



# **Initiatives to strengthen vector surveillance in the Pacific so as to optimize vector control effectiveness**

Dr Tessa Knox and Dr Amanda Murphy

World Health Organization



# Vector control in Pacific Island Countries (PICs)

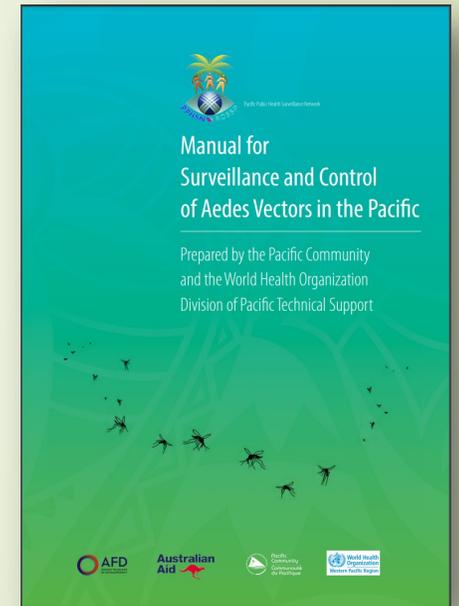
- Malaria is endemic in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu – which together account for 35% of the burden in the WPR
- Outbreaks of arboviruses have increased in frequency, scale and impact
- A challenge underpinning MOHs across the Pacific is the lack of vector control capacity and capability
- Additional support is required to devise strategies and build sustainable capacity to address the ongoing threat of vector-borne diseases
- Some innovative tools have been applied in PICs (eg. Wolbachia) and these also required enhanced skills for monitoring and evaluation
- WHO has partnered with The Pacific Community (SPC), James Cook University and other partners for new initiatives to address this gap

# New manual: **Manual for Surveillance and Control of Aedes vectors in the Pacific**

Goal: to strengthen vector surveillance and control capacities and capabilities in the regional through guidance (to be contextualised)

## Key Sections

1. Aedes vectors and disease transmission in the Pacific
2. Operational priorities for vector surveillance and control
3. Aedes vector surveillance
4. Aedes vector control interventions
5. Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance of vector control
6. Community engagement
7. Risk communication



# New project: Pacific Mosquito Surveillance Strengthening for Impact



Goal: enable **sustainable best practice vector surveillance and control** to reduce vector-borne diseases in Pacific Island countries

## Key Activities

1. Determine vector surveillance and control strengths and needs
2. Develop tailored training program to enhance vector surveillance and control capacity
3. Improve vector data management and use for decision making
4. Provide grants to support operational-research to improve vector surveillance and control
5. Support countries with technical assistance to update country vector surveillance and control plans

Contact person for  
PacMOSSI:



Dr Amanda  
Murphy  
WHO, DPS



# New network: **Pacific Network for Vector Control Response (PN-VCR)**

Goal: supports the implementation of the Global Vector Control Response 2017-2030, and **promotion of best practice vector surveillance and control** throughout the Pacific region.

## Key functions

- Voluntary network of countries and organizations dedicated to reducing the burden and threat of vector-borne diseases in Pacific Island countries.
- Led by the Ministries of Health of PICs (core members)
- Supported by regional research or training institutions with an interest in vector surveillance and control in PICs (allied members).
- Coordinating Focal Point is WHO Division of Pacific Technical Support.

Contact person for PN-VCR:



Dr Tessa Knox  
WHO, Vanuatu



# Anticipated outcomes

1. Opportunities for experience and information sharing for vector surveillance and control enhanced across PICs and with regional partners
2. Vector control needs of PICs identified through Rapid Vector Situation and Needs Assessments
3. Country-specific and evidence-based vector control strategies established or updated, including budgets and resource plans
4. Capacity enhanced for vector surveillance and control through provision of training and mentoring
5. Evidence-based decision making enhanced through better data management and use
6. Availability of technical support and advice provided to guide prioritized prevention and response activities for vector-borne diseases

# COVID-19 challenges in PICs

- ▶ Many PICs have been spared major disease burden from COVID-19 during the pandemic due to strict border measures (eg. pre-travel testing, upon-arrival quarantine in hotels)
- ▶ This may have reduced the importation of other infectious diseases, such as dengue and influenza
- ▶ However,
  - As many PICs rely on tourism there have been major impacts on livelihoods
  - As the health workforce is small in many PICs, a focus on COVID-19 prevention has impacted the continuity of essential health services
- ▶ Vector surveillance and control efforts also need to take into account the focus now on COVID-19 vaccination introduction and scale-up in PICs