



## Message from the CEO

Dear colleagues

I trust you all had a peaceful and safe Easter break with your families and loved ones. I recognize some of you may be separated due to these difficult times of Covid-19 restrictions and other calamities from your extended families or close relatives but we appreciate that our governments are taking the best actions to protect all of us. The devastating impact of this virus throughout the rest of the world changes our behaviour and our outlook on how we as citizens of our respective countries react and contribute through our work, through our households and as individuals. On top of this prolonged pandemic, we have witnessed just recently the devastation inflicted on our neighbours, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga by Cyclone Harold and we pray for God's grace and comfort to our neighbours and friends, and especially our member utilities staff and families. Your load has doubled and will be extra difficult in all fronts and we pray the resilience and strength that have sustained you in past tragedies will pull you through.

As I've advised in my previous message, your Secretariat has been fully operational, some working remotely but nonetheless keeping full-time working hours whilst respecting and obeying the State of Emergency restrictions imposed in Samoa.

I also want you to know that your Secretariat has established a special section on your [www.pwwa.ws](http://www.pwwa.ws) website that will have information about Covid-19 as well as your responses to how you are coping with Covid-19 in your countries. We have uploaded the first two responses from WAF and ASPA on what they are doing as utilities in response to the restrictions in their countries for Covid-19. The WHO Guidance on Covid-19 has also been uploaded.

We would also welcome stories on how you are helping reach communities that do not have access to water in support of the crucial message of "washing hands with soap and water" to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This simple and basic method of washing hands is said to be the most effective in preventing the spread of Covid-19 amongst people. And yet, we are all aware, not all of our communities have access to water. For countries that already have cases of Covid-19 and indeed for all of us utilities, it is vital that we ensure continuity of water supplies to communities by adequate monitoring, providing necessary staffing plans and ensure maintenance is not neglected but to also conduct rapid assessments and ensure rapid delivery of services to communities that don't have access. I would encourage you all to provide us with your action plans and we will post these on the website to share with your colleagues and hopefully help others. Let me know as well how we can continue to help in coordinating and circulating assistance and support through this media for you all.

From the Secretariat, we wish you peace and God's everlasting grace on you and your staff and families during this pandemic.

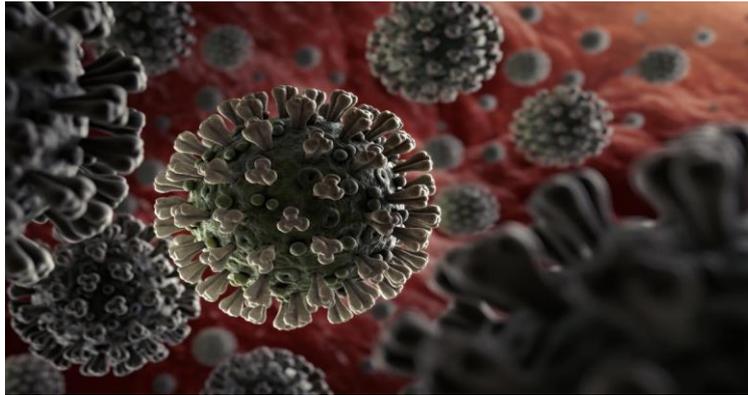
God bless

Lusia

### IN THIS ISSUE

1. Message from the CEO... [page 1](#)
2. The Deadly Virus: Coronavirus (COVID-19)... [page 2](#)
3. Pandemic in the Pacific Community... [page 3](#)
4. What we need to know about COVID-19... [page 4 - 5](#)
5. The Beastly Tropical Cyclone Harold hits the Pacific... [page 6](#)
6. The Beastly Tropical Cyclone Harold in photos... [page 7](#)
7. Solomon Water on EziPei... [page 8](#)
8. General Announcements and Tender Notices... [page 9](#)
  1. *PWWA Annual Conference and Expo 5-9 October*
  2. *Kongulai Water Treatment Plant, Solomon Islands*
  3. *PPA Annual Conference 2020*

# THE DEADLY DISEASE: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Corona virus, or COVID-19 – the dreaded disease that has spread so rapidly and quickly it is crippling the world at all levels. What it is - COVID-19 is the name given by the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) on February 11, 2020 for the disease caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. It started in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and has since spread worldwide. COVID-19 is an acronym that stands for **coronavirus disease of 2019**. It was declared a pandemic by WHO in March 11<sup>th</sup>.

It has been a short and yet long three months since Covid-19 first started to spread outside of China (January 13<sup>th</sup>) and a little less than 2 months since we started closing our borders here in the Pacific. Despite the panic and apocalyptic spread of information along with mis-information on the Covid-19, our region acted immediately and decisively to hinder the spread of the virus to our region. Measures may have been harsh but were necessary for our region given the harsh realities of our countries limited access to quality health services, and lack of infrastructure, equipment, and qualified personnel.

In the Pacific, governments acted to put in place measures to combat the entrance of the virus into their borders; 6 countries declared States of Emergency, with most having widespread lock down or curfews on movement as the impact of Covid-19 moved closer and affected our closest neighbours – Australia and New Zealand.

The actions of our governments in the Pacific were swift and necessary, hard as they may seem ; messaging and the flow of information on the virus and how to keep families and communities safe was crucial to not only ensure safety but to keep people from panicking unnecessarily.

As of date of reporting, COVID-19 has spread to at least 185 countries, killing more than 113,000 and infecting 1.8 million people, with our closest neighbours, New Zealand recording 1330 cases and 4 deaths, and Australia – 6,315 cases and 57 deaths.

In our region, the number of cases has totalled 225 (including 6 deaths) in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, French Polynesia and New Caledonia.

We would encourage our members to keep yourselves updated on the Covid-19 and its impact around your neighbouring countries but also around the world. We are a global community – this virus has brought that home to us extremely.

Included in our website at [www.pwwa.ws](http://www.pwwa.ws) is a section on your responses to Covid-19, and what you are putting in as utilities for your staff and your communities in light of this pandemic.

## PANDEMIC IN THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

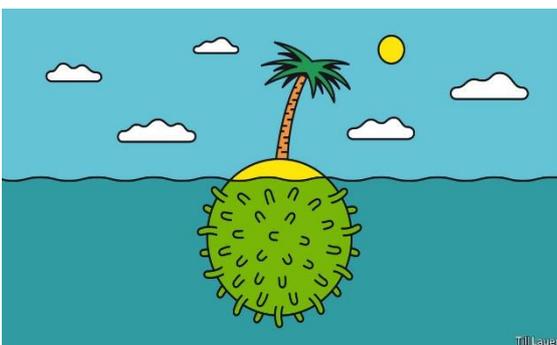
Everywhere worldwide, nations are struggling to respond to the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) or at best are planning and preparing for the virus to arrive in their country. COVID-19 signifies a very crucial challenge for the Pacific community. The governments in the Pacific Islands have taken extra precautions to handle the Covid-19.

The Government of Samoa itself has since been monitoring the global situation and updating its travel restrictions according to the growing number of cases worldwide.

As of the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2020, there have been six countries (**Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI), Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea**) in the Pacific community that have reported 225 cases and 6 deaths (World Health Organization website). There are also cases reported in Australia, **New Zealand** and **Hawaii**.

Businesses were forced to close, international trade and travel ceased, economies crashing, and in some countries brought hospitals and other healthcare facilities and services to the edge of collapse.

With cases around the world doubling, even tripling every five to seven days, few countries have been spared. The Pacific has, however, so far coped well.



According to updates from the Pacific Community (SPC) web stories on COVID-19, there are a few restrictions that have been put in place across the Pacific:

- ✓ **Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Tuvalu** have declared states of emergency.
- ✓ The **Marshall Islands** and **Federated States of Micronesia** have completely sealed their borders.
- ✓ **CMNI** is under nationwide curfew from 7pm to 6am daily.
- ✓ **Cook Islands** are in Code Yellow recommending people work from home.
- ✓ Fiji is under a nationwide curfew from 8pm to 5am daily. Lautoka and Suva are under full lockdown.
- ✓ **French Polynesia** is under nationwide curfew from 8pm to 5am till 15 April.
- ✓ **Kiribati** is at Level 4 alert with a stay at home policy.
- ✓ **New Caledonia** self-quarantine measures continue.
- ✓ **Niue** is at Level 4 alert with a stay at home policy.
- ✓ **Papua New Guinea** ended its lockdown on 06 April. The state of emergency has been extended by 2 months.
- ✓ **Tonga** is under nationwide curfew from 8pm to 6am.

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19

(Available and abridged from: *World Health Organization*: <https://www.who.int/>)

## How does it spread?

While a lot is still unknown about the virus that causes COVID-19, we do know now that it is transmitted or spread mainly through direct contact with respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.

Persons can also be infected from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face, for instance eyes, nose, mouth. While COVID-19 continues to spread it is important that everyone take action to prevent any more transmission, diminish the impacts of the outbreak and support control measures.

## Signs and symptoms.

Symptoms range from mild to severe and can include:

- Fever
- Dry Cough
- Tiredness

Other symptoms include:

- Aches and pains
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, breathing difficulties, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

## Who is at risk?

WHO has identified that the COVID-19 virus infects people of all ages. But, evidence to date advises that the two groups of people that are at a higher risk of getting severe COVID-19 disease are older people; and those with pre-existing medical conditions (e.g. Diabetes,

Heart disease, Lung disease and Suppressed immune systems).

Children may be too affected by the measures taken to control the outbreak, such as school closures and physical distancing measures. WHO has also issued a guidance to support and assist in protecting children and schools from transmission of the COVID-19 virus. WHO gives emphasis to that all must protect themselves from COVID-19 in order to protect others.

## Prevention.

There is no specific treatment and no vaccine to prevent COVID-19, however, many of the symptoms can be treated and as a result the treatment is based on the patient's clinical condition. Additionally, supportive care for infected persons can be very effective.

There are a few important precautions you can do to prevent infection and to slow transmission of COVID-19, as well as keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub.



- Maintain at least 1-meter distance between you and people coughing or sneezing.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. (Teach the kids to cough and sneeze into a tissue and be sure to throw it away after each use or to cough and sneeze into their arm or elbow, not their hands.)

**Protect others from getting sick**

When coughing and sneezing **cover mouth and nose** with flexed elbow or tissue



**Throw tissue into closed bin immediately after use**



**Clean hands** with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water after coughing or sneezing and when caring for the sick



World Health Organization

- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- Clean and disinfect your home/workplace as usual using regular household cleaning sprays or wipes.
- Avoid touching your face and teach your children to do the same.
- Abstain from smoking and other activities that deteriorates the lungs.
- Practice physical or social distancing through avoiding unnecessary travel (especially to highly infected areas), staying away from large gatherings of people and avoid public places where close contact with others is expected.

**Protect yourself and others from getting sick**

**Wash your hands**



- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste

World Health Organization

**Stay updated!**

As the world is going through such crisis we need to stay up to date about this situation as we learn more about how to prevent this virus from spreading in homes and in communities.



# THE BEASTLY TROPICAL CYCLONE HAROLD HITS THE PACIFIC!

(Available and abridged from: *Relief Web*: <https://reliefweb.int/>)

As the Pacific Nations and the world are going through the toughest times we can never predict what Nature has in store for us!

The fact that Vanuatu, Solomon Island, Fiji and Tonga are at present trying to cope with a pandemic and now a high category cyclone that is still enduring, clearly demonstrates that nature has its own agenda.

On Monday morning the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, Cyclone Harold hit and ripped through Vanuatu. It has been recorded as one of the strongest storms (since 2015's Cyclone Pam) to make landfall as a category 5 cyclone with continuous winds of more than 200 km/h. It is reported that the northern provinces of Sanma, Malampa and Penama were the most affected. And due to its path across the centre of Vanuatu, TC Harold had unswervingly impacted on a large number of the populated islands plus the large island of Santo with the country's second largest city Luganville. Thankfully there have been no reports of loss of life.

Days before the TC Harold hit Vanuatu it was reported to have swept through the Solomon Islands, where a boat was hit by heavy seas associated with the cyclone. Twenty-seven people went missing and to date only six bodies have been recovered.

The victims were swept off the ferry that continued its journey after defying cyclone warnings.

On Wednesday morning as a category 4 cyclone, it made its way to Fiji forcing more than 1,000 people to take shelter in evacuation centres. The Fijian authorities had days to prepare for the storm, which formed near the Solomon Islands before cutting a destructive path through Vanuatu. The storm struck the largest and most populous island of Viti Levu, home to its capital of Suva. Parts of Fiji are still experiencing the worst of Cyclone Harold's impact, with reports of widespread flooding and damage. People living in coastal areas are being warned of powerful storm surges and Fiji Red Cross teams have been helping people move to higher ground. Thankfully there are no reports of loss of life as well.

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> of April TC Harold was expected to hit Tonga overnight after building up again to a Category 5 cyclone. The Matangi Tonga website reported that TC Harold's arrival would correspond with a king tide and a super moon early on Thursday morning that could worsen the damage. Latest reports on Thursday afternoon report severe damages and flooding hit the Kingdom on Wednesday night/Thursday morning.

# THE BEASTLY TROPICAL CYCLONE HAROLD IN PHOTOS

(Available from: The internet)



Badly damaged houses and flooding (Vanuatu).



A large tree brought down in Suva.



A badly damaged house in Suva



Bodies recovered from Solomon's ferry tragedy.



Solomon Island Coastal coastal region.

## Solomon Water on EziPei

Provided by PWWA Pacific Utility Member – **CEO Ian Gooden**



*Solomon Water CEO Ian Gooden and Solomon Post CEO Alfred Ghemu sign the EziPei service contract*

Solomon Water recently launched its Cash Water online services with EziPei through an agreement signed with Solomon Islands Postal Corporation for its customers to access online bill payments service through EziPei using their mobile phones.

Solomon Water Chief Executive Officer, Ian Gooden said *“we are excited with the signing and partnership with Solomon Islands Postal Corporation as customers will now be able to buy their Cash Water top-ups using the EziPei app on their cell phone”*.

Solomon Island Postal Corporation CEO Alfred Ghemu articulated that the Corporation is obliged and indebted to Solomon Water to accept this payment system and to offer this service making it convenient for citizens to pay their bills from the comfort of their homes or elsewhere.

EziPei is the only mobile wallet in the Solomon Islands that allows you to send money, receive money, pay salary and bulk distributions, top- up your airtime, and pay for electricity and water wherever you are on smart or feature phones from all mobile networks in the country. This new service will greatly reduce payment risk, improve cash flow and provide our customers with flexibility in their water management.

Solomon Water will also shortly launch an online top – up service through BSP bank.



# GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND TENDER NOTICES

## 1. PWWA Annual Conference and Expo 5-9 October, Rarotonga Cook Islands

The PWWA Board of Directors and Hosts of this year's Annual Conference and Expo are monitoring closely the progress of COVID-19 in our region and in the world and will advise members accordingly should plans change.

## 2. TENDER KONGULAI WATER TREATMENT PLANT, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Water is pleased to announce that the preparations to tender a new water treatment plant and ancillary works to supply part of Honiara are almost complete. The process of design started in late 2018 as a filtration only project but due to increased turbidity loading from illegal logging in the water catchment, this project evolved into a full scale water treatment plant. The 15 MLD plant will contribute approximately 40% of the current requirement of the cities' water demand and has an estimated value of USD 17 m. Construction funding from development partners ADB, World Bank and European Union is gratefully acknowledged.

The plant will be of a conventional design based on clarification and filtration and includes a clear water reservoir, substantial earthworks and access road improvements, pump stations and rising mains. This type of process, on this scale, is a first for the Solomon Islands.

Subject to donor approvals Solomon Water expects to call tenders for this work during April. Prospective bidders and suppliers are encouraged to sign up to, and keep an eye on the Solomon Water e-tender portal <https://www.tenderlink.com/siwa/> for updates on this and other upcoming Solomon Water projects.

## 3. PPA Annual Conference 2020:

PWWA has received notice this conference that was scheduled to be held in July is now **cancelled**.

### PACIFIC WATER AND WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION SECRETARIAT

P.O. Box 868  
L4 FMFMII Building  
Eleele-fou, Apia  
SAMOA

PH: +685 30326

E-mail: [info@pwwa.ws](mailto:info@pwwa.ws)  
Website: [www.pwwa.ws](http://www.pwwa.ws)