



An Australian multi-country initiative



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The Fiji Navy in partnership with the Australian government funded Market Development Facility (MDF) and Kenua Fiji officially handed over the hydrographic survey results of the Yasawa-i-rara island anchorage today.

The Australian High Commissioner to Fiji, John Feakes, and Kenua Fiji National Operations Manager, Bradley Bower, officiated the handover of the data received from the acting Chief of Navy Captain, Marika Vosawale.

MDF supported a new Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) between Fiji Navy (responsible for hydrographic mapping in Fiji) and Kenua Fiji, the largest local cruise-ship agent in Fiji, to undertake the hydrographic mapping for the Yasawa-i-rara region, which will facilitate the return of cruise ships to this remote region at the northern tip of the Yasawa islands group.

Australian High Commissioner to Fiji, John Feakes, said Australian Government, through MDF, was pleased to be able to broker this innovative partnership between the Fiji Navy and Kenua. “These new maps will unlock economic activity for remote communities in the Northern Yasawas. Supporting tourism activity across the Fiji islands is a priority for the Fiji Government and I am pleased Australia’s aid program is able to support this in tangible ways.”

The hydrographic survey was undertaken over a three-week period in August this year. The ocean depth data gathered will be used in updating the nautical maps to the required magnification to allow for the safe passage of cruise ships and larger vessels.

MDF Fiji Country Director, Victoria Carter, said MDF has been seeking to support the Fijian Government’s 2021 Tourism Development Plan in several areas, including the development of improved nautical charts with the aim of growing nautical tourism in Fiji. “We are proud to have supported this PPP model which has successfully unlocked Yasawa-i-rara as a cruise ship destination and we look forward to other potential island destinations being mapped to promote more geographic inclusion and livelihood opportunities for cruise tourism in Fiji”.

Acting Commander Navy Marika Vosawale said the PPP is a welcome opportunity for the Fiji Navy to work alongside the private sector to support cruise tourism development, particularly given the critical role it plays in Fiji’s blue economy and national tourism objectives.

“The seaborne trade, cruise liners and yachts require safe sea lines, so it is crucial that hydrographic services provide timely and regular updates for charts and publication. Failure to provide reliable information to maritime traffic could incur severe environmental and economic impacts.”

Kenua Fiji is interested in diversifying the products for its cruise line market. Bradley Bower explained that cruise ship visits have largely been limited to the traditional ports of calls around the main island, currently with only one island stop-off at Kadavu.

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“The updated hydrographic map will re-open the Yasawa-i-rara anchorage, allowing cruise ships to revisit Yasawa-i-rara. Cruise stops in remote island communities will bring much-needed economic benefits. As a result of this particular partnership, six communities in Yasawa-i-rara will benefit from additional income through landing fees and sales of handicrafts.”

MDF’s work in cruise tourism development complements that of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which also launched its report on the Economic Impact Assessment of Cruise Tourism in Fiji today. The report, along with the hydrographic mapping, is one of the key sub-strategies in the Fiji Tourism Development Plan 2021.

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Background

Market Development Facility (MDF)

MDF works with communities, workers, farmers and businesses to reduce poverty. We are active in Fiji, Pakistan, PNG, Sri Lanka and Timor-leste. MDF is funded by the Australian Government and implemented by Palladium, in partnership with Swisscontact.

In Fiji, MDF focuses on developing a growing, diversified and inclusive tourism industry, while also improving the competitiveness of Fiji’s high value agriculture and urban industries. MDF-supported activities will create approximately 689 jobs and increase incomes for 16,500 people until 2021.

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