

# Land Administration and Resilient Urbanization in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands

David Mitchell (Australia), Stamatis Kotouzas and Andre Bald (USA)

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## SUMMARY

This paper examines the interrelationships between customary and formal land administration systems, and with disaster risk management (DRM) in four Pacific Island Countries: Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and Tonga. It investigates how land tenure systems, policies, land administration procedures and institutional frameworks influence a country's capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters. The paper aims to identify challenges, opportunities, and best practices for integrating DRM considerations into land administration practices in the context of customary land tenure and increasing urbanisation. The comparative analysis reveals diverse land ownership and management structures across the four countries. Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, with predominantly customary land ownership, face challenges related to documenting land rights and integrating traditional practices into formal DRM frameworks. Both Tonga and Kiribati have a higher proportion of public land which offers valuable insights into reconciling customary and statutory approaches. Tonga's centralised land administration system, while providing a contrasting perspective, may offer lessons for streamlining disaster response efforts. The study highlights the importance of secure land tenure, effective geospatial management, and community engagement in strengthening DRM capacity. It also examines the role of policy and institutional reforms in aligning land administration with DRM goals. The findings suggest that integrating customary land governance into national DRM policies is crucial for effective disaster preparedness and response. Empowering customary landowning groups, strengthening land administration systems, and investing in capacity building are critical for building resilience in the face of climate change and disaster risks. The study underscores the need for ongoing research and knowledge sharing to develop context-specific solutions for integrating DRM into land administration practices in the Pacific region. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection of land administration and DRM, particularly in the context of urbanisation on customary land. The findings provide

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valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working to enhance disaster resilience in the Pacific and other regions facing similar challenges. The study's comparative approach considers the diverse land tenure systems in each of the countries and their implications for DRM, informing the development of tailored strategies for building more resilient communities. □

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