



April ~ June 2021

**Vision:** To be recognized as a world class regional Customs Organization that collaborates with regional and global partners to deliver high quality services and sustainable solutions to Member Administrations

# OCEANIA CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTER

## FOREWORD



Dear Readers,

This quarter we delivered the E-Commerce Workshop which highlighted the need to work closer with postal agencies and have proper revenue thresholds and risk managed intervention strategies incorporated into business practices for Customs agencies. We also ran the Criminal Business Disruption Workshop that saw the need to interagency cooperation at the border and the need to ensure intelligence is collected and provided to the transnational crime unit, we saw the strength of working with the immigration agencies and financial intelligence units and saw the impact that the PTCCC has in providing an "overwatch" for regional criminal activity in the Pacific.

What both these workshops highlighted was the need to act collectively for border security, a theme that is manifested politically through the BOE declaration and Blue Pacific partnership strategies. We also note that our members in the North Pacific are beginning to shift to a more modern adaptation of customs processes with introduction of the HS commodity coding system, single window and ASYCUDA gaining political support and transitioning into action at a national level for us to engage in.

The collaboration at the border will ensure single window concepts will be realized in the Pacific and Vanuatu demonstrated that capability during the workshops and then commenced its partnership with the Post office in a manner that signals compliance to international best practice. I would urge all members to look carefully at what Vanuatu has been able to achieve by having technology and law, government and private sector support all come together for a common purpose in trade facilitation and border security. If Vanuatu can do it, so can you and we are there to assist.

Before I sign off, I must thank the staff of OCO Secretariat for arranging the workshops as the feedback from members and external participants has been outstanding. The staff are now in the process of developing a workshop for Covid 19 best practice at the border and working closely with WCO so we can get the best examples from around the world on how to manage the border during these challenging times.

God Bless and keep safe.

**Richard Brenan**  
Head of Secretariat

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## OUR MEMBERS





## OCO Members continues to receive capacity building support despite COVID-19

By Mrs. Irma Daphney Stone, OCO Operations Manager

The second wave of the COVID 19 pandemic started in Fiji at the beginning of this quarter and we had experienced lockdowns in various parts of the country. Despite this challenge, the Secretariat's Operation team continues to provide for our member countries capacity building needs to ensure their duties such as revenue collection, trade facilitation and border security are maintained.

While the immediate priority is to manage the virus, we are also conscious on other threats such as COVID-19 crime. Experiences from across the globe have shown us that the pandemic has led to an increase in fraudulent activities which include the advertisement and sale of counterfeit treatment and products and the use of pleasure craft for illicit activities. This is why OCO continues to work with ABF to ensure members are trained on the OCO Pacific Small Craft App (OPSCA), with the increase in usage of the App by member countries we hope to share timely information in a secure manner. The Regional Coordinator Role in the national administration also contributes to ensure sustainability of the initiative.

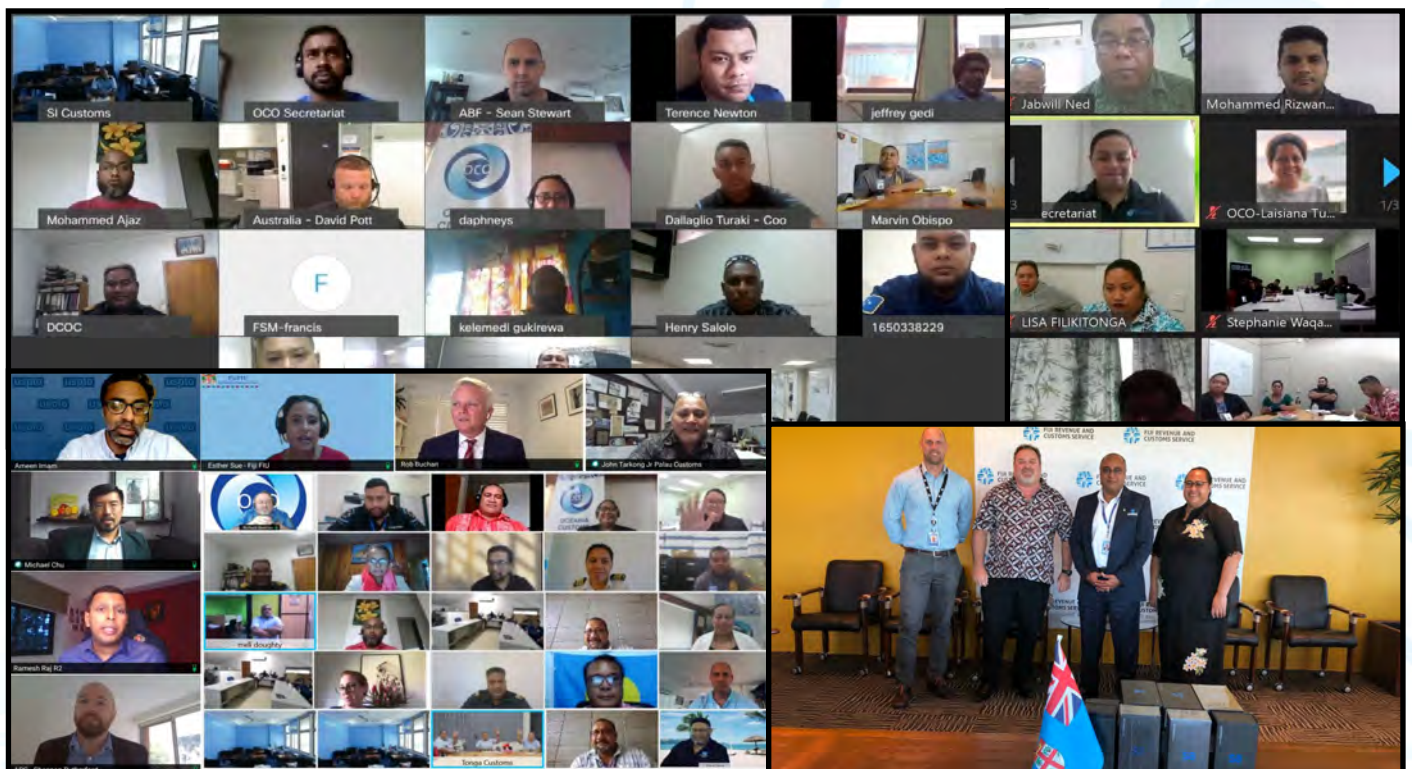
"There have been some positives of the pandemic- while we cannot have face to face training, we now have to deliver it virtually and we can include more Customs officers to be part of the training". Students are continuing their 10-month online training, which began in January and

aimed at equipping the officers with skills to address daily challenges and those brought on by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The training delivered by the Centre for Customs and Excise Studies, Charles Sturt University, Canberra, in collaboration with OCO will be completed in November and leads to a Certificate III in Regional Customs Administrations.

Further we were able to conduct our first regional e-commerce workshop to members, the HS22 workshop as well as the regional criminal business disruption workshop during this period.

The recovery of our Pacific economies is urgent and our political leaders have also expressed the need to prioritize revenue security in the region. As a mechanism to assist this recovery, we continue to work with members on readiness for HS 2022 and advocate for simplification of procedures and automation of Customs system. We also share our Intel monthly Beacon Bulletin and other Intel matters in our secure APAN information sharing platform.

In the meantime, we urge all our Pacific Customs administrations to remain vigilant in keeping our borders safe as well as faithfully and diligently fulfilling our roles in revenue collection and trade facilitation.





## April - June Highlights



### *Pacific Small Craft App Training for Savusavu Front Liners*

The Oceania Customs Organisation together with the Australian Border Force conducted a 2 day training for the Savusavu front line officers on the use of the Pacific Small Craft App to capture incoming yacht data. This training was conducted ahead of the Blue Lane initiative launch in Savusavu which was expected to bring in Yachts from all over the world. [Read More..](#)



### *Virtual Workshop on Digital Customs and Ecommerce*

The Oceania Customs Organisation organized its first *Virtual Workshop on Digital Customs & Ecommerce* from 18 -21 May, 2021 with 85 Customs officials from 16 countries participating. The objective of the workshop was to support members in the preparation of a coherent application and implementation of automation, single window and processes to facilitate e-commerce. [Read More..](#)

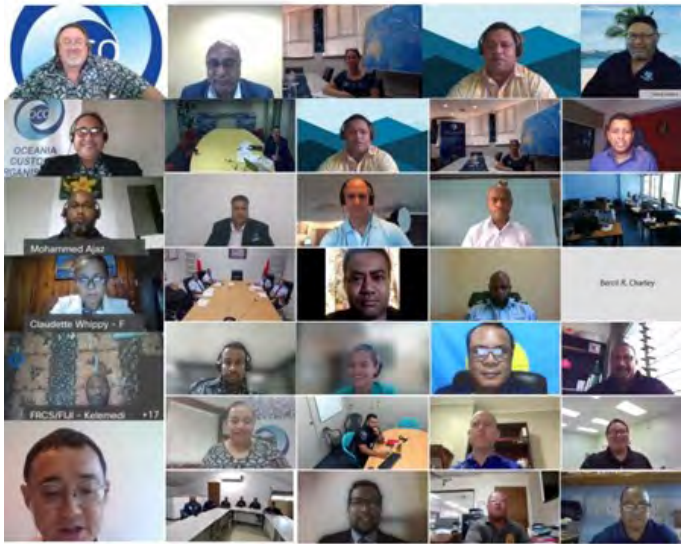


### *ABF hands over Mobile Phones to FRCS*

The Australian Border Force together with OCO Head of Secretariat and Operations Manager handed over 15 mobile phones to the CEO of Fiji Revenue and Customs Service. These devices will be used by the FRCS front line officers while processing Small Craft Apps that enter the Fiji Ports. This follows training that was conducted in Savusavu and Denarau ports consisting of Customs front liners, Fiji Immigration and Police. Small crafts remain a high threat to all countries in the Pacific being used for a number of illicit activities, including the movement of weapons, drugs and people. Small craft continue to be targeted by organized crime groups for the transport of illicit drugs as well.



## Criminal Business Disruption Workshop



The Criminal Business Disruption Workshop was conducted virtually by the OCO Secretariat from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2021. The workshop was a collaboration with members and development partners from The Australia Border Force (ABF), Australian Federal Police – TCU Fiji, Australia Pacific Security College (APSC), APG- Asia Pacific Group for Money Laundering, AUSTRAC- Australia Financial Intelligence arm, Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit (F-FIU), Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS), International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre (PTCCC), Pacific Transnational Crime Network (PTCN), Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC), Pacific Islands Chief of Police (PICP), Joint Interagency Task Force-West (JIATF-W), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), PSI – Pharmaceutical Society International, Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO-WCO), Transnational Crime Unit (TCU-Fiji), United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Smart, UNODC Fiji Office, US Homeland Security Investigation-HSI, US Department of Justice International Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property (ICHIP) and the *United States Patent and Trademark Office* (USPTO). [Read More..](#)

## PSCA Regional Training and Coordinators Forum



The OCO Secretariat in partnership with the Australian Border Force held a virtual training on the use of the Pacific Small Craft Mobile App in the region. This App has been developed by the Australian Department of Home Affairs and the ABF to provide a platform for recording of critical data on the movements of small craft vessels in the Pacific. This session was followed by the PSCA Regional Coordinators Forum which provided an opportunity for the country coordinators to discuss their roles in the effective implementation of this technology within their respective administrations. [Read More](#)

## CCES Update

During this quarter, we continued with our Online Certificate III courses facilitated by CCES. Two Cohorts were able to complete the Enforcement and Compliance Course and Tariff Courses during this reporting period. A total of about 85 students are undertaking the Certificate Level III Courses that will be completed in November 2021.

# MEMBERS NEWS

## Vanuatu Implements Electronic Single Windows System



Vanuatu is proudly leading the way on the E-Commerce front in the Pacific. The country has implemented the Electronic Single Window system which functions as the hub for Border Control agencies and traders. Vanuatu also led the way in creating the first Passenger Module into the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) system as well as creating the first direct online payment between a bank and Customs in the Pacific. Further to this, they have created the first ever Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) module for Biosecurity in ASYCUDA as well as automate Biosecurity border control processing in ASYCUDA. [Read More.](#)



## Australian Border Force enhancing border security in the Pacific region

The Australian Border Force provided Nauru Customs Service with Narcotics Identification Kits in a commitment to help enhance the border security for the Island Nation. More on the story [here.](#)



Wear a Mask



Maintain 2m Social Distance



Avoid Crowds



Frequent Hand Washing



Get Vaccinated

Covid-19 Prevention Tips



## OCO Strategic Plan Review



OCO Finance and Corporate Services Manager, Mr. Alfereti Vamarasi.

In line with the current year's work program, Maximise (Fiji) Limited a locally based consultant firm was engaged in March 2021 through to May 2021 to conduct a review of the current Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022. The review on the progress of OCO's strategic plan 2017-2020 was being carried out to assess its relevance in addressing emerging issues in the regional and global context and the impact of its strategic outcomes. The review also looked at how well OCO was resourced to deliver on its strategic outcomes and where the members of respective administrations were invited to be part of the review through providing their answers to survey questions that was sent out to the

members.

The Secretariat is appreciative and acknowledges all the member administrations for their contribution towards this activity and having a say in the review of the current OCO Strategic plan. This will also set a platform for the way forward in the development of the new strategic plan following completion of the current strategic plan in 2022. The value of the review and the report is critically dependent on the members and donors responses to the online survey questionnaire and the Secretariat is pleased to note that there was a favorable response from members that attributed to a successful review of the current strategic plan review.

The new strategic plan will be developed by our membership, we will call a virtual meeting to conduct this plan formation much like we did in Suva in 2016 in the days when we used to meet face to face.

## Working From Home – COVID Update

Since 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021 community transmissions of COVID cases were identified with a few numbers in Fiji, the Head of Secretariat issued instructions that all staff were to work from home for the next two weeks following Government media advice and which resumption of work will be subject to new upcoming Government protocols. The Secretariat staff were able to transition easily to a work from home culture given their experiences last year when they were required to work from home during periods of lockdown instituted by the Government of Fiji.

All planned face to face meetings and office work reverted to a virtual setup. With two months now gone, the community transmission of COVID cases have not relented and continued to increase with Fiji reporting its highest active cases of 3,306 today

(29 June) reaching a daily record of more than 300 community transmissions. The latest COVID business protocols implemented by Government allowed essential services and businesses that support essential services to reopen their businesses under strict compliance to new operating protocols. The Secretariat being not included in the essential services category continue to have staff work from home. Whilst staff continue working from home, the Secretariat is also preparing its office and work space to be compliant to the new requirements of COVID protocols and prepare for resumption of work. Thankful to our neighbors Australia and New Zealand we have a good supply of Astra Zeneca vaccines in the country which are being rolled out now and staff are encouraged to get vaccinated to stay safe.

# UPCOMINGEVENTS

July  
2021

OCO-PSCA Awareness for PTCCC	01 July 2021
Risk Management III-Catch up course	01—31 July 2021
Pacific Ocean Protect - PSCA Operation	01 July—30 Sep 2021
OCO-PSCA Regional Coordinators Forum	07 July 2021
Valuation Level III - Revenue Stream	05 - 09 July 2021
Valuation Level III - Enforcement Stream	12-23 July 2021
Scoping Exercise on Computer Forensics	01—30 July 2021
ISWG First Quarter Meeting 2021-22	20 July 2021
OCO Steering Committee	21 July 2021

August  
2021

Legislation Level III - Revenue Stream	02-13 August 2021
HS 2022 Workshop	17-19 August 2021
Legislation Level III - Enforcement Stream	23—31 August 2021
CENComm Training	24 August 2021
23 <sup>rd</sup> OCO Annual Conference	26 August 2021

September  
2021

OCO-ICP Meeting	01 September 2021
Launch of Mentoring Program	02 September 2021
International Trade Transactions Level III- Revenue	13—24 September 2021
WHO-OCO Joint Operations	15—30 September 2021
OCO - APAN (Train the Trainer) workshop	21—23 September 2021



# GALLERY



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