

REPORT

Reviving South Pacific Cruising 'Post-Covid Resilience Conference'



Wednesday, April 26th, 2023
Orams Marine Boat Park, Auckland, New Zealand



On Wednesday April 26th, was organised a conference called ‘*Reviving South Pacific Cruising – Post-covid resilience*’ in Auckland gathering nearly 35 people on site (and more online) to examine useful lessons learned during the pandemic experience and improve communication and cooperation as well as safety within the South Pacific waters.

The transcript of the conference and its topics is given below.

Download programme here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iNYHSSzqMbZwA8j7WD4832r5brh6SEaW/view?usp=drive_link

Mr. Ross Blackman, as the MC, welcomes everyone and thanks all the audience for their presence. He also wishes to thank Mr. Andy Turpin, Mrs. Stéphanie Betz and Mrs. Sharron Beck for organising this conference in Auckland.

Mr. Andrew Turpin, as President of the SPSN organisation is very happy to finally have been able to make this event happen. Due to the pandemic and many other difficulties, the conference was delayed so many times.

The South Pacific Sailing network was founded in 2017 and now counts 7 country members (Fiji, French Polynesia, Galapagos, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Panama, Tonga). They work for the development of international and regional yachting in the South Pacific basin cooperating in the fields of promotion, structuration and training. The objective is to increase the flow of sailing boats in the South Pacific islands and the duration of their stopovers, while promoting responsible & sustainable cruising.

Be sure to be good citizens to the sea, reminds Mr. Andy Turpin.

Download presentation here:

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Mr. Chris Galbraith from the Bay of Islands Marina will point out the importance of the international cruising fleet for New Zealand.

The industry sector is championed by many various participants from yacht agents to marina owners, boatyards, tourism entities, communities etc. There are so many stakeholders in promoting the South Pacific. The work we do is focused on making it better for cruising, promoting well-being throughout the region and helping our economies to become healthier.

The geographic opportunity of the international flow is represented with the South Pacific Sailing Network map. It is real and the traffic of recreational yachts is there (Panama, Galapagos, French Polynesia, Tonga, Fiji and New Zealand). The opportunity is huge even still post-pandemic; people wanting to continue to cruise.

International numbers for New Zealand, in 2019 -> 681 boats arrived in NZ; 129 in 2020; 158 in 2021; 425 in 2022. Not back to where we were but still growing fast.

The nationalities departing from are Fiji, Tonga, New Caledonia, Australia, Vanuatu, Norfolk Island, Cook Islands, other – French Polynesia etc.

The countries they are departing to are about the same. Some boats are bouncing and going back to Fiji or Tonga, after coming to New Zealand.

New Zealand opportunity is approximately:

- 600 yachts a year
- An average of 25-30% are returning to New Zealand
- An average of 450 international yachts
- An average spend estimated at 55,000 NZ\$ locally
- i.e. 24,750,000 NZ\$ pa

It is a regular revenue stream from demand created by vessels. It supports business trades and businesses. It is an opportunity to create a first impression of New Zealand and influence future decisions about visiting New Zealand.

The SPSN brand opportunities are:

- Understand and harness the potential for growth
- Promoted a brand that appeals
- Pursue quality of service and facilities
- Appeal to the needs of cruisers (safety, services)
- Coordinate destination ports (regulatory, access)
- Market destination (uniqueness, culture, environment etc).

We will need in New Zealand to be able to accommodate the future increasing numbers of boats and increase the numbers of berths (building new marinas and facilities).

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Situation: key data & annual yachting flow from each destination

Fidji : Mr. Adam Wade is a former hotelier and now runs Vuda Marina in Fiji. It was a very new concept for him. He met with different persons from the region and collectively they worked quite well. It is difficult individually to persuade people to come to Fiji. The adventures draw cruisers: diving, sailing, fishing, surfing, foiling, scuba diving, nature lovers etc.

Marketing is much easier collectively. On a world tour, it can be 40 days non-stop sailing. SPSN had to sell a dream, help them come to this region and then spend time in the different South Pacific countries. SPSN is a good organisation to do so.



Cruisers are now allowed to stay in Fiji for 5 years instead of 18 months previously. The entry fee is approximately 300 US\$ for a cruiser. The Fijian Government through an economic study done by MDF in 2018, found that the economic contribution of the industry was 65 million Fj\$ a year. It is a large niche market contributing much more to the Fijian

economy than tourists arriving by plane. There is also no leakage – all the incomes go directly to locals (taxi drivers, fishermen etc) – not wholesalers or international hotel companies, or agencies.

People sailing to Fiji are traditionally older people but there are more and more families now; influencers – with Youtube channels etc. People are also looking at working anywhere, especially with StarLink. However, they are very weather dependent, you will never know when they will arrive. They are adventurers and environmentally aware travellers, sensitive about nature and culture.

Many Customs, Immigration, Security personnel are very wary of yachts and shouldn't. The statistics show that with 7500 yachts over 10 years in Fiji, there was only 1 incidence of contraband found on a boat ie: 0,013%. It is a very low risk industry. Reality is that someone doing something illegal is very unlikely to visit a marina.

Sailors are wanting to help during natural disasters and cyclones in Fiji. They are the type of tourists you want in your country.

Mr. Peter Busfield is the Executive Director of NZ Marine. He sends his congratulations to the SPSN for the exchange of information about the best practices inside the South Pacific region for cruising. NZ Marine is happy to support SPSN.



The marine association of NZ represents 520 marine industry companies, and the body of public and visiting yachts to New Zealand to the efficacy of the New Zealand Government.

The marine sector means a lot to the economy, about 10% of the manufactured goods. Over 3 billion \$, about 450 million covers refits from a majority of visiting cruising yachts & superyachts. The promotion of facilities with local government and city

centres or waterfronts for ship buildings are essential for the local economy.

NZ borders were closed for 2 ½ years – April 2020 until August 2022, which was devastating for the industry, hospitality, airlines etc. Exemption during Covid was allowed for ships going on refit over 50,000 NZ\$ - 100 boats and 25 superyachts.

Cruising yachts brochures give important information about visiting boats entering New Zealand (rules & regulations, points of entry, temporary entry, exemption of goods & services tax, key dates, best time of the year, routes & distances between the countries, etc.) Nz Marine also produces videos for yachts and superyachts visiting the South Pacific with the help of their South Pacific partners.

Download presentation here:

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Mr. Joe Caesar owns Vava'u Boatyard in Tonga. The economy is slowly growing & developing there.

Tonga yachting data exists but we need to ask Customs physically.

In 2012-2023, they did their own study. In 2018, they have arrivals by yachts carried out by Immigration. With these numbers, they can extrapolate how many boats arrive in Tonga.

- 2015 -> 1,426 people arrived by yacht -> representing 475 yachts
- 2016 -> 1,818 people arrived by yacht -> representing 606 yachts
- 2017 -> 2,354 people arrived by yacht -> representing 784 yachts

Unfortunately, they have no data after that; it is a challenge. They hope to be able to search for data with the help of Tonga Tourism and MDF and compile a report with important information (customs and revenue etc...)

The figures are slightly higher than the neighbours in the South Pacific marginally, because Tonga is a crossroad for boats coming from French Polynesia, stopping in Tonga and making a decision on going to New Zealand or Fiji.

Sadly, Tonga is not really capitalising on it. The length of stay in Tonga is 4 months with an extension of 8 months. If a boat is arriving in the middle of the season, they will have to think of going somewhere else because if they are trapped in the cyclone season, they have no other options.



People still have in Tonga this old view of yachts not contributing very much to the economy, not being a valuable industry.

The Kingdom of Tonga was closed in 2020 due to Covid until August 2022 with a total of 9 yachts during that period of emergency and left as soon as repairs were done. No other boats arrived during the pandemic. 32 boats

were stuck in Tonga, the Customs allowed an extension of permit until their owners were allowed to return to their boats.

Some boats go to American Samoa (360 nm) to clear back into Tonga.

Vava'u Boatyard has a haul out for boats of 25 tons, 60 ft, and can fit 75 boats with space to expand for more. They have 2 chandleries, mechanics, shipwright companies etc. They need more services and attract more business.

They have 3 points of entry:

- Vava'u
- Tonga tapu
- Nuitaputapu

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Mr. Warren Gama, from Vanuatu Tourism, says they had a yachting industry in the past in Vanuatu.

But now the government needs to enhance the operational and private sectors first. The situation post-Covid will help the government to improve the cruising sector in Vanuatu.

The yachting sector sits under the Tourism department.

In 2020, the government developed a Cruise Development Strategy for 3 cruise markets – cruise ships, expedition and yachting tourism. In 2021, a Yacht Tourism Survey to better understand the yachting tourism market and the consumer (yachties) sentiment, which can be shared to anyone asking for it.

- 94,3% of the vessels coming to Vanuatu carry between 1 to 5 crew with an average of 2
- 21,8% of yachts and their passengers stay for at least 1 month
- 20,6% extend their visa to 2 months
- 20% extend their visa to 3 months
- With an average of 71,2% yacht visitors staying 60 days
- 57,6% of the yachts come from Fiji, (Port Denerau)
- 15,3% from New Zealand
- 12,9% from New Caledonia
- 11,7% from Australia
- The average expenditure per yacht is approximately 1,500 US\$



The main motivations to sail to Vanuatu are the people, the culture and the natural beauty of the country. Many yachties also view Vanuatu as a unique adventure experience with relatively easy access between Fiji, New Zealand and Australia.

The Customs and Immigration satisfaction rate is good (87,6% overall experience is excellent or good). Although 30,7% were concerned by the inconvenience of the office location (only 1 marina in Port Vila) and 33,8% by the high fees.

The Heath Quarantine and Biosecurity services also have relatively good rates.

The Department of Tourism looks after policies and the Tourism Office develops the marketing and promotion

The yachts were allowed to stay in the past 1 month only but now, after Covid, it is 3 months. The entry fee is approximately 100 NZ\$ (60 US\$) for Port Vila, and around 60 NZ\$ in the other places (for clearance).

There is only 1 marina in Port Vila and in the other islands, there are bays to anchorage, no infrastructures.

Mr. Jordy Chan from Papeete Ports Authority & **Mrs. Stéphanie Betz** from Archipelagoes then present the nautical tourism in French Polynesia.

The specificity of French Polynesia is that the area is as large as Europe, with 5 archipelagos, 118 islands. When arriving from Panama, the first port of entry is through the Marquesas Islands, then the Tuamotu and the Society islands sailing through different experiences and landscapes.

There are 4 niches with a substantial growth since the last 5 years: leisure craft vessels, charter boats, superyachts and cruise ships.

The economic impact of the whole nautical tourism represented in 2019: 172,2 million € per year. The part of the yachting, charter and sailing boats was approximately 27% of the nautical tourism industry.

The cruisers, like elsewhere, will stop everywhere in the archipelagoes of French Polynesia and spend their money there; not just staying in their hotel during their stay.

The figures show that even during Covid, French Polynesia has had sailing vessels in the country, while all the other countries were closed. When they left Panama during Covid, they had to stop somewhere; the French Government allowed them to come into the country, with some conflicts with the population though.

The 2023 figures are already above 2020 with huge expected sailing boats.

- In 2019 -> 750 boats entered French Polynesia with an average of 2-3 people on board
- Europeans can stay as long as they wish
- Non-europeans can stay 90 days without a visa and can ask for a long-term visa permit if they wish to extend their stay

Sailing vessels have check-in requirements in 3 ports of entry in the Marquesas Islands. They must send a Maritime Health Declaration 48 hours before arrival, must comply with Biosecurity rules, and provide information to the Polynesian Maritime Affairs.

Boats are allowed to stay 3 years in French Polynesia without importation taxes.

There are no cruising permit fees so far.

A map of the ship movements in French Polynesia is presented: it would be good for them to spend more time in the Marquesas and Tuamotu than the Society Islands, because the marinas and anchorage areas are already full there. We try to encourage the private actors and the government to develop more infrastructures (laundry, wifi, yacht services etc.)

Mr. Jordy Chan confirms that the Port of Papeete manages 2 marinas in Tahiti:

- Papeete -> 107 berths
- Punaauia -> 529 berths + 168 moorings

1 in Moorea (118 berths) and 1 in Raiatea (168 berths)

All these marinas are full especially in the high season. There are more marinas in the Tuamotu than in the Marquesas islands.

1 additional marina in Raiatea is mostly used by the charter companies (80 berths).

120 boats are permanently based in Tahiti, chartering all year-long.

1 shipyard is located in Hiva Oa (Marquesas), Apataki (Tuamotu), Raiatea, Tahiti and 1 drydock for superyachts in Tahiti.

Yacht services are provided in 10 islands.

Nowadays, the government wishes to protect the lagoons and the environment and is managing mooring zones in conjunction with the cities of many islands (Bora Bora, Raiatea, Huahine, Moorea, Fakarava - Unesco Biosphere Reserve. The DPAM is working on a platform to regulate the flows between the cruising boats. During Covid for instance, Fakarava welcomed 100 boats while the island had 400 inhabitants only, which created issues about provisioning, rubbish etc.

To help cruisers to experience the best of the islands, Archipelagoes publishes a stopover handbook in French Polynesia & New Caledonia, dedicated to cruisers as a welcome guide.

Download presentation here:

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Mr. Ross Blackman regrets that no one from Panama will be there to present the situation in this country.

People thinking of sailing through the South Pacific area are already in Panama. It is hard to get people from European boat shows, although we should still try to. But it is much easier to convince people to spend more time in the South Pacific going in circles instead of racing around the world. Once they are in Tahiti, let them enjoy their 3 months and then go to Tonga, Fiji etc. There is no conflict of interest between our destinations, we are all promoting the whole region through SPSN.

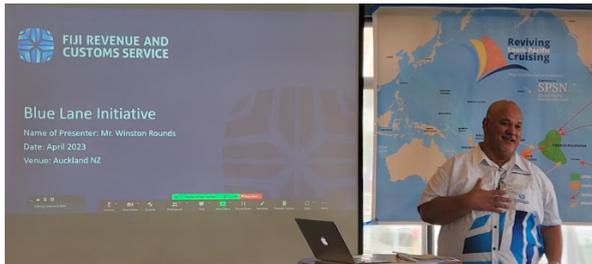
Benchmark of regulation, cruising fee and number of sailing vessels per year per destination

| Destination | Number of SV in 2022 | average length of stopover | cruising taxes US\$ | Biosecurity rules | Situation |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| Fiji | 650 | 5 years | 300 \$ | | 3 marinas, and plan to extend some |
| Vanuatu | estimated 100 | 3 months | 70 \$ | - | only one marina in Port Vila |
| Tonga | 500 | 4 months to 1 year | 100 \$ | - | A shipyard and haul out. |
| Tahiti | 750 | 2 years | In progress | - | 5 marinas but overcrowded. Need to encourage SV to spend more time in the other polynesian archipelagoes (Tuamotu and Gambier) to release the pressure on the Society islands. Needs more haul out and dry dock areas. |
| New Zealand | 550 | 2 years | 12 \$ per person | Hull cleaning mandatory at least 1 months prior to arrival in NZ | All boat repair services are tax free . Strong biosecurity control. |

Covid border discussion - Coordination & communication: What can be learned for the pandemic? What were the challenges faced by the industry? What are the effective solutions that can be shared?

Mr. Winston Rounds from the Fiji Customs presents the Blue Lane Initiative.

Fiji borders were closed in March 2020 because of Covid. The Blue Lane Initiative became effective in June 2020. Both private & public sectors decided to work together to maintain the economy through the tourism industry. At the same time, there were no rules in the South Pacific during the Pandemic.



The Blue Lane was initiated by the private sector; Fiji customs did a lot of research around the world, but many parties were also involved (Ministry of Health, Fiji Navy, Fiji

Customs, Maritime Safety Authority, Tourism and Biosecurity).

The process was to undertake a Covid test 72 hours prior to arrival, engage a yacht agent based in Fiji, submit the entry application form to the yacht agent, download the CareFiji application, activate the AIS 24h/7. The Blue Flag meant the vessel had completed all the clearance protocols. The Port of Denarau & SavuSavu Bay had a quarantine area. The quarantine period was 14 days. The process went along quite well although it was quite challenging to convince the Health Authorities: no one was infected and no Covid came in.

The lessons Fiji learned from Covid was that if we were to face another pandemic in the future, the system is already tested. Before Covid, yachts could come and clear directly to customs upon arrival. Now they need to hire an agent. Yachts are now allowed to come up to 5 years. 24 metres vessels and above were considered as superyachts, now it is 18 metres. Fiji entry fee is now 30,000 USD\$ for superyachts.

60% of the Fijian industry comes from tourism. 140,000 people lost their jobs in Fiji during the pandemic. People arriving by yacht were relatively safe; the government realised that they could at least accept some tourists in the country. The country welcomed nearly 1 million tourists per year to zero in 2020.

The success of the Blue Lane is the fact that the private and public sector worked together.

- In 2020, there were 387 vessels in Denarau – Port Denarau recorded the highest arrivals (Blue Lane Port) and 3 in Vuda before the borders were closed.
- In 2021, there were 228 vessels in Denarau while Port Savusavu was the 2nd designated Blue Lane Port increasing the yacht arrivals passing through Fiji and returning back home. It was also due to yacht rallies.
- In 2022, 163 vessels arrived in Denarau as the main port for yacht vessels.

Once the vessels cleared with the authorities, they had to raise the Blue Flag; the boats could then sail to the other islands safely.

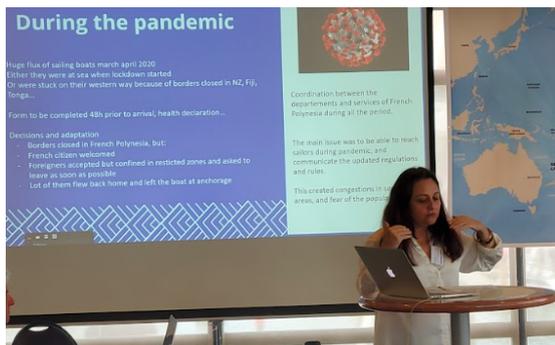
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Mrs. Catherine Rocheteau Director of the Polynesian Maritime Affairs & **Mrs. Stéphanie Betz** will explain how the Maritime Authorities managed the huge number of boats in French Polynesia during the Pandemic.

The main difficulty for the DPAM was to differentiate between the different types of vessel (cruise ships, yachts and superyachts) arriving in French Polynesia at that period.

In April 2020, boats were already at sea when the world lockdown started and stuck on their way to their western route to New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga, Cook Islands etc. where the borders were closed.



The issue for the DPAM was to convince the Health Authority to allow the boats to come in French Polynesia – they had already been at sea for at least 2 or 3 weeks, which was a sort of quarantine. 48 hours before arriving they had to send a form with their health declaration.

In France, we can't leave a boat in distress and have to welcome people. Most of them arrived in the Marquesas, as a 1st stopover from Panama and Galapagos. But then in Nuku Hiva were anchored 200 boats, while the total population of

Nuku Hiva is 600. The population was afraid of this huge number and the DPAM had to manage with this dilemma: offer shelters to the sailors or protect the population? (most of the island populations kept in mind the Spanish Flu pandemic).

Boats could leave French Polynesia, but they had nowhere to go to. They weren't allowed to reach another archipelago inside French Polynesia for 8 months. There were only 3 ports of entry: Papeete, Nuku Hiva or Hiva Oa and Rikitea. Once they had a point of anchor, they had to stay confined in restricted areas with a quarantine flag and even not allowed to swim around their boat, just like the population was.

At the same time, some people helped the sailors with their provisioning as they weren't allowed to leave their boat – this created links and helped maintain an economy in small islands.

A list of the incoming vessels was available on the DPAM website; the population of the islands could check if the boat was safe.

In some islands fights happened with some sailors and the population who felt insecure and refused these arrivals. The DPAM had to interfere and discuss a lot with the protagonists and the Mayors to ease tensions during the pandemic.

The Mayor of Hiva Oa had set up a flag system which was his own decision and not necessarily accepted elsewhere.

One of the big issues of the pandemic was that sailors were repatriated to their country of origin but left their boat in French Polynesia (marina Papeete & anchorage in Punaauia) for sometimes 2 years. The population thought there were too many of them and is now refusing sailing boats in general.

Some countries accepted their nationals to come back home during Covid (example New Zealand, Australia etc). but at the same time, 35 boats from the World Arc Rally were left in French Polynesia while their owners flew back to Europe.

The lesson learned from Covid was that we had an insufficient and uncontrolled regulation with a very dense occupation of the maritime domain and complex issues. We had to improve communication with the sailors and tell them exactly where they were allowed to sail and anchor. We have 820 boats arriving each year in French Polynesia and we need to know where they are and how long they are staying to ease the population in some islands.

Therefore, the DPAM decided to create a new software managing the stopovers -www.escales.gov.pf - for all types of vessels (cruise ships, yachts, superyachts, schooners, supply vessels, nautical activities etc.). The idea is to book their location (berth, anchorage) before arriving in French Polynesia in order to anticipate, share the space and avoid conflicts in conjunction with the Mayors.

In some places, it will be forbidden to anchor in order to protect the coral & environment. There will be a tax collection for rubbish, anchorage, moorings, water etc. for sailing boats in order to participate in the costs the population of the islands is facing. The cruisers must understand and contribute to the islands accepting sailing boats. This will help develop infrastructures (pontoons,) green areas, services, water treatment etc.

The AIS system is not compulsory yet in French Polynesia.

Download presentation here:

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Mr. Shamal Baldeo, and Mrs. Gabrielle North from the NZ Ministry for Primary Industries will present the yacht clearances during the pandemic.



During the pandemic, New Zealand reduced entry for yachts to one marina only (Opuia). PMI could only intervene after Customs approval, depending on the health risk and biosecurity risk of the vessel. To ensure the

safety of the yachties and border staff, MPI would carry out remote clearance and request crew to disembark before the inspection.

In general, there was positive interaction with the yachties, the understanding of the process. The challenges were mostly resourcing because there was a lot of work at the airport, with only one officer dedicated to the yacht clearances who became the expert over that period. Unfortunately, the high volume of yachts coming back was not forecasted post covid.

- In 2019, MPI cleared 681 yachts in New Zealand.
- In 2020, only 129

- In 2021, 148 due to lockdowns and border restrictions.
- A majority of them were cleared in Opuia and mostly during the summer period of September-December.

After Covid, New Zealand had to face weather events which affected influxes in short periods of time. Yacht numbers were almost double the toe amount predicted.

Items removed from yachts during MPI inspections remained mostly the same (food stores and CITES items – clam shells & coral). There were more pets on board during the 2022 season.

A yacht arrived heavily bio-fouled and required to be hauled and cleaned to gain biosecurity clearance. 2 instances were detected with termite infestations and required treatment.

Having had the broken yachts and coming back to normal resource wise, MPI has been able to shift their focus and enhance inspection techniques to address the risk.

The officers will ask about Biofouling maintenance of each yacht, with the records and history less than 30 days before arrival to New Zealand. If vessels can't produce the records and are assessed as having a high risk of biofouling, they may undergo a dive inspection at the owner's cost. MPI officers will inspect visible surfaces including anchor chain and well. An under-water camera may be used to inspect beyond the water line. If biofouling exceeds thresholds, the yacht will be directed for treatment or out of New Zealand waters.

The officers will ask questions about potential termite infestation.

The steps to gain biosecurity clearance are:

1. Plan place of 1st arrival
2. Meet biofouling requirements
3. Ensure vessel is free hitchhiker insects
4. Ensure garbage is in secure bags for MPI to collect for disposal
5. Notify customs & MPI of arrival – send a completed advance notice of arrival form to Customs 48 hours before arrival
6. Wait for inspection and vessel clearance. All people and goods must remain onboard until clearance is given. Complete a master declaration for biosecurity clearance and passenger arrival card for each person.

They are increasing their knowledge in the Pacific which is important for biosecurity and would be happy to share the information with the other South Pacific partners. They also promote their officers to go to other countries (Fiji, Tonga etc.) which can help them prepare for the next season and make sure the people have a better experience.

Mr. Robby Smith presents **New Zealand Customs Service** with 2 hats: Immigration (clearance of people) & Customs (looks at the vessels & goods).

During Covid, Mr. Robby Smith was in charge of the entire maritime including commercial craft, fishing, small craft and cruise.

Every season, approximately 600 small crafts arrive and 2019 was a peak.

The government decided based on science and global protocols, to close borders. NZ Customs Service had to convince the government that the maritime border is different.

In April, May & June 2020, 0 air flights and 0 passengers will arrive in the country. There were seafarers out and on containers' side, traffic had to keep on moving.

They employed 300 new staff, set up headquarters including logistics, intelligence, planning, coordination and had to make sure they could reach out to the community on the changes that occurred sometimes daily.

Sometimes real tough discussions appeared in the back room about operational policies. Opu



was chosen because the risk assessment was done by the Navy, and that was the safest place to arrive. 60% of the mariners already arrived in Opu in small crafts. Opu had a facility to make sure everyone could stay safe, quarantine vessels and give assurance to the government and health officials.

The air and maritime borders were closed and only New Zealanders could arrive. They had MIQ

(managed Isolation & Quarantine) places.

The risk of yachties and seafarers crossing the South Pacific affected by Covid, was suspected to be low, by the Customs Service. They had Covid testing, quarantine berths and 7-days sailing before arriving.

Other borders were closed and for people who had bought boats in, for refit or couldn't get the crew out, there was a temporary import entry for a period of up to 24 months. During Covid, the extension was allowed until June 2023.

All the yachtie community is informed, a dedicated email address has been created. 120 vessels are concerned.

The NZ travel declaration replaces the Passenger Arrival Card. It is a platform which had to be modernised (for cruise ships, cargos, yachts). It will be effective from 21st June 2023 for small crafts and can be completed online. The customs Service will see what needs to be adjusted after June 2023.

Download presentation here:

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Mr. Joe Caesar says during Covid Tonga was in complete lockdown with borders closed. It was really hard for family businesses, quite frustrating. Ultimately, Tonga's Health care system wouldn't be able to handle Covid.

The Blue Lane system would have worked in Tonga; it is something Tonga would keep in mind for the future.

The 1st challenge for Tonga was data.

The 2nd challenge was the short length of stay and the revenue Tonga could have generated within the community during the period allowing new opportunities. Entry fees aren't capitalised for the country. Legislation exists in other countries and can easily be copied and settled in Tonga.

Tonga has a special management area project being undertaken by the Ministry of Fisheries. It allows for certain no-go zones, protected reefs and no-takes zones and areas where you can fish. Yachts and tourism operators aren't really taken into account in the process which is just a government and community project and no 3rd-parties stakeholders drawn in.

Before Covid, there were quite a lot of conflicts in the communities; yachts had no idea where they were allowed to anchor; someone would come and charge a fee for himself.

There is an opportunity to associate the yachting industry, the government and the communities with a special management oath they administer (cultural shows etc), capitalising on the value of their homelands. Tourism, fisheries, customs and all of the communities will have to work together to create a cruising fee distributed to each of the communities and capitalise on this huge income stream.

Mr. Viliami Takau is the CEO of the Tourism Ministry. Tonga has 2 bodies: The Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Tourism which sets up the policies.



The tourism industry is still recovering from Covid, the volcanic eruption of last year, the tsunami and the cyclone Harold. The estimated loss was about 500 million Pa'anga (210 millions US\$). Pre-Covid, tourism was contributing 11% to Tonga's GDP.

MDF will help Tonga for their 1st yachting tourism strategy. ADP Bank did a complete scan of tourism in Tonga.

After Covid, until the end of 2022, 50% of the businesses were closed, a large number being marine activities. The whale watching season is reopening soon.

They thank SPSN for the conference and their yachting industry experience. Mr. Viliami Takau attended Seatrade in Miami and recently joined the South Pacific Cruise Alliance. The Ministry of Tourism is looking at both the yachting and cruising industry as opportunities for Tonga. Although civil servants view cruisers as drug traffickers which has to be changed.

The Kingdom of Tonga is about to rebrand its islands and write its cruise ship strategy with the help of SPTO. Statistics are also important not only for the government to make decisions but also for business investors.

Download Tonga presentation here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RvANpHmiAiwNTHQq9Ttsh5Gx-4l88CvU/view?usp=drive_link

Mrs. Brenda André from Vanuatu, Department of Tourism discusses plans on nautical tourism.

Like all the South Pacific countries, Vanuatu was impacted by Covid. The yachting tourism will surely bounce back once international borders reopen. Its significance in Vanuatu as a viable tourism market segment needs to be better recognized and understood by government agencies.

Communities directly benefit from yachts, and even get assistance from them during disasters, with relief supplies and recovery or medical and dental services to remote communities too. Communities are also proud to show their culture and customs.

After Covid, Vanuatu opened its borders last July and in November 2022, to cruise ships. Many



people moved for work to Australia and New Zealand because there was less yacht visitation and work. The traditional calendar of events is not happening because of the lack of yachts visiting. Vanuatu was Covid-free for some time which kept people interested in visiting again. 4 rallies have been confirmed for 2023. The yachting industry is now booming again.

Vanuatu has to face some challenges and is willing to learn with the help of the South Pacific countries' experiences - better networking with the yachts and the industry.

The government of Vanuatu did a survey in 2020 showing a huge economic impact and the need of a yachting tourism policy, and to engage more the private sector to lead the development of sub cruises. A strong collaboration with the Ministry of Public Utilities to improve infrastructures (marinas – only 1 marina in Port Vila with water, laundry etc.) is essential as well with the Border control agencies and provincial government to improve the entry formalities, Visa duration to 3 months. The provincial government also needs to work with the communities to develop products & services dedicated to yachties taking into consideration sustainable responsible tourism in the islands.

Vanuatu has a national cruise strategy which doesn't include yachting and expedition ships.

Download Vanuatu presentation here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m9d4KllcE2UWhV7HuD3y3VIRkLPTbW29/view?usp=drive_link

A visit to Oram Marine's boatyard is organised during the lunch break.

Afternoon discussion:

Looking at the future of yachting tourism



Mrs. Christine Mitchell & Mr. Andrew Turpin discuss their cruiser experience during Covid with potential solutions. They were in two different boats in two different places: Nuku Hiva and the Gambier. Mr. Andy Turpin was in quarantine in Nuku Hiva, while Mrs. Julie Turpin was stuck in the States.

The people ashore understood who they were and where they came from; they couldn't possibly be sick. They had a very good communication with people ashore: they set up a programme with rules to respect – no swimming, no alcohol, wear a mask, allowed 1 hour to get exercise and buy food.

Once the people were comfortable with the situation, they realised that the sailor at anchorage for 6 weeks couldn't be carrying Covid. In the neighbouring island, a couple of months later, when cruisers were allowed to cruise, a swiss boat explained to the islanders that no one was sick in Nuku Hiva. The mayor set up a yellow flag as a signal to prove they were safe and had been in quarantine.

During the lockdown, no one got sick – the only incident was from an Ecuadorian ship outside the international waters, with crew members being sick one by one who called for assistance.

Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell arrived in French Polynesia the year prior and arrived from Chile in the Gambier, where they had an opportunity to meet with the locals and officials. When they circled back after the season, they went back and already knew them. Before arriving at the Gambier, you must check-in at the Gendarmerie, even if you arrive from another archipelago. During the pandemic, the population didn't need to worry about them.

When they were in the main anchorage in Rikitea, there were quite a few boats there. Everyone complied with the rules very well. There was a big storm coming and the officials allowed them to go to another anchorage for the safety of the boats and people. They haven't had any experiences with locals with an adverse attitude, they were all very welcoming (just one asking not to wander around and stay in the main road).

During the second 2-weeks lockdown, they were in Moorea, which was different because there were a lot more people. It was an amazing experience and was a great pleasure to be in French Polynesia – they were welcomed by the community; processes were very clear.

Eco-navigation: moorings, coral protection, recycling, marine pests etc.

Mr. Scott Godwin from Auckland City Council will introduce the marine biosecurity programme in Auckland and the South Pacific region.

The majority of his career was in Hawaii during marine biosecurity.

He presents examples of invasive alien species in the Pacific (Pacific Sea Star will destroy the mussel industry – Asian Paddle Crab found in New Zealand, native to SouthEast Asia – Taape introduced from French Polynesia to Hawaii on purpose in the 50's by the Fisheries Bureau –

Sponge from the Philippines introduced to Hawaii accidentally by US Navy, wiping out coral – Seaweed introduced in the Great Barrier etc.)

It happens to aquaculture, commercial vessels (ballast and biofouling) and recreational boats (biofouling).

Biofouling associated with vessel hulls is estimated to be the source for 69% of marine species introductions to New Zealand and a major factor in domestic spreads of marine non-native species for recreational vessels.

They encourage sailors to clean slime with a chamois to prevent biohazards because on a boat, the slime layer allows sea animals and bacteria to grow.

The Marine Biosecurity in Hawaii found over 300 invasive Aquatic Species, with very little ballast water discharge – Hawaii is not an export economy; 74% of species introductions is done by biofouling. There is a marine protected park named Papahānaumokuēkea with no access allowed except with a permit and developed by the Bush administration and now covers 9,5 million square kms.

Auckland Council is not enforcing restrictions on boats arriving in New Zealand, it is the MPI department (pre-border and Border agency) with applications for entry. Auckland Council is managing domestic pathways. They do stakeholder engagement and education (boat owners, marinas, clubs, behaviour change campaigns, incursion response and vessel hull surveillance.

Cf. guidelines & information sources for the South Pacific (presentation below).

Download presentation here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o9W_GukS_Fuz36jUXPtUICg4gIW23XD/view?usp=drive_link

Mrs. Stéphanie Betz & Mr. Jordy Chan present the new mooring areas in French Polynesia and the waste management in the marinas Papeete Port Authorities manages.

To protect the islands, it was decided with each mayor of the island or archipelago to think about areas where to welcome boats (sandy bottom without damaging corals or building moorings). A stopover handbook has been produced dedicated to the sailors coming to French Polynesia and distributed in Panama. Charts are presented with regulation within each archipelago and island for French Polynesia and shows where to drop waste.



It is important to establish rules but also be able to clearly communicate with the cruisers who will follow them.

If they don't have the information, they will continue to do as they were used to and anchor where they feel is safe for their boat. To protect the coral, the government is also supporting a non-profitable organisation like Coral Reef Gardeners, replanting coral in damaged areas.

In the marinas, they encourage the marina managers to seal holding tanks. They don't want the cruisers to open the holding tanks when they are inside the lagoons which are really large. They need to improve it if they really want to protect the islands.

Household waste is quite well managed by the Papeete Port Authorities in their marinas but not oil, this needs to be improved. Hazardous goods such as flares and batteries are collected in some pick-up points and transported to places for treatment.

Some marinas have grey water treatment systems; cruisers should pay for this service, but they don't. They discharge their holding tanks inside the lagoons. Papeete Port Authorities could force them to seal their tanks when they are in the marinas, as this would reassure the population who sees the cruisers as polluters. It is not only an environmental issue; it has to do with the acceptance of the population.

Mr. Jordy Chan is looking forward to discussing wastewater treatment implemented in other South Pacific countries.

In Fakarava – Unesco Biosphere Reserve, and any other atoll of the Tuamotu archipelago, one solution could be to see the cruisers as a solution to help with recycling, instead of being seen as an issue (*batteries stocked in the island could be placed on a volunteer boat sailing to Papeete for recycling*). This is the kind of behaviour cruisers could adopt to face environmental issues.

Mr. Chris Galbraith refers to one solution which has been working in their marina in Opuia for a long time: a trailer. The marina should be part of the environmental solutions: while cruisers are in the marina, they shouldn't use their tanks and be locked. Plastic seals on toilets and pumps could be an option too, as well as supplying a mobile pump to use on dock for free.

Most marinas in New Zealand would be a no-discharge area. In anchorage, it is the same principle: NZ Marine pollution regulations have appointed areas where to discharge tanks.

In Fiji, Port Denarau has a pump-up station with issues sometimes, says **Mr. Adam Wade**. The Maritime Safety Authority has settled official rules that have to be discharged 15 nautical miles off land.

In New Caledonia, they have a pumping boat at anchorage which goes to each tank. It is a paying service, but it works; while in Punaauia in French Polynesia, sailing ships do it inside the lagoons. In Bora Bora at anchorage, holding tanks are compulsory, otherwise ships aren't allowed inside the lagoons in Bora Bora.

In Mexico, they have a mobile pump working out each week.

In Tonga, they don't have solutions for the moment.

Mrs. Christine Mitchell says that if cruisers knew where to discharge their wastewaters they wouldn't go offshore. They would be happy to be charged for the collection of their rubbish which could be locally or in a cruising permit.

Mrs. Sharron Beck reports that cruisers in their marina consider rubbish as the main question. Some cruisers sailing in the islands would love to help pick up the rubbish on the beaches. An organisation for cruisers to help collect rubbish could also work really well.

Mr. Ross Blackman says when they were offshore, they would throw overboard paper, cardboard, food scraps as biodegradable, collect everything else and compress it because they

were aware of recycling issues. These matters can be discussed in Panama and the information about recycling and rubbish communicated to the cruisers sailing inside the South Pacific.

Security: new safety & satellite systems, rallies, rescue operations

Mr. Josselin Jaouen, is a watch officer at the JRCC Tahiti with different missions on land and at sea (aero-maritime, navigation & pollutions monitoring, creation and broadcasting of maritime safety information as well as fishery monitory and retransmissions of security alerts).



Communication means watching 24/7 (telephone, Vhf, MF/HF, Inmarsat, Cospas/Sarsat) with specific alert procedures for aeronautical events (control tower in Faa'a airport) and special operation management tools.

When sailors are at sea, they can report any kind of events at sea by dialling **16** toll-free.

The JRCC depends on French state assets (helicopters, patrol vessels, frigates, guardian marine surveillance aircraft, coastal tugs, multi mission vessels, Gendarmerie vessels, military transport aircraft etc).

The local assets are mainly coastal (Gendarmerie, volunteers etc.) but opportunity assets may assist the JRCC too (commercial vessels, cruise ships, aircrafts, etc.).

421 events were recorded in 2022 (+17% compared to 2021 -> 358) mainly due to the increase of sailing activities.

The rescue area covers 11 000 000 sq kilometres to patrol.

Download JRCC presentation here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Wg4xCfDJ9sLyBLXw9j9A4EtYBWTVNBH9/view?usp=drive_link

Mr. Douglas Samp is a rescue officer at the Rescue Coordination Centre in San Francisco and joined the conference by video.

They provide support to the four US Joint Rescue Coordination Centres (Juneau, Seattle, Alameda, Honolulu) and cover the vast majority of the Pacific Ocean.

Each Rescue Coordination Centre is operating 24/7 with professionals and has the ability to receive distress alerts and broadcast via satellite or VHF.

The JRCC communicates with other coordination centres throughout the world. The JRCC will establish a coordinator response to a distressed situation.

The US searching rescue brought 22 international search rescue regions from Central and South America, South Pacific, Asia and Russia.

In 1979 the International Maritime Organisation brought all the countries together. Each country divided the oceans up and agreed to coordinate the maritime distress requests through a rescue coordination centre.

AMVER is a United States Coast Guard Automated Vessel Rescue System; vessels under this system are operating all around the world and have important data registered. It can be superyachts to bulkers, tankers, container vessels.

If they don't have an AMBER vessel in the area of a distressed vessel, they will search for an AIS equipped vessel. They will try to contact them through their flag country state and their JRCC for assistance. It takes longer to contact them, but it works although not as efficiently as AMBER.

Global Maritime Distress & Safety System is an internationally recognised system where RCCs can communicate with vessels from VHF to new satellite systems.

Download Rescue Coord. Centre presentation here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lun0kLsj80v-Am94aVn568QJyuv092YP/view?usp=drive_link

Mr. Eperama Waqainoa from the **Fijian Navy** explains about safety during Covid.

The RFMF (Military Forces) was activated to help the Ministry of Health and collaborated with the private sector too.

The Blue Lane Initiative was designed to allow yachts to enter Fiji through quarantine facilities. It started on June 14th, 2020 in Denarau Marina as a port of entry. After a successful year, Savusavu opened in 2021.

The team was to oversee quarantine protocols, meet and greet yachties, provide surveillance at the quarantine anchorage, transportation to Ministry of Health, supply provisioning, daily update to Ministry of Health, RFMF and other stakeholders, provide manpower for quarantine cruise (crew members coming back to their yachts) when required and additional support to Ministry of Health and RFMF.

They had to check the yachts everyday – *they were allowed to swim around the boat at the quarantine anchorage but not to interact with others*, liaise with yacht agents about provisioning, liaise with MRCC & Customs to provide AIS tracking, provide yacht details to the Ministry of Health for crew members Covid 19 tests, liaise with government agencies for clearance of the yacht.

The yacht directly liaises with the yacht agent 5 days before departure; the yacht agent will notify the Covid Risk Mitigation Team who will deliberate on the request. The CRMT will notify the agent on their decision and the agent will forward approval to the Border Agency, the Ministry of Health and the yacht to prepare their test – negative test 72 hours before departure).

When the yacht arrives, he must inform the agent that he has arrived at the quarantine anchorage. The agent will notify the designated port and Navy Security Team who will check on the yacht and collect relevant information from the yachties before liaising with HQ Navy to verify the AIS Tracking. The team will inform the Ministry of Health on yacht details and duration of the stay at the quarantine anchorage as well as providing a tender for testing.

The quarantine clearance process consists of the MOH to conduct Covid Testing on the 12th day of quarantine with results on Day 14th. The Navy Security Team will provide boat transportation for the health inspectors. The yacht agent will notify the Border Agencies (Immigration, Customs, Biosecurity) about results and arrange for clearance. The agent will

liaise with the Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs (culture) for issuing a cruising permit. The Revenue & Customs Officer will issue a Blue Lane flag.

All the boats were required to activate their AIS system while in Fijian Waters.

The estimated revenue during that period was between 8 to 10 million fiji \$.

Download Fijian Navy presentation here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QjQ3f0EEkV1H8RCS8j-lvuiRJ4AAQU4O/view?usp=drive_link

Mr. Dave Irwin as a yachtie, has helped an organisation called *SeaMercy* (now *Sea Reach*) in times of emergencies.

He sailed the Pacific in 2011. He considers himself more as a traveller than a tourist because they participate in the communities they visit.

He started to look for opportunities to bring back to the communities he was visiting.

When cyclone Winston came to the area in 2016, the second largest cyclone in the world – *240 kms/hour winds, entire villages wiped off, no power for 9 months* - he was shocked to realise how hard it was to find a place to volunteer. He met Mr. Jonathan Robinson from SeaMercy and was involved in the most engaging activities.

It is a unique organisation with little bureaucracy to get things accomplished. It participated in various events in the South Pacific but is primarily focused in Fiji. It provides medical services, assistance and disaster relief to local communities in remote areas. It provides a service that larger organisations are too large to deal with.

If you can interact with local people, the experience will be more important to you. If there is a way for you to distribute information, organisations can be recognised as a point of contact. Cruisers want to help and do good (rebuilding houses, helping with vaccinations, medical services etc.) Even superyachts are extremely generous with their resources.

Mrs. Viki Moore took over some years ago, *Island Cruising* which had been running for 35 years.

It is a group of sailors mostly from New Zealand sailing in the South Pacific and back to New Zealand. They also pick up international cruisers who want to come to New Zealand but can help in finding crew, or the paperwork needed, social events, local information, spare parts – working with local marinas and encourage them to come and stay in most marinas as well. They are connecting sailors and heading in general directions but also work with SeaMercy and help transport products and goods from New Zealand to the Pacific.

They also like to participate in environmental projects like beach cleanings, but they need the support of local organisations. They can provide the manpower and the enthusiasm by needing people coordinating and helping in the disposal of the rubbish for example.

As for safety and security, they closely work with all kinds of organisations in New Zealand. They spend a lot of time getting yachties prepared for their long passage offshore and work with the Rescue Coordination Centre in New Zealand, with a professional meteorologist, a tracker system and a daily check-in service where sailors can use their SSP radios, email etc. If

there are repairs to be done, they can call the marinas and ask them to recommend local contractors and arrange for spare parts & products to be provided. They can help with crew, skippers, medics, training courses etc.

The rally is not a set itinerary; it is a peaceful rally, and people go on their own schedule if they want to.

They want to encourage people to have sailors from Australia to New Zealand and stay longer.

Mr. Andrew Turpin has been organising the **Baja Haha** for 22 years, which is a cruise for sailors from San Diego to Cabo San Lucas.

Pacific Puddle Jump is completely different, monitoring boats crossing the Pacific from North American, Mexico, Panama with a check-in daily and tracking to monitor position and helping with customs and immigration.

They try to promote the South Pacific Ocean, self-sufficiency and have daily tracking with Predict Winds. It is still a great adventure to cross the Pacific.

Regional cooperation and synergies (promotion, training, information)

The SPSN is promoting the region through different events, says **Mrs. Stéphanie Betz**. The South Pacific should be considered as a regional navigation area like the Caribbean or any other sailing area.

The 1st B2C event is in Panama as a gate to the South Pacific, to meet with the cruisers starting their passage. It is the best way to communicate with them ahead of their stopover in the islands and help them with their programme. They established a relationship with Shelter Bay Marina in Panama and each year, SPSN members participate in seminars there (NZ, Tahiti, Fiji, Tonga, New Caledonia etc).

After the Panama seminar, they go to Puerto Vallarta, a marina in Baja California to meet with other sailors.

With these 2 events, almost 100 boats approached through the seminars. 700 boats are reaching French Polynesia, their next stop after Galapagos.

The next 3-days event takes place in French Polynesia in July: the Tahiti-Moorea Sailing rendez-vous with cultural activities too (canoe races, Polynesian dances, local food etc). Cruisers are starting to think about their next destination. It is therefore a good way for the western islands to come and meet with them (approximately 40 to 50 boats each year) and start communicating with them.

They worked with Mr. Joe Caesar from Tonga during the Blue Water Festival and Mr. Adam Wade in Fiji about the Musket Cove Regatta, reports **Mrs. Sharron Beck**. Now these have become major events where the SPSN members also take part. Developing these kinds of nautical events in each SPSN country also helps interact with the population and the cruisers.

SPSN needs to work on infrastructure in the region before getting more boats, but they want them to come more responsibly (cultural information people need to know, environmental issues, fishing etc.) and so published a responsible cruising flyer.

SPSN (Panama, Galapagos, French Polynesia, Fiji, Tonga, New Caledonia, New Zealand) would like to develop a relationship with other islands and have them join the organisation and provide cruisers all the required information throughout the region, particularly Vanuatu.

SPSN is a volunteer association, the budget only consists of membership fees. The Pacific Funds supported the organisation financially and allowed this conference to happen in Auckland.

SPSN should develop the B2B relationship, benchmarking, share information and data etc. because it helps each country to lobby and convince their governments to increase this niche market.

Mrs. Brenda André says Vanuatu will be thinking of joining.

Mr. Viliami Takau thinks the tourism bodies should be approached to become members as they are the ones paying. He is willing to have Tourism Tonga as a member.

Download SPSN actions' presentation here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZMJzqx63xOBMD96E-T2eVfsRfYFfa9jt/view?usp=drive_link

Mr. Chris Galbraith thinks we must invest in people and give them the opportunity to have skills to serve the sector well.

This is the future; we need to have the next generation ready to take our places and make sure we have programmes and practices in place.

There are 45 marinas in New Zealand, but 7 marinas lost their managers in the last 10 months, hard to replace

There are some opportunities in New Zealand and Australia to get skills through 3 organisations:

- NZ marina operators' association
- MAST (Marine Academy)
- MIA in Australia.

There are huge opportunities to be trained – marinas, boatyards, safety etc. There are webinars, online training, modules etc. but training is mixed (classes or online).

Internships between our South Pacific countries would be possible and desired. There is no limitation to where people come from.

Download NZ training programme presentation here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/15Qz3drDBx7QOMQGTPAPu03XzJlukIBhX/view?usp=drive_link

Mr. Josefa Vanuaca presents the Marketing Development Facility, an Australian Government funding programme which promotes sustainable economic development and connects individuals, businesses, governments and NGO with each other.

Their goal is the increase of jobs and income in the country partners they operate: Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

In 2021 they decided to expand further into the South Pacific region: Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu.

MDF did significant work in Fiji in the yachting sector 10 years ago through an economic impact study.

They have an interest in the tourism sector as a great potential through partnerships with Tonga Tourism Authority and Vava'u Boatyard with economic studies to be drawn.

They are also partnering with Vanuatu Tourism Organisation to do an economic study too with influencing policy.

They are very flexible and work with the private and public sectors.

Mr. Josefa Vanuaca is happy to learn from everyone here and from the yachting industry. He is open to discuss ideas that MDF can support to grow the industry in the region. They can do studies, help funding in marketing events etc. depending on the partners choices.

Mr. Ross Blackman recognises there are challenges sailing from Australia. There is a market for the SPSN to bring boats into New Zealand and we should market the eastern Coast of Australia through boat shows.

In conclusion, **Mr. Chris Galbraith** would like to thank everyone for the remarkable and productive day. Thanks to Orams Marine as a sponsor.

A lot has been achieved within the SPSN group over the last few years and today crystallises a lot of effort and energy. We must keep it going as there is a lot more work to do. We have massive opportunities, bringing more countries under the SPSN's umbrella.

We could commit to another event like this one.

Mr. Adam Wade thanks everyone for making the effort to come. This is the first time SPSN, a small group of individual organisations, has done this. The more countries joining the Board makes the Pacific more inviting & exciting to clients. We are not competing but complementing each other.

Reviving cruising in the South Pacific is happening (cf. AIS actual tracking).

Please find below the names and contacts of the participants:

[Download list here:](#)

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1d-me_mSa1MRyqrugJGTjgXc9-F5WbHoU/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=106591621896633928796&rtpof=true&sd=true

On Thursday April 27th, were organised different visits of marinas in the Northland region:

- Marsden Cove Marina – customs arrival dock and haul out yard
- Whangarei Marina
- Bay of islands marina – port clearance facilities, customs/quarantine area, cruisers facilities.



These instructive visits allowed the participants to continue exchanging about the matters discussed the previous day during the conference as well as developing relationships with South Pacific neighbours and consider future regional cooperation.

The objectives of the mission were fully achieved. This first Forum brought together the major players in the yachting industry in our South Pacific island countries. The exchanges and sharing of information during the two days of the Forum were of a very high quality. The results were mainly positive, particularly in terms of positioning and networking, information sharing and the development of local and regional synergies.

This regional collaboration and exchanges between key people from private and public sectors enabled everyone to gain a better understanding of the issues and challenges faced by our sector, and to better position themselves in this tourism niche.

Its success clearly augurs other promotional and structuring operations, in which each of the South Pacific nautical destinations will play a full part.

The SPSN Board wishes to thank all the organisations and companies who supported this forum.

