



ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Healthy Islands vision towards 2050

Current situation

In 1995 Pacific ministers endorsed the vision that Healthy Islands are places where:

*Children are nurtured in body and mind;
Environments invite learning and leisure;
People work and age with dignity;
Ecological balance is a source of pride; and
The ocean which sustains us is protected.*

This Healthy Islands vision is a unifying theme to guide development towards healthy outcomes for the Pacific. The vision provides a rallying point that speaks to our Pacific spirit. Family and community values – the foundation of the Pacific culture – are our strength and should be nurtured.

The Pacific Heads of Health Meeting was an opportunity to discuss the vision and way forward to refine preparations and presentation on this agenda topic for this special meeting of the Pacific health ministers on 25 October 2025 on Yanuca Island, Fiji.

It has been 30 years since the vision was endorsed. It is therefore timely to review the current progress of the Healthy Islands vision, especially with regard to overall sustainable development in the Pacific – including economic development and health development – and the endorsement of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent developed by Pacific leaders in 2022.

This opportunity includes reimagining health development towards 2050 in the Pacific and reshaping the approach to ensure it is fit for purpose, future-focused and fully aligned with the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy.

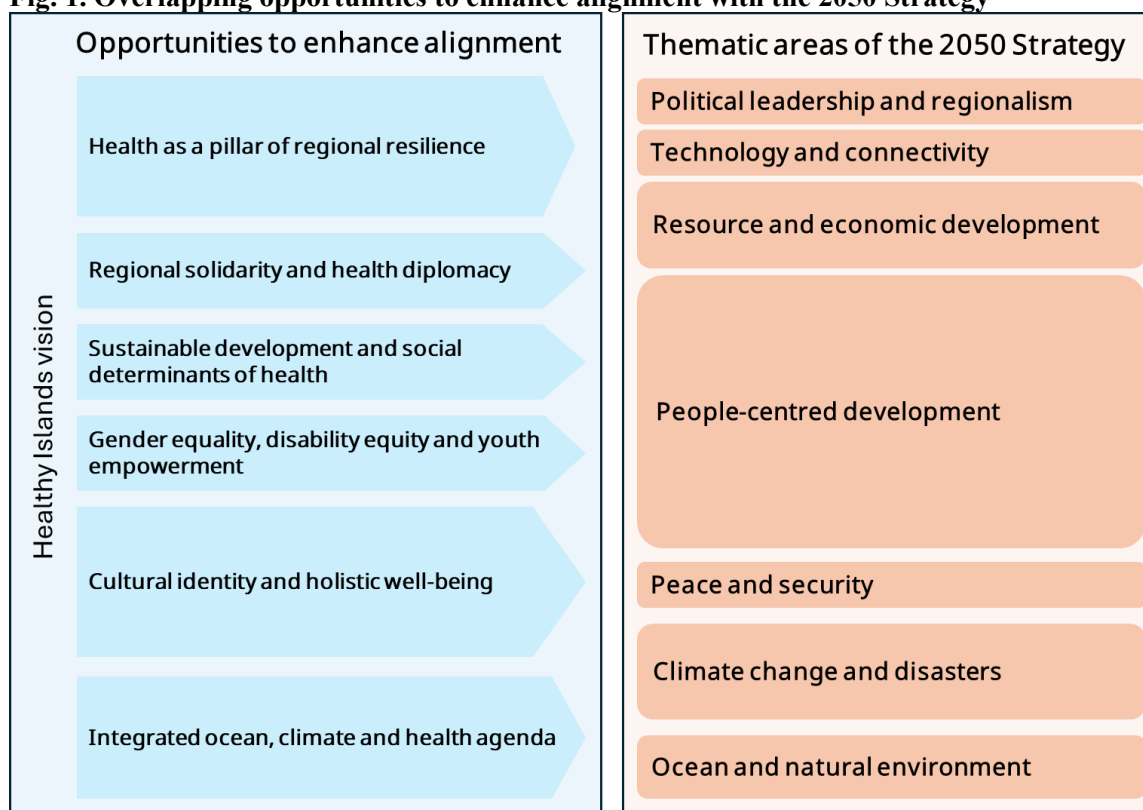
To do this, it is important to first review the opportunities to align the vision with the Strategy.



Opportunities to enhance alignment with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent

As illustrated in Fig. 1, there are several opportunities to enhance alignment of the Healthy Islands vision with various thematic areas of the 2050 Strategy.

Fig. 1. Overlapping opportunities to enhance alignment with the 2050 Strategy



1. Health as a pillar of regional resilience

- Position rights-based universal health coverage, health systems strengthening and pandemic prevention, preparedness and response as foundations of Pacific resilience.
- Integrate health into national and regional climate adaptation strategies.
- Strengthen regional health emergency coordination mechanisms, including opportunities for joint procurement and stockpiling of essential supplies.

2. Integrated ocean, climate and health agenda

- Promote a One Health approach linking human, animal and environmental health.
- Address the health consequences of climate-related environmental changes through cross-sector strategies.
- Promote ecosystem-based management and customary approaches for sustainable resource use.



3. Regional solidarity and health diplomacy

- Leverage the Blue Pacific's diplomatic voice to elevate regional health priorities globally.
- Expand shared infrastructure, health information systems and coordinated workforce development.

4. Sustainable development and social determinants of health

- Embed water, sanitation and hygiene indicators and accountability mechanisms into national health plans.
- Leverage the Healthy Islands platform to catalyse cross-sector partnerships on water, sanitation, housing, nutrition and education.
- Enhance alignment with relevant targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

5. Cultural identity and holistic well-being

- Embed Indigenous knowledge, values and healing practices into formal health systems.
- Recognize cultural and community-based health initiatives as core to Pacific well-being.

6. Gender equality, disability equity and youth empowerment

- Address structural inequities in health access and outcomes.
- Centre gender equality and disability equity and youth leadership across policy, planning and implementation.



Current and future health trends that will shape the Healthy Islands vision 2050

1. Climate change and environmental stress

- Rising sea levels, coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion and extreme weather events are placing increasing stress on health infrastructure and population well-being.
- Climate change is accelerating the spread of climate-sensitive diseases and creating new health risks linked to displacement and environmental degradation.

2. Health workforce pressures

- Ongoing shortages of trained health workers – especially in rural and remote areas, and exacerbated by ageing demographics – are limiting access to care and straining health system capacity.
- “Push” factors such as heavy workloads and low pay, alongside “pull” factors such as better opportunities abroad, are contributing to workforce migration.
- Reliance on external or short-term medical teams remains high in several Pacific countries.

3. Rapid digitalization and health innovation

- There is a growing shift towards digital health tools – including telemedicine, AI diagnostics and mobile apps – but adoption remains uneven across the region.
- Digital tools and AI hold potential for transforming health systems, but require foundational investments in infrastructure, data governance and digital literacy.
- Gaps in digital infrastructure, connectivity and literacy limit the ability of many communities to benefit from new technologies.
- Fragmented systems and lack of digital health governance to support interoperability hinder coordinated decision-making and health intelligence.

4. Urbanization, lifestyle change and demographic shifts

- Urban migration is intensifying demand on already strained health and social infrastructure in towns and cities.
- Noncommunicable diseases are rising due to sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy diets, as are mental health challenges, particularly among youth.
- Youth populations are growing, with increasing calls for their leadership in shaping systems that address their specific health, well-being and employment needs.

5. Food system fragility and trade dependence

- Reliance on imported, highly processed foods is contributing to poor nutrition and increased burden of noncommunicable diseases.
- Local food production systems, including agriculture and fisheries, face pressures from climate change, global market forces and underinvestment.
- There is a growing recognition of food sovereignty as a determinant of both health and cultural resilience.

6. Health in the context of the blue-green economy

- Health is increasingly recognized as both a contributor to – and a beneficiary of – sustainable economic development.



- Investments in health systems and workforce development are essential for realizing the inclusive growth aims of the blue-green economy.

7. Health security and geopolitical complexity

- The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in supply chains, disease surveillance and gaps in health emergency prevention, preparedness and response.
- Increased geopolitical interest in the region is influencing the landscape of health partnerships, health sovereignty and regional coordination.

8. Shifting knowledge systems and the rise of Pacific research

- There is increasing demand for Pacific-led, context-specific health research and evidence.
- Indigenous knowledge systems remain undervalued, despite their relevance to local health resilience and community care.
- Pacific island countries must retain sovereignty over health data and research findings, ensuring any use of Indigenous knowledge or community data is governed through equitable partnerships and fair benefit-sharing.

9. Fragmented financing and regional integration challenges

- Most Pacific island countries and areas continue to face low levels of health expenditure relative to need, limiting their ability to offer comprehensive services.
- Regional mechanisms for pooled financing, procurement and shared service delivery are underdeveloped or inconsistently applied.

10. Sexual and reproductive health risks

- Rising rates of HIV, sexually transmitted infections, injecting drug use and gender-based vulnerability point to emerging crises in sexual and reproductive health, particularly among youth.
- Access to culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive health information and education, contraception and youth-friendly services remains inconsistent across the region.

11. Communicable disease risks

- Ongoing vulnerability to outbreaks, including HIV, dengue, measles and leptospirosis, reinforces the need for stronger surveillance and early warning systems.
- Antimicrobial resistance and re-emerging diseases present new regional threats that require coordinated responses, including through a One Health approach.



DRAFT Healthy Islands vision towards 2050: Resilient Pacific, thriving communities

Call to action: a resilient and united Pacific

To shape a future where Pacific peoples thrive despite uncertainty, Pacific leaders are strongly urged to commit to a shared journey rooted in equity, innovation and wisdom.

Despite geographical distances between our countries, the Healthy Islands vision affirms our collective identity and interdependence. It champions the Pacific's shared values of community, solidarity and mutual responsibility. The vision will foster equitable progress across all Pacific island countries and areas, regardless of size or affiliation, safeguarding the well-being and health of all current and future generations.

Healthy Islands vision 2050 is not merely a destination – it is a path to elevate Pacific leadership in global health, reaffirm our cultural identity, and ensure that future generations inherit islands that are resilient, inclusive and alive with opportunity.

By 2050, Pacific islands will be places:

- **Where children and youth are nurtured in body, mind and spirit**, supported by inclusive health systems, equitable access to education, ethical corporate systems and practices that prioritize health, as well as strong family and community networks that foster resilience, identity and healthier future generations.
- **Where people live, learn and play in safe, climate-resilient environments** that promote holistic well-being, cultural identity and sustainable lifestyles – integrating health, environment and education.
- **Where all individuals work and age with dignity**, enabled by accessible, affordable and person-centred health services, robust social protections and meaningful participation in a thriving blue-green economy.
- **Where ecological balance is restored through clean energy, sustainable food systems and climate-smart infrastructure, and where the ocean that sustains us is protected and wisely governed.** In these Healthy Islands, the stewardship of land and sea ensures sustainable livelihoods, food security and the health of both people and planet, safeguarding the well-being of present and future generations.
- **Where integrated health systems are digitally connected, and where innovative and culturally grounded health systems leave no one behind and are supported by multisectoral collaboration**, ensuring access to care and knowledge even in the most remote island settings.
- **Where Pacific communities are resilient to pandemics, disasters and global shocks** through collective action, regional solidarity and agile public health systems designed to anticipate and adapt to future risks.



Strategic shifts to realize the Healthy Islands vision

The strategic shifts outlined below will help operationalize the Healthy Islands vision 2050. Rather than just a response to current pressures, these strategic shifts will underpin implementation plans for the vision and aim to secure long-term health outcomes that will benefit generations to come.

These are not listed in order of priority; however, some may be perceived as foundational for others.

1. Strengthening the health workforce as a system enabler

- Expand training, retention and leadership opportunities, especially for nurse practitioners and essential workforce.
- Build supportive ecosystems around the workforce, including administrative and academic structures.
- Undertake robust reviews to better understand workforce needs and pressures to support ethical recruitment and employment practices, ensure fair remuneration and promote meaningful professional development pathways.
- Leverage digital and AI tools to train and retain the health workforce.
- Support health workforce to work to their full scope of practice, particularly in primary care settings.

2. Centring primary health care and universal health coverage

- Ensure equitable and affordable access to health services across all islands through strong primary health care, nurse-led models and community-based care.
- Embed gender, youth and disability equity and inclusion in all health strategies.

3. Embedding climate and environmental resilience into health systems

- Work collaboratively to address the risks and impacts of climate change on the health of communities, families and individuals.
- Climate-proof health infrastructure, prioritizing vulnerable populations and communities that have limited access to health-care facilities.
- Leverage local knowledge to drive community-based solutions and resilience.

4. Improving digital infrastructure and exploring AI-enabled transformation

- Invest in digital infrastructure, literacy and innovation to improve access, diagnostics and disease surveillance with interoperability in mind.
- Promote digital transformation that is phased, context-specific and aligned with ethical standards that protect patient rights and data.
- Create opportunities for peer learning, remote education and use of digital tools to support health workers and communities.
- Ensure ethical standards that protect patient rights, data sovereignty and security.

5. Recognizing health as a cornerstone of economic development

- Position health as a driver of sustainable economic growth by addressing the economic impacts of noncommunicable diseases and poor health.



- Increase resource mobilization for health – including advocating for a greater allocation of national budgets towards health systems and ensuring efficient, transparent and equitable utilization of these funds.
- Demonstrate the return on investment of resilient and person-centred health systems through case studies and best practices to support resource mobilization.
- Investigate and develop measures to address the harmful impacts of corporate practices and systems on the health of people and the environment.

6. Revitalizing traditional knowledge and research-based innovation

- Integrate traditional practices with scientific approaches to develop localized, innovative solutions.
- Promote regional research collaboration based on Pacific-led priorities, with protections for data ownership, intellectual property and cultural integrity.

7. Aligning regional action with national priorities and accountability

- Strengthen regional collaboration through shared reporting, peer learning and transparency.
- Focus implementation plans on a small set of high-impact, measurable milestones to drive collective progress.

This renewed vision aims to secure long-term health outcomes that will benefit both current and future generations of Pacific peoples.