

Editorial

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is the premier provider of tertiary education in the Pacific region and an international centre of excellence for teaching, research consulting and training on all aspects of Pacific culture, environment and human resource development needs. **The South Pacific Journal of Natural and Applied Sciences (SPJNAS)** is USP's open access, peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary, international scientific journal that publishes original research findings, review articles and short communications in the broad field of natural and applied sciences. The journal focusses on academic excellence, research rigidity, knowledge distribution, and reciprocated scholarly efforts in order to endorse theoretical, experimental and applied research at national and international levels, especially in the South Pacific region.

The present volume of **SPJNAS** contains six authoritative research papers on topics of both fundamental and applied interest that are summarized as follows.

1. Proper postharvest handling of highly perishable products is very important in maintaining product quality and reducing waste loss. Lako *et al.* have examined postharvest handling practices and demonstrate the importance of time and temperature control at postharvest handling of fish in tropical environments.
2. The problem of increased solid waste dumping due to urbanization has become an important policy issue in developing countries. Chandra *et al.* report the first screening for copper, zinc, lead, nickel and cadmium in the Lami municipal disposal facility in Suva, Fiji; they suggest a strategy to cope with the uncontrolled dumping of waste and the associated environmental problems.
3. As land resource is scarce and its access is controlled by a land tenure system, the dependency of rural coastal people on the nearby open-access, common sea resources for their sustainability is increasing. Loumoli and Bhati investigate the relative contribution of seaweed harvesting in various work combinations undertaken by coastal Fijian communities for generating household income and employment.
4. Statistical tools are *sine-qua-non* for quantitative research analysis. Athar *et al.* have obtained probability density function of single concomitant and joint probability density function of two concomitants of dual generalized order statistics from bivariate Burr II distribution. They have also derived expressions for moment generating function and cumulant generating function.
5. Deeply weathered profiles and extensive sediment and nutrient loss is common in humid tropical areas as rapid weathering of exposed rocks is promoted and accelerated by high temperature and rainfall conditions. Morrison and Bonato have examined the weathering and soil genesis in the Nasinu Basalt, South-East Viti Levu, Fiji.
6. Due to over exploitation, the stock of renewable marine resources is rapidly diminishing worldwide. In their survey, Miller *et al.* have found that the number of endangered Oceania humpback whales in Fijian waters has significantly declined and is very low. They suggest that there is a need for controlling intensive commercial whaling operations in the area.

I hope that readers of **SPJNAS** will find these articles of great value. It is a final tribute to the work done on Fiji Geosystems by (the late) Fr. John Bonato, Senior Lecturer in Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.

I would like to thank all the authors who have contributed their research papers to this volume of **SPJNAS**, and to acknowledge the associate editors and the reviewers for their time, and kind

cooperation in maintaining the high standard of the journal. I wish to acknowledge the continuing support of the Dean of the Faculty of the Science, Technology and Environment, Assoc. Prof. Anjeela Jokhan, Assoc. Dean, Research & Graduate Affairs, Assoc. Prof. Sushil Kumar; and I thank Ms. Prayna Maharaj for her expertise in formatting all the papers, inserting corrections and preparing the table of contents, and also to Dr Helen Malin (CSIRO Publishing) and Dr Jagdish P. Bhati (SAFT, Samoa) for their help in various ways. Finally, my deepest gratitude to the Vice Chancellor & President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra for signing the MoU with CSIRO Publishing to integrate **SPJNAS** into its portal and make it an open access journal whereby the research findings of the contributing scientists are readily accessible.

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