



GSTC 2025 Fiji Closing Remarks – Dr Kelly Bricker, GSTC Vice-chair

7th August 2025

Bula vinaka, everyone,

As we gather here for one last time before our post conference tours at the GSTC 2025 Global Sustainable Tourism Conference in Fiji, I want to pause and reflect on the journey we have taken together over these past days.

You've come from across public sectors, hotels, tour operators, corporates, OTAs, academics, development agencies, NGOs, consultants, and scientists—diverse expertise, and many perspectives, but all united by a shared commitment: making tourism a force for good that protects nature, preserves culture, and supports communities.

Over the past few days, we engaged deeply with the three central themes of the conference: Coastal & Island Tourism, Community, Culture & Responsible Development, and Climate Resilience, Adaptation & Sustainable Recovery.

- In sessions on Coastal & Island Tourism, we examined resilient models for managing marine destinations, sustainable yacht tourism, and port infrastructure and education that protects coral reefs while supporting visitor access.
- Around Community, Culture & Responsible Development, panels showcased community-led heritage tourism initiatives that respect cultural identity and generate inclusive economic benefits.
- In the climate resilience track, we focused on adaptation strategies—from sea-level rise response planning to post-pandemic tourism recovery built on sustainability principles.

And, before the main conference even began, we saw the power of capacity-building in action. The pre-conference trainings brought together talented participants who shared their journey and how we can apply GSTC standards in real-world contexts—helping destinations, businesses, and policymakers move from vision to implementation.

The Academic Symposium brought together scholars from around the world to share cutting-edge research on sustainable tourism, fostering an important dialogue between theory and practice. These sessions enriched our collective understanding and ensured our work remains informed by both rigorous evidence and lived experience.

But beyond the content and case studies, something even more powerful unfolded here: connection.

From those training rooms and academic sessions through to plenaries, panels, and deep-dive workshops—this week has been about building bridges. We've shared experiences, tested ideas, asked tough questions, and listened intently. That spirit of collaboration has truly been the heart of this event.

We all have roles as **Changemakers and Catalysts...**

We head home with insights, tools, and new networks—but the measure of this conference's impact will be what unfolds next. So, here are three invitations for meaningful action:

1. **Be the bridge.** Connect what you've learned here with your own community or sector—whether that's island regulation, hospitality supply chains, or climate planning.
2. **Be the voice.** Leverage your platform to advocate—use strategies and stories from this week to influence policy, business leadership, or community organizations.
3. **Be an example.** Make sustainability integral—not optional. Embed it into every decision, communication, and operation. Let your organization be a showcase of tourism's impact for good.

Thank you to our hosts in Fiji—for your warmth, your seamless organization, and to the South Pacific and small island nations, exemplifying stewardship of coastal resources, cultural vitality, and resilience of island communities.

To the GSTC global team, and to the speakers, facilitators, volunteers, and sponsors—your efforts have made this a high-impact global event.

And to all of you, our friends, our colleagues, thank you for investing your time, expertise, and passion. You've underscored that sustainable tourism is not a trend, you have demonstrated the need for our industry and communities, and the importance of our commitment to this journey for our planet and communities.

Sota tale – we will meet again.

May we meet again in a world where coastal destinations thrive, communities lead, and resilience is our foundation.

Vinaka vaka levu, safe travels—and let's turn this momentum into action.

Dr Kelly Bricker, Global Sustainable Council Vice-chair