



PRESS RELEASE

24 May 2002

PRIME MINISTER LAISENIA QARASE VISITS SOLEVU VILLAGE

CCC volunteers meet Fijian Prime Minister at two-day fundraising event.

Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, was recently guest of honour at a two-day fundraising event at Solevu, organised by the six villages on Malolo Island. Volunteers working for Coral Cay Conservation (CCC), a British non-profit conservation organisation, had the privilege of meeting the Prime Minister and talked about their work on the local reefs.

The Fiji Coral Reef Conservation Project (FCRCP) is collaboration between UK-based Coral Cay Conservation (CCC), the Government of Fiji, the Mamanuca Fiji Hoteliers Association (MFHA), local communities and agencies.

Coral Cay Conservation's work in Fiji is supported by the Ministry of Tourism and the Mamanuca Fiji Hotelier's Association (MFHA), CCC volunteers and staff were delighted to have the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister and other government officials at the fundraising event in Solevu village. CCC's Project Scientist Diane Walker said, "The support for the Fiji Coral Reef Conservation Project, was felt by all currently working on site and the honour of taking part in the ceremonies in Solevu and meeting the Prime Minister was an added experience."

During his visit Prime Minister Qarase stressed the importance of education and how education can improve the standard of living for people. Fiji's reefs have traditionally served as an important source of livelihood for locals and are also considered a massive source of income to the country, in particular by tourism. CCC will be working by educating the younger generations about threats to their reefs, how to manage and look after their most precious resource in terms of income through tourism and harvesting.

Mr Qarase has also stated that tourism is the key to economic survival for Fiji, "It provides thousands of our people. It provides cash income that translates into the improvement of their homes, the improvement of education and village sanitation".

Chief Ratu Sevanaia Vatunitu Nabola, invited Coral Cay to the Solevu village fundraising event to help raise funds and awareness of their work so far on surveying the coral reefs of the Mamanuca Islands. Solevu Village is raising the money to build a jetty over the reef into deeper water. Currently boats have to anchor on the reef and it is being walked over at low tide to reach the village. Building the jetty would allow boats to moor rather than anchor on the reef.

CCC's project site is currently situated on Qalito Island, also home to Castaway Island Resort. Teams of survey divers have completed sectors of Malolo Island including the area in front of Solevu village, Qalito Island, Honey Moon Island and sectors of the inner barrier reef.

Future plans for the Fiji Coral Reef Conservation Project conducted by Coral Cay Conservation include further surveys and also to commence community education projects in the Mamanuca area. These Projects include education of the children in the Solevu village, environmental reef talks to all staff working in the resorts in the Mamanucas and Divemaster workshops. Local Fijians will also be invited to join the CCC project for 5-week periods where they will be taught Marine Conservation and Dive training.

Note to Editors

1. For further information on Coral Cay Conservation please visit www.coralcay.org
2. Additional details about Coral Cay Conservation are attached.

CORAL CAY CONSERVATION

Providing resources to help sustain livelihoods and alleviate poverty through the protection, restoration and management of coral reefs and tropical forests.

Coral Cay Conservation (CCC) is a non-profit organisation at the cutting edge of ecotourism. We send teams of volunteers to survey some of the world's most endangered coral reefs and tropical forests. Our mission is to protect these crucial environments by working closely with host countries and the local communities who depend on them for food and livelihood. Anyone can be a CCC volunteer. Anyone can help make the difference.

Aims & Principles

Coral Cay Conservation provides resources to help sustain livelihoods and alleviate poverty through the protection, restoration and management of coral reefs and tropical forests. We achieve these aims by:

- providing technical and financial support that countries need in order to produce conservation management plans for threatened reefs and forests;
- training international volunteers and host-country partners to gather, interpret and monitor the data that's so crucial for effective conservation;
- working with host-country governments and other organisations to encourage education and sustainable livelihood opportunities in local communities.

Brief History

- 1986-1998: CCC supports the Belize Government's drive to create numerous marine reserves and a World Heritage Site along the Great Atlantic Barrier Reef.
- 1995-present: CCC works with the Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation Inc (PRRCFI) to safeguard Danjungan Island and other key areas.
- 1996: CCC expeditions survey Sulawesi's Banggai Islands.
- 1998: CCC's East Kalimantan Reef Conservation Project.
- 1998-present: The Bay Islands of Honduras – CCC's second Caribbean programme.
- 2001-present: CCC's Fiji Coral Reef Conservation Project
- 2002: CCC assists with a project to help the Tobago Cays (St Vincent and the Grenadines) become a World Heritage Site.

CCC Charitable Trust (UK Charity no. 1025534)

President: Sir Bruce MacPhail, Managing Director, P&O Group.

Coral Cay Conservation donates all profits to the CCC Charitable Trust, the UK's only charity dedicated to protecting coral reefs and tropical forests – and the livelihoods of the people who depend on them. The CCC Trust:

- funds conservation diving scholarships for local people;
- produces education resources for schools;
- raises awareness of conservation issues through events and displays;
- supporting alternative livelihood schemes and other local community projects.

CORAL CAY CONSERVATION

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