

# KIOA ISLAND

## Community Tourism Development Plan 2023



By 2033, Kioa Island will benefit from tourism that is culturally centred, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and improves the wellbeing of our people.









# Acknowledgement

This Plan was developed and put together with the input and guidance of the Chiefs, Fenua, Kioa Island Council, the Kioa Island Community Organisation (KICO), all the people of Kioa and the Division of Sustainable Tourism of the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO).

The funding support from SPTO and UNDP made this work possible. Fakafetai Lasi Ia for your contribution.



# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Kioa Island Community Tourism Development Plan</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SWOT Analysis</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Resource Analysis</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Relationship to Policy</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Community Needs</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Market Analysis</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Distribution Channels</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Strategic Integration</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Environmental Analysis</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Carrying Capacity</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>38</b>







# Executive Summary

This first Community Tourism Plan for Kioa Island in Fiji sets out the vision, values and goals for the development of small scale community based tourism on the island for the next 10 years 2023–2033. The unique history of Kioa makes it a special destination for deep cultural engagement and learning ideal for those who want to unplug and enjoy the abundance of the land and sea. Tourism is not new on Kioa. It has been operating informally on the island for many years mainly catering for cruise excursions and sporadic day trips from the nearby tourism operators. It is envisioned that **‘By 2033 Kioa Island will benefit from tourism that is culturally centred, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and improve the wellbeing of our people’**. The journey towards achieving the vision will be supported by coordinated effort that unites the community through focused actions to reach the following four Goals for Tourism to:

- **Goal 1:** Provide inclusive and diversified economic benefits for all Kioans
- **Goal 2:** Improve participation and wellbeing of the people of Kioa
- **Goal 3:** Celebrate and safeguard Kioan culture and traditions
- **Goal 4:** Enhance the protection of land and ocean resources and support resilience

Recognising the shared values of Kioa and the infancy status of tourism on the island, achieving the vision and goals of the Plan hinges on effective and adequate resourcing. The success of tourism development on Kioa Island also relies on clear understanding between community members and recognising that tourism planning and development is a fluid process where power dynamics shift from stakeholder to stakeholder. The Plan is not prescriptive but rather simple in nature to help KICO navigate the early stages of tourism development on the island.

Tourism on Kioa will be small scale in nature. Acknowledging its priorities and vulnerabilities, Kioa is making a conscious decision that it is a unique destination that is only for visitors who have respect for its people, culture and environment. Accordingly, the priority actions reflect commitments to the conservation of Kioa’s resources and enhancing visitor experiences. By working together with partners in Fiji and abroad, there is hope that tourism will be a vehicle for positive change for Kioa and visitors that will grace its shores.





SAVUSAVU 7.8 KM

TOGAALA

TALITE

TAVEUNI

SOPO GAALA

KORO SEA

ANASTASIA

MAUGA LAGITOKI



# Introduction

Kioa Island is located at the entrance of Buca Bay in the Cakaudrove Province in Fiji, surrounded by the northern islands off of Vanua Levu. Kioa has steep, wooded volcanic slopes, fertile soils (Edwards, 2012) and picturesque sandy beaches bordering the island. It is about 7 square miles and its mangrove forests are alternated with rocky cliffs (Koch, 1978). The village of Salia is situated in the southern part of the island where it is flat and most accessible.

## History & People

Kioa Island has a rich and unique history. It was purchased in 1946 for 3,015 British Pounds from colonial Fiji on behalf of the people of Vaitupu, the largest island of Tuvalu. In search of better opportunities, the first settlers totalling thirty seven brave men and women arrived on the island on 26 October 1947 (Edwards, 2012). To date, it is estimated that about 500 people live on the island (Voloder, 2022) and is home to a group of Polynesians whose culture and traditions remain alive. In light of its unique past, the people of Kioa are also proud to be considered Fijians. This year marked 75 years anniversary of the settlement where integration with the Fijian community has been evident with much of the population still having strong ties with their home island of Vaitupu. Languages spoken include Tuvaluan, English and Fijian.

## How to Get There

To get to Kioa Island, there are several scheduled flights operating from Nadi International Airport to Savusavu or from Suva to Taveuni where boat transfers can be arranged from small jetties closer to Kioa Island. A 12 hour boat ride from Suva to Savusavu is an alternative to the flight option. Contact must be made with a focal point on the island to ensure smooth transfers prior to travel.







## About Tourism

Whilst Fiji is the biggest tourism destination in the Pacific Island region, having forty percent of the market share, tourism has been informally planned and managed on Kioa Island over the years. Visitors to the island have come mostly from the occasional yachts and locally organised cruises from Denarau Island including sporadic day visits from the nearby tourist operations in Savusavu and Taveuni. No official records have been kept on visitor arrivals and activity although a FJD 25.00 entry fee per passenger is paid to the Kioa Island Council. This fee has not increased since Kioa Island started to receive cruise visitors. Due to the lack of appropriate accommodation and related tourism infrastructure, no visitors have been recorded to have stayed overnight on the island.



# The Kioa Island Community Tourism Development Plan

Culture and Tourism has been identified as Key Priority Area 7 for the Kioa Island Community Organisation Strategic Plan 2022–2027 which was launched in June 2022. Recognising the potential of culture and tourism activities in celebrating and promoting the culture of Kioa while providing viable livelihood opportunities, this first Kioa Island Community Tourism Development Plan aims to provide strategic guidance for KICO, the Council and Fenua (wider community) on how the opportunities available through sustainable tourism can be harnessed.

## Vision

Collectively, the people of Kioa have agreed that it's vision for developing tourism in the next ten years from 2023 – 2033 is such that 'By 2033 Kioa Island will benefit from tourism that is culturally centred, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and improve the wellbeing of our people'. The journey towards achieving the vision will be supported by coordinated effort that unites the community through focused actions to reach the following four Goals for Tourism to:

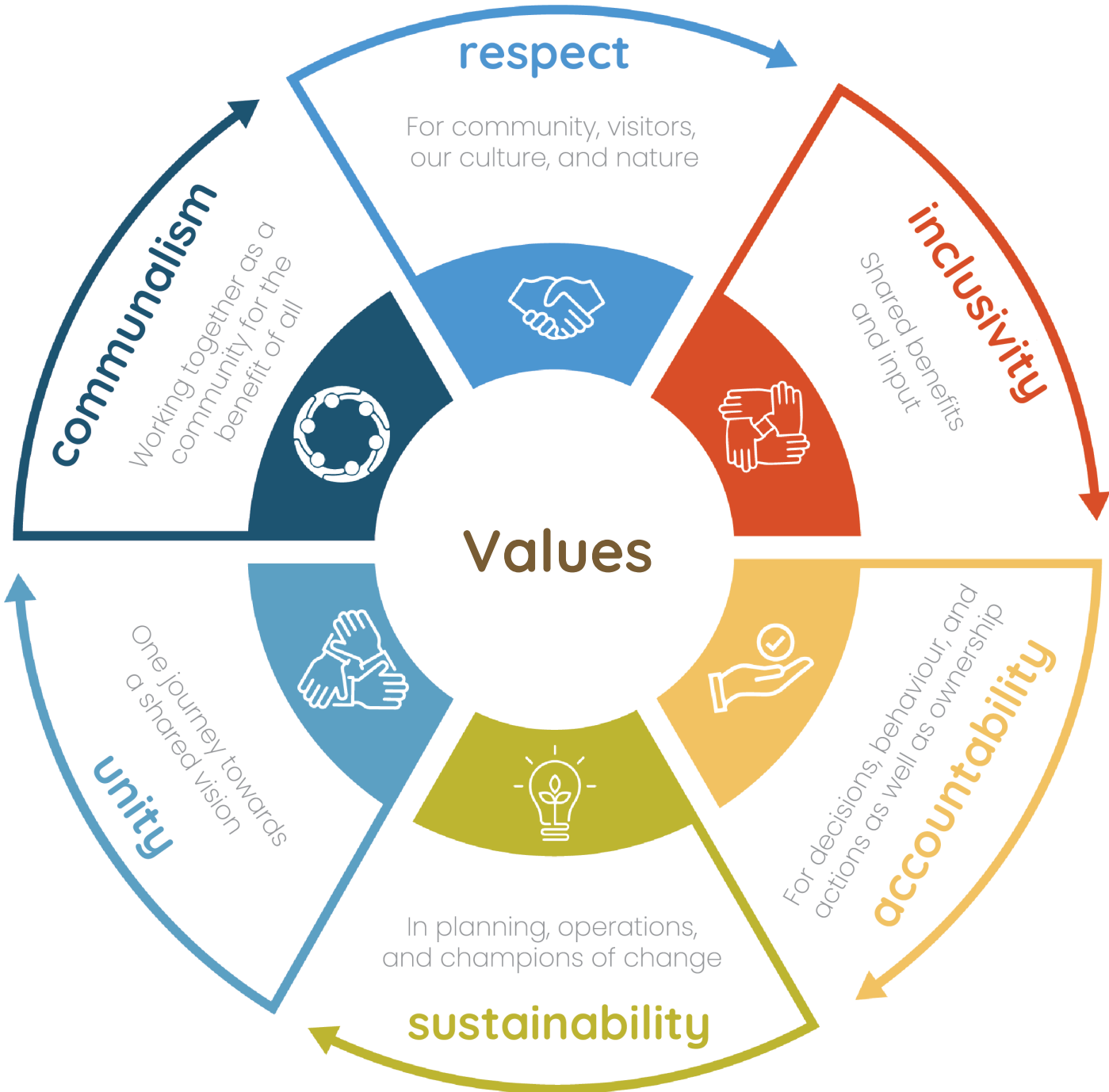
- Goal 1: Provide inclusive and diversified economic benefits for all Kioans
- Goal 2: Improve participation and wellbeing of the people of Kioa
- Goal 3: Celebrate and safeguard Kioan culture and traditions
- Goal 4: Enhance the protection of land and ocean resources and support resilience





The achievement of the vision and goals of the Plan requires a renewed mindset and vision towards shared benefits and responsibility in the way tourism is planned, developed and managed. Learning from the failures of tourism in other parts of Fiji, the Pacific and the world, it is critical that tourism planning is vital for Kioa Island to offset any potential negative impacts (Ruhahen, 2004). Founded on the culture and traditions which govern the way of life on the island, the following values are central in making sustainable tourism work on Kioa.

The vision and goals can be achieved by actively embedding the following values in our day to day activities and tourism planning processes and interactions with visitors:





# SWOT Analysis

In forging a sustainable pathway for Kioa, it is fundamental to reflect on the current situation of Kioa as a tourist destination. As such the following SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis provides context in identifying the strengths and weaknesses and assessing opportunities that will minimize the impact of potential threats which can emerge out of tourism.

## Strengths

- Knowledge of the islands' history
- Traditional knowledge, skills, language and customs still intact
- Unity of the community
- Religious values, as a Christian community
- Good governance
- Location of Kioa, being surrounded by Taveuni and Buca Bay islands off Vanua Levu
- Availability of natural resources
- Preservation of culture
- Uniqueness of Kioa's history, a Tuvaluan community in Fiji
- Strong commitment to handicraft making

## Weaknesses

- Lack of expertise and skills in tourism and hospitality
- Undeveloped infrastructure including water, energy and financial services
- Differences in opinions and visions for tourism
- Health care services under resourced e.g. nursing centre is manned by only one nurse
- No tourist accommodation and adequate facilities and support services available
- Underdeveloped tourism infrastructure and services
- Poor internet and telecommunication services
- High cost of getting to Kioa (add on destination)

## Opportunities

- Building partnerships with the tourism industry and private sector
- Training opportunities
- Partnerships with the Fiji industry, national, regional and international partners
- Enhanced marketing including digital marketing
- Awareness and education on sustainable tourism
- Construction of a handicraft center
- Capitalising on technology
- Linkages between the agriculture and tourism sector
- Improving financial services
- Improving transport accessibility
- Tourism product development

## Threats

- Climate impacts including coastal erosion, food security and safety etc.
- External influence on the Tuvaluan culture
- Future pandemics
- Loss of skills due to urbanization and emigration
- Natural hazards
- Increase in the cost of living due to tourism activities
- Social issues such as drugs and human trafficking, pornography
- Exploitation of natural and cultural resources in the development of tourism
- Global economic crisis







# Resource Analysis

Having established our vision and goals for the sustainable development of tourism, delivering on these by the end of the planning period, hinges on effective and adequate resourcing. It is therefore imperative in the tourism development planning process to conduct a thorough evaluation of the resources required. Recognising the value of looking inwards and assessing existing resources, the following section outlines existing resources which are essential in the development of tourism for Kioa Island.

## Human Resources

Kioa Island today is rich with diverse trades, talents and skillsets. The island has divers, carpenters, nurses, farmers, IT technicians, former police officers, engineers, fishermen, teachers, weavers, plumbers, painters, boat captains, students, mothers, fathers, pastors and spiritual leaders, musicians, singers, dancers, storytellers and former Government workers, all of which are fundamental for tourism.

### 1. Youth

Kioa Island has a healthy youthful population made up of young people under the age of 35 years. They have the potential to be engaged in traditional performances, meet and greet and hospitality services, tour guiding, labour for construction, administration, logistics support, transport services, dive operations, fishing expeditions and hosting agritourism experiences. Most of the young people too are helping their families with catering, cooking traditional food, supporting church activities and leading recreational sports.

### 2. Women

The women are recognised as the heart of the community and households on Kioa. The Kioa Womens Organisation brings together the women under a collective framework to plan and coordinate development programs for the island. Women can contribute to tourism through their roles as artisans and handicraft producers, cooks and caterers, housekeeping and hospitality service providers, masseuse, fishers and diving instructors. The Kioan handicrafts for instance are popular across Fiji and are mostly featured as key products in the Rise beyond the Reef online shop.

### 3. Men

Men are commonly referred to as the strength of the community. Hence the role of men is important in the revival of traditional skills such as building of traditional maneaba or bures, canoe building, carving, fishing, farming and being village advisors on traditional knowledge and protocol. At the leadership level, men hold chiefly roles with some representing the community as Island Council members. Inter-island transport services are operated by men and they are relied upon for the provision of security services. Kioa Island is therefore well resourced in terms of human resource capacity for tourism.



## Physical Resources

Salia village settlement site is a prime residential and communal area for Kioa Island. The island has a Kindergarten and a Primary School. It also has a medical center, a communal multi-purpose hall (Leleti Hall), a solid church building that belongs to the Ekalesia Kerisiano Tuvalu, a newly built Evacuation Center which also can serve as a community conference centre or community guesthouse and an open field for sports and communal activities. The KICO has an office which operates as the administration building and a recently built over the water café operated by the women. As part of ongoing livelihoods development, a community solar powered freezer storage for the fishermen has been refurbished.

## Cultural & Historical Sites

For a one island destination, Kioa Island has a range of historical sites which include Salia Village, the current settlement area. It also has the Lomanikoro which is the Fijian settlement believed to be of the Salia Mataqali (clan) and the Lomaninuku which is believed to be Dakuwaqa's (Fijian shark God), resting place. Kelekula, a potential hiking and trekking site is located inland and where red soil and the place where gold was once found. The Pupapa, a stone God and Naumu an old Fijian fishing site are also noted on the island.

## Natural Sites of Interest

Terrestrial sites which are ideal for nature walks and trekking include the Nasiliva forest, Sakea, Mauga, Cikobia Hill, Tepupapa, Etena, Lagitoki, Kelekula and Vaipuna. Water based activities such as scuba diving, snorkeling and kayaking are ideal at the Loga Kaveti, Nasiriva reed, Pikini and the Pearl farms off Kioa Island.









## Historical and Natural Sites of Interest on Kioa

### 1. Tulipalagi

Overlooking the village, on a rough mountainous terrain, lies the famous 'Tulipalagi Memorial' site.

#### Historical Significance:

According to the English translation, 'tuli' means evicted and *palagi* is the Tuvaluan name for any person of English descent, so literally the name *Tulipalagi* was the location of Mr Kennedy's eviction, where a dispute ensued resulting in his expulsion. It is also where the development stalled because opposing factions refused to participate. A meeting was convened to deliberate on Mr Kennedy's eviction, to which the settlers agreed and issued a 24-hour notice to Mr. Donald Gilbert Kennedy to vacate the island. These events occurred prior to the year 1957.

### 2. Sakea Farm

A farm in the interior that was once allocated to Mr. Nika Taitai, a teacher by profession. He was instrumental in the Educational Institution and early childhood educational development during the settlement's early years.

#### Historical Significance:

"*Sakea*" is the "*point of intersection*", derived from tracks leading to various blocks around the Island that are all connected and intersect. Another important aspect of *Sakea* is it was traditionally a resting ground for the settlers, when venturing to their allocated blocks or when toiling the swampy region

of the *Omaga* for dalo cultivation. There are many memories linked to the farm, embedded in the hearts of early settlers and the name *Sakea* continues to resonate in the minds and hearts of later generations that traverse this trek today.

### 3. Vaimoana

The Fijian name for this location is *Navuavua*.

#### Historical Significance:

It is a traditionally important and historical location. A belief that is rumored and has been passed down generations due to its immense water resources. *Vaimoana*, literally refers to the continuous cycle of water emanating from the springs that flow down to the sea. Highly dense with forest and wild species, it has a rich biodiversity. It is the location of **Mr. Neli Lifuka's Estate**, where his biography was written by **Klaus Friedrich Koch, *Logs in the current of the sea***. Neli Lifuka was born in Vaitupu on May 12, 1909, and died in *Vaimoana* on May 13, 1980. He was laid to rest on a small hill overlooking the farm towards the eastern coast of Vanualevu. He is fondly remembered for his outstanding feats and vision which resulted in the acquisition of Kioa Island.

*Vaimoana* is rumored to be the dwelling place of river goddesses, a belief that is widely narrated amongst villages on Vanualevu, within the proximity of Kioa Island. A journey upstream at night may result in some weird activities: tree branches falling into the river with thunderous splashing; or



a woman sitting leisurely by the branch of a tree staring straight at you, there is no need to panic as it's a usual phenomena when venturing upstream.

## 4. Naba Settlement

### Historical Significance:

The original dwelling place of **Captain William McGowan**. His estate is situated in *Naba* and is home to an edible rare fruit tree, the Mangosteen. The fruit of which resemble apples in size and color, and are remarkably luscious.

The Ministry of Agriculture is not aware that such fruit trees exist in Fiji. Another important aspect of *Naba* is that it was the landing place of the three men commissioned to inspect Kioa Island before habitation. They boarded a launch (boat) from Rabi and disembarked at *Naba* with an entourage of volunteers they met in Suva. The three Elders commissioned by Vaitupu were Neli Lifuka, Gideon Nitz and Lauganiu. They were the first to set foot on Kioa Island to inspect and declare it fit for settlers from Vaitupu.

## 5. Matagi Isthmus

### Historical Significance:

A small piece of land, approximately 500 acres on the "Northern Peninsula" that is attached to the mainland. It takes about 2 to 3 minutes to cross over from the coast on the windward side to the leeward side. Historically this "**ISTHMUS**" has provided the fishermen easy access to fishing grounds on either side, moving to and fro in search of sheltered waters and seasonal fishing grounds. The spectacular sites of "**Matagi**"

beach and its sparkling white sand, the *Kennedy Bay* and its pristine waters are truly marvelous and amazing wonders of God's creative works.

## 6. Malologa

A mountain range that serves as a resting site for the settlers.

### Historical Significance:

Due to the harsh mountainous terrain enroute to *Naba*, their location of activity, early settlers encountered a formidable uphill journey. Being unused to the harsh terrain, the journey was physically exhausting for early settlers as they tried to reach the summit or *Malologa*, resting site. Unaccustomed to the rough physical features of their new home, their thoughts were all cast in the direction of Vaitupu, the low lying atoll, like the islands of their motherland. The name "**Malologa**" is still retained today, in memory of the first settlers. A song composed by Asuelu Fakamua, vividly described the struggles and difficult life the early settlers faced when climbing up this mountain range.

## 7. Lomaninuku Block

Originally known as *Dromoninuku* in Fijian.

### Historical Significance:

Traditional belief in Fiji is that there lies an entrance to a cave, known as "**Dakuwaqa Cove**", situated in *Dromuninuku*. In addition to this highly controversial and superstitious belief, there were two mishaps at sea off *Dromuninuku*, resulting in organized search







parties where civilians and police officers failed miserably to retrieve the bodies of the victims. It remains a mystery to this day. According to stories surrounding these incidents, the indigenous population surmised that the shark god, *Dakuwaqa* was involved because no formalities or rituals were performed to warrant events and activities, such as water skiing, etc. The fear and dread of what occurred still persists in neighboring villages around the coast.

## 8. Qarasaqa Cave

Pupapa Cave.

### Historical Significance:

Historical site of caves used by the early indigenous Fijians. The Fijian name "*Qaranisaqa*" literally translates to "a cave for cooking", which may be linked to Fiji's history of cannibalism when feasting on human flesh was widely practiced and the cave was used for cooking. In the early years of settlement **Mr. Lisati Laupama** built a wooden house-like structure underneath the cave to shelter his family. **Mr. Lisati Laupama** played a significant role in the community's development, so much so that housing projects he initiated which used modern materials for construction bear emblems of his name.

## 9. Lomanikoro Settlement

### Historical Significance:

There are archeological sites with evidence that are still intact linked to the history of Fijian settlement. In caves close to the shore, lies human skeletons that belonged to people

that once inhabited that area.

### Real Life Experience:

A resident, once took a skull home and left it in a shed and no one knew of what had transpired, except for the said individual. In the nights that followed, the head of the household succumb to some of the most frightening experiences in his entire life. A huge iTaukei (native Fijian) man appeared to him in his sleep, demanding whatever was in his house did not belong to him and had to be returned immediately to its proper dwelling place. In the event, petrified and puzzled he took the initiative and questioned members of his family, the person involved confessed and the skull was returned to its original place. These are events that authenticate the historical truth of "*Lomanikoro*", as an ancient village previously settled by indigenous Fijians with artifacts that are exhibited to underscore any reservations to this piece of history. This place is sacred and has tremendous significance to those who once lived there.

## 10. Mount Lagitoki

### Historical Significance:

The site of the "*Emergency Locator Beacon*" installed before the Second World War. An English man was assigned to install ELB on *Mount Lagitoki* in the early 1900s during the Colonial Era. In 2011, a team from the Mineral Resources Department embarked on the island to do maintenance on the *Lagitoki* ELB and install a new beacon on the mountain peak of *Naba*. They produced data that dated back to the first installation of the ELB on the peak of *Lagitoki*, a summit between *Soata* and *Talite*. Trekking down



the mountain range towards the Northern Peninsula, overlooking the majestic bay of Soata, Talite and Matagi, one would be fascinated by the captivating beauty of the sparkling of the white sand with the pristine and tranquil environment of this horse shoe bay.

## 11. Concrete School Building

### Historical Significance:

This is the first voluntary contribution donated through organized fundraising drives to have a proper facility to serve as a classroom. This building was completed in late 1962. As a result of their endless sacrifice and sheer determination, it remains as a monument in memory of the early settlers generous contribution towards Education.

### Evidence of Vaitupu People's Zeal for Education:

In the list of proposal as to military funded projects for upgrading works in Vaitupu, education was the centre of priority. According to **Mr. G. M. White** in his book, A Polynesian community in Fiji, he rightly states to which I quote, *"There were no pressing circumstances to relocate the people of Vaitupu to Kioa as there was adequate land back then, but in my mind it was for a better future"* and what is the key to a better future? Education is the key to a better future. In the early years of the first settlers arrival, a crude shelter was made to educate the young children of Kioa. In 1949, the school of Kioa was first established, even though there was no official recognition of the school by the Government of Fiji, but gradually sacrifices were considered by the efforts of voluntary teachers and the spirit that compelled the

community to construct a building in an accrued piece of land destined for the future generations of Kioa. The school was officially recognized in **1962** and was issued the registration number, **1249**.

## 12. Cape Education

In 1972, a delegation led by Mr. Selu Fagalele embarked on the shores of Kioa Island, Buca Bay.

### Historical Significance:

The mission was to have detail information of developments occurring on the island and the demarcation of a land to expand the school boundary in anticipation of a Secondary School in the future. The area demarcated included the existing school boundary with the land towards the *Pupapa*, to be appropriately reserved for any anticipated Educational purposes. Thus, due to its geographical features, it was given the name **Cape Education**.

## 13. Nika Taitai's Monument

Adjacent to the historic building in the school compound, located in Cape Education.

### Historical Significance:

**Mr. Nika Taitai** is instrumental in the academic development of the children of Kioa in the early years of settlement. Originally a medical personnel, a transition of assignment was necessary, due to the need for a teacher. He attended Nasinu Teacher's College in Suva, graduated and became the first teacher on the Island. He was highly revered for his tireless efforts



and his exceptional art of teaching. Mr. Nika Taitai sadly passed away in 1968. His grave is located in the school compound and a monument serves as memory of his unwavering commitment and dedication to the community, which he served faithfully till his death.

## 14. Kele Kula or Red Soil

Situated on the widest portion of the island.

### Historical Significance:

This desert like region has been rumored to possess precious stones, like diamond and copper, to which samples of particles have been taken for further research. The flat area at the bottom of the hill has been used as a landing for helicopters, so researchers could descend to conduct their studies. The area continues to be used as a picnic spot due to its uniqueness and location in proximity to the famous Vaimoana pools. Standing aloft on the highest point, would enable you to have a glimpse of the *Kennedy Bay* and *Vaimoana* to the west, basking in the distance.

## 15. Naumu

### Historical Significance:

Traditionally known as the transit point between the Tunuloa Clan and Taveuni. The location is known to have sustained natives from the Tunuloa area during fishing excursions due to its abundant marine life. *Naumu* is included in the Golden triangle, a code name used by drug enforcement agents that refers to Tunuloa, Naumu and Taveuni as an area of illegal operation. Due

to its strategic location, Naumu continues to function as a favorite picnic spot and transit point for its proximity to Taveuni, Tunuloa and the island of Rabi to the Northeast. Naumu Estate was the largest copra producer on Kioa, when copra was the major source of revenue.

## 16. Kennedy Bay

Originally known as the "*Nasiriva Bay*".

### Historical Significance:

*Nasiriva Bay* was renamed the *Kennedy Bay*, in memory of **Mr. Donald Gilbert Kennedy**. The name Kennedy resonates in Kioa history, as he was instrumental in the purchase of the island, by suggesting that the money acquired from military related activities would be better off buying something of extraordinary value and that would leave a lasting impression on the minds of the later generations of Vaitupu. The people of Kioa and Vaitupu, are greatly indebted to Mr. Kennedy because of the legacy of academic literacy of the children he taught whilst a teacher in Elisefou. He had a profound impact on their character and many of them went on to become prominent statesmen and highly respected leaders, to which historical records testify to their influence and deeds. Though highly talented and educated, Mr. Kennedy is no saint, as a mere human he is susceptible to make mistake, but irrespective of his flaws, his tireless efforts and sacrifices are greatly acknowledged and embedded in the pages of our history. It was for this ultimate cause, the *Nasiriva Bay* was renamed the **Kennedy Bay**, in memory of the said gentleman.





## Culture & Traditions

The most significant resources possessed by the island of Koa are their strong faith in God and unique Tuvaluan culture and traditions. Brought over from Vaitupu 75 years ago, the Tuvaluan way of life which is lived through its culture of respect for each other, caring for one another, language, songs and dances (fatele), food and cooking methods, weaving and traditional clothing making are all part of the culture that makes Koa stand out from the rest of the Fijian islands.

## Infrastructure

Water catchment on the mountain side provides the main source of water supply for all households. It is the major setback as some households have yet to be connected to the main supply lines. Work is progressing in ensuring that water reaches all households. It was noted during the consultations that tourism cannot happen if water supply and quality is not addressed. Electricity is available through solar and a community diesel generator. There is dire need to improve access to greener and reliable energy supply if tourism is to be developed. Investment and donor support for the improvement of these services will be required.

## Technological

In the area of communication, access to reliable internet connectivity and improved mobile phone services is generally poor. Tourism will require reliable communication services hence major improvements are needed noting that only a small area of the island can access internet connectivity reliably.



# Relationship to Policy

## Community Context

The Kioa Island Community Tourism Development Plan lays out the vision, goals, priorities and actions for the sustainable development of tourism on Kioa. It is not prescriptive but rather simple in nature to help KICO navigate the early stages of tourism development on the island.

## Regional Alignment

At the regional level, the Plan aligns well with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework (PSTPF) and aims to deliver on the regional vision that *'By 2030, the Pacific Islands are empowered by tourism that is resilient, prosperous and inclusive. It improves the wellbeing of our communities, protects, restores and promotes our cultures, islands and ocean ecosystems'* (SPTO, 2021). The Plan also responds to synergies for collective action towards meeting the goals and aspirations of the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy.

## National Linkage

Tourism on Kioa will operate within the legislative and policy frameworks of the Government of Fiji. The Plan acknowledges the efforts of the Fiji Government which are underway in finalising its National Sustainable Tourism Framework which is intended to replace the Fiji Tourism 2021. This is crucial in ensuring consistency in experience and service quality. It also aims to link directly to the Tourism Fiji Sustainable Tourism Plan and related initiatives.

## Global Context

The Plan is another platform for Kioa to elevate community voice and action on climate and social justice issues. It provides a new pathway for Kioa to contribute to key global policy frameworks including the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework amongst others.





# Community Needs

Communities have an increasingly important role in tourism planning and management (Mason, 2008). The success of tourism development on Kioa Island relies on clear understanding between community members and recognising that tourism planning and development is a fluid process where power dynamics shift from stakeholder to stakeholder. For sustainable tourism to improve the wellbeing of the people of Kioa, the following need to be taken into account:

## Economic Benefits

The people of Kioa recognise that tourism development has the potential to provide economic benefits through entrepreneurship opportunities whether it be in the form of accommodation services, food supplies, guiding services, locally made products, or handicrafts. The provision of employment opportunities is amongst the highest of community needs as only a few teachers and nurses are considered those in formal employment on the island. This means the rest of the households live on subsistence fishing and farming, aside from families who engage in entrepreneurship activities which are mainly fishing and handicraft making.

## Non-financial Livelihood Benefits

Strong interest for involvement in planning, development and management of tourism was noted. Looking beyond the financial benefits through greater awareness, education and capacity development opportunities are important to the Kioa Island community. Considering tourism is a new activity for the island, a strong interest in understanding and creating awareness for its positive and negative impacts on the community, culture and environment has been identified as an essential non-financial benefit as well.

## Inclusion & Partnerships

Linked to non-financial benefits, it is imperative that tourism acts as a vehicle to introduce positive change through the establishment of new partnerships amongst the community members themselves, stakeholder groups, and external stakeholders. It is also essential that the Kioa Island community work closely with industry partners in the surrounding Buca Bay area, Taveuni Island and Vanua Levu tourism operators, to attract visitors to the island and encourage purchases of Kioan Made products. This will be essential to growing tourism demand for the island.

Community involvement in the tourism planning and decision making is a vital element for inspiring ownership and buy-in from across the community, especially if tourism is to progress successfully in the coming years. The community recognises that tourism is everyone's business and that the decisions are to be made by community consensus and facilitated for implementation through the Island Council.

This approach to tourism planning and management will put Kioa Island in good stead in providing equal opportunities for members of the community to participate in tourism.





**KATO PACIFIC COMMUNITY CLIMATE FUND**  
**Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration**  
 KIOA ISLAND 7TH - 9TH AUGUST 2023  
 KIOA CLIMATE EMERGENCY



# Market Analysis

Tourism in Kioa will be small scale. Kioa will engage in homestay types of accommodation development. As such, no hotels are expected to be built on the island. Tourism numbers will remain small, hence there is strong resistance to mass tourism. Acknowledging the potential influence visitors will exert on its culture once it opens its shores to the world, there is strong commitment to safeguarding cultural and keeping its natural environment intact for future generations. This clarity of vision is useful in analysing market opportunities for the island.

## Fiji Source Markets

Whilst tourism is market-driven, the approach of Kioa Island is inward facing. It is open to people of all nations, colour and faith. Fiji has a strong Australian, New Zealand, North American and European presence with Asia and the Pacific Islands emerging as key destinations.

## Purpose of Visit & the Ideal Visitor

In analysing Fiji's source markets, it is important to note that the top purpose of visit is holiday. Kioa Island is not for the holiday market. It is rather for the type of visitor that is looking for a unique cultural experience, learning and looking for something different and off the beaten track.





# Special Interest Groups

## 1. Eco tourists

Eco-tourists would find Kioa a place to explore nature, the flora and fauna. The marine ecosystem surrounding the island is well managed and home to abundant marine life.

## 2. Researchers and student groups

The history of Kioa Island is unique and joins two sovereign countries (Fiji and Tuvalu) in respectful co-existence. Researchers and student groups who are also interested in nature, culture, and community development would find Kioa Island a perfect place for learning.

## 3. Writers

The remote and relaxing atmosphere of the island, makes Kioa ideal for writers. There are strategic locations on the island for sound reflection and writing.

## 4. Soft adventures

Soft adventures such as snorkelling, swimming, diving, fishing, and sightseeing by boat can be organised. On the cultural front, participation in handicraft making, todi making, canoe building, learning traditional dances, or planting corals and mangroves are other activities visitors will find engaging. The Kioan handicrafts are popular in Fiji.

## 5. Domestic market

Kioa is an ideal location for Fiji's domestic market. The island offers locals the satisfaction and comfort of being right at home while enjoying Tuvaluan hospitality and traditional cuisine. These potential visitors will fit in with what Kioa offers due to the fact that the island is small, its infrastructure is under-developed and most importantly, that the community do not wish to consider hotel developments. Existing visitors from local cruises and occasional yachters will continue to suit the Kioan experience.

As such, Kioa Island will be targeting visitors who are:

- ✓ Willing to share the Kioan Experience with others
- ✓ Recognise the true value of Kioa and be willing to pay for what Kioa offers
- ✓ Respect the Kioan people, its culture and traditions
- ✓ Friendly and appreciative
- ✓ Environmentally conscious and have respect for nature



# Distribution Channels

## Digital Marketing

As opposed to traditional marketing, Kioa Island marketing campaigns will be targeted and largely digitally driven. The role of KICO is to drive awareness through the use of its website [www.kico.org](http://www.kico.org) as the main online platform for tourism information. The staff of KICO will be tasked with updating the website and it will be the go to online channel for tourism information.

## Social Media

The prominence of social media in today's digital era in marketing and communicating information about products and services and reaching the masses at low cost makes it attractive for tourism marketing. The young people of Kioa are technologically savvy and could provide marketing support if trained and provided with the necessary resources.

## Industry Partnerships

Linking with local industry partnerships in the immediate geographical areas of Taveuni, Buca Bay and Vanua Levu particularly Savusavu and Labasa locales are strategic locations where focus will generate benefits. These partnerships recognise that visitors to these locations have already made it to these northern regions of Fiji and Kioa Island could be a potential add on destination. Aside from those wishing to stay overnight, partnerships for day visits and purchase of Kioan Made products are also possible.

## National & Regional Partnerships

Partnerships with the Government of Fiji through Tourism Fiji and the Ministry of Tourism as well as the Pacific Tourism Organisation who have wider networks will provide further strategic opportunities to effect marketing partnerships for the island once it fully opens its doors to partnerships. KICO has a strong network with Non Government Organisations in Fiji and the wider Pacific region. This is a potential channel for promoting the island to potential visitors who share the values of Kioa.

## Local & International Media

Partnerships with local and international media present opportunities for sharing more information and stories from Kioa. This is useful considering the reach of the media through their global networks. Hosting media familiarisation visits to the island on a regular basis would be a worthwhile investment.





TE MOEMITIIGA



# Strategic Integration

The planning of tourism on Kioa Island is based on a strong commitment to the sustainable development approach. Hall (2000) explains that the strategic planning of tourism must take into account the conservation of resources, enhanced experiences of the visitors and the maximization of the economic, social and environmental returns to stakeholders in the host community. In view of this concept, the following priorities have been defined to advance tourism planning for the island:

## Goal One

### Tourism will provide inclusive economic benefits for all households on Kioa

It is most likely that all households will benefit economically from tourism if the following value adding activities are developed and marketed well as part of the visitor experience. These activities are low cost in nature with little additional investment required and they include: toddy making (juice/syrup from the young coconut), traditional sports, canoeing making, participating in the canoe racing, fishing and taking part in the *Te Fuka* (flotilla welcome), snorkeling and diving, hiking, wood carving, coconut demonstration, weaving, traditional cooking, fishing and farming. The following key areas need to be prioritised to achieve inclusive economic benefits for all.

- ✓ Skills development in Food and Beverage, Social Media Marketing , Hospitality, Communication, Hygiene and Safety
- ✓ Review of yachting and cruise passenger fees and carry out training on pricing and financial management
- ✓ Improve infrastructure and amenities including the health system, public sanitary facilities, handicraft Fale, water and electricity
- ✓ Provide accommodation by encouraging homestays, camping and eco-lodges
- ✓ Improving access to renewable energy options
- ✓ Enhance product and experience development through training and awareness
- ✓ Encourage and expand small business opportunities

## Goal Two

### Tourism will improve the wellbeing of the people of Kioa

It is imperative that tourism is a driver for equality, empowerment of all community members including marginalised groups and community and visitor satisfaction. As such, the following will need to be given priority in the next five years.

- ✓ Share benefits widely amongst households via employment and business opportunities.





- ✓ Engage all sub sectors of the community in planning and management which strengthens community wide ownership of the Kioa tourism experience, boosts interest amongst members of the community to actively participate and have their say in tourism planning and development
- ✓ Enhance community awareness and promotes capacity development through training
- ✓ Improve community access to services including health, water and sanitation, communication, water, energy and waste management
- ✓ Strengthen people to people connectivity and establishes quality relationships amongst community members and between visitors and the community
- ✓ Create awareness and exert behavioural change in visitors

## Goal Three

### Tourism will celebrate and protect Kioan culture and traditions

Culture is central to the people of Kioa influencing decision making and day-to-day activities. Community values are greatly attributed to cultural and religious beliefs. Recognising the significance of culture on the island's way of life, tourism on Kioa Island should respect and enhance opportunities for learning and celebrating Kioan culture and protecting it from potential negative external influence. Priority actions need to focus on the following:

- ✓ Encourage stronger engagement of children and youth in cultural activities in schools and community activities



- ✓ Promote the celebration of Kioan culture through daily practices such as garlanding, dancing, catering, use of traditional costumes and colours, building of traditional houses etc.
- ✓ Document cultural songs, dances, art and actively pass on to younger generations and using tourism as a vehicle to put these into practice.

## Goal Four

### Tourism will enhance the protection of land and ocean resources and support resilience

The environment has sustained the people of Kioa for generations as a major source of livelihood. Noting the triple global crisis of climate change, plastic pollution and biodiversity loss, Kioa acknowledges the importance for sustainable management of our environment upon which tourism depends. Tourism must therefore support protection of land and ocean resources and support resilience efforts against climate, disaster and other crises through:

- ✓ Improved waste management action including the elimination of single use plastics
- ✓ Improved water, sanitation and hygiene practices
- ✓ Monitoring marine activities and in particular fishing taboos and overharvesting
- ✓ Protection of water sources, reduce deforestation and increasing mangrove planting
- ✓ Maintain natural sites, improve access and establish signage and interpretative information
- ✓ Improved monitoring of tourist activities through tour guide training
- ✓ Strengthened coastal protection to stop beach erosion and explore suitable solutions









# Environmental Analysis

## Physical

The physical environment for growing tourism on Kioa is characterised by rugged mountains, deep forests, and vegetation. The interior is undisturbed by development as over 90% of the population reside in Salia village. Kioa is home to Fiji's largest vesi tree plantation which supports the replanting of this tree across the country. Surrounded by pristine waters, Kioa offers magnificent sites for diving and snorkelling. Not far off the shoreline lies the Rainbow Reef which is amongst Fiji's top diving spots. A Fijian entrepreneur is leasing part of Kioa's waters for pearl farming. Aside from its green and lush vegetation, Kioa has several white sandy beaches, historical and cultural sites, ideal for creating a meaningful tourism experience.

## Socio-Cultural

Existing governance systems through Chiefs, Fenua and Island Councils will be the framework under which tourism will be planned, developed and managed. As with other activities on the island, tourism will respect the social systems and relationships between stakeholder groups that govern the day-to-day activities of Kioa. Faith and culture are foundational elements of these social structures, so tourism must be developed with these in mind to avoid interference with the way of life, culture and values of the people of Kioa.

## Economic

Subsistence living has sustained Kioa for generations. Economic returns from tourism are therefore not expected to overturn the harmony amongst community members and their environment. Economic returns sought through tourism is therefore small scale in nature, locally owned and managed to keep the benefits within the community. Consensus has been reached for the development of homestays and guesthouses instead of the development of hotels.



# Carrying Capacity

Carrying capacity is defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation as the “maximum number of persons which could visit a location within a given period such that local environmental, physical, economical, socio-cultural characteristics are not compromised and without reducing tourist satisfaction” (WTO, 1999). As a small island destination, Kioa Island must take a precautionary approach to tourism planning and management. Carrying capacity must be determined based on several factors including how many visitors can visit the island or a particular site on the island, at any given time as accepting too many can cause detrimental impact to the people, culture and environment.

## Social

The impact of tourism development on social systems such as the culture, way of life, behaviour and interactions needs to be at the forefront of tourism planning. Carrying capacity can easily be about limiting numbers, however assessing the potential social impacts of tourism on the entire social system within the community is paramount as these tend to creep in over time. Too many visitors can put pressure on services and lead to situations where the community may not have enough time to rest, enjoy normal family time and attend to important family, church and village events. Long hours spent by employees at work may lead to disruptions in family life. The influx of visitors also has the potential of bringing in western behaviour that will harm the Kioan culture and way of life. Stressing the importance of respect for island protocols and customs must be effectively communicated before and during visits to the island.

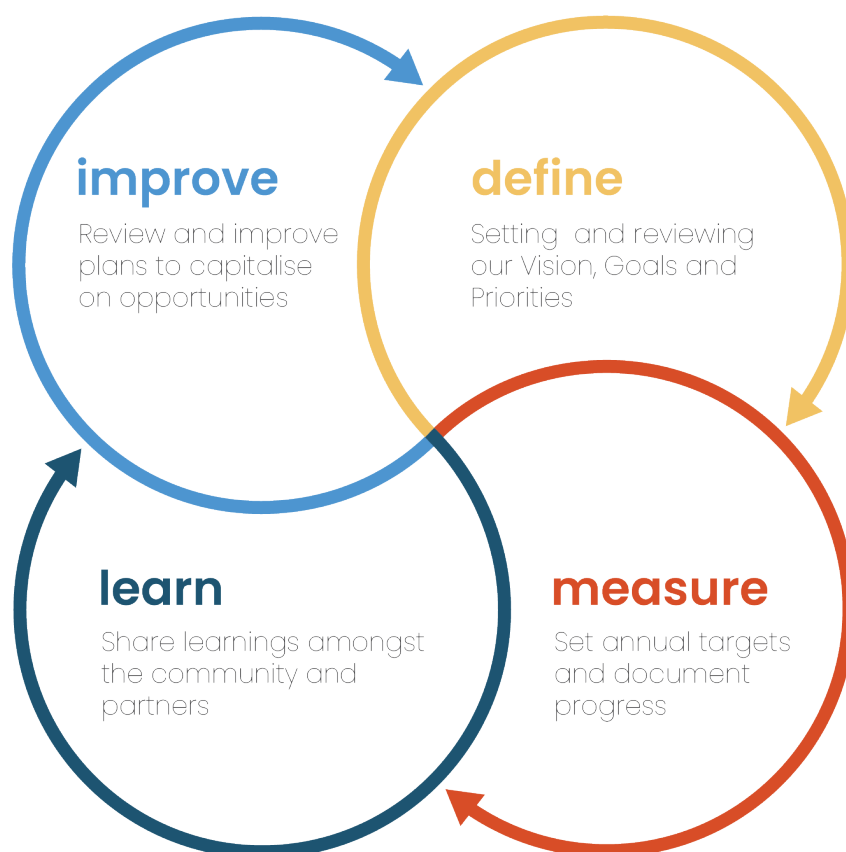
## Physical

The pressure on resources such as water, electricity, facilities and access to beaches, natural and cultural sites would be greatly impacted if tourism numbers grow exponentially and out of hand. Waste generated and overcrowding on a small island can deter visitors as well as locals and stakes will be high if the physical pressures lead to a collapse in the social structures that govern Kioa Island. Planning and management of tourism must therefore be exercised effectively at all times.



# Monitoring, Learning, & Evaluation

Successfully achieving the vision of the Plan is dependent on an effective monitoring, evaluation and learning framework. KICO will take the lead role in ensuring this important process is implemented and that progress is reported, challenges addressed and opportunities harnessed during the planning period. This process will be supported by the Island Council and all partners of Kioa Island. The diagram below illustrates the intrinsic relationship between the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning functionalities of the framework. A Mid term review for the plan is required half way through the planning period in 2028 with the End of Planning Review in 2033 in preparation for the next planning period. The annual planning process will be an opportunity to review and update actions to suit.



As a new economic tool for the island, tourism will be seen not through the lens of rapid economic development. It will remain small scale because the people who live here genuinely believe in taking care of nature. The Kioan culture will set us apart from all of Fiji and the world and there is nowhere like us. Through genuine partnerships at all levels, we remain positive that Kioa Island will be a sought after destination that should be on anyone's bucket list.



# References

Hall, C. M. (2000) *Tourism Planning: Policies, Processes and Relationships*: Harlow: Pearson Education

Koch, F (1978), *Logs in the current of the sea*, Canberra: Australian National University Press  
Mason, P. (2008), *Tourism impacts, planning and management* (2nd ed). London: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Pacific Tourism Organisation (2021), *Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework*  
Lisa Ruhanen (2004). Strategic planning for local tourism destinations: an analysis of tourism plans, *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, 1:3, 239-253, DOI: 10.1080/1479053042000314502

United Nations Environment Programme (2009), *Sustainable Coastal Tourism – an integrated planning and management approach*

World Tourism Organisation (1999). *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism for tourism*. Proceedings of 13th Session of the General Assembly: Santiago Chile

Fiji Government (2017), *The Nations Business*

Edwards, J (2012) *The Bula Bulletin*, pg 1

KICO website <https://www.kioaisland.org/>









**PACIFIC TOURISM  
ORGANISATION**

**For more information, contact us**



**[www.kioaisland.org](http://www.kioaisland.org)**



**[project\\_manager@kioaisland.org](mailto:project_manager@kioaisland.org)**



**Kioa Island Community Organisation**