

Pacific renewables

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Like the history of the first and second world wars in the Pacific,

Pacific renewables and their energy story is somewhat obscure. However, the problems faced by these Islands due to climate change and the attempts they are making is somewhat inspiring. Most of these Islands with the exception of Hawaii are low lying (at least in part). Many are atolls which are barely above sea level. Like the Maldives in the Indian Ocean they are threatened by rising sea levels and like this Island nation but with less publicity some (like the Cook Islands) are going for a 100% renewable target. The second problem is one of energy costs. The Pacific islands have a reputation for being generally very expensive. This is because most products used are imported, the supply lines are long and the populations are relatively small. This includes energy. A friend of mine worked with OM in Hawaii. She said power prices were very high. Most electricity came from coal power and the coal was imported. Not only do these Island states need to set an example due to climate change but the drop in wind and solar and the coming drop in energy storage gives them an economic opportunity as far as electricity prices are concerned. The solar resource is great in these Islands and the system requirements not huge. The Island of Yap (part of the Federated States of Micronesia) is aiming for an initial 25% renewables target to reduce dependency on expensive imported diesel using solar and wind. The Cook Islands are aiming for 100% renewable electricity by 2020 as was stated above, using solar and energy storage. The story of Pacific renewables is an inspiring but ongoing one, watch this space. Neil

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