

## Water Safety Plans for Building Resilience in the Pacific

### Under TA 6551 *Strengthening WASH Practices and Hygiene Behavioral Change in the Pacific*



#### EVENT DETAILS

*Virtual Webinar on Strengthening WASH Practices and Hygiene Behavioral Change in the Pacific: Webinar 4*

#### Water Safety Plans

12 March 2021 | via Zoom

*Organized by the Pacific Department, ADB in partnership with the Pacific Water and Wastewater Association*

#### Speakers

- **Clara Laydon**  
*Principle Process Engineer, Hunter H2O*
- **Clarissa Laulala**  
*Program Manager, Samoa Independent Water Schemes Association*
- **Mosese Nariva**  
*Manager Laboratories and Water Treatment, Water Authority Fiji*
- **Daiana Legalega**  
*Technical Officer Water Safety Plans, Water Authority Fiji*

#### Moderator

- **Dean Taylor**  
*ADB Consultant (Utility Advisor)*

Event recording and resources available [here](#).

The webinar stressed the importance of ensuring safe quality water delivered to consumers during a pandemic situation and discussed how this is supported through the development and implementation of risk-based water safety plans (WSPs). ADB Pacific Department's Deputy Director General, Emma Veve, and the Pacific Water & Wastewater Association CEO Lusia Sefo, gave opening addresses and was followed by presentations from four expert practitioners.

Clara Laydon set the scene with a comprehensive overview of the principles and objectives of a WSP and walked through the process of developing a WSP. Clara also brought to light the many short- and long-term benefits of developing a WSP, which are not just limited to ensuring safe water quality, but can benefit the utility through knowledge gathering and sharing, centralizing information for ease of access, bringing about long-term behavioral change, and increasing resilience of the water supply system to shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

*“ The provision of safe water quality is also arguably one of the most visible services provided by water utilities to their community on an everyday basis outside of pandemic times, so it is all the more important for us to focus on how we can strengthen our operational knowledge, resilience, and share our knowledge with each other.—ADB Pacific Department DDG Emma Veve*

Clarissa Laulala discussed key takeaways from the development and implementation of drinking WSPs for over 54 villages under Samoa's Independent Water Schemes Association. She particularly highlighted challenges and lessons learnt, including maintaining ongoing community engagement, lack of resources due to the quantity of schemes and their small scale, ongoing capacity building requirements for water committees responsible for operations and maintenance, and record keeping.

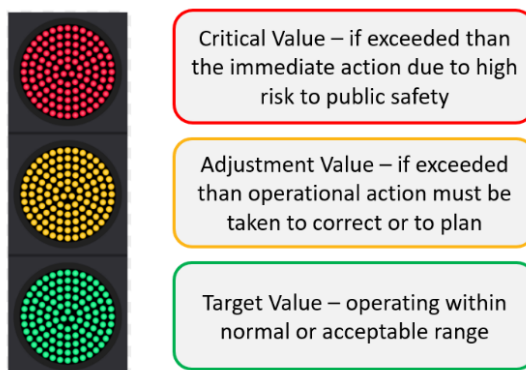
Mosese Nariva and Daiana Legalega shared Water Authority Fiji's six-year journey to embed 55 drinking WSPs in Fiji, and their current task of ensuring the documents are kept relevant, up-to-date, and effective. They emphasized the importance of examining the unique risk for each element of the drinking water supply, as they can change according to catchment surroundings, treatment systems, storage, and distribution.

## LESSONS LEARNT AND EXPERT TIPS

- **Stakeholder engagement across all levels is highly critical to the successful implementation of a water safety plan.** From the enforcement of water related by-laws, to funding of operations and maintenance, and the protection of catchment areas, all stakeholders from community to decision and policy makers need to be involved at all stages of water safety plan development to ensure protection of water quality from catchment to tap.
- **Capacity building for the community to understand their drinking water quality and how to protect it can work to improve health and wellbeing.** A community that understands the importance of restricting activities that could cause contamination around the intake and understands the reasons behind the recommendation to boil all drinking water is more likely to implement these hazard mitigation steps. Understanding the actions of the water utility will also encourage customers to pay their fees.
- **Involve development partners and donors during water safety plan workshops.**

This allows donors to understand the context and complexities of each system and develop a relationship with the utility and community to support the successful implementation of water supply upgrades.

- **Simplified versions of the plans should be provided to operators or village community representatives.** Particularly, clear communication and signage around what the critical control points are, and what actions should be undertaken if a critical or alert level is reached. A traffic light system like the one illustrated below can be a useful tool.



Site assessment with members of the Village Water Committee at Letogo independent water scheme intake.

Source: Independent Water Schemes Association (IWSA).

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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