

PACIFIC GIS & REMOTE SENSING COUNCIL



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2022

www.pgrsc.org

THE PGRSC

The Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council (PGRSC) was established to oversee the activities of the Pacific Islands Annual GIS & RS User Conference outside of SPC to a dedicated independent body.

The Council's board members, constitution and all institutional arrangements were achieved within a limited time frame as it was paramount for the council to open a bank account that will accommodate all funds directed towards the logistics and activities of the GIS & RS User Conference. This document briefly describes the role and purpose of the PGRSC.

More detailed information such as the Council's constitution can be downloaded from the PGRSC website.



2018 launch of the Pacific GIS & Remote Sensing Council.
(L-R) Rajendra Singh, Wolf Forstreuter, Hon. Minister Koya, Malakai Finau and Russell Howorth.

Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council,
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PURPOSE

1. To promote the development of GIS and Remote Sensing (RS) data, technologies, methods and services for the Pacific region;
2. To enable collaboration and share lessons learnt across regional agencies and commercial parties;
3. To discuss and establish methods in building adaptation for the Pacific environment for solutions working already well outside the region;
4. To manage the distribution, publication and awareness of conference outcomes;
5. To establish robust links with other GIS, RS and scientific bodies regionally and globally.

The Council was initially established to oversee the 2017 GIS&RS User Conference and was recognized as a body that would promote and help support further developments of GIS & Remote Sensing tools in the region.



TRUSTEES

The Council must have a minimum of three (3) Trustees and ten (10) Board Members besides the GIS & Remote Sensing Committee. The Trustees are the guardians of the council and are accountable for the organisation. These are persons who are familiar with the objectives of the Council.



Malakai Finau

The former Permanent Secretary Lands and Mineral Resources Malakai Finau. Malakai Finau was also the former Director of the Fiji Mineral Resources Department, an organisation that has over the years, worked closely with the GIS and RS conference and community.



Russell Howorth

Dr. Russell Howorth worked many years at SOPAC (now the Geoscience, Energy, and Maritime Division of SPC) and at the end of his term served as the Director. SOPAC was the leading Pacific organisation regarding GIS and RS. He is still Director of the Circum-Pacific Council. Dr Russell Howorth is also a trustee of STAR.



Arthur Faerua

Mr. Arthur Faerua is the Director General for the Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources in Vanuatu. He also leads the Vanuatu Conference Committee for the planned Vanuatu Pacific GIS & Remote Sensing Conference.



Rajendra Singh

Rajendra Singh received a prestigious award by the Fiji Government for his organisational work in education for Fiji and know-how transfer is one of the objectives of the Council.

THE BOARD

The Board of PGRSC makes far-reaching decisions including financial ones several times a year. Voting also is performed through e-mail.



Salote Viti
CHAIR



Wolf Forstreuter
BOARD MEMBER



Arti Pratap
BOARD MEMBER



Leba Gaunavinaka
BOARD MEMBER



Rafael Kargren
BOARD MEMBER



Keleni Raqisio
BOARD MEMBER



Bradley Eichelberger
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MEMBERS

In November 2018 the Board decided to have registered membership for the PGRSC. There are three types of membership:

Institutional Membership

Organisations that are offering products, services, training, education or support in Geospatial Science can become institutional members of PGRSC. Currently following organisations hold institutional membership: (i) Geoscience Australia (ii) Fiji Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Samoa (MNRE), (iii) Ministry of Sugar Industries – Fiji, (iv) AllTerra, (v) BLUECHAM SAS (vi) Eagle Technology, (vii) SPREP, (viii) INSIGHT SAS, (ix) University of Guam, (x) Sivaconsult, (xi) Drone Service Fiji, (xii) Kenex, (xiii) Kahuto Investment Pte Ltd.

Personal Membership

People who are working in a professional capacity in geospatial science and are active in professional development and have appropriate geospatial science qualifications or the equivalent experience can become personal member of the PGRSC.

Student Membership

Student membership can be received through full time students enrolled in a geospatial science degree, diploma or certificate or a bachelor degree from a cognate discipline with a major in geospatial science course component.

HISTORY

The Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference 2017 prompted the establishment of the Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council as explained above. However, the annual Conference results in the outcomes of the monthly GIS & RS User Groups.

The Fiji GIS & RS User Groups

In 1991 the Management Services Division of the Forestry Department (MSD-Forestry) established together with the Fiji Land Information Support Centre (FLIS) monthly GIS and Remote Sensing User Group Meetings, where the first meeting was conducted in Colo-i-Suva, where MSD-Forestry was located. These meetings attracted a number of organisations with the idea to establish a GIS within their sectors. The meetings were held the first Tuesday every month at a different location to experience the working environment of various GIS users. The purpose was to (i) avoid duplication of work and to share data instead of re-producing, (ii) to share knowledge especially when methods required adaptation to Pacific environment, (iii) to enhance personal contacts which simplifies data exchange. The format was as informal as possible to encourage inexperienced GIS users to talk. The meetings had fixed structure, all institutions present introduced themselves, explained what they had carried out during the last four weeks and what they intend to do during the next month. This was followed by short presentations explaining new applications, software or hardware.

The Fiji Annual GIS & RS User Conference

In 1998, USP under the guidance of James Britton approached the Fiji Lands Department to jointly conduct a two day National Conference, which was then extended to a 3 day conference in 1999. In 1999 the first participants were from outside of Fiji. The first poster competition was conducted in 2001, and has since been an integral activity of the platform . The first companies moved in, in 2003, with the arrival of image vendors. In the same year, the EU funded a regional project at SOPAC assisting GIS and RS application in Pacific Island Countries. This resulted in the renaming of the Fiji Conference.

The Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference

In 2004 the National Conference was renamed as the 'Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference' due to the increasing interests of participants that came from Pacific Island countries. In 2005 ISPRS joined the initiative and was part of the first discussion session of the Conference. The former president John Trinder helped to guide the discussion sessions. The discussion session is an important session of the Conference and has since been held every year. The session provides an opportunity for companies, scientists and GIS &RS users to meet and share ideas. Many applications, which required an adaptation to Pacific environment, were discussed at the Conference and implemented during the following years. Besides this the Conference is the platform for exchange of experiences of GIS&RS users by different island countries.

The formation of the PGRSC was a necessary follow up of User Group and Conference in enabling the 2017 Conference. The next step will be to regionalise the Conference more than it currently is. The council currently established focal points in all Pacific islands to share the information about the Conference but also to organise presentations and ideas by the countries to building up to the next Conference. Here the three vehicles for information dissemination will become an even more important role.

Pacific Islands GIS & RS User Conference

The Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference is an ideal vehicle for know-how in transferring information and data to Pacific island states. As mentioned GIS users are isolated in remote island countries with limited possibility to engage with scientists and companies. This is not only the case during the discussion session, the Conference provide an avenues to meet during the coffee breaks with a daily social function during the evening, where all types of Conference participants are present.

The Pacific Islands GIS & RS Newsletter

The first GIS and RS Newsletter was published in 1993 and distributed in Fiji. There was a need for a regular information platform as there was no Fiji medium (i) to report and document the monthly GIS&RS User Meeting, (ii) to distribute new developments in the areas GIS, RS and upcoming GPS applications, (iii) to report about data available in Fiji. The Newsletter started as a simple print out of a WordPerfect written A4 document edited by Wolf Forstreuter and Les Allinson.

In 1994 SOPAC's Director supported the Newsletter with professional staff and Lala Bukarau joining the team. James Britton (USP) joined the newsletters working group in 1998. During the time users of other Pacific states were interested in the newsletter where SOPAC printed and posted to Pacific island countries.

Shortly afterwards, a network was established of national focal points, which then produced bigger quantities and was distributed to subscribers in-country. By the end of the nineties the Newsletter was able to be downloaded from the SOPAC website, however, the postage of newsletters continued as the countries e-mail access was very limited.

The newsletter can still be printed if there is a need, however, this is an exception. The last issue was published two years ago as there was no time which could be allocated to this publication.

The PGRSC took ownership and the newsletter will be published again in regular intervals.

The importance is that the newsletter is the only publication, which focuses on spatial data application in Pacific Island Countries.

GIS Pacnet

The e-mail distribution and communication list GIS-PacNet was established by Franck Martin with the intention to have a platform to help MapInfo GIS software users to operate their GIS. This was about 1995 or 1996 where e-mail started and SOPAC was the pioneer and Fiji distributor. The mailing list was seldom utilized to ask questions as this is not the Pacific nature or culture, however, the list very soon distributed news in the areas GIS, RS, database and GPS applications.

THE LINKS

The Council has strong links to other organisations with similar objectives. The links are institutionally where Trustees of the Council are at the same time Trustees of related organisations and there are links through the web site and working relationships.



The University of the South Pacific has been a foundational supportive member since inception also playing a major role of educating emerging professionals/professionals who have massively contributed their expertise and knowledge to the Pacific Region.

PGRSC & IUCN signed an MOU on 7 October, 2021 forging a relationship and supporting each others institutions with their commitment and services to the public, private and non-government organizations. IUCN provides the knowledge, tools and projects that enable societies, economies and nature to thrive together. These include data, assessments and analysis, trusted standards, neutral convening fora, and capacity-building resources.



Pacific Science, Technology and Resource Network. Originally an advisory group for SOPAC annual session. Today an own Council. The Chairman is Dr Raijeli Taga. Russell Howorth is one of the Trustees of STAR.

PGRSC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with STAR for mutual assistance.

Eagle Technology has more than 45 years experience supporting New Zealand businesses with innovative technology including GIS products. Our longstanding GIS and Enterprise IT practices combine to offer a range of products and solutions that use best practice and innovative technologies together to extend and support GIS and common IT challenges.





Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme left SPC in Noumea in 1992 and relocated to Samoa. It achieved autonomy as an independent inter-governmental organisation with the signing of the Agreement Establishing SPREP in Apia on 16 June 1993. SPREP (the Secretariat) is the region's key inter-governmental organisation for environment and sustainable development, and is one of several inter-governmental agencies comprising the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP). The purposes of SPREP are to promote cooperation in the South Pacific Region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve the environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations. SPREP is an institutional member of PGRSC.

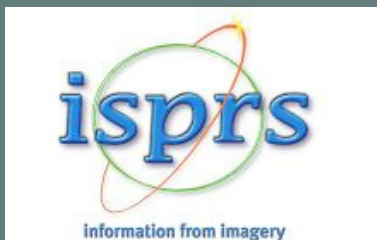
Geoscience Australia is an agency of the Australian Government. That carries out geoscientific research and is also the governments technical adviser on all aspects of geoscience. Additionally, GA is the custodian of geographic, geological data and knowledge of the nation. A number of projects are carried out across the Pacific and are supported by Geoscience Australia such as the PacSaAFE project which aims to build disaster and climate resilience within the Pacific.



Since its formation in 1985, AllTerra has been dedicated to providing innovative geospatial technology through a commitment to technological evolution and development. The AllTerra brand replaced the GeoSystems brand in July 2016. AllTerra is the global dealer brand for Trimble's geospatial portfolio and symbolises a new brand with a fresh look and feel, and a renewed focus on Trimble geospatial products and services. AllTerra serves the New Zealand and English-speaking South Pacific Islands for Trimble geospatial solutions.

INSIGHT SAS is a commercial company established in New Caledonia offering GIS & RS services including data provision. INSIGHT has been a recognised organisation present at the annual Pacific GIS & RS User Conference.





International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. ISPRS was first time present at the Conference in 2005. ISPRS distributes its information and bulletins through the PGRSC network. In 2018 PGRSC became the Regional Member of ISPRS for Pacific Island Countries.

Silvaconsult AG is a Swiss consulting company which offers solutions now in the Pacific region particularly in the Forestry Sector.



The Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society serves the Society's purposes by serving the interests of the global Internet community through its presence in the Pacific Islands. It focuses on local issues and developments, and as an impartial advisor to governments and the public on matters of significant interest to Pacific Island people. PICISOC first came into being in 1994 as IT-PacNET when a group of technical guys working for SOPAC decided to set up a support organisation. Through their association with regional organisations they were able to expand the organisation, and finally join the group up with the Internet Society in 2002. The 600+ regional members of PICISOC come from 22 countries which constitute the Pacific region (they are all members of the Pacific Islands Forum). The PGRSC forms the special interest group GIS and RS within PICISOC. PICISOC hosts for PGRSC the GIS-PacNet

Spatial Industries Business Association is the leading association representing the Spatial Industry. SIBA|GITA is committed to working with Government and Academia to build a more innovative, in Australia and the Pacific. SIBA|GITA provides a network of businesses, tender alerts, networking and collaboration opportunities, professional development, think tanks and direct business opportunities. SIBA is present during the Conference and uses the platform to hand out the spatial business award. The Council is helping to distribute the message to apply for the award through GIS-PacNet. The PGRSC signed a MoU with SIBA|GITA.





The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Samoa has the vision to work together in close partnerships to pursue and achieve sustainable development. It is made up of a number of departments and also hosts a number of projects working towards the achievement of the organisations mission, vision and objectives.

Kenex provides global high level consulting in mineral exploration, renewable energy, infrastructure, agriculture and environment. Kenex specialises in project development and assist mining and exploration companies through the provision of 2D and 3D mineral predictive modelling, 3D integrated geological mapping, targeting studies and a wide range of GIS services. Other services provided include mineral permit management, land management, marine mineral predictive modelling, agricultural and environmental services and wind energy prospectivity services.



The team at Kahuto are committed on delivering our mission statement -" To become the leading company in the Pacific specializing in the collection and transforming of geographical data." Our focus on developing emerging technology coupled with our commitment to deliver value for our clients enables our team to constantly find solutions for our fast growing company. We are committed to understanding our clients requirements and delivering cost effective solutions for the Pacific.

Bluecham SAS is involved in thematic research projects to speed up the process for transferring results to its clients. The company is working on natural risks (floods, fires, tsunamis, cyclones, etc.) with Strasbourg University/SERTIT (Image processing and remote sensing service), on mangroves and lagoons with the teams at IRD (Institute for Research and Development), and on soil erosion with UNC (University of New Caledonia).





Drone Services is a commercial service provider currently operating in Fiji. Drone Services offers services in the collection of drone imagery at various grades of accuracy and price points. Additionally, the company offers pilot licence training locally. The company is a feature presenter at the Pacific GIS & RS Conference and is active in numerous forums providing sound advice for all things drone in Fiji (and the Pacific).

Island Research and Education Initiative (IREi) is a non-profit organization founded in Pohnpei, Micronesia, in 2005, and dedicated to upholding the environmental and cultural heritage of Pacific Islands and peoples by means of targeted research and educational projects. IREi has a rich background in GIS, research, and publishing. One of the most recent products is the Digital Atlas of Micronesia (islandatlas.org).





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