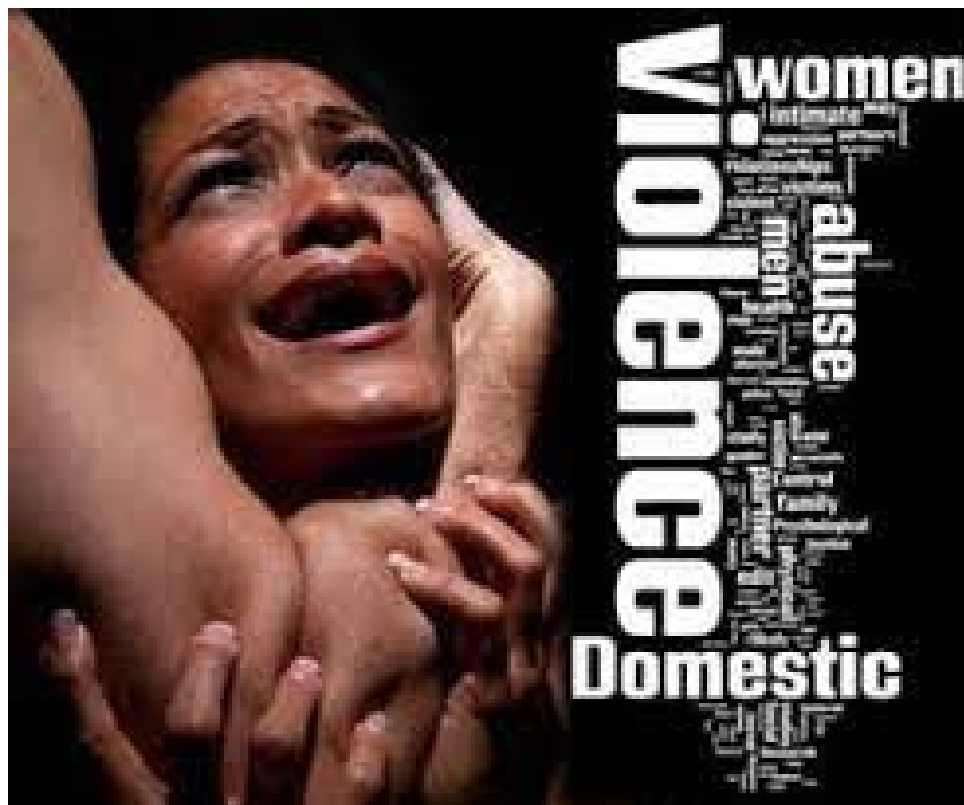


TALANOA TOKTOK

The weekly newsletter of the Pacific Conference of Churches



Break the silence

THE Deputy Moderator of the Pacific Conference of Churches will preach at Break The Silence Sunday. A service at the Dudley Methodist Church, Suva will be livestreamed around the world, allowing Pacific congregations to join. This marks the beginning of 16 days of activism, especially against violence. Pacific churches will hold similar services throughout November.

Our Pacific champions

BEGINNING on November 25, the Pacific Conference of Churches will highlight 16 women who have made outstanding contributions in the region.

While these amazing women have contributed to education, research, advocacy or self-determination, each belongs to a church which is a member of the PCC Family.

As part of 16 Days of Activism, we honour these women and hold them up as models to young Pacific people as examples to follow in everyday life. The PCC has championed the role of women for 60 years and appointed Lorine Tevi as General Secretary when few governments in the region gave women much recognition.

Today, Pacific women form the backbone of the programmes at the PCC Secretariat and in our member churches.

At COP26, the Pacific churches were represented by a young Samoan woman - Maima Vaai - who is on the PCC Secretariat staff and has started to become an inspiration to young people in the region. You can see our champions on the PCC Facebook page.



Hilda Heine ... one of our 16 Pacific heroes

TV campaign highlights violence as a sin



Calling out ... Reverend Dr Tevita Banivanua's family will be part of the campaign against violence

The Pacific Conference of Churches has partnered with the Fiji Council of Churches to produce a Christmas Media Campaign on the need to protect children from violence.

The campaign will be aired on radio, television, and PCC social media platforms in December in an effort to provide Christian messaging on the urgent need to protect children from all forms of violence.

With increasing cases of child violence and abuse reported in Fiji, churches must use their influence and to help safeguard children.

The PCC Campaign coincides with the development of a Regional Training Toolkit for Churches to become the safest institution in the Pacific region for children.

Church leaders have consistently called out violence as a sin.

Church leaders meet

The Pacific Conference of Churches Executive Committee will meet next month in a virtual conference for the second time since the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Issues for discussion will include preparations for the World Council of Churches General Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany. An exciting programme for young people has been created around the WCC General Assembly and participants from around the region have been invited to represent the Pacific and their churches.

Next month will also see the Pacific Church Leaders Meeting being held on-line to discuss pressing matters in the region. The PCLM will hear reports on efforts to strengthen relationships between the PCC, Pacific Theological College and the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools.

PCC General Secretary, reverend James Bhagwan, is expected to report to the Executive Committee and the PCLM on his recent attendance of the COP26 meeting in Scotland and update leaders on preparations for activities in 2022.

The meeting will also receive the usual audit, finance, administration and operational reports from the General Secretary and key PCC staff members.

Deputy Moderator, Deaconess Temalesi Makutu, will chair two days of the three-day event and Moderator, Rev Dr Tevita Havea will lead discussions on the final day.

Leaders from Aotearoa, Australia, American Samoa, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kanaky, Kiribati, Maohi, Niue, Papua New Guinea, the TRepublic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu Vanuatu and West Papua are expected to attend.

Kanaky heads to Dec referendum



VOTERS in Kanaky (New Caledonia) head to the polls next month to decide whether to opt for independence from France.

Despite an appeal to defer the third referendum vote because of the effects of the global COVID-19 Pandemic, France has decided that dates will not change.

The pro-freedom FLNKS Party has decided to protest against the decision by not participating in the vote. The PCC will support its member church, the Eglise Protestante de Kanaky Nouvelle Calédonie in its work with youth and indigenous people leading up to the event.

The PCC - with civil society partners PANG, FCOSS and PIANGO has written to the Forum Secretariat chair, seeking support for the referendum to be deferred in the interests of democracy and the Kanak people.



Youth matters ... Joape Anare of the Diocese of Polynesia with rubbish collected by participants at a regional workshop at Korotogo, Fiji

Youth talk masculinity and justice

Young people from the region have gathered in a hybrid workshop to discuss transformative masculinity. The concept will help them address gender-based violence by identifying roles men and women play in overcoming the issue.

Fiji-based attendees gathered at the Crows Nest on the Coral Coast and joined other Pacific youth by Zoom.

They also discussed the influences of climate change and other social issues on gender-based violence.

Eco-farm to offset carbon footprint

AS delegates fly home from COP26, plans are afoot on a small farm in Tailevu, Fiji to make up for the carbon emissions created by the Pacific Conference of Churches' team to Glasgow.

When Reverend James Bhagwan and Iemaima Vaai clear quarantine, one of their first tasks will be to join Team PCC at the Lomana Na Vulagi (Love The Stranger) Farm to plant trees.

A variety of native hardwood trees have been chosen to form the core of the PCC's Carbon Sequestration Project and its Climate Change and Stewardship Programme.

The initiative is designed to encourage all member churches to implement similar strategies as a first line of defence against climate change.

There are plans to build a retreat centre on the site for Pacific leaders and an eco-school for young people.

Each visitor to the farm will be expected to plant a tree to acknowledge their contribution to global carbon emissions.

PCC Executives and the Tui Dere - the local chief - planted avocado trees in October to launch the farm.

The PCC will also invite CSO representatives who travelled to COP26 to join the tree-planting initiative at Lomana Na Vulagi in December or early January 2022.

Campaign success

The PCC messaging around COP 26 has involved church leaders, young people and children around the region.

From Samoa in the east to Papua in the West, the message has been clear and strong. World leaders must act responsibly and they must do so now.

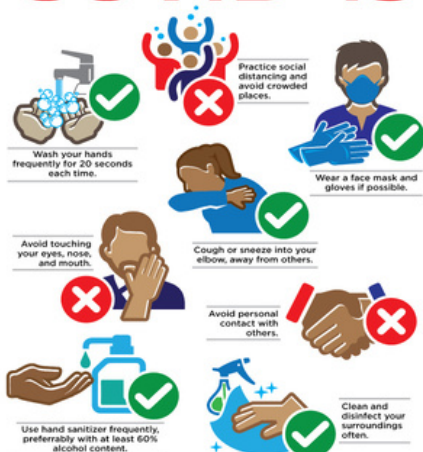
In the PCC's post-COP 26 campaign, social media will be flooded with messages from our young people urging stronger commitments at COP27.

The recent PCC messaging series included videos and messages of solidarity with partner organisations.

We reached more than 150,000 people with our COP messages.



WAYS YOU CAN HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19



It's still a threat

COVID-19 remains a threat throughout the region, despite the opening of borders and resumption of travel.

Tonga recorded its first case last month with a traveler from New Zealand testing positive on arrival in Nuku'alofa.

Fiji has one of the highest vaccinations in the Pacific and worship has resumed under strict guidelines.

Many churches continue to use social media as a means to take weekly worship into homes, communities and hospitals.

All PCC meetings and workshops are held under strict COVID-safe procedures and staff are now fully vaccinated.

Churches are reminded that COVID-19 is still a threat and vaccination remains the key to protection of the population.

Sad end to climate talks

As COP26 came to an end in Scotland, China and India lobbied hard for specific language allowing them to maintain high levels of coal use.

The two countries have increased their diplomatic presence in the region since 2014, using development money to create alliances with Pacific governments. Now they have shown that despite their knowledge of the region's climate change plight, they will continue to use huge levels of non-renewable energy.

PCC General Secretary, Reverend James Bhagwan said while the regional presence at Glasgow had been halved by COVID, delegates had worked hard.

"We need to work harder, together to keep our polluter vuvale on notice to keep their commitments from becoming just rhetoric."



Work plan takes shape

An action plan for Pacific youth in 2022 has started to take shape.

The Regional Ecumenical Youth Council met last weekend and discussed young people in the region. Fiji, Kanaky, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and West Papua were represented at the talks. A final work plan will ensure youth issues are addressed through an ecumenical lens.

Pacific 2050 - in deed



Pacific leaders envision that by 2050 the region will be a place of social, cultural, environmental and economic integrity.

The Pacific Island Forum's 2050 Strategy 2050 Strategy hopes to develop long-term approaches to critical challenges such as climate change, sustainable development and security. The PCC has tried to offer an ecumenical insight into this initiative.

Now we have moved towards designing a climate friendly building with renewable energy sources, natural cooling and harvested water. Watch this space as we bring words into action.