



## Women in fisheries profiles

### Nanise Kuridrani Tuqiri

Nanise Kuridrani Tuqiri was born and grew up in Namatakula Village in Fiji.

She holds a Master of Environmental Management degree majoring in conservation biology from the University of Queensland in Australia, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Marine Science from the University of the South Pacific. She is currently a Senior Research Officer with the Ministry of Fisheries overseeing a team of 30 fisheries staff coordinating all research, data synthesis, and providing policy guidance and advice.

Since joining the Ministry in 2005, she has played a critical role in coordinating marine resource assessments, including the establishment and gazettement of marine protected areas. The management and protection of marine species are an integral part of her work, and she made a significant contribution to the management and protection of groupers in Fiji. She coordinated the socio-economic data collection of aggregated reef fishes and the gazettement of the Naiqoro Passage Spawning Aggregation Marine Reserve in Kadavu in 2018. As a scientist, Nanise is interested in understanding the social and economic landscapes behind marine resources utilisation and the wealth it created through sustainable management and conservation. She coordinated the value chain analysis (VCA) of freshwater mussel (*Batissa violacea*) in 2016 and co-coordinated with Science and Conservation of Fish Aggregations (SCRFA) on the grouper fishery VCA in 2017.

She has a growing interest in understanding the impact of climate change on seafood safety and livelihoods. Nanise is actively involved in ciguatera fish poisoning research, working closely with the Fiji National University and the International Atomic Energy Agency. She presented a scientific abstract on "Identification of ciguatera hot spots in Fiji's I Qoliqoli" during the Indo-Pacific Fish Conference held in French Polynesia in 2017. At the national level, she presented a paper on "Grouper management in Fiji" during the Pacific Voices for a Global Ocean Challenge Conference held at the University of the South Pacific in June 2017 and a paper on "Value chain analysis of freshwater mussel in Viti Levu, Fiji" during the Women in Fisheries Celebration Conference in March 2017. She is well respected by her colleagues and partners for the high quality of her work and for her integrity.

#### What has been one of the greatest highlights of your career so far?

The greatest highlight of my career is being part of the Australia Awards Women's Leadership Initiative Leadership

and Mentoring programme for the 2019 to 2020 cohort. I was blessed and honoured to be selected in the programme since the selection process is very competitive: you compete with elite women leaders in the Pacific who have applied for limited spots. The programme is giving me the opportunity to further build my leadership skills and capabilities, and to establish my networks with other Pacific and Australian women leaders who share the same passion and vision to create positive changes in the areas that we serve. I contribute effectively not only to the Ministry of Fisheries on the sustainable management of fisheries resources, but also to my village by encouraging women and girls to actively participate in sports. I am the founder and the Manager of the Vusu Raiders Women Rugby League Club, a village-based women's rugby team that provides a platform for women and girls in my village and district to be empowered and create change. Being involved in these roles has given me the opportunity to mentor young women and girls so that they can also generate social and economic change and contribute to development in my village and district.

#### Why are you passionate about women in fisheries (or gender and fisheries)?

I was brought up by my grandmother in my village, Namatakula, in the province of Nadroga Navosa. In coastal and maritime villages, one of the regular activities for women is gleaning and fishing on coastal reefs. I often followed my grandmother, and she taught me the basic fishing and gleaning skills, especially to catch octopus. Therefore, I have been fishing from an early age, and this has contributed to my passion to know more about the marine environment and to understand the important role women play in our coastal fisheries. We know that women dominate the use of coastal resources, but only a few take up management roles. And as one of those few women in a senior role, I want to create a positive impact. Specifically, I want to do more impactful research and resource assessments that contribute to policy improvement and service delivery.

#### What message do you have for inspiring young women early in their career?

You need to self-discover first – know yourself – as this will help you to know your vocation. Sometimes the process to reach your goal might be long, as there are a lot of twists and turns along the way, but never give up. Remain confident, believe in yourself and have faith that anything is possible if you set your mind to it.