

Tātaki Whakakitenga
Exhibition Guide

Trouble in Paradise
Climate Change in the Pacific



29 January - 21 February 2025

NGUTU KĀKĀ



People in the Pacific have lived in harmony with the ocean and land for thousands of years. Today, however, unprecedented challenges are faced as climate change threatens the environment, culture, and way of life in the region. We are living in a climate crisis and need to intensify our global efforts to address it. Despite being some of the lowest carbon-emitting countries, the Pacific islands are among the most vulnerable to its effects and often the hardest hit.

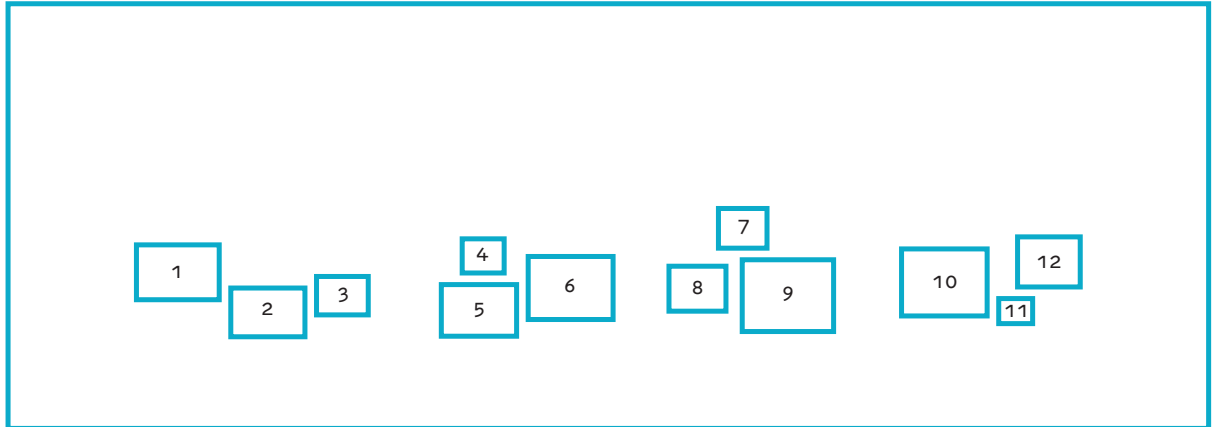
The photographs in this exhibition were created as part of the UK Government's Pacific Climate Photography Competition, inviting people across the Pacific to document the everyday impacts of climate change in their communities. These images provide a powerful and authentic glimpse into the realities of climate change in the Pacific, showing a stark picture of the challenges island nations face while capturing the urgent threat to their very existence.

In the Pacific we are witnessing rising sea levels, warming oceans, and increasingly severe tropical storms causing coral death, crop loss, and the gradual disappearance of land. However, this exhibition also conveys resilience and hope, as Pacific communities, often marginalised in global discussions, are positioned at the forefront of climate action.

Trouble in Paradise challenges us to reconsider the Pacific's vital role in addressing global climate change. This exhibition has travelled across Aotearoa New Zealand and was recently presented at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2024 in Samoa, bringing these urgent and compelling stories to leaders of the Commonwealth and amplifying the voices of those most affected by climate change.

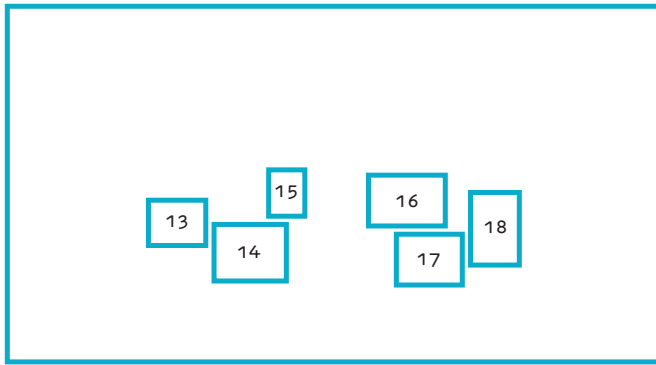
This exhibition at Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery marks the next phase of its journey, as this collection of photographs are long-term loaned to AUT and exhibited across its campuses, to inspire its staff and students in their teaching, learning and research.

Image: Maxim Va'a, Samoa



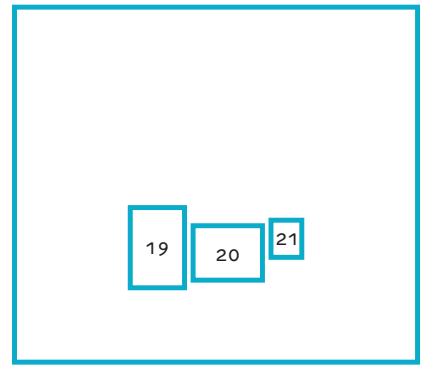
1	Elena Pasilio, Tokealau 'As climate change threatens the future of our low-lying atolls, our only defence are the concrete sea walls four feet above sea level.'	7	Karl Vaekesa, Solomon Islands 'This is Buluabu Village, Langalanga Lagoon, in the Solomon Islands. The island village is sinking, the sea level is rising'
2	Taina Toi, Cook Islands 'Our corals are bleaching. We need to save them.'	8	Ashetosh Kumar, Fiji 'The rapid rise in sea level is causing salt water intrusion, leading to soil erosion. Tree roots are getting weaker, as depicted in this picture.'
3	Maikolo Fonua, Tonga 'This is Ha'apai Island, Kingdom of Tonga.'	9	Genesis Nake, Papua New Guinea 'What once used to be a sealed road, making it an hour's drive to my village, is now a cliff because the sea has eaten the land. This is a clear result of the rising sea level due to climate change.'
4	Jacqui Shipp, Fiji 'Cyclone frequency has doubled in the last decade, exposing many Fijian villages to high winds, heavy flooding and sea surges.'	10	Savenaca Viriviri, Tuvalu 'A view of the impact of climate change in Pacific Island countries.'
5	Kersom Richard, Vanuatu 'Vanuatu's main food supply is its local crops. Climate change is having an impact on agricultural production, but this doesn't stop people from Mele harvesting yam every 1st of January.'	11	William Yates, Solomon Islands 'Houses are already submerged in the sea, while there are still homes on partial land that is slowly but surely being eroded and taken over by the sea.'
6	Daniel Kakadi, Solomon Islands 'Sikaiana is one of the atoll islands affected by the challenges of climate change. One of the main sources of food is taro, but over time the sea-level rise causes damage to land and crops, which sometimes means hunger for weeks and months.'	12	Maciu Nadore, Fiji 'These are pine trees. According to village elders, none of them have grown a single leaf since Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2015.'

End wall



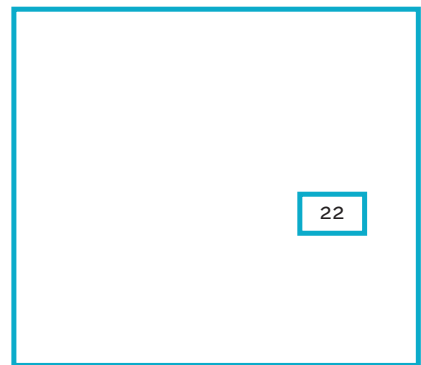
- 13 **Kilisi Popa, Papua New Guinea**
‘The skeletons of trees.’
- 14 **Justin Naisua, Fiji**
‘Ten-year-old Epineri Lata takes a dip in the ocean to escape the incredible heat at his village of Yaro on the island of Kia, which was ravaged by Cyclone Yasa. The islanders of Kia have had to deal with two extreme climate events: rising sea levels and the powerful super storm, Yasa.’
- 15 **Jovesa Naisua, Fiji**
‘Niko Vulaca looks at the devastation caused by Tropical Cyclone Yasa, which demolished his island home in December. The physical devastation was something the Yara on Kia Island had never experienced.’
- 16 **Dan Shipp, Fiji**
‘This blue sea star is extremely sensitive to changes in water temperature, oxygen levels and acidity, all of which are key indicators of the health of our marine environment. The marine environment directly affects our climate on Earth.’
- 17 **Tera Takai, Cook Islands**
‘Baby blues need our help. We need to be better caretakers of our island.’
- 18 **Dan Shipp, Fiji**
‘This lone mangrove root in Savusavu growing up through the water and into the air symbolises the critical relationship between the health of our oceans and the health of our climate.’

Entrance wall



- 19 **Stephanie Stevens, Vanuatu**
‘Protect our trees, they will protect us.’
- 20 **Faaiuga Vaialia, Samoa/
New Zealand**
‘Young women of the islands.’
- 21 **Joseph Haga, Solomon Islands**
‘Joachim is sitting under a coconut palm that is highly likely to be washed away before he turns eight.’

Foyer



- 22 **Maxim Va’a, Samoa**
‘Many residential areas are heavily affected by floods, like this house in Taumeasina village.’