

NZ's Top Navy officer shares his experiences with FMA students

Royal New Zealand Navy commits to protect and promote regional peace, security and resilience in the South Pacific as it shares a close relationship with the Pacific Island countries, according to Chief of New Zealand Navy, Rear Admiral (RADM) David Proctor.

RADM Proctor, as part of his inaugural counterpart visit to Fiji, toured the Fiji National University's (FNU) Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) on Friday where he shared his experience and knowledge with around fifty students.

"We have strong cultural and historical ties to the South Pacific, an enduring focus on the region as our front yard, and an interest in ensuring they are strong and independent nations," he said.

"The New Zealand Government released the Strategic Defence Policy Statement, which highlighted the priority for the New Zealand Defence Force to be able to operate within the South Pacific to the same level as New Zealand territory, and the importance of our partnerships with other maritime nations," said Rear Admiral Proctor.

RADM Proctor highlighted the increasing challenges countries in the Pacific were facing in the wake of climate change, globalisation and increase in the movement of drugs. He said New Zealand is ready to assist its neighbours to strengthen border control and offer training to develop capacity within the islands.

"The effects of climate change create instabilities in several spheres



Royal New Zealand Navy Chief, Rear Admiral David Proctor while speaking to maritime students today

of security and magnify traditional security challenges. This interacts with other destabilising factors, such as transnational crime and the movement of drugs, people and contraband through the region which introduce violence and corruption into societies. Many of these disruptors disproportionately affect open societies and weak states. They are the forces for disaster," added the NZ Navy Chief.

"To help strengthen the collective capacity and resilience to the influences of this change, New Zealand needs to strengthen the International rules-based order by proactively understanding the security needs of the neighbouring countries including Fiji,"

Rear Admiral David Proctor is in Fiji to attend the third South West Pacific Heads of Maritime Forces Forum. The forum will allow an equal voice to each maritime force in the Pacific, to collaborate on issues that we are faced with.

RADM Proctor also informed the maritime students about Royal NZ Navy's engagement in "Operation Wasawasa". The Navy Chief said Royal New Zealand was then directed to support the Fijian Government with Patrol Vessels to assist in Fiji's programme of maritime and fisheries surveillance.

"Some of you may have noticed the presence of Royal New Zealand Navy ships in the waters around Fiji in May last year. At the time, Fiji's capacity to conduct maritime patrols was limited due to the unserviceability of RFNS," he said.

Two naval ships HMNZS TAUPO and HMNZS OTAGO assisted the Fiji Navy to patrol its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

These ships were deployed to Fiji to conduct maritime surveillance, security and fisheries patrols on behalf of, and in partnership with other Government Agencies from both Fiji and New Zealand.

Rear Admiral David Proctor thanked the students and staff of FMA for the warm welcome adding he was excited to meet Fiji's future sailors.

"We are the guardians of the maritime domain, and whether big or small, no one nation can or should do it alone."



Rear Admiral David Proctor receives a token of appreciation from Captain Voi Garisau on behalf of FMA