

Honouring a Legacy: US\$1M Fund Launched to Clean Up Fishing Vessels in Suva Harbour and Protect Fiji's Ocean Future

SUVA, FIJI, August 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Captain Johnathan Smith Fund has launched to safely remove derelict fishing vessels from Suva Harbour, in honour of Captain Smith's enduring commitment to ocean stewardship. This effort aims to restore Suva's harbour, enhance the surrounding waters and marine life, and safeguard the wellbeing of the communities who depend on these waters for food, income, and daily life.

To launch the Fund, the [Waitt Institute](#) will contribute US\$1 million to begin the cleanup of the vessels in Fiji's waters. The cleanup effort is a collaboration between the Government of Fiji, the Joint Maritime Environment Committee (JMEC), [Blue Prosperity Fiji](#), and the Waitt Institute, marking an important step to protect ocean health and strengthen Fiji's Blue Economy.

"This Fund is about more than removing derelict fishing vessels; it's about protecting our future and building a sustainable ocean economy," said Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau, Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services, and Transport.

In addition to the cleanup, the newly launched Fund will work towards legal, policy, and institutional reforms.

"Removing these vessels is essential, but creating legislation to prevent future dumping is even more important," said Dr. Sivendra Michael, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. "We are committed to safely cleaning up the harbour, advancing policy reform, and taking action for a healthy ocean for our people."

The Fund was officially launched at Suva Royal Yacht Club with a symbolic sail on the Uto Ni Yalo, Fiji's traditional voyaging canoe, which was first captained by the late Johnathan Smith.

The event featured remarks from:

Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau, Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services, and Transport

Dr. Sivendra Michael, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

Mr. Ted Waitt, Founder and Chairman of the Waitt Institute and Foundation

Ms. Mavis Smith, Wife of Captain Johnathan Smith

The Captain Johnathan Smith Fund marks a critical step in a broader national effort to

sustainably manage 100% of Fiji's ocean and fully protect at least 30%, a vision being advanced through the Blue Prosperity Fiji programme and the development of a Marine Spatial Plan.

"These vessels really upset me because it's a symbol of years of exploitation of Fijian waters and Fijian resources. The citizens of Fiji deserve better; they deserve an ocean that is thriving with abundant life," said Mr. Ted Waitt, Founder and Chairman of the Waitt Institute and Foundation, a signatory partner with the Government of Fiji for the Blue Prosperity Fiji programme.

Derelict Fishing Vessels in Suva Harbour

Suva Harbour has become a graveyard for abandoned and sunken vessels, many of which have been left by foreign-owned and operated fishing fleets. These rusting, structurally unsound ships leak oil, fuel, and toxic substances, polluting coastal waters, threatening fisheries and navigation, and damaging important habitats which directly affect the wellbeing of nearby communities and businesses. They disrupt port operations, pose safety hazards, and deter investment in tourism and coastal development. Legal jurisdiction challenges have made enforcement difficult, leaving the responsibility of cleanup efforts to the Government, philanthropy, and local communities.

Honouring a Legacy of Stewardship

The Fund honours the legacy of Captain Johnathan Smith, who was widely celebrated for his lifelong dedication to ocean stewardship and sustainable ocean practices. A community leader, veteran seafarer and first Captain of the Uto Ni Yalo canoe, he championed traditional Fijian knowledge while advocating for strengthened measures to protect marine ecosystems.

Over decades, he worked with local fishers, policymakers, and regional organisations to promote sustainable fishing, combat illegal practices, and safeguard coral reefs and coastal habitats. Captain Smith served as Operations Manager for Dive Centre Fiji Limited, where he led a team of divers in salvaging wrecks at sea. Throughout his extensive travels, Captain Smith remained committed to marine engineering, working from the Royal Suva Yacht Club Marina. He dedicated his life to protecting Fiji's waters for both cultural heritage and future prosperity, and his legacy lives on as he continues to inspire the next generation of ocean advocates.

About Blue Prosperity Fiji

Blue Prosperity Fiji is a partnership between the Government of Fiji, the Waitt Institute to support Fiji's vision for a healthy ocean, thriving communities, and prosperous economies.

The programme focuses on sustainable ocean management of 100% of Fiji's ocean and at least 30% full protection of Fiji's waters in Marine Protected Areas, in addition to sustainable fisheries management and development of Fiji's ocean industries through Blue Economy initiatives.

BlueProsperityFiji.org

About the Waitt Institute

The Waitt Institute is a non-profit that partners with committed governments and local

communities to create and implement sustainable ocean plans to benefit people, the economy, and the environment. The Waitt Institute is the founding member and organizing body of the Blue Prosperity Coalition, which currently has Blue Prosperity partnerships with the Azores, Bermuda, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

Ian Chute

Blue Prosperity Fiji

ichute@blueprosperityfiji.org

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/836236663>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.