



LUI BELL MEMORIAL POST-GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP FOR MARINE SPECIES CONSERVATION

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

1. Background:

To honour the life and work of Lui Bell and his commitment to the conservation of marine species in the Pacific, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) established the Lui Bell Memorial (LBM) Scholarship in 2013. Funding for the Scholarship has been generously provided by the European Union through the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) Programme¹. **The scholarship is designed to promote the development of scientific expertise for Pacific island nationals in areas related to the conservation and management of Pacific marine wildlife (turtles, cetaceans, dugongs, sharks and rays, and seabirds) threatened by the impacts of fishing.**

2. Scope of the LBM Scholarship:

The scholarship:

- a) is open to Pacific island students from SPREP member countries².
- b) covers the disciplines of marine biology, environmental science, marine science, social science and environmental law for postgraduate qualifications.
- c) is open to all, but preferably to those who are under 40 years of age, to undertake full time post-graduate studies in marine species conservation at a recognized regional institution.

3. LBM Scholarship Conditions:

- a) Candidates must be resident in one of the SPREP Pacific islands Member countries.
- b) The proposed area of study must be aligned to one of the actions under Key Result Area 5 of the PEUMP Programme that relate to: endangered species by-catch threat assessments; species bycatch mitigation strategies; community monitoring and protection of endangered species; and capacity development for CITES for country partners. Areas of research identified as a priority by Pacific Island Countries to date have included:
 - Do anchored FADs reduce pressure on coastal fisheries?
 - Investigation into community-based turtle take and recommendations on management strategies and protocols.
 - Scale of incidental dugong and turtle entanglement in coastal gillnets.
 - How to work with communities to bring about positive change in attitudes.
 - Effectiveness of hookpods in reducing turtle bycatch by longline vessels

¹ See Annex 1 for more detail about the PEUMP Programme.

² American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna.

- Effectiveness of traditional governance systems for sustainably managing trade in CITES-listed species (to be established through Government regulations).
 - Impact of bycatch on populations of Threatened, Endangered and Protected (TEP) species (from inshore and offshore fisheries).
- c) The scholarship will generally be for Master's level research for up to **two years** and will be awarded *up to a maximum amount of US\$20,000* to cover tuition fees, necessary research and approved travel expenses for the student. Any additional costs above this total amount will need to be met by the student, *unless approved by the Lui Bell Management (LBM) Scholarship Trust Board*.
- d) In the case of applicants who are already employed in the public sector, a letter confirming release of the applicant, if successful, from his/her duties by the relevant employer for the term of the scholarship is a requirement.
- e) Preference will be given to candidates who will be undertaking their studies attached to one of the following institutions who have existing MOUs with SPREP: University of Newcastle, Victoria University of Wellington, University of the South Pacific, National University of Samoa, Griffith University, Solomon Islands National University and University of Papua New Guinea.
- f) Intending applicants should approach potential supervisors at the above institutions to assist with developing suitable projects. SPREP staff are available to provide advice karenb@sprep.org
- g) Successful candidates will, in normal circumstances, be expected to take up their place in the semester / trimester immediately following the award of a scholarship.
- h) Extensions to the scholarship period will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, demonstrably beyond the control of the student. Any application for such an extension must be submitted, with the support of the identified supervisor, for the approval of the Trust Board appointed by SPREP.
- i) Students receiving a scholarship must provide a twice-yearly progress report to SPREP via their university supervisor and are also expected to participate in various workshops and seminars intended to further the aims of the scholarship and contribute to the outcomes of KRA 5 of PEUMP. The award may be terminated, and all allowances forfeited if the student fails to maintain adequate progress in academic courses or project research or is no longer supported by the relevant educational institution.
- j) Students will be expected to contribute (without additional payment) up to eight hours of work per week to the department hosting their research, normally in areas relating to their field of study, providing them with useful experience of university activities. This work requirement can be waived in consultation between students and their supervisor, especially when it might hamper or conflict with the student's thesis research (for instance when this is based at a site away from campus).
- k) Students may not engage in full-time paid employment while enrolled in the scholarship scheme, except with the express permission of their supervisor and head of the relevant school.

4. Operation of the LBM scholarship:

a. Management:

The LBM Scholarship Trust Board will manage the scholarship. This Trust Board is comprised of the following:

- SPREP Director-General or nominee
- SPREP Director of Finance
- SPREP Director of Human Resources

- Threatened and Migratory Species Adviser
- Manager of KRA 5 – PEUMP Programme
- Senior representative of an academic institution

This Trust Board will convene at least twice annually to review the progress of the scholarship holders to assess their progress and evaluate continued support

Supported students will be required to submit their academic reports to the LBM Trust Board and the Board will consult with the relevant academic institution in assessing the students' performance.

5. Assessment of the scholarship applications:

Applications will be assessed on the basis of the academic standing of the applicant, academic and research potential, relevant work experience, alignment of proposal with priorities of the PEUMP Programme, potential to contribute to marine species conservation and management in SPREP Member countries after graduation, comments from referees, supervisors and overall suitability for postgraduate study. Attention will also be given to appropriate balance of gender and geographical origin.

While the aim of the scholarship will be to provide for the entire post-graduate tenure, continued funding after the first year and any subsequent years will be dependent upon the student's performance in a given year to a maximum of two years support.

Supplementary awards process:

Where an applicant has some existing funding, an award may be made on a supplementary basis.

Administrative support and information flow:

Progress in implementing the scholarship will be reported in the SPREP annual report to the SPREP Meeting. This will include recognition of the EU as scholarship sponsors.

Scholarship funding arrangements:

Payments to successful applicants will be made directly to the appointed University on per term/semester basis. Payment for each semester will be dependent upon the submission of a positive academic progress report to the Trust Board.