

Responding to globalisation

Connected in different ways

Imagine you live on a remote island off the coast of Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. To visit your national capital would take many days. It may start with a two-hour walk to the nearest port followed by a few days' wait for seas to be safe enough to travel and a boat to arrive, then 10 hours' travel to a large town and then, if you can afford it, a short flight on a small aircraft. However, you may be connected to services, cities and people, via the internet and telephone.

Links between the Pacific islands are not new. Ancient migrations and trading have resulted in relationships dating back many centuries. However, globalisation and technology are bringing the world closer together as people, goods, money and ideas move around the world faster, more easily and more cheaply than before. For the Pacific islands, rapid air transport has brought tourists and imported goods, while Pacific islanders leave their home islands to seek jobs and experiences around the world, for example, many Australian and New Zealand sports teams include players originally from the Pacific islands.

Pacific island governments are also becoming more interdependent as they face the impacts of globalisation. Because of their small sizes and economies it can be helpful for Pacific island nations to belong to larger regional organisations so that they can act together to deal with common economic, political, social and environmental problems. One of the most influential regional organisations in the Pacific region is the Pacific Islands Forum.

Key words and concepts

aid, consensus, donor, investments, life expectancy, memorandum of understanding, remittances, repatriation, royalties, trust fund

The Pacific Islands Forum

The Pacific Islands Forum (formerly the South Pacific Forum), founded in 1971, comprises 16 independent and self-governing states in the Pacific: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. New Caledonia and French Polynesia are associate members, and Tokelau and Wallis and Futuna are observers.

The leaders of the member countries meet annually to develop collective responses to regional issues. The forum meetings are mainly informal, and decisions are made by consensus and are outlined in forum communiqués. The communiqués express the forum's position on issues such as nuclear testing, climate change, fisheries, and other security and/or environmental issues, but disagreement by a single country can weaken both the language used in the statement and any action taken.

Adapted from www.forumsec.org.fj

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Forum leaders, Cairns, 2009

Reproduced with permission of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat



Forum economic ministers, Tuvalu, 2005

Thinking about

1. How does the Pacific Island Forum make decisions? Why might consensus be the preferred method of decision making? How binding would these decisions be?
2. In a small group, select an issue that affects you all, such as selection of a new uniform or response to bad behaviour. Each person considers their own opinion, and then shares their opinion with the group. Try to make a decision which you all agree upon and write this as a statement.

Thinking more deeply

In small groups, investigate a recent Pacific Island Forum Communiqué (see www.forumsec.org.fj/index.cfm).

1. Which issues have strong statements attached to them and which ones use weaker language?
2. How might the kind of language used in the statements indicate the level of consensus?
3. Why might those with weaker statements have lacked consensus?

The dot TV story

Tuvalu has created an economy out of cyberspace. Tuvalu is a very small, remote nation with a high point of just five metres. Its nine coral atolls cover only 26 square kilometres. With poor soil and few natural resources and located far from the usual tourist routes, its economy has depended largely on foreign aid and the money sent back by its citizens living and working overseas (remittances) or earned from fishing licences. The Tuvalu Trust Fund, set up in 1987 with a grant from Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, with later additions by Japan and South Korea, has been wisely managed to also provide substantial income.

The arrival of the internet provided a unique opportunity. The people of Tuvalu realised that their internet domain name dot TV could prove to be very popular with media companies and personalities wanting their own dot TV website. After a couple of false starts, the Tuvaluan government negotiated a deal to set up dot TV, a subsidiary of an American company, to sell dot TV to the world! With the royalties from dot TV, Tuvalu was able to pave the capital island's roads and become a member of the United Nations.

Thinking about

1. What difficulties do Tuvaluans face earning money?
2. How have links with countries around the world assisted Tuvaluans to earn an income? What problems might Tuvalu experience from its links to other countries?

Tom Cockren/Lonely Planet Images



Ancient communication

In ancient times blowing a conch shell was used to communicate across the water between people on canoes and those on land.

Today the internet has opened up new avenues of communication and also provides a new stream of income.

Aid

To assist the Pacific island nations facing social, economic and environmental challenges, some donor countries provide aid to help reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. Most aid is committed to long-term projects to assist countries in developing their skills and knowledge to manage in the future. Some aid is also provided for relief in emergencies and to address particular issues such as peace building. Donors coordinate their aid to avoid duplication and work with the receiving countries to plan and monitor the use of the aid.

Aid donors to Pacific countries, 2006

Donor	US\$ (million)
Australia	480
USA	187
New Zealand	113
France	112
European Commission	78
Japan	76
Italy	24
United Nations (UN)	14
Asia Development Bank (ADB)	12
Other donors	30

The table to the left details major aid donors to the Pacific region in 2006. This data has been sourced by the OECD (an international organisation concerned with improving democracy and development) from its members. In addition to the OECD donors, China and Taiwan have also donated significant amounts of money to Pacific countries in recent years.

Source: OECD Development aid at a glance, statistics by region: Oceania 2008 (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/29/42139429.pdf).

Australia's aid in the Pacific

The Pacific region is one of the highest priorities for the Australian government's aid program. Its programs focus on economic growth, more effective, accountable and democratic government (governance), improved law and justice, and security and enhanced service delivery, including effective fiscal management. In 2009–2010, Australia committed A\$1,090.9 million in aid to the Pacific region.

Roger Wheatley, AusAID



Unloading food aid at Gizo, Solomon Islands

Emergency relief

In 2007 an earthquake, measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale, 345 kilometres north-west of the Solomon Islands capital of Honiara, created a tsunami that affected more than 36,500 people. There were 52 people confirmed dead, and about 6,300 houses were damaged or destroyed across 304 communities. Australia responded to this disaster by sending medical teams and relief supplies, which prevented large-scale outbreaks of diseases such as diarrhoea and malaria.

Roger Wheatley, AusAID



Rice being unloaded at Gizo, Solomon Islands

Roger Wheatley, AusAID



Tsunami destruction, Gizo, Solomon Islands



South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project

The South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project, funded by the Australian government's aid program, has installed monitoring stations to provide accurate long-term records of sea levels in partnership with the governments of Pacific island countries. Aid has also provided training for improved weather forecasting so that disaster managers and farmers can better prepare emergency services and plan crop rotations for the following season.



Improving health through sport

The Australian government-funded Taveuni Community Health Project is working with the Fiji Amateur Basketball Federation in Suva to give young people opportunities to develop new skills and make friends with people outside their traditional groups.



Improving education

Australia has been assisting the government of Samoa to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the country's 160 infant and primary schools, with the production of school curriculum materials and teacher training.

Thinking about

1. What are some of the reasons donors provide aid to Pacific island countries?
2. Are there benefits for the donor countries and for the peoples of the Pacific?

Thinking more deeply

In small groups, consider one of the examples of the Australian aid programs and describe how aid might be changing people's lives. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of receiving aid. Develop a poster for the Australian community that communicates the benefits for Pacific islander countries.

Remittances

Many Pacific islanders work in other countries, and some even settle abroad with their families for long periods. Mostly they maintain close links with their relatives, villages and churches through communication and sending money (remittances). These are worth more than A\$430 million a year. Remittances are an important source of income for their families, who may face limited employment prospects in their home countries.

The cost of sending money to Pacific countries is 13–30 per cent of the total amount remitted, while the global average money transfer fee is about 10 per cent. The Australian and New Zealand governments have established a website at www.sendmoneypacific.org to help Pacific islanders working in their countries to compare costs, transfer methods, speed and exchange rates when sending remittances home to family and friends.

Aid and remittances to Pacific island countries 2003

Country	Aid per person (US\$)	Total	Remittances per person (US\$)	Total
Fiji	61		185	
Papua New Guinea	40		1	
Solomon Islands	132		4	
Vanuatu	154		43	
Samoa	186		253	
Tuvalu	520		460	
Kiribati	191		73	

Source: Pacific 2020, page 35: www.ausaid.gov.au

Thinking about

1. Calculate the total amount of remittances received by each country using the information in this table and the population statistics on pages 10 and 11.
2. Calculate the total amount of aid received by each country using the information in this table and the population statistics on pages 10 and 11.
3. Which source of income contributes more to the welfare of the country: aid or remittances? Think about who receives the money, what the money may be spent on and the impact on the community.



Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme

On 24 November 2008, the Australian government signed a memorandum of understanding with the governments of Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu. The three-year pilot scheme will examine whether Pacific islanders employed short-term in the horticulture industry, picking and packing fruit and vegetables, could contribute to economic development in home countries through workers' employment experience, remittances and training.

The pilot will also examine the benefits to the Australian economy and to employers within the horticulture industry who can demonstrate that they cannot source local labour.

Adapted from: www.workplace.gov.au/pswps

Locations of Pacific seasonal workers

Thinking about

Why might the Pacific islanders be attracted to the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme?

In small groups, choose one of the roles described below. List the possible positive and negative impacts of the scheme for your chosen role. Write a speech bubble to show what this group might think about the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme, and share your views with others in the class.

- Australian farmers
- Pacific island workers
- Families of Pacific island workers
- Australian government
- Pacific island governments
- Australian seasonal workers
- People in the local towns

Select one person to represent your group's role (they could wear a label or simple costume to identify their role). All the representatives stand in a circle, with the person representing Pacific island workers holding a ball of wool. This person states their connection to another representative and passes the ball of wool to them, while holding an end of the woollen ball. This action continues and the group begins to create a woolly web, until no new connections can be named.

Discuss: How are people in Australia and Pacific island countries connected?

Pacific islanders in sport

Many Pacific islander young men and women pursue professional sporting careers in countries around the world.



There are 17 players in the ACT Brumbies rugby squad who identify themselves as originating from Pacific island countries.

Front row Christian Lealiifano (Samoa), Sanulio Afeaki (Tonga), Peter Betham (Samoa), Alfi Mafi (Tonga).

Second row Tyrone Smith (Tonga), Matt Toomua (Samoa).

Third row Jerry Yanuyanutawa (Fiji), Francis Fainifo (Samoa), Sitaleki Timani (Tonga), Talalelei Gray (Samoa), Brent Hamlin (New Zealand), Huia Edmonds (New Zealand).

Back row Afusipa Taumoepeau (Tonga), Salesi Ma'afu (Tonga), John Ulugia (Samoa), Mark Gerrard (Tonga).

Brumbies rugby squad

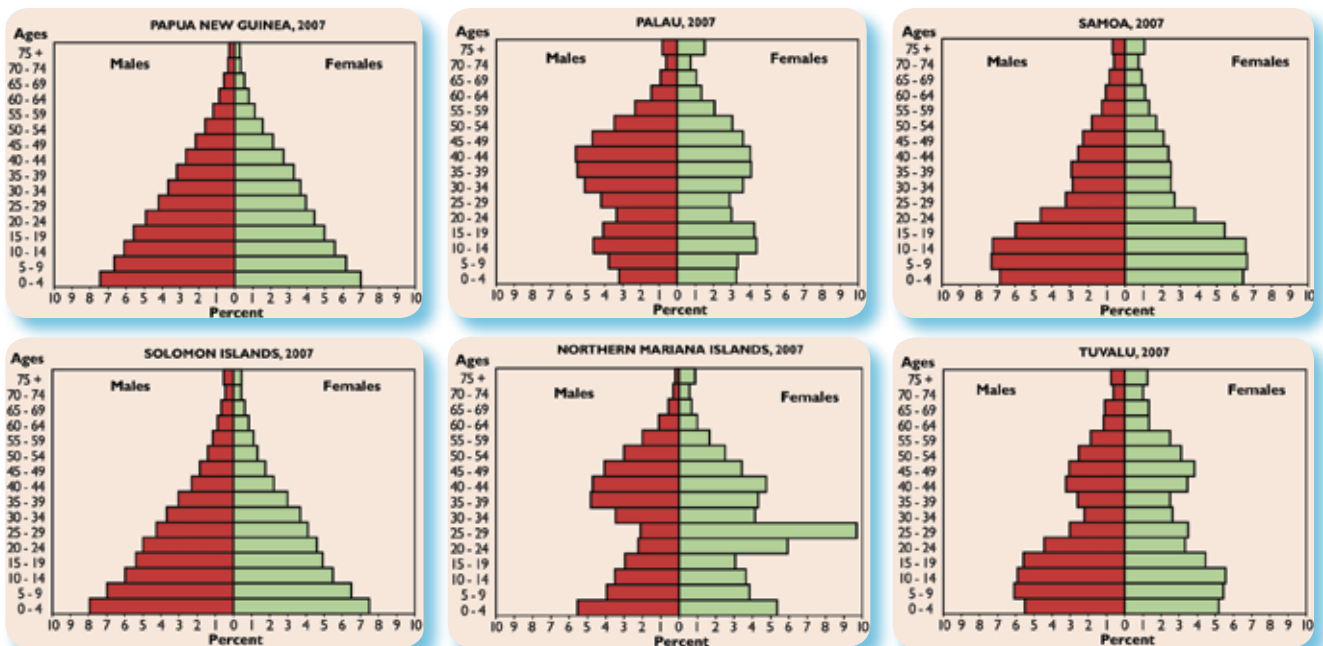
Thinking about

1. Create a pie graph showing the countries of origin of the players featured in the Brumbies photo.
2. Is rugby the national sport for any of the Pacific island countries?
3. What are the benefits to the player, the club and Australia of having players from so many Pacific countries involved in sport?
4. Why might there be so many Pacific islanders playing rugby league, rugby union and netball in Australia?
5. How might sport help promote links between Pacific islanders, and between Pacific islanders and Australians?

Demographics

A way of finding out about the people of a country is to look at a population pyramid which shows the size of the population by sex at different ages. By looking at the shape of population pyramids, you can make inferences about the population of that country. A longer line in the graph means there are more people in that age group. This could be caused by more births or by immigration. A shorter line in the graph means there are fewer people in that age group, and this could be due to a lower birthrate, increased deaths, perhaps due to a traumatic event such as a war, or emigration.

As you can see from the examples below, the shapes of the population pyramids for the Pacific islands can be quite different. The pyramids of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, for example, are typical of a developing country's population where there is a high birthrate, a high death rate, short life expectancy and low emigration. Palau's population pyramid shows a contracting population with a low birthrate, a low death rate and longer life expectancy. The lower numbers in the 20–24 and 25–29 age categories indicate these groups may be working overseas. In the population pyramid of the Northern Mariana Islands, the graph shows a big difference in the ratio of males to females in the 25–29 age category. This is due to the large numbers of female workers from overseas who work in the country's garment industry.



Source: SPC Statistics and Demography Programme 2007

Thinking about

Examine the population pyramids.

- What percentage of Samoan and Tuvaluan girls were under 5 years old in 2007?
- What factors might contribute to there being fewer children in the 5–9 year group than in the 0–4 year group?
- What percentage of Samoan men and women were over 75 in 2007?
- What does this suggest about the life expectancy of women in Samoa?
- How does this compare to the number of men and women over 75 in the Solomon Islands?
- Which age group has the largest percentage of men for Palau? In what years were they born?
- Which country has the largest number of older people?
- How might wealth affect the population pyramid? (Hint: Use the Gross National Income information on pages 10 and 11.)



PNI chart

Positive	Negative	Interesting

Chapter activities

Collecting your thoughts

1. Using information from this chapter and current media, fill out a **PNI chart** about the effects of globalisation on Pacific islanders (consider migration, aid, employment, remittances etc). Write a paragraph about your conclusions resulting from this analysis.
2. Using the information on the following website, create a bar graph of the number of Pacific islanders from a specified country who live in each state or territory of Australia:

www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/summary.htm.

3. Indicate whether you 'strongly agree' (SA), 'agree' (A), are 'undecided' (U), 'disagree' (D) or 'strongly disagree' (SD) with the following statements by placing a cross in the box. Be prepared to explain your answers and give reasons for your opinion.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
People living on Pacific islands are isolated from the cares of the world.					
Pacific islanders are well placed to take advantage of globalisation.					
Pacific island countries have valuable skills for working together to address the impact of globalisation.					
It is important for Australia to provide aid to countries in the Pacific.					
Australians can learn a lot from Pacific islanders.					
Pacific islanders working overseas contribute more than money to their own countries.					
Sport provides many opportunities for Pacific islanders to visit Australia.					
The problem with aid is that sometimes it ends up in the hands of corrupt politicians.					

Taking action

To establish your fellow students' connections with the Pacific, construct a short **survey**. For example, ask if they know anyone who:

- has come to Australia from a Pacific island country
- has been to a Pacific island cultural festival
- has visited any of the countries
- has an artefact from any Pacific island country
- has read about the Pacific islands in the media
- has met a Pacific islander sportsperson or musician.

Using your findings from the survey, describe how students in your class are connected to Pacific island countries.

Alternatively there is a Pacific island **bingo chart** on the accompanying CD-ROM to explore connections.



survey



bingo chart