

# **Pacific Heads of Nursing & Midwifery Meeting**

Réunion des directeurs des soins infirmiers et obstétricaux du Pacifique

## **Eyes Upfront- Eye Care Nurse Training and Workforce Support in the Pacific**

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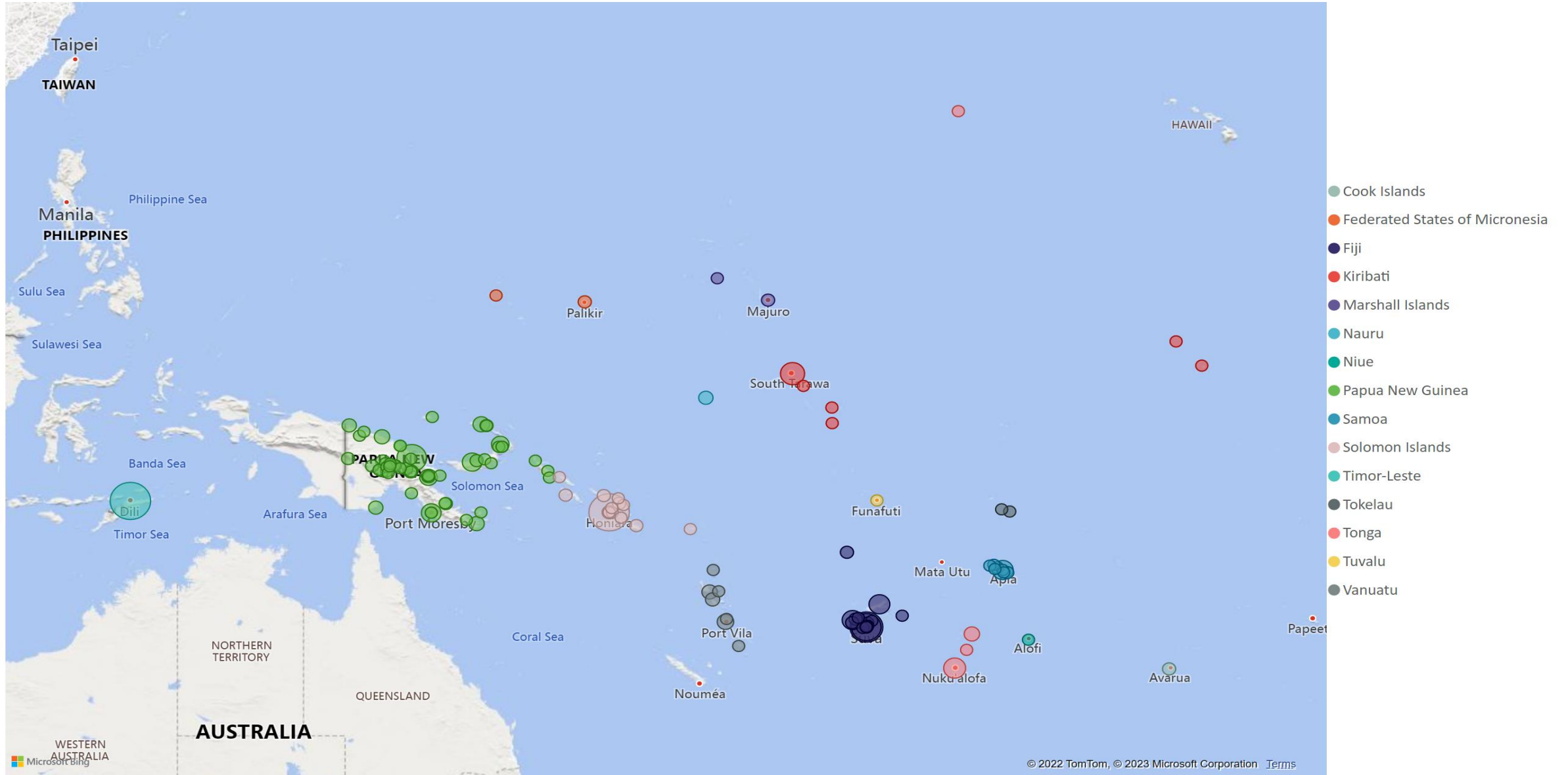
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# 1.0 Background

- The ophthalmic qualifications were developed in response to the growing eye health needs in the Pacific.
- The main causes of visual impairment and blindness in the Pacific are Cataracts, Diabetes Retinopathy and Refractive Error.
- The growing rates of diabetes and diabetic retinopathy meant that the diabetes eye care component was included as part of training in 2017
- In partnership with the Fiji National University (FNU) and the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), the Pacific Eye Institute has trained 206 Ophthalmic personnel consisting of eye doctors, nurses, and technicians. In 2023 there are 15 students enrolled of which 8 are nurses.

# Workforce Support

## Active Graduate Locations



## 2.0 Progress and Achievements

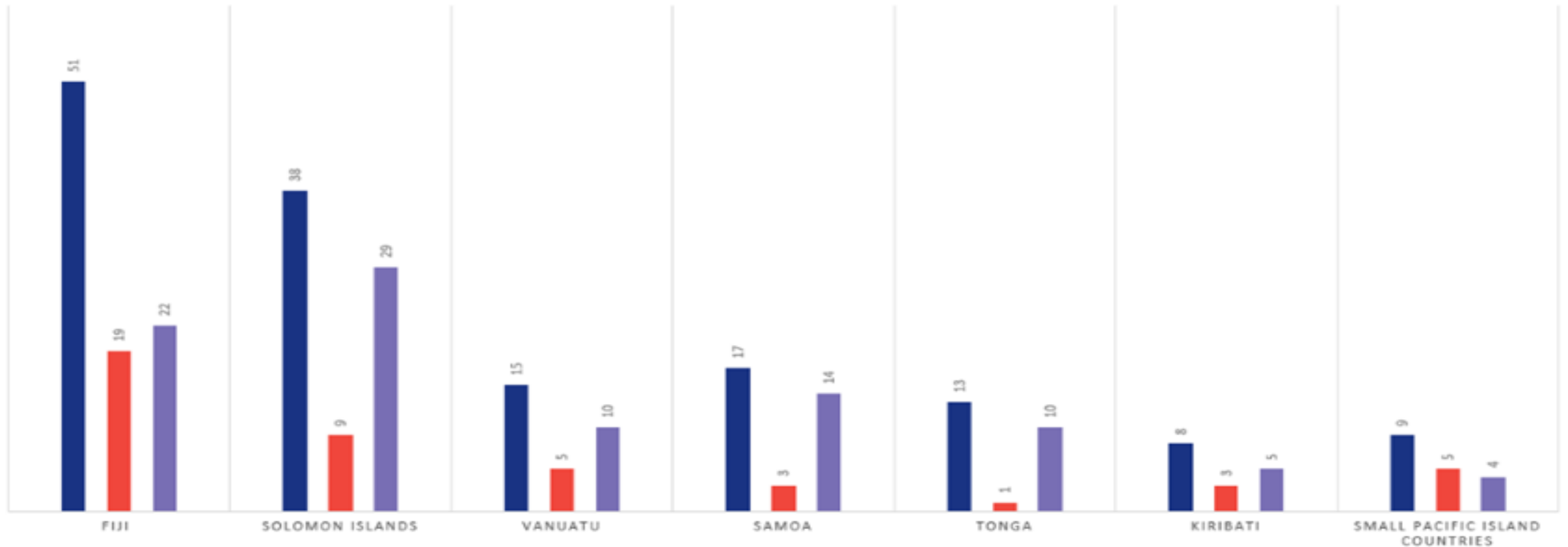
- The development and delivery of eye care nurse qualifications by FNU, with support from Fiji MHMS, is a significant advancement in expanding the national eye health workforce.
- Currently, FNU delivers the Post Graduate Diploma in Eye Care (PGDEC), which holds international recognition and accreditation.
- PGDEC has been reviewed to address the increasing challenge of diabetes and diabetic retinopathy (DR).
- 151 nurses from 11 Pacific Island Countries have been trained as eye care nurses.

# 2.1 Growing eye care nurses in the Pacific

Of the 151 eye care nurses trained, there are now 94 nurses working actively in 11 PICTs delivering eye care services.

## ACTIVE GRADUATES

■ Trained ■ Attritioned ■ Active



# Progress

- 2.2** PGDEC curriculum review to meet changing needs and context
- 2.3** Successful ongoing clinical attachments for eye care nurses (WFS)
- 2.4** Facilitation of primary eye care training by trained eye care nurses
- 2.5** Motivation to remain within the eye health workforce
- 2.6** Strengthening Eye Care Nursing through Clinical Governance

# 3.0 Challenges

While there has been some progress in the training and ongoing professional development of eye care nurses in the Pacific, there remain ongoing barriers:

**3.1** Eye care is still not prioritized as a key health issue, impacting ongoing eye care workforce support

**3.2** Inability to practice eye care due to ongoing nurse attrition

**3.3** Geographical barriers that prevent ongoing and effective eye health workforce support

**3.4** Limited Resources

# 4.1 Recommendation for Government

**4.1.1** Support the growth of the eye health workforce by recognizing eye care nurses through the endorsement of a Scope of Practice for eye care nurses

**4.1.2** Recognize that research and data collection is imperative to identify trends, challenges, and solutions relating to nurse attrition, including eye care nurses.

**4.1.3** Recognize that ongoing workforce support and professional development of nurses, including eye care nurses, is essential in response to the growing attrition rates.



## 4.2 Recommendation for Developing Partners

**4.2.1** Coordinate and mobilize funding for ongoing nurse training, including eye care nurse, workforce support, and professional development in response to the growing nurse attrition.

**4.2.2** Work with Ministries of Health in the procurement and maintenance of equipment in support of workforce development

**4.2.3** Support Ministries of Health to identify areas in digital health that can increase opportunities for ongoing eye health workforce learning and development.

# Vinaka Vakalevu

- Any Questions?

