

Speech: Queen's birthday celebration 2019 in Suva, Fiji: High Commissioner, Melanie Hopkins' speech

Minister for Defence and Foreign Affairs, Hon Inia Seruiratu Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament Distinguished Guests, members of the media, Ladies and Gentlemen

Bula Vinaka, Namaste.

It's a joy to welcome you all to Gordon House as we celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's 93rd Birthday. The more discerning amongst you may have noticed a distinct Scottish theme tonight. I am delighted to be joined by the First Scots Guards tonight who are here on a rugby tour and joined their comrades at the RFMF for a march through the city at the Change of Guard at the State House last Saturday.

I'm very proud that we are celebrating her Majesty's birthday with a unique bula-kilt combination found nowhere on earth.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Fiji 7s rugby team for bringing home the London 7s title and now leading with the HSBC World Sevens.

Now, it may not have escaped your notice that our politics are more complicated than usual at the moment – to read the UK press, you would believe that there is nothing else happening beyond Brexit. But this is not the full story – we are very proud of the UK's global reach as the only country in the world to spend 0.7% of GDP on development AND 2% of defence; and the UK announced last year the largest expansion of its diplomatic network in a generation.

This year has seen a step change in the UK's relationship with Pacific countries:

- In Fiji and Tonga, we welcomed Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Sussex to deepen links on youth, gender empowerment, conservation and veterans.
- The UK has continued to lead on climate change, both domestically and internationally, including here in the Pacific. The UK is proud to be a supporter of the regional Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) hub as part of the USD88 million spent in the Pacific on International Climate Finance. We are also the champion for resilience and adaptation at the UN Secretary General's Climate summit in September 2019. At home, we have now gone 300 hours without coal – a huge step towards becoming the first major economy to legislate for net zero emissions.

- On oceans we have delivered new scientific and data support on ocean management as well as marine litter. The University of the South Pacific won a new 5 year £1.6 million UK research grant and will partner with world leading research centres in other Commonwealth countries in the response to the urgent challenges facing our ocean.
- Bilaterally we have extended new support on human rights, IMO negotiations, women's empowerment and police training.
- We have secured a new economic partnership with Papua New Guinea and Fiji to protect trade access post exit from the EU. Speaking of trade, we were delighted when Fiji Airways selected Airbus and Rolls Royce (whom I'd like to thank for their generous sponsorship of this year's celebration) for its next generation of aircraft. Major parts of the A350 XWB are made all across the UK. Rolls Royce is known throughout the world for its precision engineering and quality engines. I can't wait to fly on one of these.

So, in short, Britain is back!

And we have plenty still to come this year. This is the year when the UK's diplomatic network doubles in the Pacific – from 3 to 6 diplomatic missions, more than any other European partner. The British High Commission team in Suva has doubled this past year with new roles on development, oceans, regional organisations and programmes.

But lists of numbers and programmes don't begin to tell the story of this relationship. A relationship so rooted in shared history and personal ties. How best to sum it up? After two and a half years in the Pacific, I thought I would like to take inspiration from the tradition of Talanoa or storytelling to tell the story of one or two individuals whose achievements sum up what makes the UK-Fiji and UK-Pacific relationships so very special.

The first story involves a lady called Lusiana Manoa. Lusi was born in Navatu, Cakaudrove in Vanua Levu. Her dream as a child was to help people and to become a doctor. She was so encouraged by her parents, University lecturers and they moved to a farm in Wainadoi, outside Navua. She soon realised that she wanted to specialise in diabetes prevention. Lusi was selected for a UK masters (Chevening) scholarship in 2017-2018 and was awarded a place at the London School of Economics rated the second in the world for social policy.

At the end of her Masters, not only did she graduate with distinction, but Lusiana Manoa from Fiji was awarded the Dean's prize for outstanding overall academic achievement. She now works as a WHO consultant technical advisor for non-communicable disease control.

Next I want to tell you the story of Ben Naivalu, now Sergeant Ben Naivalu, a former student of Ratu Kadavulevu School in Tailevu. Sergeant Naivalu joined the British Army in 2004 and has served honourably on numerous overseas

posts.

As many of you know, just over 5 years ago, Russia, illegally annexed part of Ukraine, bringing open conflict to Europe's borders for the first time since the Second World War. At the NATO Summit in Wales, NATO leaders agreed new support to Ukraine and to strengthen defences in the Baltic republics of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

The United Kingdom's armed forces were ready to answer that call. Since September 18, the 1st Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment – including sergeant Naivalu – has spearheaded a multi-national battlegroup in Estonia.

I want to thank all the Fijian men and women who are working so hard both in the British Armed Forces and the RFMF to protect global security, uphold the Rules Based International System and in the UK help the British army beat the navy at rugby! When he's not working, Sergeant Naivalu continues to advocate for veterans and is passionate about supporting the Ministry of Defence Mental Health Awareness Campaign.

So as we look ahead to big anniversaries of independence in the region – Kiribati's 40th anniversary of independence on 10th July and Fiji's 50th anniversary next year, we can be proud of the links that are taking us from a shared history to a shared future. But more than numbers or list of financial programmes, we can be proud of those men and women who are the beating heart of the relationship, and that includes many of you here tonight.

On that note and with thanks again to our sponsors Airbus and Rolls Royce, I would like to invite you to join me in raising your glasses in a toast, "To the President, Government and People of the Republic of Fiji."

Press release: 160 more industry professionals to be recruited as FE teachers

Colleges and further education providers will receive a funding boost through the Taking Teaching Further programme to help recruit over 160 new FE teachers, Skills Minister Anne Milton announced today (Friday 31 May).

The latest round of funding from the £5 million Taking Teaching Further programme will support 45 further education providers to recruit experienced industry professionals from sectors such as digital, engineering and construction, to work in the classroom.

The Government is also providing more than £900,000 to support 22 innovative projects to look at ways to improve the link between further education

providers and industry so students are learning the skills and knowledge that employers require.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, Anne Milton said:

Teaching in further education is an incredibly rewarding career. We are reforming technical education in this country with the introduction of new T Levels and we want more staff with industry skills to pass on their expertise and inspire the next generation.

I'm thrilled to announce the second round of providers who will be offered funding to help over 160 industry professionals to become FE teachers.

We've already seen fantastic stories of success. The fund has supported 47 new teachers and 19 innovative projects to date. I am looking forward to more teachers joining the profession to inspire, energise and bring on the next generation of highly-skilled young people.

The programme has already seen 47 new FE teachers recruited across the country. This includes East Kent College who have recruited 5 teachers from sectors as construction, digital and education & childcare.

The scheme forms part of the Government's wider commitment to support the further education sector as it prepares to introduce new T Level qualifications from 2020. T Levels will offer young people the opportunity to gain the required experience to secure a good job or progress into further training.

Chief Executive of the Education and Training Foundation, David Russell said:

There is a vital need to bring the very best industry talent into the sector, so they can pass on their expertise and experience to both learners and fellow teachers and trainers. This is alongside the urgency to deepen the links between employers and further education. This programme is proving popular because it brings both needs together and we are confident it will make a real long-term difference.

The number of applications to be part of the Taking Teaching Further programme increased over the two rounds. This shows a clear enthusiasm and commitment to this initiative from across the Further Education and Training sector.

Head of Teaching Academy, East Kent College, Simon Bigrigg said:

Strand 1 has provided EKC Group with a range of fantastic opportunities to develop our recruitment and training of teachers in 'hard to fill' areas. The project has enabled us to recruit 5 lecturers who are brand new to teaching into lecturing posts across our Group of Colleges, from Plumbing to Electrical, Carpentry, Digital and Early Years. So far, the recruited staff have greatly benefitted the support provided by the project in embarking on their roles and initial teacher education, making full use of the DET level 5 Programme and the shadowing and reduced timetables elements.

Looking ahead, we are confident that Round 1 of the TTF will provide the 5 recruits with the best possible foundation to develop their careers, and the project will continue to create development opportunities for staff making the transition from industry that is second to none".

Curriculum Manager, Calderdale College, Robin Smith said:

Taking Teaching Further has enabled us to create innovative, hybrid roles which has led to us attracting our first highly skilled industry professional to join our curriculum team. Digital skills are a key area for economic growth in the Leeds City Region. The TTF programme means we will be able to deliver cutting-edge digital skills to fulfil the needs of our current and future students, providing a talent pipeline for employers in the region. The resultant comprehensive skills offer will include key areas required by employers, including cyber security, software development, systems and networks".

Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Wakefield College, Karen Sykes said:

It is widely accepted that, to equip students with the skills they need for a career in construction, teaching staff must be recruited from industry. Historically, we have faced many challenges attracting and retaining the talented people we need. The support of the scheme has enabled us to transform our approach to supporting those making the transition into teaching. We are delighted that the approach we have taken has proved an attractive proposition in the jobs market for those who would like a change in direction. Our trainees are amazing and made an impact from day one!

Programme Manager, Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network, Matt Leigh said:

Through the Taking Teaching Further programme, the Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network (GMLPN) and the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) have developed The Greater Manchester Further Education and Industry Exchange project which has brought together Further Education Institutions (FEIs) and employers from across Greater Manchester in four sector-focussed Industry Boards. We're particularly pleased that these partnerships aren't just one to ones they are many to many and we're confident that this positive, holistic, strategic and sustainable approach will not only generate the exchange activity and achieve the aims of programme but will also lead to long term partnerships that benefit everyone".

The £5 million programme was [launched in June 2018](#) to further boost the quality of the post-16 teaching workforce. It was designed in partnership with the Association of Colleges and the Education and Training Foundation, to create further links between the education sector and industry.

For further information about Taking Teaching Further, please visit the [ETF website](#).

[Press release: England's Marine Life Protected With Blue Belt Expansion](#)

Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today created 41 new Marine Conservation Zones, marking the most significant expansion of England's 'Blue Belt' of protected areas to date.



Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today created [41 new Marine Conservation Zones](#), marking the most significant expansion of England's 'Blue Belt' of protected areas to date.

Stretching from Cornwall to Northumberland, the new protections safeguard 12,000 square kilometres of marine habitat, an area almost eight times the size of Greater London. Today's announcement follows the government's manifesto commitment to create a Blue Belt of marine protection for Britain's overseas territories and its own coast, and builds on the ambition of the [25 Year Environment Plan](#).

The rare stalked jellyfish, short-snouted seahorse and blue mussel beds are among the species and habitats that will benefit from the protections.

With 50 zones already designated in 2013 and 2016, the UK now has 355 Marine Protected Areas of different types, spanning 220,000 square km – nearly twice the size of England.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

The UK is already leading the rest of the world by protecting over 30% of our ocean – but we know there is more to do.

Establishing this latest round of Marine Conservation Zones in this Year of Green Action is another big step in the right direction, extending our blue belt to safeguard precious and diverse sea life for future generations to come.

The latest round of protections follow an extensive consultation, including with local fishermen and marine conservation experts, which received overwhelming support for the proposals. In total, over 48,000 responses were submitted by members of the public, with Defra designating all 41 of the proposed sites and expanding protections at 12 existing sites.

Each designation is based on scientific evidence provided by marine experts from [Natural England](#) and the [Joint Nature Conservation Committee \(JNCC\)](#), as well as socio-economic information provided by stakeholders and Defra economists. Management plans will now be put in place to protect the newly-designated habitats and species.

Regulators, such as the Marine Management Organisation and local Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA), will be responsible for ensuring the Marine Conservation Zones are managed to protect their species and habitats, working with local fishing communities and other organisations.

Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, said:

These new protections are based on advice from our world-leading marine scientists and we believe will go a long way toward safeguarding over a million hectares of England's ocean and coastal

environment, and the many species which rely upon it.

Today really does mark a major step forward for the conservation of our precious marine environment, but there is still much to be done, including putting in place more of the good practices that we know are needed to secure the long-term health of our seas and their wildlife.

Marcus Yeo, Chief Executive at the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, said:

Defra's announcement on the designation of this third tranche of MCZs is a fantastic achievement in our collective vision for clean, healthy, safe and biologically diverse seas across the UK. In particular, we are proud as lead advisors to see the designation of a substantial number of additional MCZs in waters away from the coast, including the deep-sea; furthering vital protection for habitats and species of national and international importance such as coral gardens, sea-pens and fan mussel.

We know this is not the end of the story and look forward to continuing to work with Defra and the other responsible organisations to ensure these new MCZs contribute effectively to the UK MPA network and deliver tangible conservation benefits.

Joan Edwards, Director of Living Seas at The Wildlife Trusts, said

It's fantastic news that now we have 91 Marine Conservation Zones – they will form a vital series of underwater habitats which can be nursed back to health. We've been calling for the government to give real protection to a network of diverse sea-bed landscapes since 2009 and over 22,000 people joined our call for better protection of our seas during last summer's consultation.

Huge thanks to everyone who has supported this change! Now we need to see good management of these special places to stop damaging activities such as beam-trawling or dredging for scallops and langoustines which harm fragile marine wildlife.

Marine Conservation Zones are just one type of the many Marine Protected Areas in place around the UK to conserve rare, threatened and nationally important habitats and species for future generations.

The UK government has called for 30% of the world's ocean to be protected by 2030 and has co-chaired the creation of the [Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance](#) with Vanuatu.

The government will also publish an international strategy later this year setting out further action to conserve and sustainably use the ocean.

[Press release: PHE calls on all NHS Trusts to ban smoking on hospital grounds](#)

Survey finds that more than two-thirds of NHS acute Trusts in England now prohibit smoking on site as part of their journey to becoming smokefree.



- thousands are admitted to hospital because of smoking-related conditions every day
- new Public Health England (PHE) survey shows more NHS Trusts are now smokefree than ever before
- PHE calls for all Trusts to ensure total smoking bans on hospital grounds

Public Health England (PHE) has found that Trusts are making steady progress in becoming smokefree, with smoking now banned completely on the grounds of more than two thirds (69%) of NHS acute Trusts in England. Yet despite this progress, almost a third (31%) have not yet enforced total smoking bans across hospital premises.

The survey was carried out as part of PHE's Smokefree NHS campaign, which encourages all hospitals to provide smokefree environments as part of supporting smokers to quit and reducing tobacco-related harms. The NHS Five Year Forward View included a commitment for all Trusts to have fully smokefree sites by spring 2020.

Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive, Public Health England said:

One in four hospital beds are occupied by a smoker, and most of them want to quit. Many patients or visitors will be going through difficult times, but smoking remains England's biggest preventable killer and it is time for the NHS to stop smoking within its hospital grounds, everywhere.

It cannot be right that it is more acceptable in some hospitals to smoke at the front door than it is outside a pub.

As well as encouraging Trusts to prohibit smoking on site, the Smokefree NHS campaign calls for all patients who smoke to be offered evidence-based quitting support. The NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, commits to offering NHS-funded tobacco treatment services to all inpatients who smoke, regardless of why they are in hospital, by 2023 to 2024.

Professor Steve Powis, National Medical Director, said:

Quitting smoking has clear health benefits, which is why the NHS Long Term Plan details a number of practical actions to help people kick the tobacco habit.

Smokefree NHS premises are an important part of this drive, and the successful schemes we are seeing already provide a blueprint for other Trusts to achieve this over the coming year.

The survey highlighted examples of how Trusts are successfully implementing smokefree policies, including:

- effective leadership to ensure policies implemented quickly
- establishing smokefree steering or working groups
- investing in dedicated staff to deliver stop smoking support to inpatients
- tannoy system reminders about 'no smoking' to reduce confrontation
- promoting healthy environments – for example, fruit and veg stalls at hospital main entrances
- shelters with plants and trees
- partnerships with local schools to produce 'no smoking' signage

NHS acute Trusts such as mid-Yorkshire, Northumbria and South Tees are among those highlighted as adopting innovative approaches to help ensure smokefree premises.

Some NHS Trusts reported that implementing policies on e-cigarette use and allowing vaping in designated areas had helped them to achieve smokefree status.

Seema Kennedy, Public Health Minister said:

No one should have to walk past a cloud of smoke in order to enter

or leave their local hospital – we must lead by example, and I am determined to see a smoke-free NHS by 2020.

Smoking is still one of the biggest causes of death in this country, and through our NHS Long Term Plan, every smoker admitted to hospital will now be offered targeted NHS support to quit. I am encouraged by this new survey, which shows great strides have already been made towards a smokefree NHS – I strongly urge all Trusts to follow suit.

The PHE survey ran from December 2018 to March 2019. Participation in the survey was voluntary, with Trusts participating on condition of anonymity. Out of 145 Trusts contacted by PHE, 134 responses and 11 nil-returns were recorded.

Being a smokefree Trust was defined as providing evidence-based support for smokers to quit and prohibiting smoking anywhere on the premises, in line with NICE Guidance.

Trusts were scored on a seven-point scale according to the smokefree policies they have in place. Trusts with nil-returns were automatically scored zero for all criteria.

Main findings:

- almost half (46%) of Trusts achieved maximum points, although this does not necessarily mean that all smokers were offered support to quit
- two thirds (63%) of Trusts were rated 'green' as smokefree or substantially smokefree
- nearly one third (31%) did not have a policy prohibiting all smoking on the premises
- policy prohibits smoking in the grounds

Good examples of smokefree policies across NHS Trusts

Mid-Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

- tannoy announcement system plays anti-smoking reminders recorded by children. Any member of staff, patient or visitor can play the announcements by pressing a button located inside the hospital foyer
- on-site Stop Smoking Service at Pinderfields for staff, patients and visitors, with plans to launch additional services at more sites
- almost 3000 patient-facing clinicians have completed Very Brief Advice training on Smoking
- currently recruiting for a Clinical Nurse Specialist in smoking cessation

Further [information is available](#).

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

- all smoking shelters replaced with trees and plants

- award-winning 'Change is in the Air' campaign has been adopted by other trusts across the region
- dedicated training for all staff groups on offering Very Brief Advice for quitting smoking
- information on smokefree included as part of staff induction and appraisals
- 'I want to quit' button included on staff intranet to help signpost expert advice and support

Further [information is available.](#)

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

- stop smoking support and brief advice training provided to all staff
- over 80 smokefree champions to advise staff and patients being recruited across all clinical areas
- Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) routinely offered to inpatients, with NRT available on all wards

Further [information is available.](#)

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

- trolley dashes around all wards and departments with information (for example leaflets, promotional literature) to raise awareness of smokefree site
- public and staff education evenings held on smoking cessation as well as stop smoking drop-in clinics.
- due to install announcement service with anti-smoking reminders recorded by children (for example "my grandfather is receiving treatment in this hospital, please do not smoke.")

Further [information is available.](#)

[News story: Government launches call for evidence on ivory trade](#)

A range of animals including hippos, walruses and narwhals could join elephants in enjoying greater protection under the [Ivory Act](#), as the government today (30 May) launched a call for evidence on the subject.

In December 2018, the landmark Ivory Act became law in the UK, bringing with it one of the toughest bans on elephant ivory in the world. The new [call for evidence](#) will seek to gain further understanding about the trade in ivory from other, non-elephant species.

Today's announcement delivers on a pledge made by Ministers when the Act was passing through Parliament last year to gather evidence on the trade in ivory from species other than elephants. The Ivory Act includes a power to allow the ban to be extended to other, non-elephant, ivory-bearing species. This power is one way in which the government could further protect other ivory-bearing species.

The government is keen to hear from specialists across all relevant sectors during the 12-week call for evidence to ensure the latest information is considered. The Ivory Act is a landmark in our fight to protect wildlife and the evidence submitted to the review will inform the government's decision on whether or not to bring forward any changes to the protections already in place.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Our ivory ban is one of the toughest in the world, demonstrates that we see the elephant ivory trade as a thing of the past and will help the global effort to protect elephants for future generations. But there are many more precious species, like the hippo and walrus, which could fall victim to the trade in ivory.

We said we would consider extending the Act to other species. This call for evidence will help inform government policy on this.

This call for evidence will help us to understand if we need to take any further action to protect these animals from the trade in their ivory. We want to hear from specialists in this field to inform any next steps.

The full list of species to be included within the scope of the call for evidence is:

- common hippopotamus
- walrus
- narwhal
- sperm whale
- killer whale
- common warthog
- desert warthog
- mammoth

Whilst extinct, the mammoth is included in the call for evidence because trade in mammoth ivory may be linked to the trade in elephant ivory, due to their similarity. Government seeks further information on this issue, including whether any proven links threaten elephant populations.

[You can now submit evidence to the call for evidence](#) and there are a range of options for getting in touch with contributions.

The deadline for responses is Thursday 22 August 2019.