

Building sustainable communities in Rotuma

The future is what inspires many to persevere in what they do and LājeRotuma initiative (LRI) is no different in its vision and goal to mobilize our Rotuman island community to better manage their natural resources.

For the past seven years, LājeRotuma a community-based environmental initiative has been assisting in building sustainable communities.

“Shifts in values and use of natural resources accelerates loss of Rotuman traditional knowledge and practices im-

portant to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development”, says Monifa Fiu, coordinator of LājeRotuma. Plans for infrastructure development and the exponential rate of resource utilization are imminent across Rotuma today.

Since it's inception, LājeRotuma has been assisting with biological surveys of land and marine biodiversity to improve understanding of Rotuma's flora and fauna and address major threats to this unique island ecosystem. Rotuma was once covered in

tropical moist forest that has almost been entirely replaced by coconuts and shifting crops. Due to lack of streams and rivers, sedimentation does not threaten the reefs. However, small amounts of coastal erosion do occur following heavy rain events.

Major threats to Rotuma's ecosystems are extreme weather conditions and excessive use of herbicides. This has also been identified as a threat to groundwater (a source of drinking water) and potentially harmful to marine life if leached into the lagoon.



(top left) Rotuman Myzomela, (bottom left) LRI organized ecocampers conducting sea grass survey, (right) A Rotuman canoe carver and weaver (source www.rotuma.net).