

**Isabella Ptrick**

**Graduate Women New Zealand Fellowship March 2026 update**

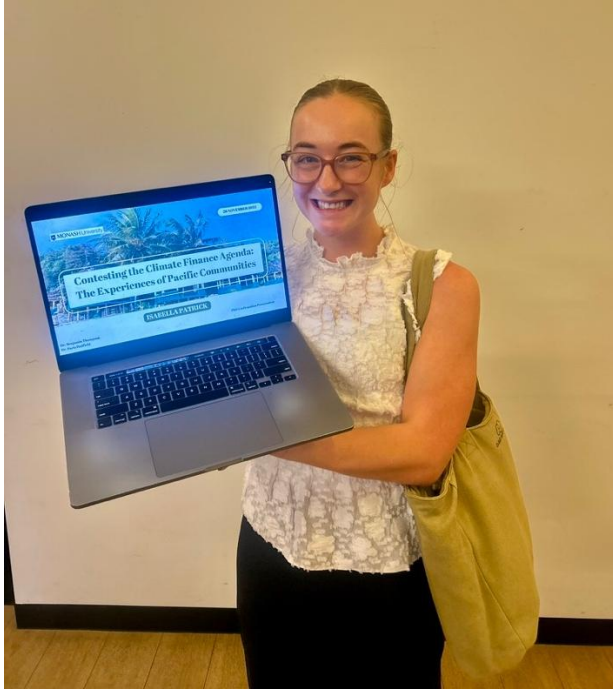
**Research Topic Summary**

Despite billions of dollars being pledged, global climate finance is still largely inaccessible, administered top-down, and fails to consider place-specific climate resilience. This PhD aims to investigate how climate finance can become more accessible and effective for Pacific communities. In so doing, it will explore the experiences of Pacific communities as prospective climate finance recipients and climate resilience knowledge holders, and scrutinise bottom-up financing mechanisms that contest the top-down global climate financing agenda. This research will use Indigenous social science methods (e.g., the *Talanoa* research methodology) to explore grass-roots experiences of climate financing. The research will draw on critical geography perspectives to understand the extent to which financing mechanisms and related policies are place-specific, accessible, and supportive of climate resilience. These learnings from the Pacific will provide impactful knowledge-sharing opportunities for other Small Island States in their quest to access and effectively use climate finance.

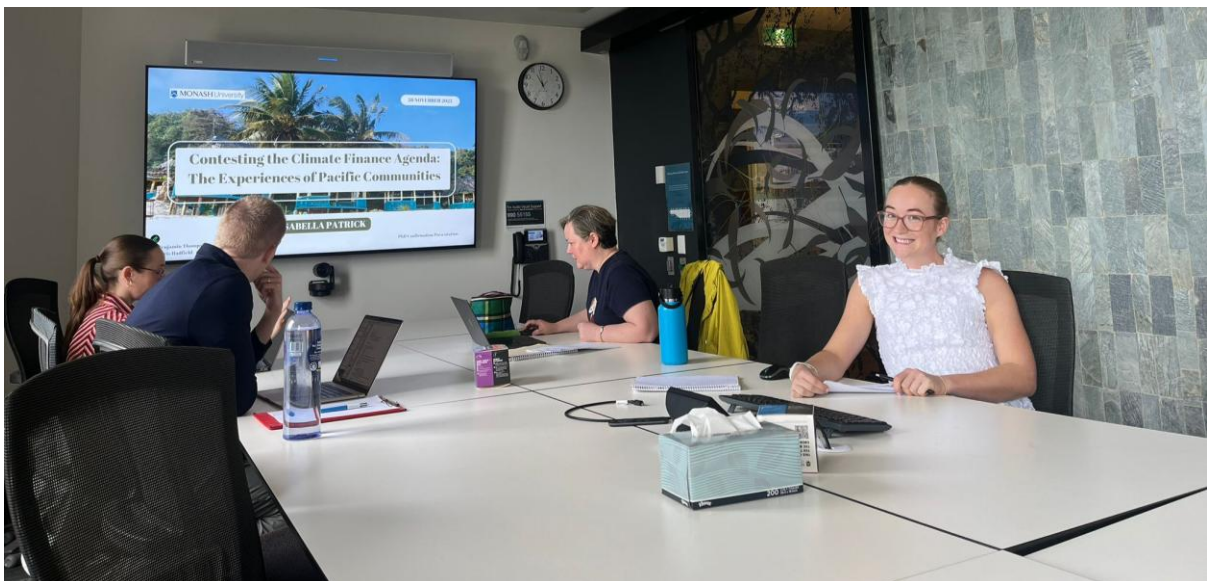
**Keywords:** climate finance, climate change, climate resilience, Indigenous Local Knowledge, *fa'asamoa*, grass-roots approach, sustainable development, *Talanoa*.

## **Isabella's Updates**

The biggest update is that on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025, I passed my first PhD milestone, and was confirmed into the Monash University PhD programme, officially becoming a PhD candidate! The confirmation consisted of writing 9,000 words on literature, research aims and questions, research design (methodology and methods), ethics, impacts, and timeline. I then presented my research in front of my friends and family to a panel of experts, I successfully defended my research design, conceptual framework and significance of the research. This was a really exciting and proud moment for my PhD, with fieldwork planning now beginning to take place.



*1 This was after I was officially confirmed as a PhD candidate*



*2 Moments before presenting my research, the expert panel and my family/friends were all on Zoom*

From August 2025 to now (February 2026), my primary focus for my PhD has been a systematic literature review, ethics, and planning my fieldwork for 2026. Thanks to the GWNZ Fellowship, I was able to upgrade my technology at the end of last year. As mentioned in my application, my technology was due for a serious upgrade, with it being over 7 years old. My new PC, monitor and iPad have significantly improved my ability to analyse papers, create database systems for my systematic review, and allow me to use multiple programs at once. I am very appreciative that I was in a position to improve the quality of my PhD and thus the output of my work.

As mentioned in my application, my fieldwork will take place in Samoa and Fiji, as well as conferences in Palau and the Solomon Islands. I am currently in the process of booking and planning this fieldwork. Because of the nature of this research, in-country fieldwork is vital, and this Fellowship has meant that I now have the ability to stay in-country for longer periods and collect data from people located in more places across the Pacific. This means that my research will be rigorous, leading to more impactful outcomes for the communities that are impacted by climate change

My fieldwork is tentatively booked for May and June this year, with the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meetings in Palau in August this year. I was planning on also attending COP in Australia; however, with the meeting being moved to Turkey, I am establishing the feasibility and importance of attending.

Thank you to the GWNZ again for selecting me and my research for the Fellowship. I am looking forward to the year ahead with the financial feasibility to undertake my fieldwork rigorously.

Kind regards,  
Isabella Patrick