

# Fighting Pacific poverty



*“Tourists leave more money in the islands than governments”*

New tourism strategies are being developed to fight poverty and foster long-term improvements for communities and businesses in Pacific Island countries.

The Oceania Sustainable Tourism Alliance (OSTA) will gather leaders from the non-governmental and private sector in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, to assist ten Oceania countries. Victoria University is a founding partner in the alliance.

Vice chancellor Professor Elizabeth Harman said VU

was delighted to be part of an initiative which fully included local communities as stakeholders in the development of sustainable tourism in the Pacific Islands.

According to former United Nations executive, LeLaulu, tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry,

“Victoria University's academic depth and wealth of experience in designing effective tourism models and policies will help Pacific island countries define how to best harness tourism to benefit their communities,” he said.

VU's Centre for Tourism and Services Research, led by Professor Leo Jago, will develop innovative tourism approaches and capacity-building training for OSTA countries, which are: Timor-Leste, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau,

Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

LeLaulu said while the island nations of the Pacific were wealthy in natural beauty, tourism held the most promise for accomplishing sustainable development for the region, as it represented the largest voluntary transfer of resources from the 'haves' to the 'have nots' in history.

“Australian tourists leave more money in the Pacific islands than the Australian and New Zealand governments give in development aid, and we want to ensure these visitors feel their holidays can also improve the daily lives of people in these destinations. We all know how destructive non-sustainable tourism can be.”

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