

Aitutaki Climate Change Activity Report 2025

Workshops & Projects

In December 2024, a comprehensive climate change proposal-writing workshop was conducted in Aitutaki at the Arutanga Community Hall. The two-day workshop focused on building participants' skills in proposal development while strengthening their understanding of potential climate finance opportunities, including funding available through New Zealand's climate change fund.



A key outcome of the workshop was the development of three community-driven climate change project proposals:

1. **Repurposing Waste Project** through composting practices to address drought impacts and enhance household food security.

2. **The Floral Regeneration Proposal**, focused on a coastal restoration tree-planting project.

3. **The Floral Regeneration Project**

focused on promoting safe and effective Tree-pruning practices, with an emphasis on health and safety.

Repurposing Waste – Composting Project

A two-day community composting workshop was conducted on 19–20 May 2025 at Arutanga Hall, commencing at 9:00 am each day. The workshop was designed to strengthen community knowledge and practical skills in composting as a climate change adaptation initiative. Attendance included women and men from the community, as well as students from Primary School, promoting inclusive participation and intergenerational learning.

The workshop covered both theoretical and practical components. Theory sessions introduced participants to the fundamentals of composting and outlined various composting methods suitable for household and community use. These sessions were followed by group discussions that encouraged participants to share local experiences and community-based practices. Practical activities included the assembly of compost bins and demonstrations on their correct use and maintenance.

As part of the project, the Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI) donated 40 composting bins along with supporting materials to complement the

project's objectives. With the support of the Aitutaki agriculture team these resources were distributed to all workshop participants and the Primary School to support ongoing composting practices and reinforce learning outcomes. The workshop concluded with a summary session that reflected on key learnings and encouraged continued application of composting within households and the wider community.



Tree Pruning Project



The tree-pruning project was implemented in two phases. The first phase involved a grant from the Climate Change Office to the Aitutaki Island Council in support of its cyclone readiness programme for the upcoming cyclone season. The official signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the grant took place on 17 September at Ureia Hall during an Aitutaki Island Council meeting and was signed by the Mayor of Aitutaki. Implementation of this phase was carried out by individual villages, with the support from the infrastructure staff, under the management of the Executive Officer (E.O.) and village councillors. The activity was conducted over a two-week period following the tree-pruning workshop.

The second phase of the project consisted of a one-day health and safety awareness workshop, held on 2 October 2025 at Arutanga Hall from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. The workshop aimed to build community knowledge and capacity in safe and sustainable tree-management practices, particularly within the context of climate change. The workshop began with a session on climate change awareness, highlighting the importance of retaining and maintaining significant trees rather than clear-felling.

Participants received training on proper tree maintenance and good pruning techniques, with an emphasis on maintaining tree health. Sessions also covered identifying common tree health problems and appropriate treatment methods.

The workshop included a strong health and safety component, focusing on chainsaw safety, basic saw maintenance, and correct cutting techniques. In addition, participants were trained on the selection and correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce risks and promote safe working practices.

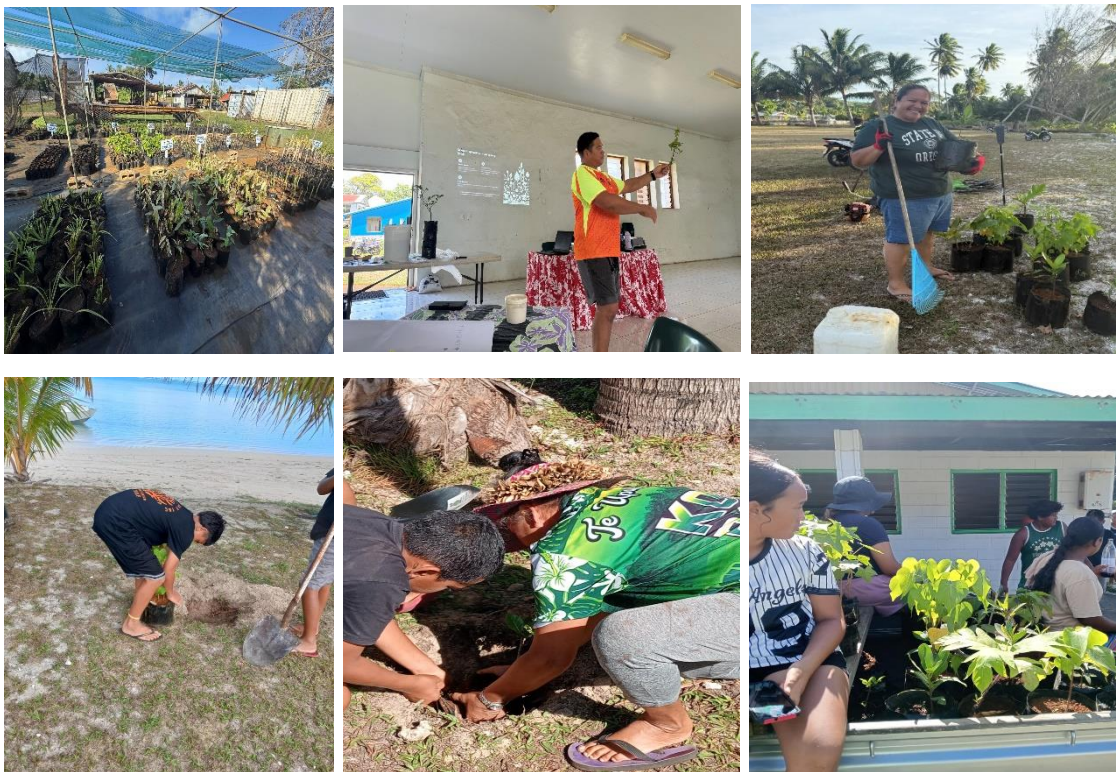


Costal Restoration Tree Planting Project

The Tree Planting Workshop and Coastal Restoration Tree Planting Project was carried out in partnership with the Aitutaki Agriculture Department and the Aitutaki village councilors & community. A community workshop was held at Arutanga Hall on 9 October from 9:00am to 2:00pm, aimed at building community capacity in sustainable tree planting and management.

The workshop covered coastal tree planting methods, nursery management, and plant propagation, with opportunities for participants to engage in group discussions and share experiences. The session concluded with an evaluation, with feedback indicating the workshop was well received and effective in strengthening environmental knowledge and skills.

Following the workshop, planting materials were sourced and provided to the agriculture team to grow 1,000 specified plants. Each village was allocated 100 plants, with the option to request additional plants if wanted. Villages were given flexibility to carry out planting at their own pace, and implementation took place over a two-week period from late November to mid-December.





Aitutaki World Ocean Day

Motu Clean-up — June 4

The programme kicked off with hands-on environmental care: volunteers, including government staff from MMR, NES, Tourism and CCCI cleaned up motu Rakau and motu Tekopua, collecting more than 63 kg of rubbish mostly plastics, bottles and cans. The teamwork demonstrated the local commitment to keeping island motu and beaches cleaned.

Youth Engagement & Cultural Creativity — June 5

Araura college Year 7 and 8 students participated in an interactive education day. They heard from our team on ocean conservation, climate impacts and the value of healthy marine ecosystems. Students formed teams to create and perform chants in Māori celebrating World Ocean Day, making learning deeply cultural and fun. Prizes were awarded, reinforcing enthusiasm and pride.



Primary School Outreach — June 6

Another section of the programme extended to our primary schools, Araura School, Vaitau School and the Seventh-Day Adventist School, where students took part in fun ocean-themed activities such as fishing competitions and interactive sessions designed to spark curiosity about fish, reefs and the broader marine environment.



Cook Island Climate Change Country Program Workshop

The Country Programme provides a national framework to guide climate action across the Cook Islands, but its strength lies in the voices, knowledge, and lived experiences of our Pa Enea communities. On the 25th & 26th of November 2025, stakeholder consultations were held in Aitutaki to create space for open kōrero with the community. These discussions helped unpack what the Country Programme is, explore its 11 priority areas, and reflect on how these priorities connect with local realities, values, and ways of life in Aitutaki.



The insights shared by community members grounded in local knowledge, cultural practice, and everyday experience are used to inform updates to the Country Programme and guide the development of future climate actions and projects. This ensures climate planning is shaped by the Pa Enea, for the Pa Enea, and reflects the

collective responsibility we share to care for our land, lagoon, and future generations.

National Workshops & Activities

Transparency Dialogue: 25th – 28th March 2025

Loss & Damage Dialogue: 17th – 19th April 2025



GCF Dialogue: 6th – 9th May 2025



Write-shop for the Northern Island Schools: 23rd – 24th July 2025



Atiu Island TRAK: 22nd – 26th September 2025



International Workshops

GESI Conference: 10th – 14th February 2025



The week-long GESI conference served as a collaborative forum bringing together Pacific governments, regional organisations, development partners, and key stakeholders to advance gender equality and social inclusion. It provided an opportunity to align national and regional commitments and to prepare collectively for significant global engagements in 2025 and beyond. Discussions also highlighted the intersection between climate change and GESI, recognising that climate impacts disproportionately affect women, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable communities in the Pacific, and that inclusive climate policies and responses are essential to building resilient and equitable societies. The event was attended by the Head of Ministry Ms Anne Herman from Internal Affairs, her colleague Princess Raukete, and myself.

Bio-diversity Conference: 26th – 30th May 2025



In May 2025, representatives from Pacific Small Island Developing States gathered in Apia, Samoa, for a week-long regional workshop focused on protecting and preserving our region's biodiversity. The meeting brought together Pacific governments and partners, and was supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Government of Samoa. The workshop helped countries review and strengthen their national biodiversity plans to ensure they reflect global biodiversity goals and climate commitments. Discussions focused on improving planning processes, strengthening policies, and building better systems to monitor and report on progress. Participants also shared experiences and practical approaches to tracking biodiversity targets, including the use of clearer indicators and improved reporting tools. This will help countries measure progress and better protect their natural resources. A key message throughout the week was the close connection between biodiversity and climate change. Healthy ecosystems—such as forests, reefs, and coastal areas—are essential for protecting communities from climate impacts. At the same time, climate change continues to place pressure on these natural systems, making coordinated and inclusive action even more important. Overall, the workshop strengthened regional cooperation, built technical knowledge, and reaffirmed the Pacific's shared commitment to safeguarding biodiversity for current and future generations.

Adaptation Future Finance Conference: 13th – 16th October 2025

In October 2025, the 8th International Adaptation Futures Conference (AF2025) was held in Christchurch, New Zealand. Hosted by the University of Canterbury in partnership with the United Nations World Adaptation Science Programme (WASP) and other regional and international organisations, the conference is recognised as one of the world's leading events focused on climate change adaptation. The event brought together community leaders, policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and partners from across the globe to share experiences and practical solutions for responding to the impacts of climate change. Over four days, participants engaged in more than 200 sessions, including workshops, panel discussions, field visits, and interactive dialogues. Topics covered included Indigenous leadership, oceans and island resilience, adaptation finance, infrastructure, food and water security, biodiversity, and health and wellbeing. A strong focus was placed on Indigenous and Pacific perspectives, highlighting the

value of traditional knowledge and community-led approaches to climate adaptation. Discussions also explored ways to improve access to climate finance, including innovative funding mechanisms, investment strategies, and insurance solutions to support vulnerable communities, particularly in small island states. With both in-person and online participation, the conference encouraged broad engagement and collaboration. Overall, AF2025 strengthened partnerships, promoted knowledge sharing, and reaffirmed the global commitment to practical and inclusive climate adaptation solutions that support communities now and into the future.

