

***United Nations Expert Group Meeting on International
Migration and Development in Asia and the Pacific***

Migration Policies, Practices and Co-operation Mechanisms in the Pacific

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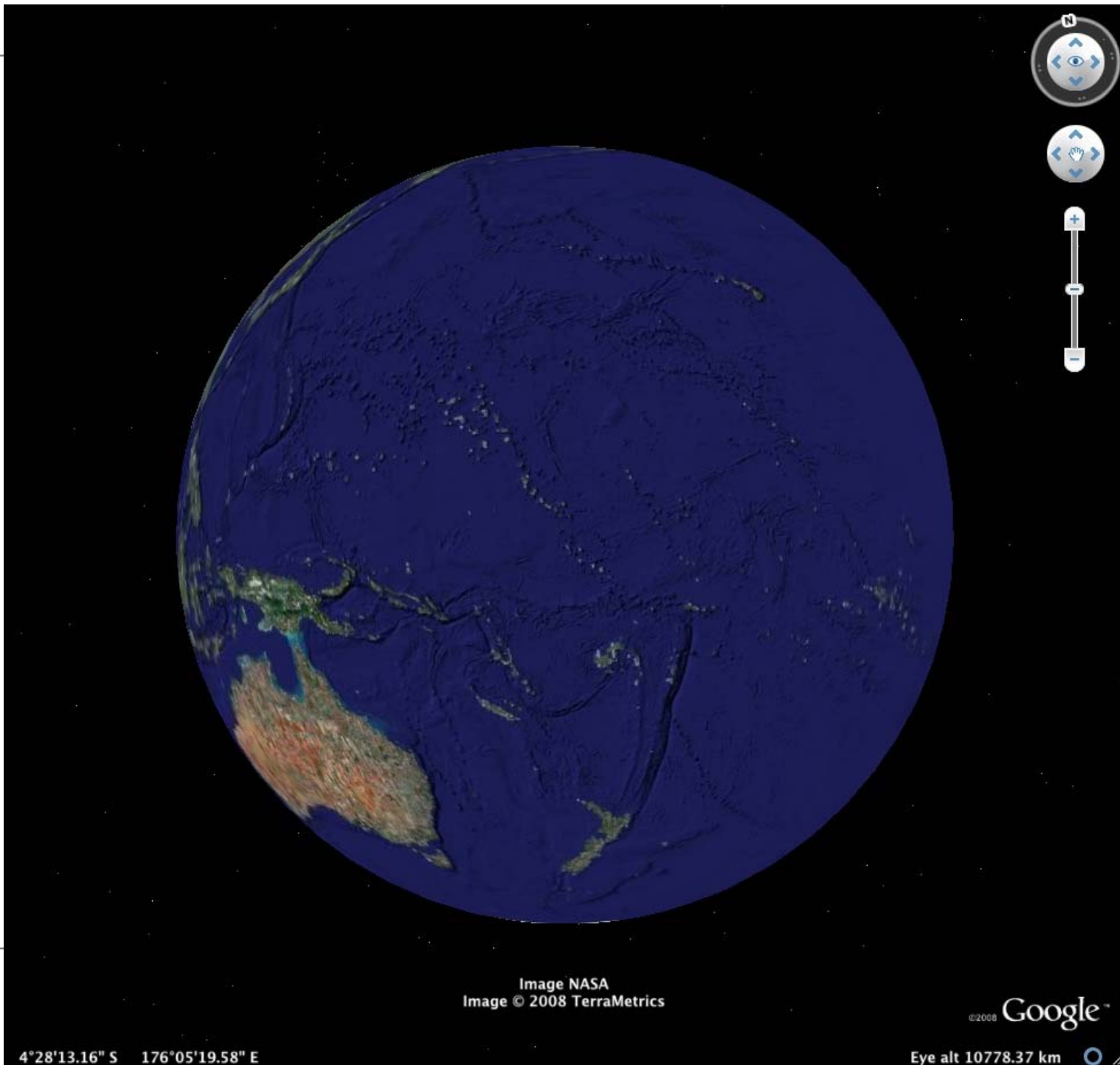
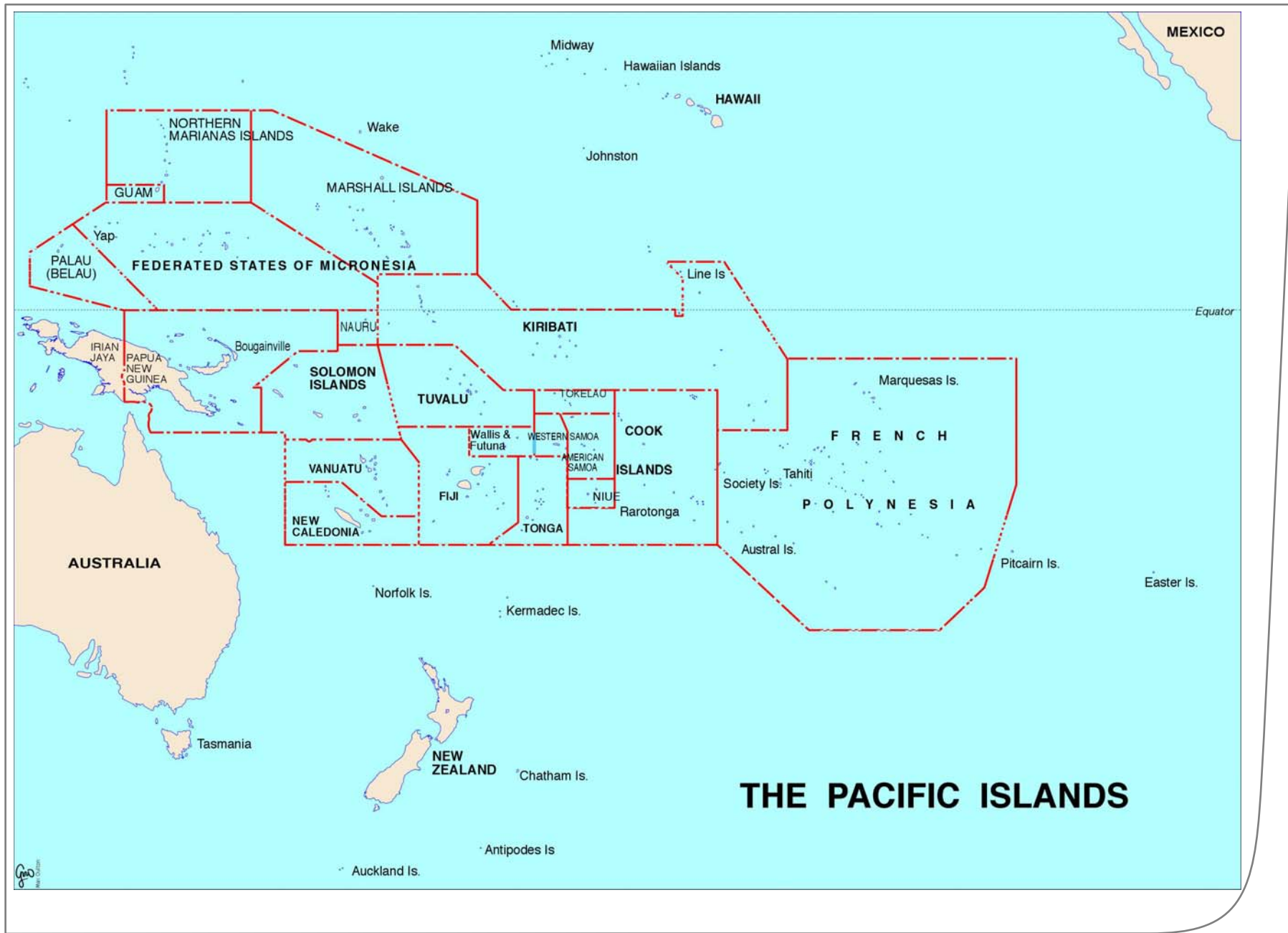


Image NASA
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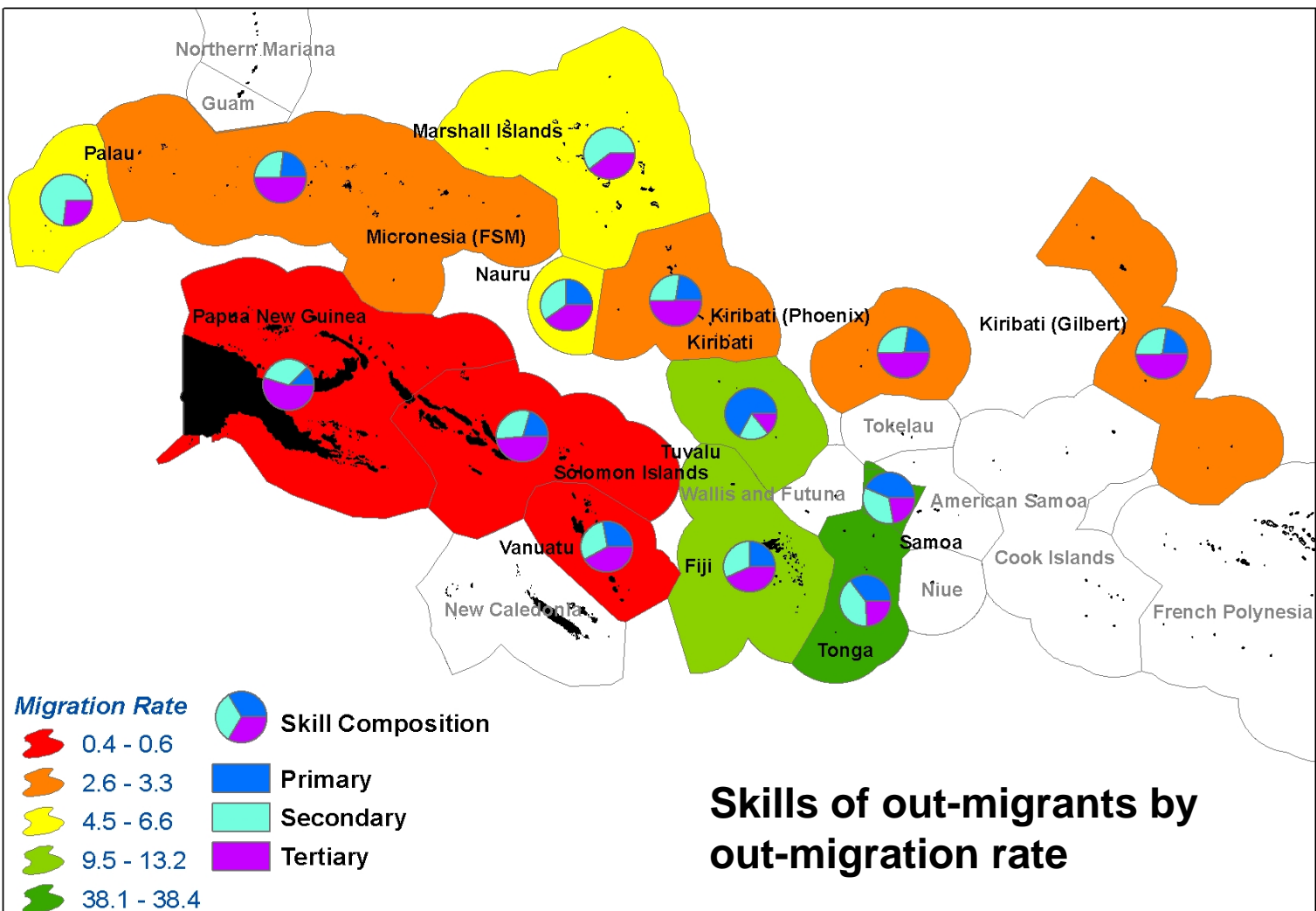
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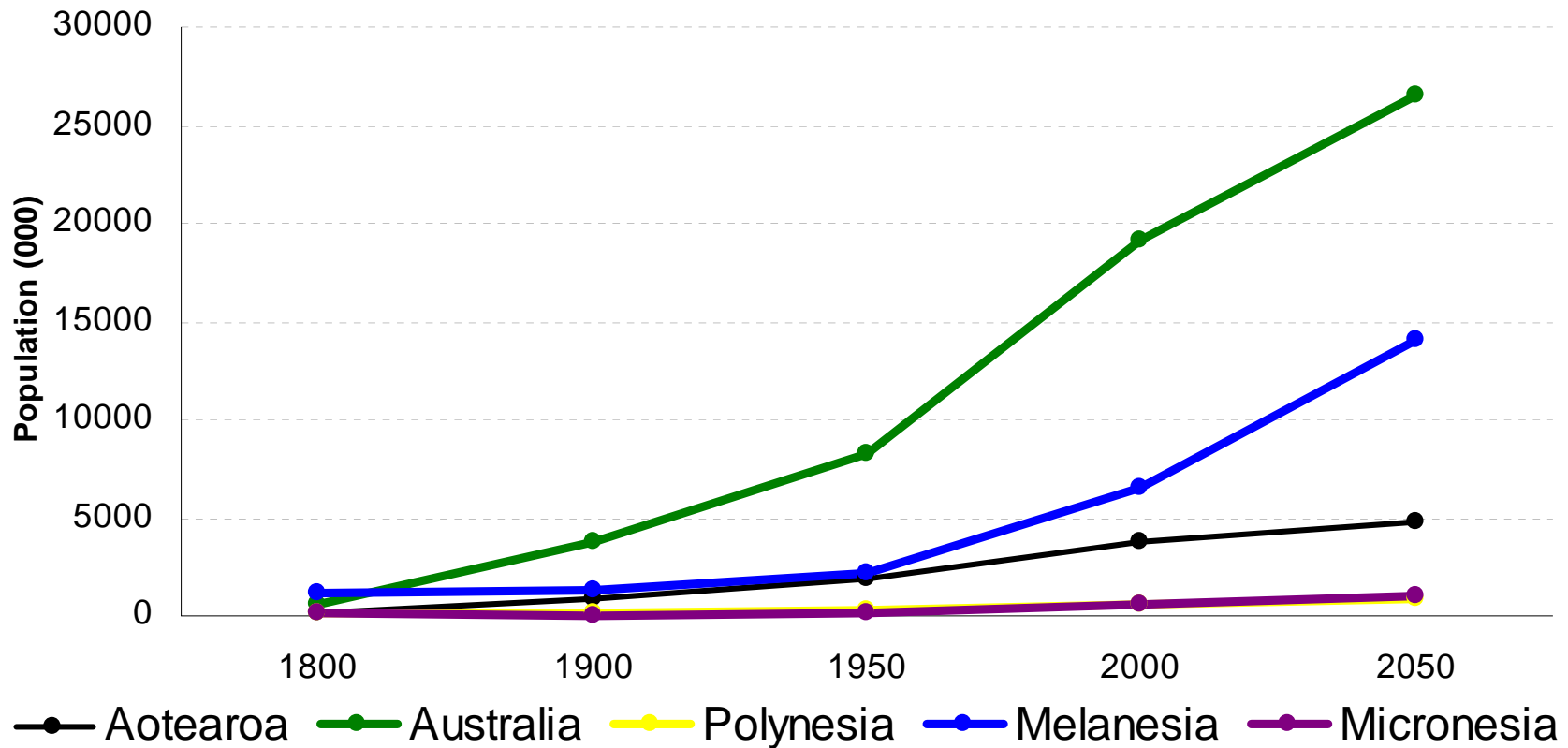


THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Pacific mobility worlds



A demographic challenge



The population situation around 2000

	(000's)	%
Aotearoa	3,780	12
Australia	19,140	63
Polynesia	590	2
Melanesia	6,480	21
Micronesia	516	2
Oceania	30,510	100



The population situation around 2050

	(000's)	%
Aotearoa	5,000	10
Australia	26,500	56
Polynesia	900	2
Melanesia	14,100	30
Micronesia	1,100	2
Oceania	47,600	100



Population change, 1950-2050

	1950-2000	2000-2050
Aotearoa	1,870,000	1,220,000
Australia	10,840,000	7,360,000
Polynesia	350,000	310,000
Melanesia	4,370,000	7,620,000
Micronesia	350,000	580,000
Oceania	17,780,000	17,090,000



Population change, 1950-2050 (%)

	1950-2000	2000-2050
Aotearoa	98	32
Australia	131	38
Polynesia	150	53
Melanesia	207	118
Micronesia	207	113
Oceania	140	56



A Pacific leaders' challenge

The Eminent Persons' Group Review of the Pacific Islands Forum recommended, amongst other things, in 2004, that Forum Leaders:

“Listen to the needs and aspirations of the burgeoning population of young people in the region, and recognise the impact of bigger and more youthful populations on the resources required for education and vocational training, healthcare and job opportunities”



Pacific youth populations

Sub-region	% tot pop 15-24 yrs	% growth 1995-2015
Melanesia	19.5	34.6
Micronesia	18.7	26.0
Polynesia	19.3	19.2
New Zealand	14.5	16.2
Australia	13.6	?



The Five Pacifics

- **Four sets of islands**
 - ❖ **Islands with rapid population growth**
 - ❖ **Islands with slow population growth**
 - ❖ **Islands with negative population growth**
 - ❖ **Islands with no major outlets for international migration**
- **“Islands” on the rim: Australasia**



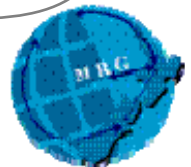
Supply of labour

- ❖ **Australasia -- shortages of skilled and unskilled labour**
- ❖ **Polynesia – shortages of skilled and unskilled labour in several countries**
- ❖ **Melanesia – oversupply of labour, especially unskilled**
- ❖ **Micronesia – shortages of skilled and unskilled labour in several countries**



Resolving labour supply issues

- ❖ **Australasia -- immigration of skilled labour; Working Holiday schemes for less skilled labour; RSE in NZ**
- ❖ **Polynesia – immigration of skilled and some unskilled labour**
- ❖ **Melanesia – absorbing surplus labour in rural areas and urban informal sector**
- ❖ **Micronesia – immigration of skilled and unskilled labour**

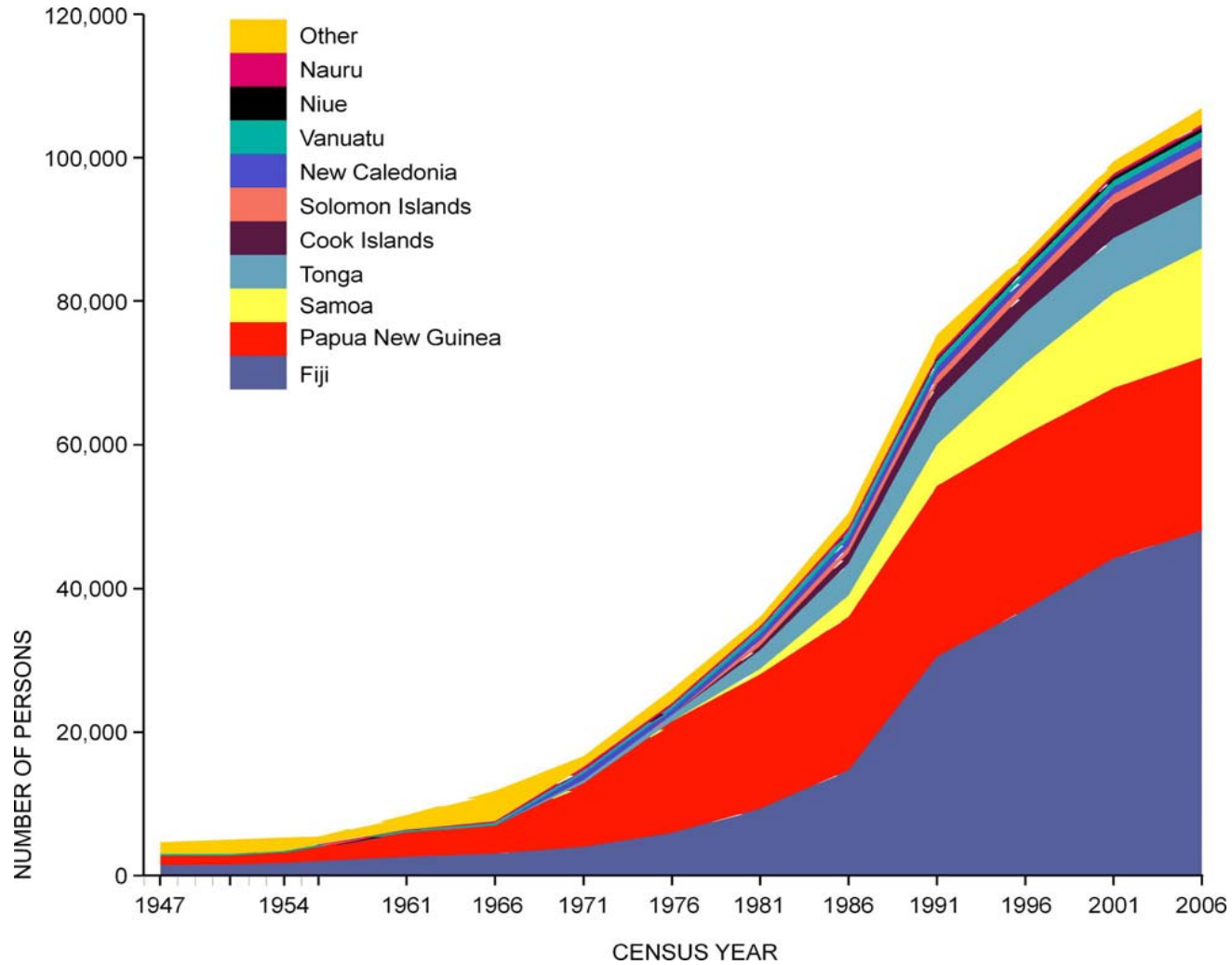


The Melanesian dilemma

- ❖ **Small formal sectors to the economy**
- ❖ **Low percentages of population in urban residence (especially PNG, Sols, Vanuatu)**
- ❖ **Increasing pressure on productive land resources and weak markets for rural commodities**
- ❖ **Very limited outlets for emigration of labour (especially PNG, Sols, Vanuatu)**



Australia: Pacific-born, 1947 to 2006



The major issue

Arguably the most contentious demographic issue confronting Australia and NZ in the Pacific during the next half century will be how to cope with pressure for an emigration outlet from Melanesia.

Sustainable development in Melanesia will depend heavily on opportunities for young people to travel overseas for training and employment.

Responding to the issues of population growth and employment provision in the Pacific is complicated by differences in immigration policies of Australia and NZ.



The major challenge

The biggest difference in Australia's and New Zealand's immigration policies relate to the Pacific.

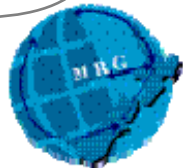
New Zealand has long-established migration relationships with countries in Polynesia and Fiji; Australia has had no special relationships with regard to Pacific migration since the 19th century.

In August 2008 Australia announced it would pilot a seasonal migration scheme with selected Pacific countries. This is a very significant policy shift.



RSE scheme

- ❖ **Benefits to NZ employers, migrant workers, and Pacific communities**
- ❖ **Main objectives**
 - ❖ **Provide overseas labour for hort/viticulture (H/V) industry when NZ labour not available**
 - ❖ **Promote best practice in H/V industry to support economic growth and productivity**
 - ❖ **Encourage ec. development, regional integration and good governance in the Pacific through preferential access for Pacific workers**



The scheme to date

- ❖ **Open to all Pacific Forum countries**
- ❖ **Five “kick-start” states: Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu**
- ❖ **Scheme launched April 2007**
- ❖ **By 14 June 2008 5,079 RSE workers in NZ across 12 regions. Represent 73% of the 6,969 people approved to that date on ATRs**
- ❖ **75 clients had been granted ATRs, and 91% of the workers were in three regions**



Some initial reactions

- ❖ **General sense in NZ amongst officials and employers that the scheme is working well**
- ❖ **Nic Maclellan's independent assessment has identified some problems**
- ❖ **Recent research in Vanuatu by Hammond and Connell reports higher incomes appear to be focused on development initiatives**
- ❖ **Research on development impacts sponsored by World Bank is cautiously optimistic about scheme reaching the poor**



RSE policy

- ❖ **Involves three government agencies sharing responsibility for delivering the scheme**
- ❖ **MSD oversees registration of NZ employers and ensures genuine need to recruit overseas labour**
- ❖ **DoL is responsible for all immigration aspects including compliance and monitoring**
- ❖ **NZAID oversees agreements with Pacific governments concerning recruitment and selection of workers, and monitors development impacts of scheme on Pacific communities**



RSE process

- ❖ **Employers seeking accreditation must meet several criteria, including paying half of worker's return airfare**
- ❖ **Once RSE status granted employers need an Agreement to Recruit (ATR) which also has several conditions**
- ❖ **Once ATR approved, employer can begin recruiting either themselves or through a contractor**
- ❖ **Workers must apply for Seasonal Work Visa off-shore and must meet several pre-departure criteria**



RSE process cont.

- ❖ **Workers can remain in NZ for 7 months in any 11 month period**
- ❖ **Workers from Kiribati and Tuvalu can be granted a permit for up to 9 months**
- ❖ **Workers can return in subsequent seasons, subject to demand**
- ❖ **Workers cannot transition to residence**
- ❖ **Of the 5,079 RSE workers 1,700 from Vanuatu, 1,400 from Tonga and Samoa and 170 from Kiribati and Tuvalu**



Pre-departure training

- ❖ **A condition of the Inter-Agency Understandings is creation of a work-ready pool and pre-departure training**
- ❖ **Many aspects of work conditions in New Zealand, the taxation system, medical insurance etc not common in islands**
- ❖ **The issue of transferring funds -- not something employers in NZ required to organise.**
- ❖ **Managing wages and dealing with the pressures of consumption**



Some questions

- ❖ **Will employers recruit reasonably sizeable numbers from the more distant countries like Kiribati and Tuvalu?**
- ❖ **Will those with NZ work experience sign on for work in Australia rather than NZ when Australia gets its RSE-equivalent?**
- ❖ **Will Pacific workers use the RSE to build a case for opening up avenues for resettlement, especially workers from Kiribati and Tuvalu?**
- ❖ **Can such schemes really make a difference to alleviating pressure for employment opportunities, especially in the larger Pacific countries?**

