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About BMT

BMT Defence and Security (BMT) is a subsidiary of BMT Group, the world's leading independent naval architecture and maritime design company. BMT in Australia currently operates in six states. The company has been operating in Australia since 2005 and has been supporting numerous major defence projects, including the Air Warfare Destroyer platform design support, Amphibious Assault Ship (LHD) operational safety case and Auxiliary Tanker Double hull design.

BMT's work in the Pacific

BMT has been actively engaging with Pacific island nations on matters related to defence, environment and humanitarian relief work.

A recent example of our project in this region is a consultation work on landing craft vessel for the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) Vital PetroCorp. This vessel would contribute to the *Coconut for Life* project, which focuses on the revitalization of the FSM's coconut industry to support the Micronesian people.

BMT also engaged with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assist Samoa with a review of the interdependence of flood mitigation options for the Vaisigano River Catchment, located on the eastern side of the Samoan capital Apia. As part of the Economy Wide Adaptation to Climate Change (EWACC) project, BMT provided an independent review and new integrated 1D/2D model of all the flood mitigation options to enhance climate resilience of the Vaisigano River that was approved by the Green Climate Fund.

Similarly, BMT also assisted with Nadi River flood alleviation project in Fiji, comprising river surveys, flood mapping, recommendations, concept papers and delivering flood alleviation for settlements and businesses on the Nadi River floodplain.

Contributing to Pacific Island Nations

All the projects, whether the focus was on defence or the environment, had a direct and meaningful impact on the day-to-day lives of the local communities and governments in their respective countries.

The FSM *Coconuts for Life* project is reviving the FSM coconut industry by increasing the trade in coconut tree products, as well as the processing, manufacturing, distribution and export of high



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value products. It also allows communities to become less dependent on government and foreign aid and provide long-term opportunities for all sections of society, including youth.

Both the flood mitigation projects in Samoa and Fiji also allow communities susceptible to the potential effects of climate change to focus on their daily livelihoods and enable respective governments to reduce disaster relief expenses. It was estimated in early to mid-2010s, extreme weather events in the Samoan capital Apia resulted in approximately USD 200 million worth of damage during each event.¹

Providing Australian assistance to these regions provides benefit in the enhancement of relationships with the Pacific island nations. These countries will now have long-term and self-sustainable measures to combat their internal issues, reducing reliance on foreign assistance.

The development of their capabilities also results in improved economic activity which would lead to growth in purchasing power. Eventually, these nations would have higher capacity to facilitate more Australian equipment acquisition.

BMT's expertise in defence projects has not only been utilised to develop Pacific Island Nation capabilities to better prepare themselves for defence purposes, but also allowed them to utilise and adapt for the benefit of local economies.

Summary

BMT agrees with the Government's intentions to bridge closer ties with Pacific Island Nations. From BMT's experience, Pacific island nations often adapt equipment and services intended for defence purposes to be used for other activities such as anti-drug operations, fisheries and disaster relief. Closer defence ties will not only benefit the island nations' defence capabilities but can also enhance their general well-being and prosperity.

¹ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp037>