



LAU iYaubula Festival 2023



CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL
Fiji





The Lau Seascope initiative is a dynamic collaboration uniting government, businesses, local communities, and organizations to enhance the management of natural resources in Fiji's Province of Lau and its surrounding waters. It's not just about land and sea; it's about effective governance at every level – local, national, and regional. Covering a vast area of 335,895 square kilometers, this initiative spans from the mountains to the reefs and out into the ocean, focusing on small islands highly vulnerable to climate change.

This strategy paints a clear picture of the Lau Seascope, outlining a compelling vision, specific goals, measures to reduce threats, objectives, activities, and ways to monitor progress. The vision is shaped by the Masi in Vanua of Lau (the traditional chiefs' forum) and Lau Yaubula Management Support Team (YMST) representatives, reflecting their collective aspirations.

Conservation targets in this strategy cover a wide range of vital areas, including reducing threats, improving natural resources, boosting local communities' well-being, building resilience to climate change, and strengthening the overall environment. Cultural integrity is also a crucial aspect, acknowledging its significance as both a threat and a necessity for protection.

The Lau Seascope Strategy is a roadmap, a call to action, outlining a set of agreed-upon goals and actions to enhance Lau Seascope management over time. It's not just words; it's a plan with specific steps. This strategy guides a committed coalition of partners working together to develop and sustain the Lau Seascope, where culture and nature thrive together.



NU SA LEA BULA VINAKA

It is with immense gratitude that I reflect on the journey of the Lau Seascape Initiative, a project that has been very dear to my heart. The Lau Seascape Initiative birthed out of a request from the Chairperson of the Bose Vanua to Conservation International (CI) to provide guidance to on key environmental challenges. Members of the Bose Vanua were concerned with increasing volume of industrial fishing debris that landed on the islands as well as the unchecked and unsustainable harvest of terrestrial and ocean resources across the islands. At CI we were scotting for an opportunity to contribute to the protection of the last frontier of intact ecosystems as evident from Biodiversity Assessment Reports of expeditions held in 2007 and 2010. I have since witnessed the development of a partnership of deep respect and collaboration, where CI has been fortunate to facilitate the aspirations of the Bose Vanua o Lau.

Our discoveries over the years have zoomed in on the critical importance of the Lau Seascape, not only for the communities within but for all of Fiji. This region is a beacon of hope in a world grappling with environmental challenges. The new species found, the insights into our ocean's health, and the pressing need to protect it; have all reinforced the vital role that nature provides for our wellbeing and our role in preserving Fiji's natural resources and biodiversity. The Yaubula Festival paves the way to fulfilling the Bose Vanua's vision for "Lau to be prosperous and grounded in values of respect and collaborative participation to achieve sustainable regenerative resources by 2030 for current and future generations and to overcome challenges with the guidance of the Almighty God".

A cornerstone of the Lau Seascape Initiative is anchored in the establishment of community-protected areas, demonstrating our deep collaboration with local communities. Initiated by a marine expedition that extended our understanding of the Lau Seascape's vast biodiversity, these endeavours have led to numerous community-driven conservation achievements. Guided by the Bose Vanua and local leaders, these areas are not only environmental safeguards but also a heartfelt commitment to indigenous communities, honouring and preserving their cultural values and traditions. This commitment is integral to our mission, ensuring the harmonious coexistence of these communities' heritage with the Lau Seascape's ecosystems.

As the Vice President of Conservation International's Pacific Island Program and an Indigenous Fijian from the island of Moala in Lau, I am honoured to support the aspirations of the Bose Vanua o Lau and have seen the powerful synergy of local insights, scientific research, and policy implementation in bolstering our work with communities. My heartfelt thanks go to the Bose Vanua o Lau and local leaders, who have been pivotal in this journey, and to all our partners and dedicated individuals contributing to this cause. Together, we are creating a lasting impact on this unique and crucial part of the world – the last frontier of Fiji's unique ecosystems.

As we progress, I hope that the initiative of the Lau Seascape, such as the iYaubula festival, will continue to inspire us, embodying the potential of unity in our mission to protect and celebrate the region's natural and cultural richness.

**With heartfelt appreciation,
Susana Waiqanibete-Tuisese
Vice President Pacific Island Oceans Program,
Conservation International**



MALO A BULA

The Yaubula Festival served as a perfect platform for us to unite and transmit our ancestral wisdom, deeply entwined with the awe-inspiring biodiversity that envelops our cherished islands of Lau.

This festival reflects the deep aspirations of the Bose Vanua o Lau to connect our rich cultural heritage to our environment "Yaubula" to raise awareness of the urgent need to sustainably manage the limited resources on our islands. Sustainable management is a cornerstone of our wellbeing as our forefathers are known to put aside traditional taboo areas through traditional processes and cultures that we are all familiar with. The Yaubula festival served as a unique opportunity for us to come together, bridging generations to share our rich cultural heritage, and showcasing the intersection of culture, sustainable resource management and protection in Lau.

In partnership with Conservation International, we have demonstrated our unwavering commitment to pass on the wisdom of our ancestors, protecting both our cultural legacy and the precious biodiversity of our resources for future generations.

Empowering the younger generation to learn from their elders about the traditions of Lau, and how those traditions intersect with nature conservation, is at the heart of our mission. Lau's pristine beauty and unique culture are gifts we strive to preserve for the benefit of current and future generations.

This festival supports the vision and aspirations of the Bose Vanua to highlight the importance of the environment to supporting our way of life, our culture, traditions, and wellbeing. We hope that the Yaubula Festival, will help us to reflect on the importance of our environment - together, we will ensure that Lau continues to flourish, a lasting legacy for all.

**Malo,
Roko Josefa Cinavilakeba
Roko Sau
Chair, Bose Vanua o Lau**



LIULIU NI BOSENI TIKINA

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who played a part in bringing this book to life. Your dedication and support have been invaluable.

We express our deepest gratitude to the Bose o Vanua Lau, Lau Provincial Council, Committee ni Veika-vakavanua, and the Indigenous community of Lau for their exceptional leadership and invaluable guidance in co-hosting the first ever iYaubula Festival in Fiji.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our Lau Seascape partners and donors for their unwavering support.

Your collective efforts made the event, and subsequently this book possible, and we are immensely grateful for your contributions to the preservation of Lau's natural and cultural heritage.

Author: Conservation International – Fiji Program
Photographers: Dave Lavaki, Sekope Tukana
Design and Layout: Bilitaki Lovo

Copyright Information

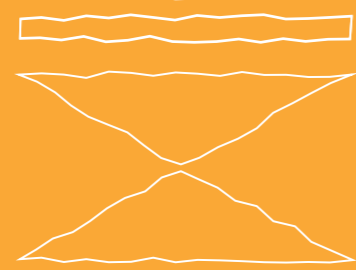
© 2023 by Conservation International

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

For permission requests, please contact: CFijiGeneral@conservation.org



SA MALO A BULA!



I extend my warmest greetings to all those who were part of exploring the essence of the Lau Yaubula Festival and the profound significance it holds.

As the Roko Tui for the Province of the Lau, I've had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the delicate dance between culture and conservation within the Lau Seascape. For years, our collaboration with Conservation International has been instrumental in ensuring that our cultural heritage thrives alongside the preservation of our natural treasures.

The Lau Yaubula Festival was a testament to our commitment to safeguarding both our rich cultural legacy and the pristine environment we call home. It serves as a reminder of the interdependence between our people, our traditions, and the land and sea that sustain us.

Our marine resources are not just a source of sustenance; they are a part of our identity. The health of our coral reefs and the abundance of our fisheries are intrinsically linked to our cultural practices and way of life. As we celebrate our heritage at this festival, we also acknowledge the need to protect these resources for future generations.

Similarly, our land resources are more than just a backdrop to our cultural events. They are the foundation upon which our traditions are built. The lush landscapes of our islands are a reflection of the deep connection we have with nature and the responsibility we bear to protect them.

In this celebration of culture and conservation, we recognize that the two are inseparable. Our culture is rooted in the environment, and our traditions serve as guardians of our land and seascape.

As you explore the pages that follow, may it inspire you to join us in our commitment to protect not only our marine and land resources but also the cultural tapestry that binds us to this remarkable place.

**Malo vakalevu sara,
Jioji T. Kalounivalu
Roko Tui Lau,
Lau Provincial Council**



NOTE FROM MERE LAKEBA

As we reflect on the Lau Yaubula Festival, we must recognize that this celebration was more than just a moment of joy and festivity; it was a pivotal occasion for the sharing of valuable knowledge and the exchange of traditions from the older generation to the present. It served as a means of empowerment for our people, both in the diaspora and the permanent residents of the 13 districts in Lau.

In a world where 90% of the Lauan populace live as diaspora, the Yaubula Festival played a vital role in strengthening kinship ties and reinforcing the spirit and aspirations of family values at the vuvale, tokatoka, mataqali, tikina and yasana level. The convening also served as a reminder that, despite our geographical distances, we are united by our shared heritage and love of one's native home.

The Lau Yaubula Festival reaffirmed the deep connection between culture and the natural world, which is the lifeblood of many indigenous people. Our ancestors have taught us that people need nature to thrive, and this festival beautifully encapsulated this truth. Our culture is intertwined with the land and the ocean, and this symbiotic relationship is eloquently mirrored in the Lau Seascape Strategy, which affirms our commitment to maintaining this delicate balance.

Preserving Lau's cultural integrity is one of the key goals to fulfil under the Lau Seascape Strategy and with the generous support of cherished partners and donors, the festival is a critical platform to safeguarding and strengthening the unique social and cultural values of Lau. Strong collaborations between the Bose Vanua, Lau Provincial Council, Committee ni Veika-vakavanua all played a pivotal role in transforming the Yaubula Festival from a mere dream into a resounding success.

Conservation International is humbled to be the 'partner of choice' to the Vanua o Lau and our commitment goes beyond just implementing project deliverables, it involves a deep dedication to reviving and fostering the cultural elements that underpin our conservation and sustainable development efforts across Lau.

As we look back at the festival, I am deeply encouraged about the future, as I share maternal links to the Lau province and have five loving children who are from Lau; the milestone event is paving the way to safeguarding the Yaubula kei Lau, the culture, the people, and the pristineness of a natural environment that many are proud to call home.

Inspired by the spirit of the Indigenous people of Lau and the support from our various partners and friends of Lau, we stride confidently towards the future, we carry forward the invaluable knowledge and traditions passed down to us, ensuring that the cultural grandeur of Lau and the preservation of our stunning natural world remain at the forefront of our collective efforts.

**Malo vakalevu sara,
Mere Lakeba
Senior Director, Fiji Program and Regional Fisheries
Conservation International**



OVERVIEW

Picture yourself at the heart of the Lau Yaubula Festival, a moment when time slows down, allowing us to immerse ourselves in a world where the abundant natural resources of Lau take center stage, shaping the life and culture of these islands.

Held from June 29th to June 30th, 2023, at Suva's National Gymnasium, this festival was a captivating celebration that beautifully weaved together Indigenous Lau culture, heritage, community, and the need for sustainable management within the Lau Seascape.

As you journey through the pages of this picture book, let your imagination carry you to the vibrant scenes of the festival. Witness the radiant smiles, hear the rhythmic beats of traditional drums and the special meke. Join us in this visual journey where culture and nature demand to coexist to ensure that future generations can bask in the richness of their environment and culture.

Co-organized by the Lau Provincial Office, Matabose ni veika-vakavanua, and Conservation International (CI), with guidance from the Bose Vanua o Lau, this festival stood as a milestone for the Lau community, highlighting their commitment to preserving their rich cultural identity while embracing the bounties of nature.

The festival's inauguration by His Excellency President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere emphasised the paramount importance of safeguarding cultural integrity, a cornerstone of the Lau Seascape Strategy 2018-2030. This echoes Fiji's broader UN Ocean commitments, with the Lau Seascape playing a pivotal role in this grand vision.

Mere Lakeba, Senior Director Fiji Program and Regional Fisheries for CI Fiji, commended the active collaboration of the Vanua o Lau in organizing the Yaubula Festival. She emphasized how this celebration impeccably balances cultural integrity with the urgent call for sustainable conservation and livelihood.

In Lau, tradition and nature share an unbreakable bond, where the ocean isn't just a resource; it's the lifeblood sustaining prosperity and a way of life. Initiatives like the Yaubula Festival play a pivotal role in ensuring that Lau's unique social and cultural values not only endure but thrive, leaving a lasting legacy for present and future generations.

But what connects Indigenous culture so profoundly to nature here in Lau? Consider the exquisite artistry of pandanus mats and magimagi, meticulously woven with craftsmanship passed down through generations. These traditional crafts originate from the abundant pandanus and palm trees found in Lau. It's essential to manage these natural resources sustainably to ensure their availability for future generations. Overharvesting or improper resource management can lead to the depletion of these valuable materials, which are not only essential for cultural heritage but also for livelihoods, serving as construction materials, functional items, and sources of income for local communities.

So as you flip through the colorful pages, remember that this celebration was not just about the past; it was a commitment to preserving our shared heritage for generations to come, ensuring that the harmonious relationship between culture and nature in Lau continues to thrive.

“The Lau Yaubula Day celebration is set at a unique moment in time – as climate change impacts accelerate and the need for rapid economic development rises to support the wellbeing of our people; we have a limited window of time to work towards establishing meaningful mechanisms for safeguarding and protecting our cultural integrity.”

“I was presented the opportunity to peruse your Lau Seascope Strategy 2018-2030, and was deeply concerned with the threatened [red] status of one of the 10 strategic targets - Cultural Integrity. Today’s milestone event is one step towards moving the needle from red to green. The preservation of Cultural Integrity will restore the critical social-cultural elements that are of significant value to guide conservation and sustainable development in Lau.

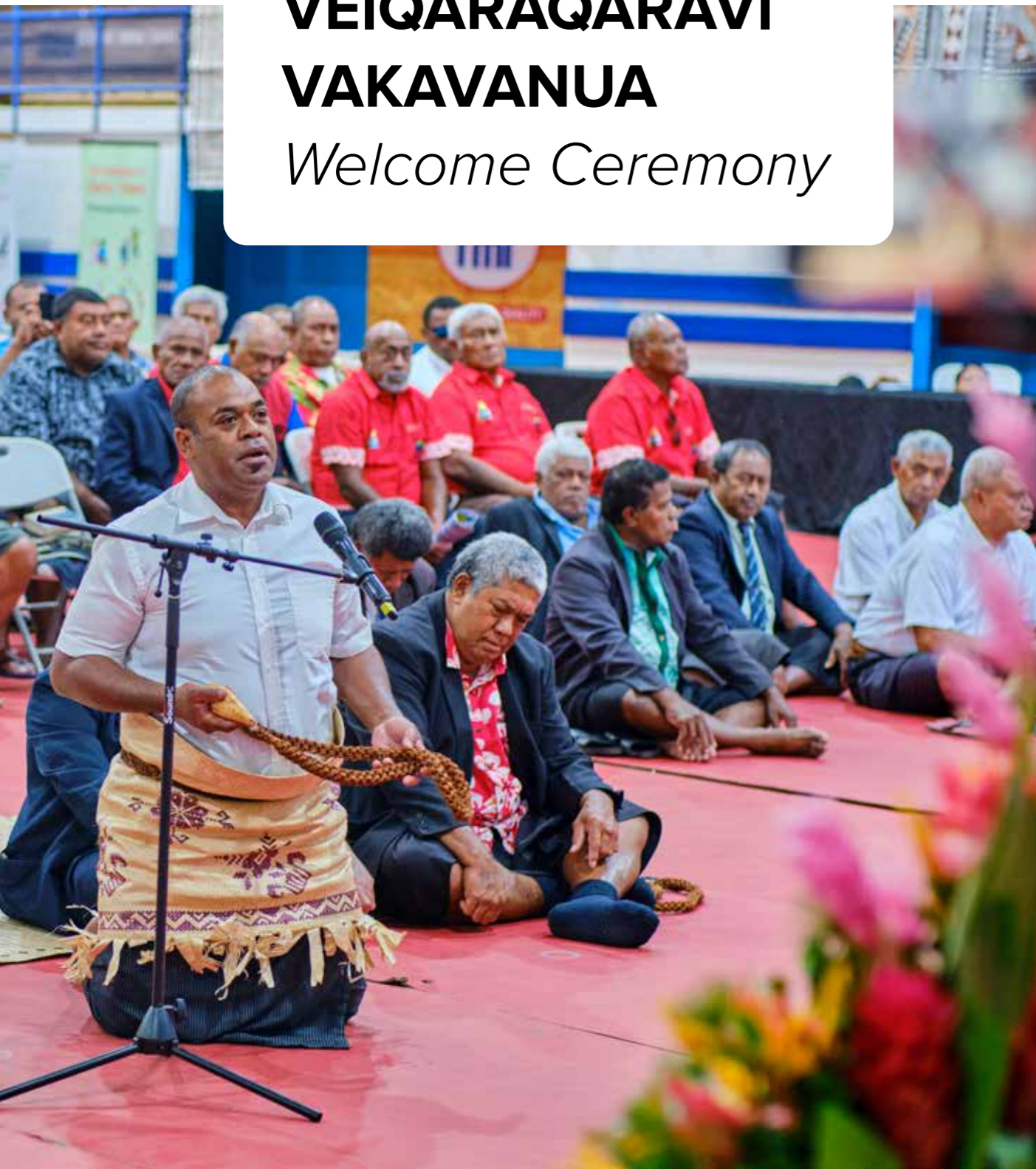
I am humbled that while you strive to deal with the above challenges I am encouraged to see that Lau is contributing and shaping national development to fulfill Fiji’s UN Ocean commitments such as the MPA 30x30 where 8.26% is the contribution of Lau. These national commitments are aligned to the Lau Seascope Strategy.

“In the post-pandemic situation and impact to our national economy and the compounding global economic crisis, it is without a doubt that Lau will need a new way forward grounded in our care for one’s self and integrating your richly embedded cultural diversity of each islands. I am excited to be part of this event, and to celebrate with you the milestone for your collective stewardship of Lau natural resources from the mountain-to reef-to ocean.”

**His Excellency the President
Ratu Wiliame Katonivere**



**VEIQARAQARAVI
VAKAVANUA**
Welcome Ceremony



*Qaloqalovi
Vakamamaca
Sevusevu
Yaqona Vakaturaga
Wase ni Yaqona
Vakaturaga*







CULTURAL PERFORMANCES:

Méké:

Feel the rhythm of tradition in the lively cultural performances at the Lau iYaubula Festival. These spirited displays celebrate the islands' traditions, sharing the beauty of its culture with all who gather to witness.





Yavirau – traditional fish drive method from the island of Totoya. The meke performance also signifies the traditional titles and their respective roles in carrying out this practice.

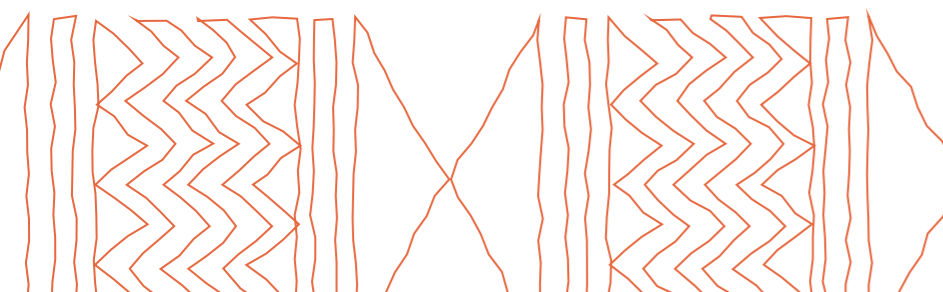
Meke is the traditional style of dance, which is a combination of dance and story-telling through song.





Meke performed by communities of Komo.

A special meke composed for late Lady Maria Vosawale Sukuna – Ratu Sukuna's wife

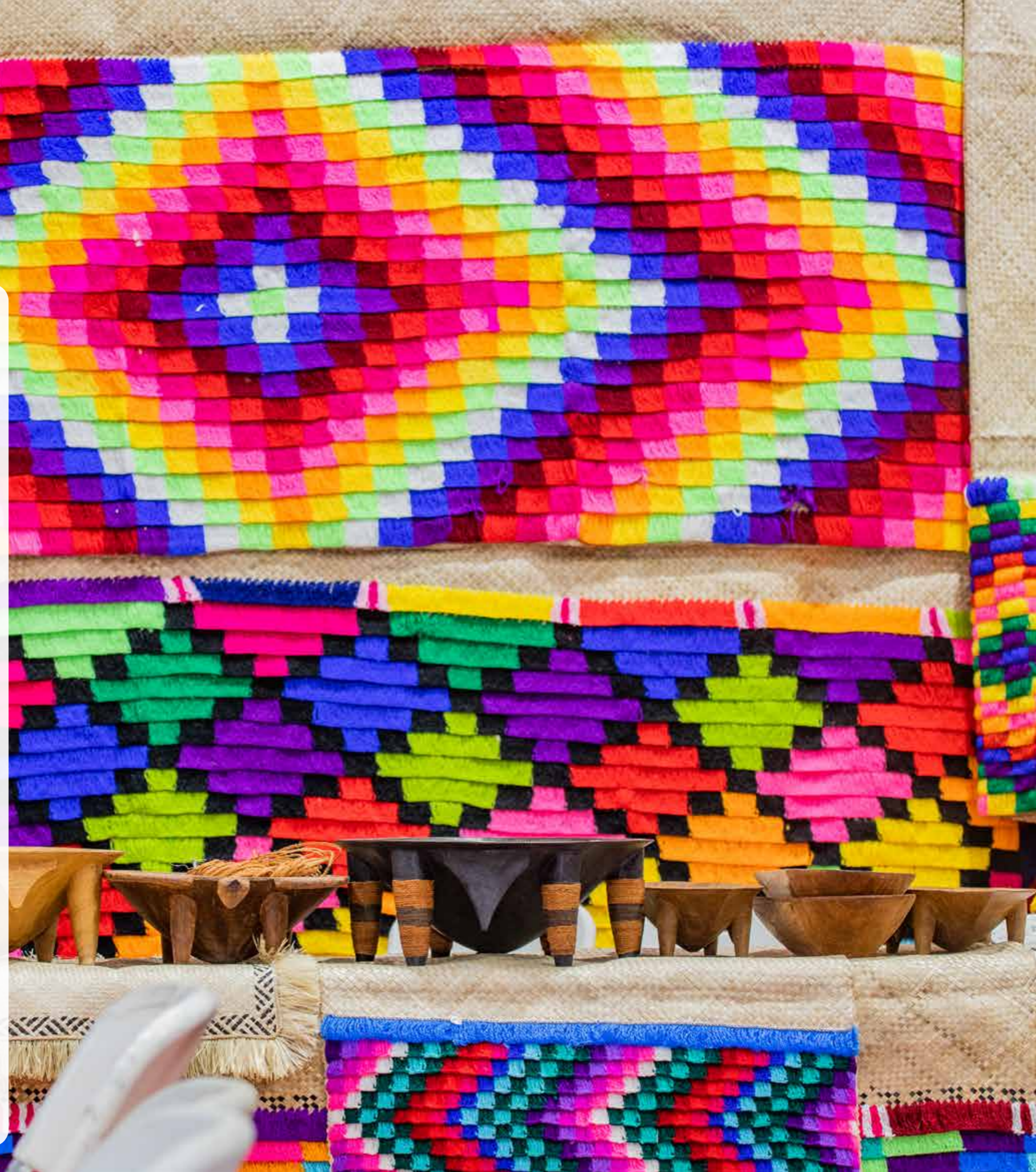


Women of Moce



TRADITIONAL ARTIFACTS

Delve into the bond of nature and culture as seen through traditional artifacts at the Lau Yaubula Festival. In these images, we celebrate the profound connection between people and the natural environment, emphasizing the importance of preservation for generations to come.



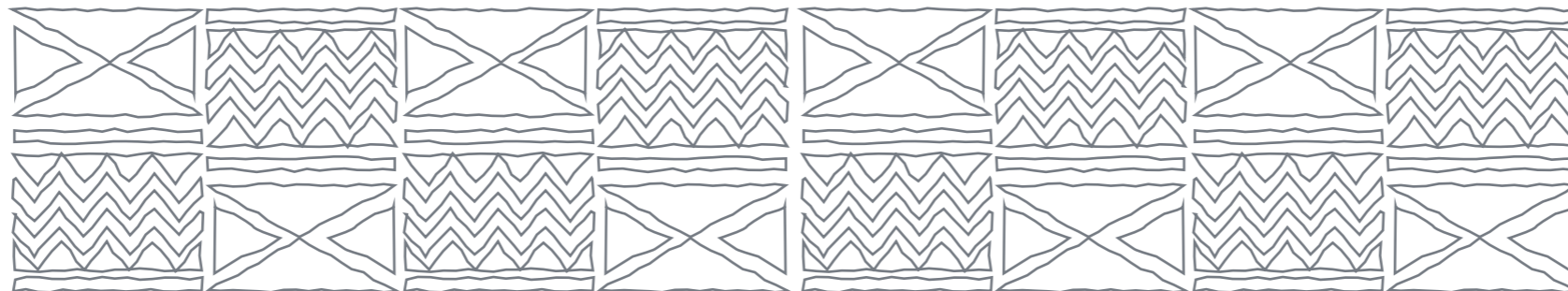


Merewalesi Vakarewa – Mataqali, Lakewa. Tokatoka – Soso - Cicia, Tarukua, Lau

Speciality of Cicia – Loaloa (Black Dye) for the Tapa printing.

At 50, I've discovered Cicia's expertise in 'Masi Printing' and our unique black paint creation. We specialize in crafting sikeci, qereqere, and lauci. Sikeci is delicately broken, strung like beads, and sun-dried. In a 'Kubulolo,' a small hut, we burn the sikeci/lauci.

The black ash, vital for tapa printing, is preserved for years. We, the Cicia Women's Network, are dedicated to preserving these cultural practices. We also lead in safeguarding 'iyau bula' in Vanua' o Cicia





**Epeli Draunidalo Laliniqavoka,
Tarakua, Cicia Lau**

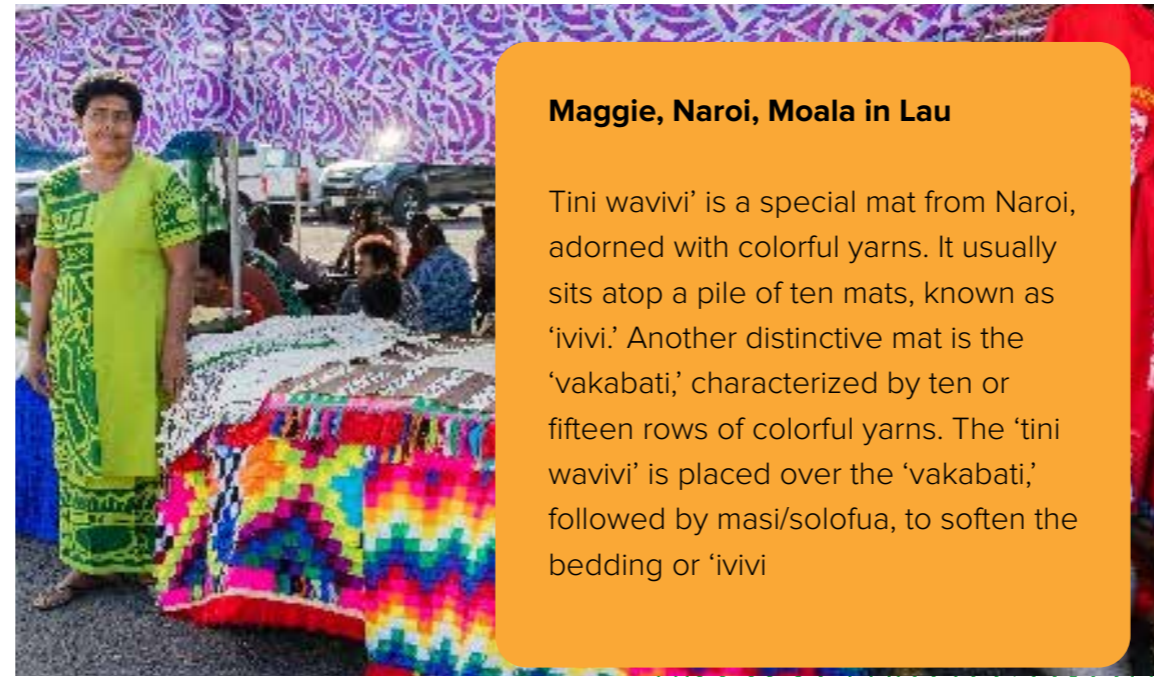
As head of the Cicia Tikina Council for 23 years, I've been dedicated to preserving 'Vanua o Lau's' cultural heritage. Our ancestors believed in respecting the ocean and land's gifts. I advocate for reviving traditional handicrafts and artifacts, now overshadowed by modern technology. Our forefathers skilfully built with magimagi, as seen in Tubou's Methodist Church. I urge Conservation International to continue this annual show, educating our youth about our rich heritage.





Laveni Matetea - Matokana Ono – i – Lau

I am 70 years old. The Yaubula Festival is unique, uniting us Lauans and allowing us to share our identities. Our speciality in Ono-i-Lau is the 'Yaba ni Ono' or 'Tabukaisi,' a special mat originally known as 'Yaba Ni Ono' but renamed by the late Tui Nayau, Ratu Sir Kamisese Tuimacilai Mara. The 'Tabukaisi' tops the 'ivivi' or mat rolls at Lauan functions like weddings and birthdays. Exclusive to Ono-i-Lau women, its weaving is distinct, soft, and fine, incorporating plaited wild hibiscus string. Nowadays, some use store-bought rope to edge the 'Tabukaisi.' Weaving an Ono-i-Lau mat is sacred. It begins with a lovo to acknowledge the start, and during weaving, the mat is concealed to protect it. The process ends with another lovo, marking the 'Tabukaisi's' completion.



Maggie, Naroi, Moala in Lau

'Tini wavivi' is a special mat from Naroi, adorned with colorful yarns. It usually sits atop a pile of ten mats, known as 'ivivi.' Another distinctive mat is the 'vakabati,' characterized by ten or fifteen rows of colorful yarns. The 'tini wavivi' is placed over the 'vakabati,' followed by masi/solofua, to soften the bedding or 'ivivi'



'Ibe Cula' is a special type of mat made by the women of Cicia. It is like a crochet with brightly coloured yarns and designs.

The traditional Fijian cloth, known as “masi” or “tapa” in the Fijian language, is typically made from the inner bark of the paper mulberry tree (*Broussonetia papyrifera*). The process of making masi involves harvesting the bark, soaking it, and then beating it until it becomes thin and flexible. The sheets of beaten bark are then often decorated with traditional designs using natural pigments.

Masi holds cultural significance in Fiji and is used for various purposes, including clothing, ceremonial attire, and as decorative items. The patterns and designs on masi often convey symbolic meanings and may vary depending on the region or purpose for which the masi is created. The production and use of masi continue to be an important aspect of Fijian cultural identity and heritage.



The tanoa is a traditional wooden bowl used in the preparation and serving of kava, a traditional beverage made from the root of the kava plant. The tanoa is a central element in Fijian ceremonies and social gatherings where kava is consumed.

The tanoa is typically made from a hardwood such as vesi or dakua and is characterized by its shallow, wide shape. It often has four legs, giving it stability when placed on the ground. The interior of the tanoa is hollowed out to create a bowl where the kava is prepared.

Kava holds cultural significance in Fiji, and the preparation and consumption of kava are rituals that are deeply ingrained in Fijian society. The tanoa is used in a ceremonial context, and the process of preparing and sharing kava fosters a sense of community and social bonding. The etiquette and rituals associated with the tanoa vary across different regions of Fiji, but the use of this traditional bowl is a common and important cultural practice.



THE LAUAN PEOPLE

At the Lau Yaubula Festival, 13 Tikinas united, creating a mosaic of culture and community. In these images, we glimpse the people of Lau, their unity, traditions, and shared spirit.























Rajjeli Daku, Yarei, Matuku, Lau.

My traditional role is 'vaka' of Matuku. I appreciate this initiative to revive the traditions and cultures of Vanua' o Lau. This is the first of its kind, despite our long history of attending Lau Provincial meetings. It's an excellent way to unite the people from each district (tikina) in Lau, all 13 of them. This event has allowed us to truly get to know each other. In Matuku, we've been preparing for the last seven nights, with each village/mataqali (clan) sharing responsibilities. We practiced the meke (dance) before the big day. It's crucial for the younger generation to be involved; they're invited to sit, watch, learn the songs, and understand the performance. This interaction is how our youth can learn. The meke is a vital part of our culture that needs preservation. We must remember, our culture and society are oral; we learn by observing, listening, and actively participating.



Salote Luma, spokesperson for the village chief (Bete), Narocivo, Nayau.

I believe this function is incredibly valuable—it's a great learning process for us all. We are learning about properly caring for the environment and respecting all living things. Everything is a creation of God, but often, we abuse these gifts through ignorance and extravagance. In Nayau, we have a traditional 'meke' known as 'Veli' that we have practiced for many years. It's crucial that we pass this down to our younger generation before it completely disappears. I am grateful to the Sea Scape for helping to salvage our 'meke' in Nayau. Thanks to their efforts, our Nayau women are also reviving our masi making traditions and passing these skills on to the younger generation.



Semisi Meo – Senior Marine Program Manager - Conservation International

The event aimed to revive Lau's culture, uniting the 72 villages across the islands. These communities hold unique knowledge, artistry, and practices linked to their natural resources. The Chiefs of Lau recognized the need to rebuild these social bonds to appreciate the value of resources for current and future generations. Conservation International's role is to support this cultural exchange, rekindle heritage, and foster sustainable resource management in collaboration with the people of Lau.



Kolinio Raiwaqali – Mata ni Yaubula mai (iYaubula representative) Cicia, Lau

I want to express my gratitude to Conservation International for organizing such a fruitful gathering. I've observed their strong commitment to preserving both the sea and land's wealth. In a workshop held in March 2023, I confirmed that a youth representative, Paula, would succeed me upon my retirement. We showcased handicrafts made from sinnet/magimagi, including 'tawala' (a belt worn by men), and 'fue,' a fan used by men to ward off flies and insects. The women presented 'loaloa' (black powder), traditionally stored in small houses and burned to powder for future use. This black paint, made from lauci, lasts many years. Our grandmothers were skilled in making masi, but that knowledge is fading. Cicia relies on Moce, Nanuka, Nayau, and Oneata for masi production and also excels in planting uvi. Though we're not a large island, we're fortunate to still produce magimagi. At the March workshop, the absence of youth was noted, highlighting a need to encourage young people's involvement in such programs. I am thankful to Conservation International for aiding the Lau Seascape in staging this show, teaching the importance of preserving our cultural heritage to the people of Lau.



Laura-Unise Coriakula Levukaidaku, Matuku, Lau in Fiji, and her mother is Anglo-Celtic Australian. Laura resides in Melbourne.

I am a proud Fijian, finding joy in my journey back to my indigenous roots. I prioritize learning about my Lauan identity, frequently traveling to Fiji for firsthand experiences of the Fijian way of life. It's an honor to authentically learn customs and traditions, including Lauan and Yasayasa meke (traditional dance), tali-ibe (weaving), vavakula (decorating mats with wool), and my Matuku dialect.

My connection to my heritage deepened at the Yaubula Festival. Attending such events and being surrounded by family in Fiji is the best way to stay connected and understand myself as a Fijian woman.

Laura's cultural journey reflects the broader goals of Conservation International's Lau Seascape Strategy, aimed at conserving biodiversity while valuing and including Indigenous cultural traditions and knowledge, much like Laura-Unise's endeavor to learn her Tikina's unique mat style, "Tusi".

"That's something that only our families in Matuku know how to do and it belongs to us. For me, it's about keeping alive these traditions, especially these very unique crafts that's only for our tikina," she said.

In learning to decorate her very own "Tusi", Laura-Unise imparts an important message: to keep traditions like vavakula (decorating the mat) alive, it's important to look after and use the natural resources they rely on in a sustainable way.



Catherine Sophia, Youth Representative, Maloku, Moala.

I see this gathering as a reminder to us the youths about what life once was like in our villages and islands. We the youths of Maloku prepared a 'meke' (dance) to represent the whole island of Moala. I want to thank the LauSeascape for organising this gathering that's helping revive significant aspects of our culture and traditions that are fading away.

CLOSING CEREMONY



Chiefs of 13 Tikina's of Lau with: the Minister of Agriculture and Waterways, Hon. Vatimi Rayalu, the Conservation International Fiji team, members of the Lau Provincial Council, and members of the Diaspora community



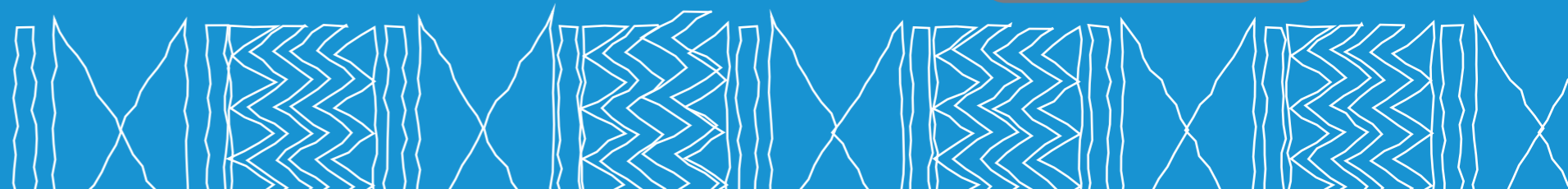
The Government firmly stands in solidarity with the Lau community, extending our support for your vital endeavors. We are deeply committed to preserving the natural resources of the maritime communities within the Lau Seascape. This region's marine life, with its vibrant 80% live coral cover and more than 200 species of hard coral, showcases the richness and diversity of its environmental heritage. Such extraordinary biodiversity, coupled with the unique cultural traditions of the Lau people, is a source of immense pride that demands our collective protection and reverence.

We are profoundly grateful for the partnership with Conservation International and the Bose O Vanua Lau, whose stewardship has been instrumental in safeguarding these invaluable natural and cultural treasures. Our collaborative efforts are key to nurturing and sustaining both these ecological and cultural legacies.

Honorable Vatimi Rayalu
Minister, Minister of Agriculture and Waterways



The Minister for Agriculture and Waterways presents practical gifts, such as tools like wheelbarrows and brushcutters, along with weaving supplies, to the Lau community. These gifts are a gesture of gratitude for their dedicated and sustainable stewardship of the natural resources vital to their livelihood.



At the heart of the Lau Yaubula Festival lies a profound message – the inseparable unity of cultural and ecological heritage within the Lau Seascape. This celebration is a reminder of our duty to preserve not only the region’s natural beauty but also the rich tapestry of traditions that define it.

As we reflect on this event, we recognize that preserving Lau’s cultural and ecological heritage is not just a choice; it’s an obligation to our past, present, and future. The Lau Seascape Initiative (LSI) lights the way toward a sustainable future where culture and conservation go hand in hand.

We invite you to join this journey, to stand with the Lau community in protecting their unique way of life, traditions, and fragile ecosystems. By supporting initiatives like the Lau Seascape Initiative, you help preserve a living treasure for future generations.

Together, we can make a difference, safeguarding the Lau Seascape’s wonders and cultural richness. Let’s embrace this mission, knowing that by preserving the past, we secure a vibrant future for Lau and the world.



 375 Waimanu Rd Suva
 CI FijiGeneral@conservation.org
 +679 3314593
 [conservation.org/projects/the-lau-seascape](https://www.conservation.org/projects/the-lau-seascape)