

Pacific Climate Change Science Program



Climate Change in the Pacific: Scientific Assessment and New Research **Volume 1: Regional Overview**



Australian Government

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National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Climate change in the Pacific: scientific assessment and new research. Volume 1. Regional overview / Australian Bureau of Meteorology, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

ISBN: 9781921826733 (pbk.)

ISBN: 9781921826740 (ebook)

Includes index.

Climatic changes--Pacific Region.

Climate change mitigation--Pacific Region.

551.691823

This publication should be cited as:

Australian Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO, 2011. Climate Change in the Pacific: Scientific Assessment and New Research. Volume 1: Regional Overview. Volume 2: Country Reports.

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Foreword

This report is a first in many ways. To date our understanding of how the climate of the Pacific is changing, and is likely to change in the future, has been limited. Lack of scientific knowledge is a major challenge to effective adaptation planning for Pacific Island countries. In 2007, the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identified key information gaps in the Pacific. *Climate Change in the Pacific: Scientific Assessment and New Research* is a significant step forward in our understanding of climate drivers in the Pacific region.

Climate Change in the Pacific is the final report of Australia's Pacific Climate Change Science Program, a landmark investment in climate science for the region. It is the result of three years' scientific research. This report is an invaluable reference for climate scientists, communities and decision-makers in the Pacific.

Climate Change in the Pacific also tells the climate change story - for the first time - for individual countries. It includes the first-ever country scale projections for the region, along with more detailed information for 15 small island developing states including East Timor. Enhanced understanding of climate change impacts is critical to building the capacity of countries to plan appropriate adaptation responses.

The Pacific Climate Change Science Program is one element of Australia's five-year, \$328.2 million International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative. The Initiative assists countries to identify and implement priority adaptation measures, assess their vulnerability and develop evidence-based adaptation strategies. As part of this, *Climate Change in the Pacific* will be an essential tool for Pacific Island countries and their development partners in progressing adaptation and building resilience to future climate change.



Climate Change in the Pacific finds that during this century the Pacific will continue to see increasing temperatures and sea level rise, changes to rainfall variability, further ocean acidification and more extreme weather events. Pacific Island countries will face increasing impacts on human health, fresh water availability, agriculture, fisheries, marine ecosystems and tourism – with flow-on effects to livelihoods, culture and custom.

Australia is committed to working with developing countries to develop effective adaptation responses to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Australia's adaptation support focuses on least developed countries and small island developing states – because these countries need it most urgently. Australia is committed to building on the achievements of the Pacific Climate Change Science Program and supporting further research and investment to increase the resilience of the Pacific. Australia will continue to support our neighbours in the Pacific and East Timor to respond to the challenges identified in the *Climate Change in the Pacific* report – and work together towards a sustainable future for the region.

The Hon Greg Combet AM MP

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Energy Efficiency

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Contents

Abbreviations.....	ix
Acknowledgements.....	x
Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction and Background.....	2
About this Publication	3
Current Climate of the PCCSP Region	4
Climate Variability and Trends.....	5
Climate Modelling	6
Performance of Climate Models	6
Global Climate Model Projections.....	7
Projected Changes in Major Climate Features and Patterns of Variability	7
South Pacific Convergence Zone	7
Intertropical Convergence Zone.....	7
West Pacific Monsoon.....	7
El Niño-Southern Oscillation	7
Indian Ocean Dipole	7
Atmospheric Projections	7
Temperature	7
Rainfall	8
Potential Evapotranspiration	8
Humidity and Solar Radiation	8
Wind	8
Ocean Projections.....	8
Salinity and Stratification.....	8
Sea Level	9
Ocean Acidification.....	9
Downscaled Projections.....	10
Tropical Cyclone Projections.....	10
Uncertainties in Climate Model Projections	11
Box ES.1: Climate Projection Uncertainties	11
Future Research to Advance Climate Science in the PCCSP Region	12
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	13
Summary	14
1.1 Background	15
Box1.1: Definition of Climate and Climate Change.....	15
1.2 Contextual Setting	16
1.2.1 Pacific Climate Change Science Program.....	16
Box 1.2: Description of the Pacific Climate Change Science Program	17
1.2.2 Partner Country Diversity.....	17
1.3 Building on the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC.....	19
1.4 Major New Contributions to Pacific Climate Change Science	20

Chapter 2: Climate of the Western Tropical Pacific and East Timor.....	23
Summary	24
2.1 Introduction.....	25
2.2 Data Record	26
2.2.1 Atmospheric Data	26
2.2.1.1 Data from Observing Stations in the Pacific and East Timor Region.....	26
2.2.1.2 Homogenised Observed Station Data.....	28
2.2.1.3 Pacific Climate Change Data Portal	28
2.2.1.4 Datasets on Global or Regional Grids	28
2.2.2 Ocean Data.....	30
2.2.2.1 Datasets on Global or Regional Grids	30
2.2.2.2 Sea Level	31
2.2.3 Climatological Periods.....	31
2.3 Current Climate in the Region: Atmosphere.....	33
2.3.1 Surface Air Temperature.....	33
2.3.2 Atmospheric Circulation	34
2.3.3 Rainfall	35
Box 2.1: Indigenous Weather and Climate Terminology	36
2.4 Large-Scale Climate Features	37
Box 2.2: Main features influencing the climate of the PCCSP region.....	37
2.4.1 South Pacific Convergence Zone	38
2.4.2 Intertropical Convergence Zone.....	38
2.4.3 West Pacific Monsoon.....	39
2.4.4 Other Climate Features.....	40
2.5 Mean Climate at Key Locations Across the Region	41
2.6 Current Climate in the Region: Oceans.....	43
2.6.1 Sea-Surface Temperature.....	43
2.6.2 Salinity and Nutrients.....	44
2.6.3 Ocean Currents.....	45
2.6.4 Sea Level	46
2.7 Atmospheric and Oceanic Extremes	47
2.7.1 Tropical Cyclones	47
2.7.2 Extreme Sea Levels.....	48
Chapter 3: Observed Climate Variability and Trends	51
Summary	52
3.1 Introduction.....	53
3.2 Global Context.....	54
Box 3.1: Local Perceptions of a Changing Climate	55
3.3 Climate of the Pacific over the Past 12 000 Years.....	56
3.3.1 Changes in Climate over the Holocene.....	56
3.3.2 Changes in Climate over the Past 1000 Years	57
3.4 Major Features of Climate Variability	58
3.4.1 El Niño-Southern Oscillation and the Walker Circulation	58
3.4.2 Pacific Decadal Oscillation and Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation.....	60
3.4.3 Intertropical Convergence Zone.....	61
3.4.4 Western Pacific Monsoon.....	62
3.4.5 South Pacific Convergence Zone	64

3.4.6 Hadley Circulation	64
3.4.7 Southern Annular Mode	65
3.4.8 Indian Ocean Dipole	65
3.5 Variability and Change in the Atmosphere	66
3.5.1 Temperature	66
3.5.2 Rainfall	66
3.5.3 Tropical Cyclones	67
3.5.4 Other Variables	68
3.6 Variability and Change in the Ocean	69
3.6.1 Sea-Surface Temperature and Salinity	69
3.6.2 Sub-Surface Temperature and Salinity	70
3.6.3 Sea Level, Waves and Surges	71
3.6.3.1 Past Sea-Level Change	71
3.6.3.2 Current Sea Level Variability and Change	72
3.6.4 Ocean Circulation	75
3.6.5 Ocean Acidification	76
Chapter 4: Climate Projection Methodology	79
Summary	80
4.1 Introduction	81
4.2 Emissions Scenarios	82
Box 4.1: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Emissions Scenarios	82
4.3 Global Climate Models	84
4.3.1 Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 3	85
4.4 Climate Projection Methods	86
4.4.1 Large-Scale Projections	86
4.4.2 Small-Scale Projections	87
4.5 Dynamical Downscaling	89
4.5.1 Downscaling Methods	89
4.5.2 Downscaling in the Pacific Climate Change Science Program	89
4.5.2.1 CCAM 60 km Global Simulations	90
4.5.2.2 CCAM 8 km Regional Simulations	90
4.5.2.3 Additional CCAM Simulations Using Alternative Settings	90
4.5.2.4 Additional Limited-Area Model Simulations	90
4.6 Statistical Downscaling	92
4.7 Sea Level	93
4.8 Tropical Cyclones	94
4.8.1 Genesis Potential Index	94
4.8.2 CSIRO Direct Detection Scheme	94
4.8.3 Curvature Vorticity Parameter Scheme	95
4.8.4 Tropical Cyclone Wind Hazard	95
4.9 Ocean Acidification	96
Chapter 5: Climate Model Reliability	97
Summary	98
5.1 Introduction	99
Box 5.1: Summary of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Comments on Model Strengths and Weaknesses	100

5.2 Evaluation of CMIP3 Climate Models	101
5.2.1 Atmosphere Variables	101
5.2.1.1 Surface Air Temperature	101
5.2.1.2 Rainfall	101
5.2.1.3 Near-Surface Wind	103
5.2.1.4 Summary: Atmosphere Variables	103
5.2.2 Ocean Variables	104
5.2.2.1 Sea-Surface Temperature	104
5.2.2.2 Sea-Surface Salinity	104
5.2.2.3 Trends and Variability	106
5.2.2.4 Sub-Surface Trends	107
5.2.2.5 Climate Model Drift	107
5.2.2.6 Sea Level	108
5.2.2.7 Summary: Ocean Variables	111
5.2.3 Climate Features and Patterns of Variability	111
5.2.3.1 El Niño-Southern Oscillation	111
5.2.3.2 Indian Ocean Dipole	114
5.2.3.3 South Pacific Convergence Zone	114
5.2.3.4 Intertropical Convergence Zone	115
5.2.3.5 West Pacific Monsoon	115
5.2.3.6 Summary: Climate Features and Patterns of Variability	116
5.2.4 Extremes	117
5.2.4.1 Surface Air Temperature	118
5.2.4.2 Rainfall	118
5.2.4.3 Summary: Extremes	118
Box 5.2: CMIP3 Model Biases in the PCCSP Region	120
5.3 Evaluation of Dynamical and Statistical Downscaling	121
5.3.1 CCAM Large-Scale (60 km) Climate	121
5.3.1.1 Surface Air Temperature	121
5.3.1.2 Rainfall	122
5.3.1.3 Extremes	124
5.3.2 CCAM Small-Scale (8 km) Climate	127
5.3.2.1 Rainfall and Temperature Validation for Nadi, Fiji	128
5.3.3 Additional Regional Climate Model Simulations	131
5.3.4 Evaluation of Statistical Downscaling	132
5.3.5 Summary: Dynamical and Statistical Downscaling	134
5.4 Tropical Cyclones in Global and Downscaled Models	135
5.4.1 Introduction	135
5.4.2 Tropical Cyclones in Downscaled Models	135
5.4.3 Tropical Cyclones in Global Climate Models	136
5.4.3.1 Curvature Vorticity Parameter Method	136
5.4.3.2 CSIRO Direct Detection Method	139
5.4.3.3 Genesis Potential Index Method	140
5.4.4 Tropical Cyclone Wind Risk Hazard	140
5.4.5 Summary: Simulation of Tropical Cyclones	141
5.5 Model Reliability and Implications for Projections	142
5.5.1 Use of Global Models for Climate Projections	142
5.5.2 Use of Downscaled Models for Climate Projections	143

Chapter 6: Projections Based on Global Climate Models	145
Summary	146
6.1 Introduction.....	147
6.2 Atmospheric Projections	148
6.2.1 Surface Air Temperature.....	148
6.2.2 Rainfall	149
6.2.3 Near-Surface Wind.....	151
6.2.4 Surface Solar Radiation.....	152
6.2.5 Near-Surface Humidity	152
6.2.6 Potential Evapotranspiration.....	153
6.2.7 Extreme Temperature and Rainfall	154
6.2.7.1 Surface Air Temperature Extremes.....	156
6.2.7.2 Extreme Daily Rainfall	157
6.2.7.3 Drought.....	157
6.3 Ocean Projections.....	159
6.3.1 Ocean Temperature and Salinity.....	159
6.3.2 Ocean Circulation.....	160
6.4 Key Climate Features and Variability	162
6.4.1 El Niño-Southern Oscillation.....	162
6.4.2 Indian Ocean Dipole	163
6.4.3 Intertropical Convergence Zone.....	163
6.4.4 West Pacific Monsoon.....	164
6.4.5 South Pacific Convergence Zone	166
6.5 Sea-Level Rise	168
6.5.1 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Projections of Global Averaged Sea-Level Rise for the 21st Century	168
6.5.2 Post-Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Results	169
6.5.3 Regional Distribution of Sea-Level Rise During the 21st Century.....	170
6.5.3.1 Ocean Dynamical Changes	171
6.5.3.2 Ocean Mass Changes	173
6.5.3.3 Total Regional Sea Level Change.....	173
6.5.4 Sea-Level Rise Beyond 2100	175
6.6 Ocean Acidification	176
6.7 Synthesis of Projections	178
6.7.1 Summary of Atmospheric Projections.....	178
6.7.2 Summary of Ocean Projections	178
6.7.3 Summary of Projected Changes in Key Climate Features and Variability	179
Box 6.1: Climate Projection Uncertainties	179
Chapter 7: Projections Based on Downscaling	181
Summary	182
7.1 Introduction.....	183
7.2 Dynamical Downscaling	184
7.2.1 CCAM Downscaling at 60 km Resolution	184
7.2.1.1 Surface Air Temperature	184
7.2.1.2 Rainfall	185
7.2.1.3 Surface Wind Speed	186
7.2.1.4 Heavy Rainfall.....	188

7.2.2 CCAM Projections Downscaled to 8 km Resolution	188
7.2.2.1 Detailed Analysis of Two Regions at 8 km Resolution.....	189
7.2.2.2 Seasonal Temperature and Rainfall Changes at Selected Locations.....	192
7.2.2.3 Changes in Probability Density Functions of Temperature and Rainfall	193
7.2.2.4 Extremes	194
7.2.3 Additional Regional Climate Model Results.....	197
7.2.4 Dynamical Downscaling Summary.....	197
7.3 Statistical Downscaling	198
7.3.1 Statistical Downscaling Results	198
7.3.2 Statistical Downscaling Summary.....	202
7.4 Tropical cyclone projections	203
7.4.1 Introduction.....	203
7.4.2 Tropical Cyclone Frequency Projections in Dowscaled Models	205
7.4.3 Cyclone Frequency Projections in Global Climate Models.....	206
7.4.4 Cyclone Frequency Projections from the Genesis Potential Index	206
7.4.5 Cyclone Intensity Projections.....	208
7.4.6 Cyclonic Wind Hazard Projections.....	210
7.5 Downscaling Summary	211
Chapter 8: Conclusions and Further Research to Advance Pacific Climate Science	213
8.1 Introduction.....	214
8.1.1 Expand Ocean and Atmosphere Measurements in the Pacific Climate Change Science Program Region.....	214
8.1.2 Advance the Understanding of Current Climate, Climate Variability and Climate Trends	214
8.1.3 Improve Climate Models and Climate Change Projections.....	215
8.1.4 Improve Understanding of Tropical Cyclones and Extreme Events	215
8.2 Conclusions	216
Appendix 1: CMIP3 Models Used in Climate Projections.....	217
References	223
Glossary	243
Index	253



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