continues to increase and remains well-above pre-pandemic levels, signalling a permanent change in habits. It is therefore essential that Pacific businesses are well-equipped to face this new digital era to avoid the risk of falling behind.

It is against this background that PTI Australia strengthened our digital upskilling portfolio, to further improve digital business-enabling environments throughout the Pacific.

In 2021, PTI Australia launched our *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarship and facilitated 65 business professionals to gain in-depth knowledge in social media's ecommerce and advertising capabilities.

As the first of its kind in the region, PTI Australia's *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarship was designed to equip participants the marketing skills required to support business growth.

The 16-week program was developed based on *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* data and anecdotal

feedback received from businesses, indicating a growing regionwide interest in developing ecommerce capabilities, accessing new markets, and improving technology know-how.

With an initial focus on Small Island States, 2021 saw 65 businesses professionals from 9 countries complete the bespoke Pacific-focused course.

Leilani N Reklai, publisher and editor of *The Island Times* newspaper in Palau, said the development program benefited her business tremendously.

"In the month since I started following the recommendations and posting ads linking my Facebook page with my Instagram, traffic to my website has grown by about 70%. There are still a few challenges that, once resolved, will further increase traffic to my business. I own a newspaper, which is also available online. With the world moving more towards online news, our days as print media are numbered. It is critical that we transition to online media and learn how to maximise the tools available in order to do that. This training is what I have been looking for and it has exceeded my expectations. Thank you so much, PTI Australia, for giving me the opportunity through this scholarship! It's a lifesaver!"

COUNTRY PROFILES

Papua New Guinea

In partnership with PNG Investment Promotion Authority, delivered PTI Australia's Social Media Masterclass to 281 Papua New Guinea-based business leaders.

Palau

Provided support for Palau Small Business Development Center's Pathways to Finance Project, assisting women-led businesses to develop professional funding submissions.

FSM

Supported the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) membership of Hidden Treasures, Treasures of the South Pacific.

Tuvalu

Hosted and facilitated a dialogue for tourism stakeholders and operators in Tuvalu, to discuss challenges and required support.

Tonga

Supported 13 women entrepreneurs in Tonga secure impact investment to build and grow their businesses.

Fiji

Facilitated introductions to financial services for a major commercial sports entity in Fiji.

Solomon Islands

Supported a Solomon Islands based social enterprise with equipment that improved their capacity to sell and process specialty value-added coconut products for export.

New Caledonia

In partnership with Pacific Cooperation Fiji, delivered PTI Australia's Social Media Masterclass to 25 women-led businesses through the Kanak's Women's Group.

Vanuatu

Supported a Vanuatu-based exporter of skincare to Australia through the COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package.

Hawaii

our BLUE PACIFIC reach

Nauru

Under our *Digital Tourism Program*, PTI Australia collaborated with Nauru Tourism to complete preliminary work for creating a website.

Marshall Islands

Ongoing engagement with Australian travel agents and distributors to promote the Marshall Islands as a tourism destination through our *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* work

PTI Australia works across 16 unique and diverse Blue Pacific countries.

Kiribati

Provided Social Media for eBusiness professional development scholarships for 12 Kiribati-based business leaders.

French Polynesia

Supported Tahiti Tourisme at the Monaco Yacht Show, the industry's largest international event, showcasing the region as a super yachting destination.

Samoa

Supported a Samoa-based exporter of root crops through the COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package.

Niue

Supported a Niue-based exporter of root crops through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.

Cook Islands

Supported 22 tourism operators in the Cook Islands through PTI Australia's *Digital Tourism Recovery Readiness Workshop*

COOK ISLANDS

Capital: Avarua

Land Area: 240 km²

Population: 17,600 (2020)

GDP growth (% change year on year): 4.8% (2019)

Industries: fishing, fruit processing, tourism, clothing, handicrafts

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

A\$494,359
exports facilitated

OUR IMPACT 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

The intermittent reopening of Cook Islands' international borders in 2021 brought with it both relief and new challenges for the local tourism industry. PTI Australia worked closely with tourism operators, exporters, and the public sector to respond to the needs of the dynamic economic environment. In 2021, we supported 55 businesses and facilitated A\$494,459 in exports in the Cook Islands.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in the Cook Islands, delivering eight regional reports, and two Cook Islands-focused country reports.
- Provided *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarships for 13 Cook Islands business leaders. The bespoke four-month course supported participants in developing ecommerce capabilities, social media growth strategies, and profitable advertisement methodology.

- Provided *Digital Design Program* sponsorships to two Cook Islands business leaders, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, five Cook Islands-based business professionals participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing participants with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.

TRADE

- Delivered PTI Australia's *Social Media Masterclass* in partnership with the Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce to 82 registrants in the Cook Islands in November.
- Introduced a Cook Islands-based skincare company to an Australia-based natural products website.
- Engaged with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID 19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Promotion of six investment opportunities in the Cook Islands on PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- In partnership with Cook Islands Tourism, 22 participants in the Cook Islands attended *PTI Australia's Digital Tourism Recovery Readiness* workshop in March.
- In February, a Cook Islands-based tourism operator participated in PTI Australia's *Understanding Your Business Financials* workshop, supporting participants to build financial literacy and prepare for the return of international travel.
- Supported 16 Cook Islands-based tourism operators to develop and maintain a fully functional website, inclusive of a booking engine and channel manager, through our ongoing *Digital Tourism Program*.
- Supported 16 Cook Islands-based tourism operators a significant reduction in monthly service fees for hosting and other support charges, through *PTI Australia's Digital Tourism COVID-19 Support Package*.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.



CASE STUDY



DIGITAL TOURISM ROLL-OUT

Tourism is a pillar of the Cook Islands' economy, with the island nation having welcomed more than 170,000 tourists to their shores in 2019. The onset of COVID 19 pandemic forced the nation to close international borders, subsequently shutting the door on an industry that contributes two-thirds of the country's GDP.

In 2021, upon Cook Islands' plans to reopen borders to New Zealand, PTI Australia developed the *Digital Tourism Recovery Readiness* workshop to equip Cook Islands participants with world-class skills, technology and marketing tactics, in preparation for borders reopening.

Providing participants with access to world-class digital tools and techniques, the workshop was led by experts in online-buying cycles, software needs and tourism marketing. The workshop also provided resources on channels for online distribution such as overseas travel agents, wholesalers, meta search, and packaging for social media. It also covered new considerations – from safety to policies and website communication – arising from the unprecedented market conditions caused by COVID 19.

PTI Australia also continued to roll out our *Digital Tourism Program*, which supported 16 tourism operators in the Cook Islands in 2021. The program provided tourism operators with digital support to prepare their business for market return, and a significant reduction in monthly hosting fees and other support charges.

Serena Hunter, General Manager and Founder of Koka Lagoon Cruises and Muri Hillside Resort, said that PTI Australia's fee relief and its workshop series were immensely useful for business recovery.

"The fee relief during 2020–21 was much appreciated, and I found the webinars I attended very useful. I look forward to working with you and the team in the coming months as we move forward and look to rebuild. Meitaki ma'ata."

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Capital: Palikir

Land Area: 700 km²

Population: 102,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -3.8 (2020)

Industries: tourism, construction; specialised aquaculture, craft items (shell and wood)

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

INCREASED AWARENESS

as a tourist and investment destination.

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PTI Australia is committed to supporting the Pacific Small Island States (SIS), recognising the economic effect the COVID-19 pandemic has had on these nations. In 2021, PTI Australia continue to work closely with Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) private sector, government organisations and partners, to deliver services to promote trade, tourism, and investment opportunities.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in FSM, delivering eight regional reports.
- Provided a *Digital Design Program* sponsorship to an FSM business leader, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, two FSM-based business professionals participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing participants with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.
- Provided *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarships for two FSM business leaders. The bespoke four-month course supported participants in developing ecommerce capabilities, social media growth strategies, and profitable advertisement methodology.

TRADE

- Engagement with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Promotion of an investment opportunity in FSM in PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- In February, an FSM-based tourism operator participated in PTI Australia's *Understanding Your Business Financials* workshop, supporting participants to build financial literacy and prepare for the return of international travel.
- Ongoing engagement with Australian travel agents and distributors to promote FSM as a tourism destination through our *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* work.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

CASE STUDY



PROMOTING A HIDDEN TREASURE

The 607 islands that make up FSM are some of the most remote and beautiful places on earth and home to a cultural and biological diversity that offers unique travel experiences.

While FSM's international borders remained closed for much of 2021 due to the COVID 19 crisis, PTI Australia continued to engage with the country's national tourism office, Tourism FSM, through PTI Australia's *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* program, to ensure the destination stayed front of mind for the Australian travel and tourism industry.

Treasures of the South Pacific is a series of annual events showcasing the variety of tourism products and experiences available across the South Pacific. It is designed to educate and inspire Australian travel agents, acting as a platform that directly promotes members to the Australian travel industry.

Initially focused on larger island states with mainstream tourism offerings, Treasures of the South Pacific now partners with PTI Australia to represent SIS under the banner of Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific, where PTI Australia continues to support ongoing FSM membership.

Since the COVID 19 crisis, *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* has transitioned towards a virtual model, conducting workshops and online activities for the Australian travel industry market, with a focus on continued awareness and education.

Onorina Fugawai, PTI Australia Tourism and Investment Project Officer, said the onset of COVID 19 and its associated closure of international borders highlighted the need for the promotion of SIS such as FSM to the Australian travel industry, to keep them front of mind and ready for reopening.

"For Small Island States such as FSM, it can be difficult to access expertise in global digital marketing. PTI Australia understands the value of international tourism to local Pacific Island economies and as the world starts to actively plan post-pandemic holidays, we saw an opportunity to promote the many Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific, including the Federated States of Micronesia, as ideal holiday destinations."

FIJI

Capital: Suva

Land Area: 18,270 km²

Population: 895,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -21.0 (2020)

Industries: tourism, sugar processing, copra, gold, silver, lumber

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook



OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

As Fiji continued to face the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic throughout the year, Fiji's international borders did not reopen until late 2021. PTI Australia continued to assist 371 businesses from across a variety of sectors, facilitating A\$18,833,914 in exports and A\$14,537,231 in investments, significantly supporting Fijian businesses as they tackled the road to recovery.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Fiji, delivering eight regional reports, and five Fiji-focused country reports.
- Provided *Digital Design Program* sponsorships to eight Fiji-based business leaders, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, 51 Fiji-based business professionals participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing participants with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.

TRADE

- Delivered PTI Australia's *Social Media Masterclass* in partnership with Investment Fiji to 359 registrants in Fiji in March.
- Supported three Australia-based importers of Fiji root crops through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported 13 Fiji-based exporters of Fiji products (root crops, kava, chilli sauce, bottled water, ginger products, pawpaw, coconut oil) through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Provided a Fiji-based exporter with specialised labelling advice for packaging and labelling to the Australian market.
- Provided a Fiji-based seaweed producer with an Australian market opportunity overview.
- Provided a Fiji-based peanut butter manufacturer with advice on the Australian market and pricing and distribution options.
- Provided a Fiji-based exporter specialised labelling advice for packaging and labelling to the Australian markets.
- Provided financial assistance to a Fiji-based food manufacturer and exporter to upgrade production line equipment.
- Provided financial assistance to a Fiji-based added-value food manufacturer to purchase new processing equipment.
- Provided financial assistance to a Fiji-based kava exporter to purchase new production equipment.

- Provided graphic design assistance to a Fiji-based retailer prior to entry into Fine Food Australia 2022.
- Introduced a Fiji-based agricultural exporter to an Australia-based importer looking for ginger.
- Introduced a large Fiji-based root crop exporter to an Australia-based importer in Melbourne.
- Introduced a Fiji-based agricultural group to a potential ginger buyer in Australia.
- Introduced a Fiji-based coffee business to a new online artisan food website portal.
- Introduced a Fiji-based cassava flour manufacturer to an Australia-based importer for sampling and testing.
- Introduced three Fiji-based kava exporters to Australia-based importers and distributors to discuss opportunities for market reopening.
- Introduced a Fiji-based chilli sauce producer to an Australian-based online food retailer.
- Introduced a Fiji-based social enterprise to a third-party website that would increase their web traffic.
- Assisted a Fiji-based nutraceutical supplier with existing Australia-based buyer to further discussions for their 2021 strategic plan.
- Assisted a Fiji-based peanut butter producer with understanding the category sections in Coles and Woolworths stores in Australia.
- Engaged with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID 19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Facilitated introductions to financial services for a commercial sports entity in Fiji.
- Provided specialist advice for numerous impact investments in Fiji.
- Provided specialist advice and facilitated introductions for a qualified investor to key allies and stakeholders in Fiji.
- Assessed multiple impact investment-readiness work for impact investing in Fiji.
- Assessed updated impact investment memorandum for a Fiji-based investment opportunity.
- Developed strategy to attract Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) to Fiji and Samoa.
- Developed tailored business case for a potential investor into Fiji.
- Provided key information and referrals for a Fiji-based impact investment.
- Provided introductions for a tourism investment project in Fiji.
- Facilitated introductions to financial services for a commercial sports entity in Fiji.
- Promotion of seven investment opportunity in Fiji in PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Provided support to Fiji tourism operators to boost marketing and promotional efforts to increase booking revenue under the Blue Lane Initiative.
- Facilitated graduation trip bookings through a partner to two Fiji-based tourism operators.
- In February, nine Fiji-based tourism operators participated in PTI Australia's *Understanding Your Business Financials* workshop, supporting participants to build financial literacy and prepare for the return of international travel.
- In partnership with Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association, 46 participants in Fiji attended the virtual *Revolutionising Pacific Payments* webinar in October.
- Supported 12 Fiji-based tourism operators to develop and maintain a fully functional website, inclusive of a booking engine and channel manager, through our ongoing *Digital Tourism Program*.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.



CASE STUDY



POWERING THE FIJIAN DRUA

In 2021, the Fijian Drua professional rugby union team confirmed its place in the 2022 Super Rugby Pacific competition, marking the beginning of a new era for Super Rugby in the Pacific.

PTI Australia is proud to have played a role in this historic achievement, having supported the team to cement its position in the Super Rugby Pacific franchise. Through the use of a blended finance model, the Fijian Drua has been successful in securing initial funding through several channels. To support this, the Fijian Drua accessed PTI Australia's *Impact Support Program* and investment facilitation services, which are designed to support and encourage impactful Pacific projects in international markets.

PTI Australia's Impact Investment Manager, Leata Alaimoana-Roberts, said the inclusion of the Fijian Drua to the Super Rugby Pacific competition is one that will have a significant positive economic effect in the region.

"We believe the establishment of the Fijian Drua is an extremely important step towards rugby [union] becoming an even larger commercial industry in the Pacific than it already is. This in turn encourages jobs and investment in the region, while acting as a major driver for impact at both an economic and community level. There

is immense potential for growth within this space and we are proud to be able to support the Fijian Drua in their inaugural Super Rugby Pacific campaign."

While an exciting moment to celebrate, the journey was not an easy one. There is a substantial application process for new entrants to the Super Rugby competition to negotiate, including meeting stringent financial conditions, such as holding substantial cash assets and providing financial guarantees to ensure a team's long-term viability.

Fijian Drua interim CEO, Brian Thorburn, said PTI Australia's support has benefited the club, aiding their Super Rugby placement in a variety of ways.

"PTI Australia's support has been of great assistance during this period, and we thank them for their specialised services. Their support has most definitely played a part in getting us to where we are today. The rugby [union] world has long known what our Fijian players are capable of; however, we are now presented with the opportunity to showcase this, week in, week out, as part of the Super Rugby Pacific competition. We look forward to demonstrating to young Fijian players that they don't have to go offshore; they can pursue their dream at home. The flow-on effect of this on communities in Fiji will be immense."

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Capital: Papeete

Land Area: 3,660 km²

Population: 286,000 (2018)

GDP growth (% change yoy): 2.3% (2017)

Industries: tourism, pearls, agricultural processing, handicrafts, phosphates

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

TARGETED PROMOTION

to superyacht industry

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021, we continued to build our knowledge and network in French Polynesia, meeting with both the private sector and government agencies to gain deeper understanding on how PTI Australia can support French Polynesia through the promotion of trade, tourism, and investment opportunities in the wake of COVID 19.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in French Polynesia, delivering eight regional reports, and a French Polynesia-focused country report.

TRADE

- Introduced a French Polynesia-based sea salt exporter to a new online artisan food website portal and provided advice on labelling for the Australian market.
- Engagement with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Liaised with potential tourism sector investor regarding opportunities in French Polynesia.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Supported Tahiti Tourisme's *South Pacific Breakfast Seminar* held at the Monaco Yacht Show, the superyacht industry's largest international event attended by more than 19,000 visitors and featuring over 100 yachts. The event showcased the idyllic nature of French Polynesia and the Pacific as a super yachting destination, as well as addressing COVID-safe protocols and itinerary options.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

CASE STUDY



MONACO YACHT SHOW

Tourism is a key economic driver within French Polynesia, with research from Invest in Tahiti, the investment promotion authority of French Polynesia, revealing that the travel sector accounted for more than 11 per cent of the Polynesian GDP in 2019.

Stretching for more than 2,000 kilometres and comprising 130 islands in five archipelagos: the Society Islands, the Tuamotu Archipelago, the Gambier Islands, the Marquesas Islands and the Austral Islands, French Polynesia is known for its coral-fringed lagoons, over-the-water bungalow hotels, and as an idyllic destination for superyachts.

While the cruise and superyacht industry is of great importance to French Polynesia for a multitude of reasons, most significant is the recent growth in that industry and how it might contribute towards the economies and the potential of many Blue Pacific nations in the future.

In 2021, PTI Australia supported Tahiti Tourisme's *South Pacific Breakfast* seminar held at the Monaco Yacht Show, the superyacht industry's largest international event. Attended by more than 19,000 visitors and featuring over 100 yachts, the event showcased the idyllic nature of French Polynesia and the Pacific as a super yachting destination, as well as addressing COVID-safe protocols and itinerary options.

Onorina Fugawai, PTI Australia's Tourism and Investment Project Officer, said the impact from such a global opportunity was vast.

"The impact of being included in the seminar has meant an increase in awareness of French Polynesia as a super yachting destination, further providing an opportunity to educate agents and wholesalers on what the Pacific has to offer and ultimately providing them with the confidence to further market the region as a travel destination."

Manoa Rey, Research and Niche Marketing Coordinator, Tahiti Tourisme, valued the support PTI Australia provided in showcasing the industry.

"Tahiti Tourisme is very grateful for the support provided by PTI Australia at the Monaco Yacht Show in 2021, which allowed us to raise awareness about the South Pacific as the perfect destination for superyachts. Our seminar gathered several professionals from the global superyacht industry, and we received much positive feedback from the audience."

KIRIBATI

Capital: Tarawa

Land Area: 810 km²

Population: 117,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -1.1 (2020)

Industries: fishing, handicrafts

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

12
BUSINESSES
upskilled in Social
Media

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

As international borders remained closed in Kiribati for all of 2021, PTI Australia worked closely with both the private sector and government agencies to support and facilitate trade, tourism, and investment capacity building and upskilling opportunities. Throughout this time, PTI Australia supported 13 businesses in Kiribati.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Kiribati, delivering eight regional reports.
- Provided *Digital Design Program* sponsorships to three Kiribati-based business leaders, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, a Kiribati-based business professional participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing the participant with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.
- Provided *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarships for 12 Kiribati-based business leaders. The bespoke four-month course supported participants in developing ecommerce capabilities, social media growth strategies, and profitable advertisement methodology.

TRADE

- Engagement with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

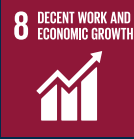
INVESTMENT

- Promotion of three investment opportunity in Kiribati in PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Ongoing engagement with Australian travel agents and distributors to promote Kiribati as a tourism destination through our *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* work.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

CASE STUDY



DIGITAL UPSKILLING FOR KIRIBATI

Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic, digital trade has become even more important given its ability to sustain economic activity while preserving social distancing. Even as lockdowns ease and borders reopen, engagement in ecommerce continues to increase and remains well above pre-pandemic levels, thus signalling a permanent change in habits. PTI Australia found through our *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series and anecdotal feedback from clients that Pacific businesses are seeking upskilling opportunities to become well-equipped to face this new digital era, and to avoid the risk of falling behind.

In 2021, Kiniviliame Raicebe, Sales and Marketing Manager at Vodafone Kiribati, participated in both PTI Australia's *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarship program, as well as the PTI Australia X Canva's *Digital Design Program* sponsorship.

With both programs coming under PTI Australia's digital upskilling portfolio, the *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarship is designed to equip participants with the in-depth social media marketing skills required to support business growth, and the *Digital Design Program* was created to offer participants access to the global communications and graphic design platform Canva, as well as necessary training.

Raicebe said attending these sessions allowed him to further enhance his knowledge of marketing strategies and digital design, which increased his productivity immensely.

"I've always tried to do our graphics but found the programs available to be quite complicated and not very user-friendly. Since taking part in the PTI Australia X Canva *Digital Design Program*, I've found Canva to be an ideal tool – really great and easy to use! I've managed to make some posters for the company, as well as for friends who have small businesses. I found the courses to be immensely enriching and interesting, and they have really enhanced my knowledge. Talking with some of the other participants from Kiribati, I know they all found the same. A goal of mine is to now share this knowledge with my colleagues here in Kiribati, allowing them to also upskill in this area and, in turn, create further impact. The more of these programs, the better for the people and the region in general. Thank you so much PTI Australia!"

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Capital: Majuro

Land Area: 180 km²

Population: 55,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -4.5 (2020)

Industries: copra, tuna processing, tourism, craft items (from seashells, wood, and pearls)

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

INCREASED AWARENESS

as a tourist and investment destination.

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

While international borders remained closed in the Marshall Islands throughout 2021, PTI Australia continued to promote the Marshall Islands as a tourism destination, engaged with private sector, and potential investors.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in the Marshall Islands, delivering eight regional reports.
- Provided a *Digital Design Program* sponsorship to a Marshall Islands business leader, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- Provided *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarships for two Marshall Islands-based business leaders. The bespoke four-month course supported participants in developing ecommerce capabilities, social media growth strategies, and profitable advertisement methodology.

TRADE

- Engagement with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Promotion of two investment opportunity in the Marshall Islands in PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Ongoing engagement with Australian travel agents and distributors to promote the Marshall Islands as a tourism destination through our *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* work.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

CASE STUDY



PORTAL TO THE WORLD

Treasures of the South Pacific is a series of annual events showcasing the variety of tourism products and experiences available across the South Pacific and is designed to both educate and inspire Australian travel agents.

Partnering with Treasures of the South Pacific, PTI Australia represents the Marshall Islands under the banner of *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* (Hidden Treasures).

The 29 coral atolls and five single islands that make up the exquisite Marshall Islands are spread out over an exclusive economic zone of nearly 1 million square miles. With roughly 5,000 visitors per year and a language where the common greeting of 'iakwe' translates to 'you are a rainbow', the Marshall Islands is one of the most unique and culturally enriched destinations in the world.

In 2021, in conjunction with the active promotional work undertaken by PTI Australia, the Marshall Islands Office of Commerce,

Investment & Tourism participated in PTI Australia's *Digital Tourism Program*, under which PTI Australia provided website fee assistance, technical development, and created a digital platform for participants to directly engage with international audiences and further the promotion of the Marshall Islands as a tourist destination.

Onorina Fugawai, PTI Australia Tourism and Investment Project Officer, said Marshall Islands tourism opportunities are plentiful.

"The Marshall Islands presents a unique set of tourism opportunities. Technology is helping to open the global tourism market, creating more awareness and access to the Pacific as a destination. It is important that Pacific countries like the Marshall Islands continue to leverage new technologies and platforms to their advantage, opening the Pacific to different types of travellers."

NAURU

Capital: Yaren

Land Area: 21 km²

Population: 13,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): 0.7 (2020)

Industries: phosphate mining, offshore banking, coconut products

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

DIGITAL UPSKILLING

in social media and
website creation

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PTI Australia continued to support and actively promote trade, tourism, and investment opportunities for Nauru. In 2021, as the nation felt the economic effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, PTI Australia worked closely with local government bodies to assess opportunities for digital upskilling and capacity building.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Nauru, delivering eight regional reports.
- Provided *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarships for two Nauru-based business leaders. The bespoke four-month course supported participants in developing ecommerce capabilities, social media growth strategies, and profitable advertisement methodology.

TRADE

- Engagement with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Facilitated an introduction with to Complete Aviation Solutions for the development of national tourism policy.
- Under our *Digital Tourism Program*, PTI Australia collaborated with Nauru Tourism to complete preliminary work for creating a website.
- Ongoing engagement with Australian travel agents and distributors to promote Nauru as a tourism destination through our *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* work.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

CASE STUDY



A STUNNING TOURIST DESTINATION

With an area of just 21 square kilometres, boasting sandy coastlines and covered in coconut trees, Nauru is home to approximately 13,000 people and is the world's smallest sovereign island country. Despite only welcoming an average of 200 tourists each year, there are several local businesses offering deep-sea game fishing, diving, and underwater shipwreck explorations.

Situated only four and a half hours by air from Brisbane, Nauru has its own national airline, national tourism body and a rich history and much to offer tourists.

In 2021, Nauru Tourism participated in PTI Australia's *Digital Tourism Program*, with PTI Australia working closely with the Nauru Government to create a unique website that promotes the beautiful Nauru as a tourist destination.

Onorina Fugawai, PTI Australia Tourism and Investment Project Officer, said as businesses and consumers navigate the COVID 19 pandemic, the need for digital connection and online presence has never been greater.

"Tourism is an important economic driver for the Pacific Islands and as it is a competitive industry, it can be difficult for small island nations like Nauru to gain exposure as tourist destinations. Having a national tourism website provides Nauru with a platform to engage with the world, showcase its amazing offerings, and reflect the diverse and colourful history of this small island nation and its people. Being part of PTI Australia's *Digital Tourism Program* gives Nauru Tourism the tools to confidently market and grow awareness of all that the beautiful island has to offer."

NEW CALEDONIA

Capital: Noumea

Land Area: 18,280 km²

Population: 293,608 (2020)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -4.2 (2020)

Industries: nickel mining and smelting

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

UPSKILLING
women-led
business leaders

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PTI Australia worked closely with New Caledonia's private sector and government agencies to understand the impact of COVID 19 on the trade, tourism, and investment landscape, while continually identifying opportunities for collaboration.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in the New Caledonia, delivering eight regional reports, and one New Caledonia-focused country report.

TRADE

- Delivered PTI Australia's *Social Media Masterclass* in partnership with Pacific Cooperation Foundation (PCF), Pacific Market.NC, and PTI New Zealand to 25 women-led businesses in New Caledonia through the Kanak's Women's Group in July.

- Engagement with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

CASE STUDY



E-COMMERCE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

PTI Australia is committed to strengthening the ecommerce environment in the Pacific. For women entrepreneurs in particular, ecommerce has emerged as a powerful tool for women's empowerment. As the internet enhances access to information, and mobile technology allows for new payment channels and access to capital, access to ecommerce has become increasingly viable, further providing women with new business opportunities that can help increase their participation in domestic and international trade, working towards closing the gender gap.

In July 2021, PTI Australia partnered with Pacific Cooperation Foundation (PCF) New Zealand, Pacific Trade Invest New Zealand (PTI NZ) and Pacific Market.NC to deliver PTI Australia's *Social Media Masterclass* to a New Caledonia-based Kanak Women's Group, to support businesses looking to optimise their social media marketing. A part of PTI Australia's *Ecommerce Connector Series*, the masterclass supports participants to upskill in the mechanics of using social media content and advertising, to grow their business and drive sales.

PTI Australia's Social Media Masterclass was well received, with 18 registrations. Jeremy Grennell, PTI Australia General Manager – Exports, said the opportunity to refresh important digital skills during uncertain market conditions was met with enthusiasm by the country's SME sector.

"We were so pleased with the high level of engagement in our workshop in New Caledonia. Many business owners and leaders saw the need to stay digitally agile during the ever-changing COVID 19 crisis, to represent their offerings accurately and securely. We look forward to working with the Kanak Women's Group into the future."

NIUE

Capital: Alofi

Land Area: 260 km²

Population: 1,862 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): 6.5% (2018)

Industries: handicrafts, food processing

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

A\$197,320
exports facilitated

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Research from the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* found that 85 per cent of Niue-based businesses were operational by the end of 2021, a figure higher than the Pacific average. Throughout the year, PTI Australia continued to support and actively promote trade, investment, and tourism opportunities for businesses in Niue facilitating A\$197,320 in exports.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Niue, delivering eight regional reports, and seven Niue-focused country report.
- Provided a *Digital Design Program* sponsorship to a Niue-based business leader, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, a Niue-based business professional participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing the participant with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.
- Provided *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarships for eight Niue-based business leaders. The bespoke four-month course supported participants in developing ecommerce capabilities, social media growth strategies, and profitable advertisement methodology.

TRADE

- Supported a Niue-based exporter of root crops through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Engagement with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Supported two Niue-based tourism operators to develop and maintain a fully functional website, inclusive of a booking engine and channel manager, through our ongoing *Digital Tourism Program*.
- Supported two Niue-based tourism operators a significant reduction in monthly service fees for hosting and other support charges, through PTI Australia's *Digital Tourism COVID-19 Support Package*.
- Ongoing engagement with Australian travel agents and distributors to promote Niue as a tourism destination through our *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* work.

CASE STUDY



BRINGING NIUE TARO TO NEW MARKETS

With a love of food and a passion for taro, Niue chef Pearline Magatogja saw a gap in the market and an opportunity to take Niue taro international through her company, Moui Produce.

When COVID 19 struck and borders closed, Pearline's first shipment was in jeopardy due to delays, disruptions and unexpected increased freight costs. Pearline reached out to PTI Australia and accessed the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*. The stimulus package was designed to provide tangible relief to businesses in the Pacific facing the unprecedented pressures of the COVID 19 economic crisis. Offsetting freight costs since 2020, the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package* has supported the growth in demand for Pacific goods and services in international markets and the long-term development of ecommerce in the Blue Pacific.

Pearline said the package was vital to her and other Pacific businesses.

"With my cargo on hold for inspections, the costs started to pile up. Supplies are limited and everything is done manually in Niue with limited resources and materials, which makes shipping expensive. I shared my venture with PTI Australia and they told me about the COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package. This was exactly what I needed. With export costs covered, it eased the financial burden on me and meant that I could use money allocated for freight for other initiatives like supporting local taro farmers.

"Support like the COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package is so important for me and other Pacific businesses. With freight costs reduced, we can focus on developing other parts of the business. For example, I'm currently working on improving the connection and collaboration between farmers through a digital platform. I'm really happy with the experiences I've had so far with PTI Australia and I'm looking forward to more discussions and collaboration with them in the future."



PALAU

Capital: Ngerulmud

Land Area: 460 km²

Population: 21,613 (2021)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -3.7% (2017)

Industries: tourism, fishing, subsistence agriculture

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

A\$266,030

exports facilitated

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PTI Australia continued to strengthen its partnerships in Palau, working in collaboration with private sector and government agencies. Despite the economic downturn caused by COVID 19, PTI Australia facilitated A\$266,030 in exports through connecting businesses and capacity building in 2021.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Palau, delivering eight regional reports.
- Provided *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarships for four Palau-based business leaders. The bespoke four-month course supported participants in developing ecommerce capabilities, social media growth strategies, and profitable advertisement methodology.

TRADE

- Engagement with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Provided support for Palau Small Business Development Center's (SBDC) *Pathways to Finance Project*, focussing on women-led businesses developing professional funding submissions.
- Promotion of an investment opportunity in Palau on PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Supported 14 Palau-based tourism operators to develop and maintain a fully functional website, inclusive of a booking engine and channel manager, through our ongoing *Digital Tourism Program*.
- Supported 14 Palau-based tourism operators a significant reduction in monthly service fees for hosting and other support charges, through PTI Australia's *Digital Tourism COVID-19 Support Package*.

- In partnership with Palau SBDC, six participants in Palau attended the virtual PTI Australia's *Digital Tourism Recovery Readiness* workshop in May.
- In February, a Palau-based tourism operator participated in PTI Australia's *Understanding Your Financials* workshop, supporting participants to build financial literacy and prepare for the return of international travel.
- Ongoing engagement with Australian travel agents and distributors to promote Palau as a tourism destination through our *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* work.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

CASE STUDY



COMMERCIAL FINANCING CAPACITY BUILDING

The Blue Pacific requires sustainable and inclusive investment to fuel growth. As purposeful investment continues to play a key role in providing the financial capital needed to establish and expand businesses into new and existing markets, it also offers opportunity for positive social or environmental impact, addressing issues such as gender inequality while holistically accelerating sustainable economic growth in the Pacific.

In 2021, COVID 19 and international border closures made it challenging for investors to perform due diligence on assets and sites in Palau and across the Pacific. Digital products and platforms were critical in PTI Australia's support for investees and investors over the year, with a focus on supporting and working with clients and investment promotion agencies to develop engaging digital channels and assets.

2021 saw PTI Australia continue to strengthen its partnerships in Palau, working in collaboration with both the private sector and government agencies, such as the Palau Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

PTI Australia continued to partner with the Palau SBDC on the *Pathways to Finance Project*, a program aimed at supporting Palau-based SMEs, with a focus on women-led businesses, with the development of professional funding submissions to banks and other lending institutions.

Leata Alaimoana-Roberts, PTI Australia's Impact Investment Manager, said the upskilling of Pacific-based SMEs is an integral first step towards successful commercial financing.

"Through the program, participants are provided specialist training and bespoke mentoring support. We believe that with this expert advice and training, SMEs in Palau and beyond have the potential to present clearly their business strengths to financial institutions and improve their chances of accessing finance, further facilitating business growth and increased employment opportunities within the community."

Ltelatk Fritz, Center Director of the Palau Small Business Development Center, said the *Pathways to Finance Project* was integral to the development and upskilling of SME's in Palau.

"Many producers in both of Palau's formal and informal economies have traditional institutional knowledge on growing, harvesting, or creating quality products. Too often barriers for entering a new market or diversifying requires marketing, selling, and financial skills that the producers require further the development or growth of their enterprise. PTI Australia's Pathways to Finance Project provides opportunities for the SMEs in Palau to learn to speak the language of business and build confidence when seeking capital investment to truly enable their business to thrive. Thank you, Pacific Trade Invest Australia, for your continued support for our SME's in Palau!"

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Capital: Port Moresby

Land Area: 452,860 km²

Population: 8.6m (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -3.3% (2020)

Industries: copra crushing, palm oil processing, plywood production, wood chip production, mining (gold, silver, copper), crude oil and petroleum products, construction, tourism, livestock, dairy products, spice products, fisheries products

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook



OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021, we continued to build our network in Papua New Guinea (PNG), promoting trade, tourism and investment opportunities in the wake of COVID 19. Through its services, PTI Australia facilitated A\$4,111,240 in exports and worked with 187 businesses.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Papua New Guinea delivering eight regional reports.
- Provided *Digital Design Program* sponsorships to 13 Papua New Guinea business leaders, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, 62 Papua New Guinea-based business professionals participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing participants with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.

TRADE

- Support, sponsorship, and promotion of the *2021 Goroka Bilum Festival* which saw 82 women-led businesses introduced to international markets.
- Delivered PTI Australia's *Social Media Masterclass* in partnership with PNG Investment Promotion Authority to 281 registrants in Papua New Guinea in April.
- Supported three Papua New Guinea-based exporters of bilum to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported two Papua New Guinea-based exporters of green coffee beans to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of premium skincare to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of roast and ground coffee to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of virgin coconut oil to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.

- Supported an Australia-based importer of cocoa beans from Papua New Guinea through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Introduced a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of processed foods to a Melbourne-based importer.
- Introduced a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of cocoa butter and powder to an Australian-based importer.
- Introduced a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of speciality coffee beans to a European-based roaster.
- Introduced a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of green coffee beans to a Melbourne-based importer.
- Introduced a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of vanilla extract to a Melbourne-based importer.
- Introduced a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of palm kernel meal to a Brisbane-based importer.
- Introduced a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of Bilum and handicraft items to an Australia-based importer.
- Introduced a Papua New Guinea-based exporter of timber to a Melbourne-based importer.
- Provided financial assistance to two Papua New Guinea-based coffee producers and exporters to purchase mill equipment.
- Assisted a Papua New Guinea-based business with information on market access of durian.
- Assisted a Papua New Guinea-based tuna business with competitor samples and information as to the Australian market.
- Assisted a Papua New Guinea-based vanilla business with information as to the Australian market.
- Assisted a Papua New Guinea-based business with information as to Australian biosecurity requirements.
- Engaged with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID 19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Facilitated introductions for impact investment for two Papua New Guinea-based businesses.
- Provided three Papua New Guinea-based businesses with impact investment information.
- Promotion of an investment opportunity in Papua New Guinea in PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- In February, a Papua New Guinea-based tourism operator participated in PTI Australia's *Understanding Your Financials* workshop, supporting participants to build financial literacy and prepare for the return of international travel.
- Supported six Papua New Guinea-based tourism operators to develop and maintain a fully functional website, inclusive of a booking engine and channel manager, through our ongoing *Digital Tourism Program*.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.



CASE STUDY



LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR PIVOTS TO ONLINE

PTI Australia is committed to strengthening the digital capacities and ecommerce business environment in the Blue Pacific. Out of the COVID 19 pandemic and corresponding dramatic shifts in consumer behaviour, digital trade grew astronomically, a trend that is set to continue.

The pandemic has had a profound impact on businesses in PNG, with many business leaders now interested in pivoting to sell more online and develop skills in ecommerce trade. Local entrepreneur Albert Moki Ahabh is one of those business leaders. Founder and operator of Albee Sales, Albert sells apparel and merchandise, including National Rugby League (NRL) jerseys, for which there is high demand in the Pacific.

Albert registered for PTI Australia's *Social Media Masterclass*, along with 280 other local business professionals in May. Attending the masterclass enabled Albert to see social media as an opportunity to move his business online and grow sales.

The Social Media Masterclass, led by PTI Australia's expert trainer Heather Porter, provided participants such as Albert with the fundamentals of setting up social media accounts and how to create best-practice content and use the business functions to create targeted campaigns that drive sales.

Albert was already learning about ecommerce through videos online, but said the masterclass significantly increased his knowledge and helped him identify Facebook as the best platform to drive sales. In less than two months after the masterclass, Albert began selling through Facebook. He sold over 100 pieces of apparel, including rugby jerseys, polo shirts, singlets and shirts. Albert's customer base also expanded outside his province; he now has sales from New Ireland, East New Britain, Morobe, and Eastern and Western Highlands.

Albert continues to use the instant connectivity of social media and ecommerce to conduct his business more efficiently and is now planning to develop a website and app to enable more customers to buy his products.

"I saw that PTI Australia's Social Media Masterclass was coming to PNG and thought it was worth taking up. Technology will shape the future of PNG and the world. The masterclass inspired us to move Albee Sales PNG online and since then, we have grown faster than we imagined. We're now looking forward to exploring the many opportunities ahead of us. Our goal will always be to improve the livelihoods of the rural population."

SAMOA

Capital: Apia

Land Area: 2,830 km²

Population: 201,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -5% (2020)

Industries: food processing, building materials, auto parts

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

A\$1.27m
exports facilitated

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PTI Australia has continued to build strong relationships with the private sector in Samoa throughout 2021, as well as partnering with Samoa's government to further support trade and investment. Despite the economic effects of COVID 19, PTI Australia assisted XX businesses and through connecting businesses and capacity building, facilitated A\$1,272,354 in exports.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Samoa, delivering eight regional reports.
- Provided *Digital Design Program* sponsorship to three Samoa-based business leaders, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, seven Samoa-based business professionals participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing the participant with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.

TRADE

- Supported a Samoa-based exporter of turmeric juice through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Samoa-based food exporter through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Melbourne-based importer of Samoan cacao through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Samoa-based exporter of root crops to the USA through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Samoa-based exporter of root crops to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Samoa-based exporter of clothing to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Sydney-based importer and retailer of clothing, food, and handicrafts through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Samoa-based exporter of vanilla to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Provided library image access to Samoa-based environmental agency.
- Provided financial assistance to a Samoa-based food manufacturer to upgrade processing equipment.

- Introduced a Samoa-based exporter of frozen root crops to a Brisbane-based importer.
- Introduced a Samoa-based exporter of frozen root crops to a Sydney-based importer.
- Introduced a Samoa-based exporter of root crops to an Australia-based importer and distributor.
- Introduced a Samoa-based chocolate maker to an Australia-based importer and distributor.
- Introduced a Melbourne-based importer of Samoan cacao to cacao buyer.
- Introduced a Samoa-based agricultural exporter to a Sydney-based importer.
- Engaged with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID 19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.
- Facilitated introductions between two Samoa-based businesses and impact investors.
- Facilitated in-country introductions for investor seeking BPO opportunities in the Pacific.
- Assessed business suitability for impact investment.
- Promotion of five investment opportunities in Samoa on PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

INVESTMENT

- Facilitated introductions for impact investment for a Samoa-based business.
- Provided partner with in-country introductions for impact investment work.
- Provided four Samoa-based businesses with impact investment information.
- Provided a Samoa-based business with information regarding business growth.
- Provided a Samoa-based business with marketing assistance.
- Provided an investor with a Samoa-based business case.
- Developed strategy to attract Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) to Fiji and Samoa.

TOURISM

- Supported nine Samoa-based tourism operators to develop and maintain a fully functional website, inclusive of a booking engine and channel manager, through our ongoing *Digital Tourism Program*.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.



CASE STUDY

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



KEEPING EXPORTS MOVING THROUGH COVID 19

PTI Australia's 2020 *Export Survey* found that freight costs continued to be one of the main barriers to export faced by Pacific businesses, with the increase in shipping costs brought about by the pandemic only compounding the problem.

Using this knowledge to inform the design of future programs, PTI Australia launched the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package* with the aim of assisting Pacific exporters to continue exporting in this challenging environment. Samoan-based food processor and fruit exporter Natural Foods International (Natural Foods) is one of more than 30 Pacific businesses that received a grant of up to \$2,500 to offset freight costs as part of this package.

In addition to the COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package grant, Natural Foods also received financial assistance as part of the PTI Australia Impact Support Program, where the funds granted were used to invest in breadfruit flour manufacturing machinery to improve the quality and shelf life of its products.

Natural Foods, Managing Director, Grant Percival, intends to continue growing Natural Foods by working with the Samoan community to identify opportunities in the agriculture processing sector and fresh fruit export market.

"Working with PTI Australia was excellent and straightforward. As a result of this equipment, our buyers are letting us know that our fresh fruit conformance is 99 per cent or more every time. This has increased the export demand for our products and resulted in more purchases from Australia and the broader Pacific community. For export businesses like ours, initiatives such as the Freight Assistance Package can be the difference between failure and success.

"With our substantial processing equipment, we want to become an industrial hub for raw material processing that operates in line with Samoan community values – including zero-carbon production. We hope that our focus on adding value, maintaining environmental security, and reducing waste can translate into a more inclusive and cohesive development model for Samoa."

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Capital: Honiara

Land Area: 27,990 km²

Population: 641,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -5% (2020)

Industries: fish (tuna), mining, timber

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

A\$1.27m
exports facilitated

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PTI Australia worked broadly in the Solomon Islands in 2021, assisting 58 businesses, and through connecting businesses and digital upskilling and capacity building, facilitated A\$1,273,181 in exports.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in the Solomon Islands.
- Provided *Digital Design Program* sponsorship to three Solomon Islands-based business leaders, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, three Solomon Islands-based business professionals participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing the participant with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.

- Provided *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarships for 13 Solomon Islands-based business leaders. The bespoke four-month course supported participants in developing ecommerce capabilities, social media growth strategies, and profitable advertisement methodology.

TRADE

- In partnership with Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry, delivered PTI Australia's *Social Media Masterclass* to 34 registrants in the Solomon Islands in June.
- Supported an Australia-based importer of Solomon Islands cocoa beans through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Brisbane-based importer of Solomon Islands cacao through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Solomon Islands-based exporter to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Provided financial assistance to a Solomon Islands-based exporter to upgrade bottling equipment.

- Introduced a Solomon Islands-based exporter to a Sydney-based distributor.
- Introduced a Solomon Islands-based coconut oil producer to Melbourne importer looking for certified organic virgin coconut oil.
- Introduced a Solomon Islands-based canned tuna company to a Brisbane-based distributor.
- Provided reports and market intelligence to Solomon Islands Government consultant looking to increase root crop exports.
- Engaged with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID 19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Facilitated introductions for gender lens invest investment opportunity in the Solomon Islands.
- Provided a Pacific company with in-country introductions in the Solomon Islands.
- Discussed Solomon Islands investment attraction strategies with local investment attraction agency.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.

- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Supported two Solomon Islands-based tourism operators to develop and maintain a fully functional website, inclusive of a booking engine and channel manager, through our ongoing *Digital Tourism Program*.
- In February, two Solomon Islands tourism operators participated in PTI Australia's *Understanding Your Business Financials* workshop, supporting participants to build financial literacy and prepare for the return of international travel.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.



CASE STUDY



IMPACT SUPPORT PROGRAM ENCOURAGES VALUE-ADDED COCONUT PRODUCT GROWTH

PTI Australia's *Impact Support Program*, which provides assistance to commercial businesses, aims to contribute to local economic growth and help improve rural livelihoods in the Pacific Islands. The program recently supported Kokonut Pacific Solomon Islands (KPSI), a social enterprise that works in partnership with local communities to improve lives by building sustainable value chains that revitalise the value-added coconut product industry through technology. By contributing to the purchase of equipment, PTI was able to support the growth of KPSI's virgin coconut oil project.

Coconuts have been central to rural communities of the Solomon Islands for many decades. Not only are they an abundant resource that is fundamental to food security, they are also an important cash crop and income generator for many smallholder farmers.

The infrastructure and the incentives for farmers to improve production and quality has been championed and facilitated by KPSI, which made them an obvious partner for PTI Australia to work with on the ground.

In 2021, KPSI noticed that local demand for their body oils had increased suddenly. The KPSI team realised that to meet this demand, they would require a more efficient bottling system.

Through financial assistance provided as part of the PTI Australia *Impact Support Program*, PTI Australia was able to assist with the purchase of a new bottling machine. KPSI Managing Director, Bob Pollard, said the impact of this has been incredible.

"We were excited to install the bottling machine because we knew that it would improve the productivity of the team. The addition of the bottling machine has created the opportunity to switch from plastic bottles to pouches, which has a number of advantages. We currently import plastic bottles and are implementing a recycling program, but pouches are another option. Our food and cosmetic production team of five female employees has also now grown to seven! It is great to see our staff handling new technology, which in turn makes their job more enjoyable."

TONGA

Capital: Nuku'alofa

Land Area: 720 km²

Population: 100,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -2.5% (2020)

Industries: tourism, construction, fishing

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

A\$117,669
investment facilitated

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PTI Australia continued to support and actively promote trade, tourism and investment opportunities for Tonga. In 2021, PTI Australia worked closely with local government bodies to assess opportunities for digital upskilling and capacity building, facilitating A\$540,807 in exports and A\$117,669 in investment.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Tonga.
- Provided *Digital Design Program* sponsorship to a Tonga-based business leader, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.

TRADE

- In partnership with Kingdom of Tonga's Investment and Export Promotion Division (IEPD), Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, delivered PTI Australia's *Social Media Masterclass* to 27 registrants in Tonga in September.
- Supported a Tonga-based exporter of fresh yams through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Tonga-based exporter of root crops through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported an Australia-based importer of Tongan coconuts and frozen root crops through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Tonga-based importer of Solomon Islands canned tuna through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Provided financial assistance to a Tonga-based crop exporter to upgrade processing equipment.

- Introduced a Tonga-based kava exporter to a Brisbane-based distributor.
- Introduced a Tonga-based root crop exporter to a Sydney-based distributor.
- Introduced a Tonga-based frozen root crop exporter to a Melbourne-based importer.
- Introduced a Tonga-based kava exporter with an Australia-based importer.
- Engaged with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID 19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

INVESTMENT

- Supported 13 women entrepreneurs in Tonga secure impact investment to build and grow their businesses.
- Promotion of an investment opportunity in Tonga on PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Supported two Tonga-based tourism operators to develop and maintain a fully functional website, inclusive of a booking engine and channel manager, through our ongoing *Digital Tourism Program*.
- Ongoing engagement with Australian travel agents and distributors to promote Tonga as a tourism destination through our *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* work.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

TOURISM



CASE STUDY



MICROLOANS SUPPORT WOMEN-LED BUSINESS

PTI Australia's focus on Impact Investment activities promote and support investments across the region that have positive social and environmental impacts upon the local community. This takes into consideration the gender-based dynamics and disadvantages faced in many Pacific countries and seeks to empower women-led business leadership.

PTI Australia partners with and support finance capability organisation, Good Return, as they work to ensure that female-led businesses and their employees have access to responsible financial services, financial education, and business skills.

In 2021, following introductions and in-country facilitation by PTI Australia, Good Return's microloan program reached 60 women-led micro and small business owners in Tonga. Further strengthening their position in the region,

Good Return opened a Pacific office in 2021, allowing them to better deliver their work across all Pacific countries, including Tonga.

According to Marlene Dutta, Pacific Regional Manager for Good Return, the impact investment model allows the global community to contribute directly to the positive development of businesses in Tonga.

"Our microloan program offers a way for people in Australia to understand the lives and needs of women in Tonga and to directly support their business endeavours. So far it has supported over 60 female micro and small business owners in Tonga. Many are in agribusinesses and the loans allow them to increase their yield, buy seeds or hire more hands to till the land. We really value PTI Australia's work. In future, we plan to expand this by having PTI Australia provide technical services to our borrowers through its extensive Pacific networks."

TUVALU

Capital: Funafuti

Land Area: 30 km²

Population: 11,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -0.5% (2020)

Industries: fishing

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

4

Tuvalu-focused
country reports
delivered

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PTI Australia continued to strengthen its partnerships in Tuvalu, focussing on tourism and upskilling opportunities for Tuvalu-based business professionals. We also engaged closely with partners and networks throughout Tuvalu to deliver quantifiable data on Tuvalu's private sector.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran the *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Tuvalu, and four Tuvalu-focused country reports.
- Provided *Digital Design Program* sponsorship to three Tuvalu-based business leaders, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, three Tuvalu-based business professionals participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing the participant with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.
- Provided *Social Media for eBusiness* professional development scholarships for eight Tuvalu-based business leaders. The bespoke four-month course supported

participants in developing ecommerce capabilities, social media growth strategies, and profitable advertisement methodology.

TRADE

- Engaged with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID 19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Promotion of an investment opportunity in Tuvalu on PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.
- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Hosted and facilitated a dialogue with the Tuvalu Department of Tourism and the Enhanced Integrated Framework Project for tourism stakeholders and operators in Tuvalu, to discuss challenges and required support.

- Assisted the Tuvalu Department of Tourism with data collection towards draft of Tuvalu Sustainable Tourism policy.
- Facilitated connection with Pacific Tourism Organisation on development of Tuvalu tourism policy.
- Ongoing engagement with Australian travel agents and distributors to promote Tuvalu as a tourism destination through our *Hidden Treasures of the South Pacific* work.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

CASE STUDY



DIALOGUE OPENS DOORS

The ongoing effect of the COVID 19 crisis and its associated impact on the Blue Pacific's travel and tourism industry in 2021 saw PTI Australia continue to amplify and deliver PTI Australia's *Digital Tourism Program* to throughout the year, alongside input from operators and on-the-ground partners across the Pacific.

Working to strengthen the impact of existing community partnerships and understand the needs of tourism stakeholders on the ground in Tuvalu, PTI Australia partnered with the Tuvalu Department of Tourism and the Enhanced Integrated Framework Project to run a World Cafe Hangout dialogue session, a hybrid event held for tourism stakeholders and operators in Tuvalu.

The dialogue provided Tuvalu-based participants with a chance to identify, share and discuss key areas in which they required support as the region navigated the COVID 19 crisis, working to further inform the design of PTI Australia's country-specific Digital Tourism workshops and offerings.

From the dialogue, PTI Australia was able to facilitate an introduction to the Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO), who, in collaboration with other tourism stakeholders, supported Tuvalu's Department of Tourism in finalizing Tuvalu's long term commitment to sustainable tourism through the development of the Tuvalu Sustainable Tourism Policy (TSTP), laying the foundation for further strategic development of the industry.

EIF Project Officer at Tuvalu's Department of Trade, Darryl Farshid Iqbal, said the dialogue session proved invaluable to all stakeholders.

"We are deeply appreciative for the insightful World Cafe Hangout session that was facilitated by PTI Australia. We found the format of dialogue to be an immensely effective way for our stakeholders to speak on the myriad challenges they are currently facing as they navigate the COVID 19 crisis. In turn, the session has proceeded to inform and shape our response to the crisis. Thank you again, from our team here in Tuvalu."

VANUATU

Capital: Port Vila

Land Area: 12,190 km²

Population: 293,000 (2019)

GDP growth (% change yoy): -8.3% (2020)

Industries: food and fish freezing, wood processing, meat canning

Source: DFAT Country/Economy Factsheet, CIA World Factbook

A\$152,125
Exports facilitated

OUR IMPACT – 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PTI Australia worked extensively in Vanuatu in 2021, engaging with and assisting 80 Vanuatu businesses, and through connecting businesses and capacity building, facilitating A\$152,125 in exports.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ran our *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* series to continue tracking the ongoing impacts of COVID 19 on businesses in Vanuatu.
- Provided *Digital Design Program* sponsorship to three Vanuatu-based business leaders, offering 12-months of access to Canva's professional suite of tools, as well as online training and support.
- In May, 11 Vanuatu-based business professionals participated in PTI Australia's *Introduction to Digital Design* webinar, providing the participant with an understanding of the online visual communications platform, Canva.

TRADE

- Delivered PTI Australia's *Social Media Masterclass* in partnership with Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce to 85 registrants in Vanuatu in February.
- Supported a Vanuatu-based exporter to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.

- Supported a Vanuatu-based exporter of coffee to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported a Vanuatu-based exporter of skincare to Australia through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Supported an Australian-based importer of Vanuatu cacao through the *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package*.
- Provided financial assistance to a Vanuatu-based business to increase numbers of farmers with organic certification.
- Introduced a Vanuatu-based exporter of frozen taro to an Australia buyer.
- Introduced a Vanuatu-based tamanu oil producer to an Australian distributor and importer.
- Introduced a Vanuatu-based timber company to a Melbourne-based importer.
- Assisted a Vanuatu-based instant kava exporter design new labels.
- Assisted a Vanuatu-based business with options and information for the Australia market.
- Assisted a Vanuatu-based coffee producer with price and volume negotiations with Australian importer.
- Engaged with Australian buyers and distributors to understand the impact of COVID 19 on their businesses and the demand for Pacific products.

INVESTMENT

- Promotion of seven investment opportunities in Vanuatu on PTI Australia's online Investment Directory, showcasing investment prospects to potential international investors.
- Increased awareness of the Pacific as an investment destination through an article and advertorial in *Oracle Time* magazine.
- Facilitated webinars to Pacific stakeholders, funds, trusts, and networks to promote the importance of impact investments in the region, including those with sustainable social outcomes and a gender lens.

- Engaged with Australian investors, impact investors, and relevant stakeholders, to proactively promote Pacific investment opportunities.

TOURISM

- Supported two Vanuatu-based tourism operators to develop and maintain a fully functional website, inclusive of a booking engine and channel manager.
- Ongoing engagement with national tourism organisations to understand the impact of COVID 19 and potential areas PTI Australia could provide support.

CASE STUDY



VANUATU'S NATURAL BEAUTY BRAND

Established in 2003, Volcanic Earth is a natural skincare company located in Vanuatu, a country that sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire and features nine active volcanoes and much abundant agriculture. Volcanic Earth uses the benefits of Vanuatu's volcanic ash, virgin coconut oil and tamanu oil to create natural skincare solutions to combat ageing and to treat conditions such as acne, eczema, dermatitis and pigmentation.

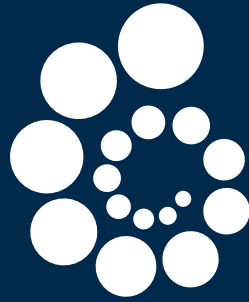
In 2021, Volcanic Earth found its normal shipping routes interrupted due to the COVID 19 pandemic, leaving the company no choice but to export products via Australia and face increased freight costs. Because of this, Volcanic Earth qualified for and received PTI Australia's *COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package* – a stimulus package designed by PTI Australia to provide tangible relief to businesses in the Pacific facing the unprecedented pressures of the COVID 19 economic crisis.

With the aim of supporting the growth in demand for Pacific goods and services in international markets and the long-term development of ecommerce in the Blue Pacific, Jeremy Grennell, PTI Australia's General Manager – Exports, said the feedback from the Freight Assistance Package was overwhelmingly positive.

"We are immensely pleased to witness the incredible impact the Freight Assistance Package has had on SMEs across the Pacific. With the onset of COVID 19, the damaging economic effects of the pandemic on Pacific businesses came about quickly, requiring immediate tangible support. Our COVID 19 Freight Assistance Package enabled us to provide this support when and where it was needed most."

Linda Trenkner, CEO and Managing Director of Volcanic Earth, said the Freight Assistance Package allowed her to continue shipping products via Australia, a freight route that is working well for the business.

"Shipping orders out from Australia to consumers around the world is working well. It also means customers receive their orders faster and online tracking is available. This is extremely important as we also operate a wholesale dropshipping program with hundreds of resellers around the world, where we ship their orders out for them. Having inventory stock in Australia and a shipping agent there means we can ship their orders via Australia Post to almost every country in the world."



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