



**Joint Submission of Fiji and Solomon Islands  
to the Commission on the Limits  
of the Continental Shelf  
concerning the  
Melanesian Borderlands Plateau Region**

**Part I  
Executive Summary  
MBP-ES-DOC**

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- GeoLimits Consulting, Canada
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- GeoScience Australia
- Australian Attorney General's Department

## 1. Introduction

This Executive Summary forms part of the Submission made jointly by the Republic of the Fiji Islands and Solomon Islands (hereinafter referred to collectively as 'the two coastal States'), pursuant to paragraph 8 of Article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 ('the Convention'), in support of the establishment by the two coastal States continental shelf that lies beyond 200 nautical miles ('M') from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured ('territorial sea baselines ') in the Melanesian Borderlands Plateau (MBP) region.

Where the continental shelf extends beyond 200 M from the territorial sea baselines, a coastal State seeking to establish the outer limits of its continental shelf beyond 200 M consistent with the Convention, is required under paragraph 8 of Article 76 to submit information on such outer limits to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (hereinafter referred to as 'the Commission'). The Commission makes recommendations to the coastal State on matters related to the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf consistent with the relevant provisions of Article 76 of the Convention.

As provided for under paragraph 1 of Article 76, the two coastal States have a continental shelf comprising the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond the territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of the relevant land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, up to the limits provided for in paragraphs 4 to 6 of Article 76.

The two coastal States are each Contracting Parties to the Convention and have, for the purposes of preparing this Submission, applied the relevant provisions of Article 76 of the Convention, the Rules of Procedure of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS/40/Rev. 1) adopted by the Commission on 17 April 2008 ('Rules of Procedure') and, the Scientific and Technical Guidelines of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS/11) adopted by the Commission on 13 May 1999 ('the Guidelines').

The two coastal States have, for the purpose of this Joint Submission, interpreted all references in Article 76 of the Convention to 'a coastal State', 'the coastal State', 'its territorial sea', 'the territorial sea', and 'its land territory' as applicable to 'the coastal States', 'their territorial seas' and 'their land territories' respectively.

## 2. Joint Submission

In accordance with paragraph 4 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the two coastal States have agreed to make a joint submission to the Commission in support of the establishment by them of the outer limits of their continental shelf in the region of the MBP that lies beyond 200 M from their respective territorial sea baselines.



This Submission is therefore of a joint nature, and comprises a single document prepared collaboratively by the two coastal States.

For the purpose of paragraph 9.1.4(c) of the Guidelines, no member of the Commission gave advice in the preparation of the Submission.

### 3. Partial Submissions and Preliminary Information

This Submission also represents a partial submission in respect of a portion only of the continental shelf beyond 200M from the territorial sea baselines of the two coastal States. In this regard, Fiji has previously submitted a partial submission, on 20 April 2009 (as revised on 30 April 2012), for which the Executive Summary has been duly publicised ('Partial Submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf pursuant to Article 76, paragraph 8 of the Convention in the Region of the Lau-Colville and Tonga-Kermadec Complex').

The lodgment of this partial joint submission also follows the lodgment of a Joint Submission by the Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Federated States of Micronesia concerning the Ontong Java Plateau on 9 May 2009 pursuant to paragraph 8 of Article 76 of the Convention in support of the establishment by those three coastal States of the outer limits of the extended continental shelf that lies beyond 200 M from their respective territorial sea baselines in the Ontong Java Plateau Region.

On 21 April 2009, the two coastal States submitted to the Secretary-General preliminary information indicative of the area of continental shelf beyond 200 M for MBP region (termed in that document "Charlotte Bank") pursuant to the *Decision regarding the workload of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the ability of States, particularly developing States, to fulfil the requirements of article 4 of annex II to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as the decision contained in SPLOS/72, paragraph (a)* (SPLOS/183).

This partial joint submission for the MBP Region defines the extent of the continental shelf beyond 200 M and replaces the previously submitted preliminary information indicative of those limits.

Furthermore, in accordance also with paragraph 3 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, submissions for other areas of continental shelf beyond 200 M for each of the two coastal State have already been made, or shall be made, in respect of relevant areas at a later date.

### 4. Absence of Disputes

In accordance with paragraph 2 (a) of Annex I of the Rules of Procedure, the two coastal States confirm that the area of continental shelf that forms the basis of the

present Joint Submission is not the subject of any dispute between the two coastal States, or with regard to any other State.

The two coastal States have agreed further, pursuant to paragraph 4(a) of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, to make this Submission in respect of the establishment of the outer limits of the extended continental shelf in the MBP region without prejudice to the delimitation of the extended continental shelf between them. Therefore, the delimitation of the area that is the subject of this joint Submission shall be agreed once the Commission has concluded its consideration of the Joint Submission and after the outer limits of the area concerned have been duly established.

## 5. Form of Submission, Maps and Tables

In accordance with Article 1 of Annex III to the Rules of Procedure and paragraphs 9.1.3 to 9.1.6 of the Guidelines, the Joint Submission consists of three parts comprising:

- this Executive Summary (MBP-ES-DOC);
- the Main Body (MBP-MB-DOC); and,
- Supporting scientific and technical data (MBP-SD).

A separate section of this Executive Summary provides a brief outline of the region of continental shelf beyond 200 M, including a depiction of the extent of the continental shelf determined by the two coastal States.

Maps at an appropriate scale are included in this Executive Summary and have been duly supplied as separate A0-size maps. Map 1 (Figure 1: MBP-ES-MAP 1) depicts the extent of the continental shelf beyond 200 M, while Map 2 (Figure 2: MBP-ES-MAP 2) depicts the Fixed Points delineating the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 M from the relevant territorial sea baselines.

## 6. Provisions of Article 76 Invoked

The two coastal States invoke paragraphs 3, 4(a)(ii), 5 and 7 of Article 76 of the Convention in support of the determination of the outer limits of the continental shelf included in the Joint Submission.

## 7. Geographic, Morphological and Geological Overview

The MBP represents the northern flank for the NFB, a high-standing feature with respect to the surrounding Pacific seafloor. The MBP is morphologically connected to and continuous with the NFB and slopes gently northwards where it merges with the deep ocean floor of the Ellice Basin. The plateau has a highly irregular morphology with a lower slope swell characteristic of the large igneous provinces in the region along with seamounts, banks and associated structures.

The MBP represents the amalgamation of a sequence of tectonic and magmatic processes that has given rise to its present-day morphology. It is comprised of a series of volcanic seamounts, ridges, banks and islands on the Pacific oceanic crust, which parallels northward of the Vitiaz Trench lineament from 173°30'E to the Samoan Islands.

A detailed examination of the geology of the region is presented in the Main Body of the Joint Submission, which includes a discussion that is intended to clearly demonstrate that the MBP comprises the natural prolongation from the relevant landmasses.

The scientific and technical data submitted by the two coastal States in support of this Submission establishes that the outer edge of the continental margin extends beyond 200 M measured from the territorial sea baselines. Accordingly, the two coastal States have defined the outer limits of the continental shelf by applying the rules of paragraphs 4 to 10 of Article 76 of the Convention.

## 8. Outer Limits of the Continental Shelf

In accordance with paragraph 7 of Article 76 of the Convention, the two coastal States have established the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond the 200 M limit by fixed points defined by longitude and latitude coordinates connected by straight lines not exceeding 60 M. In this regard, the two coastal States have used GEOCAP software to determine the optimized location of the fixed points on the combined formula and constraint lines in addition to the 200 M lines of Fiji, Solomon Islands and neighbouring coastal States.

The outer limits of the continental shelf for the MBP Region determined by the two coastal States in accordance with Article 76 of the Convention encloses an area of approximately 49,165 km<sup>2</sup> beyond 200 M from the territorial sea baselines of Fiji and Solomon Islands.

The outer limit of the continental shelf in MBP region is delineated by reference to 42 fixed points, of which:

- 41 fixed points are defined by arcs not more than 60 M from the foot of the continental slope (Article 76, paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Convention);
- 1 fixed point (**MBP\_FP\_42**) is located where the outer edge of the continental margin, drawn in accordance with Article 76, paragraph 7, intersects the 200 M line measured from the territorial sea baselines of Tuvalu.

The two coastal States note in this regard that the configuration of the outer limits of the continental shelf in this Joint Submission does not result in a more extensive area

of continental shelf being jointly delineated than the sum of the areas to which the coastal states would be individually entitled.

The list of Article 76 fixed points delineating the outer limits of the continental shelf of the two coastal States is presented in Table 1 below.

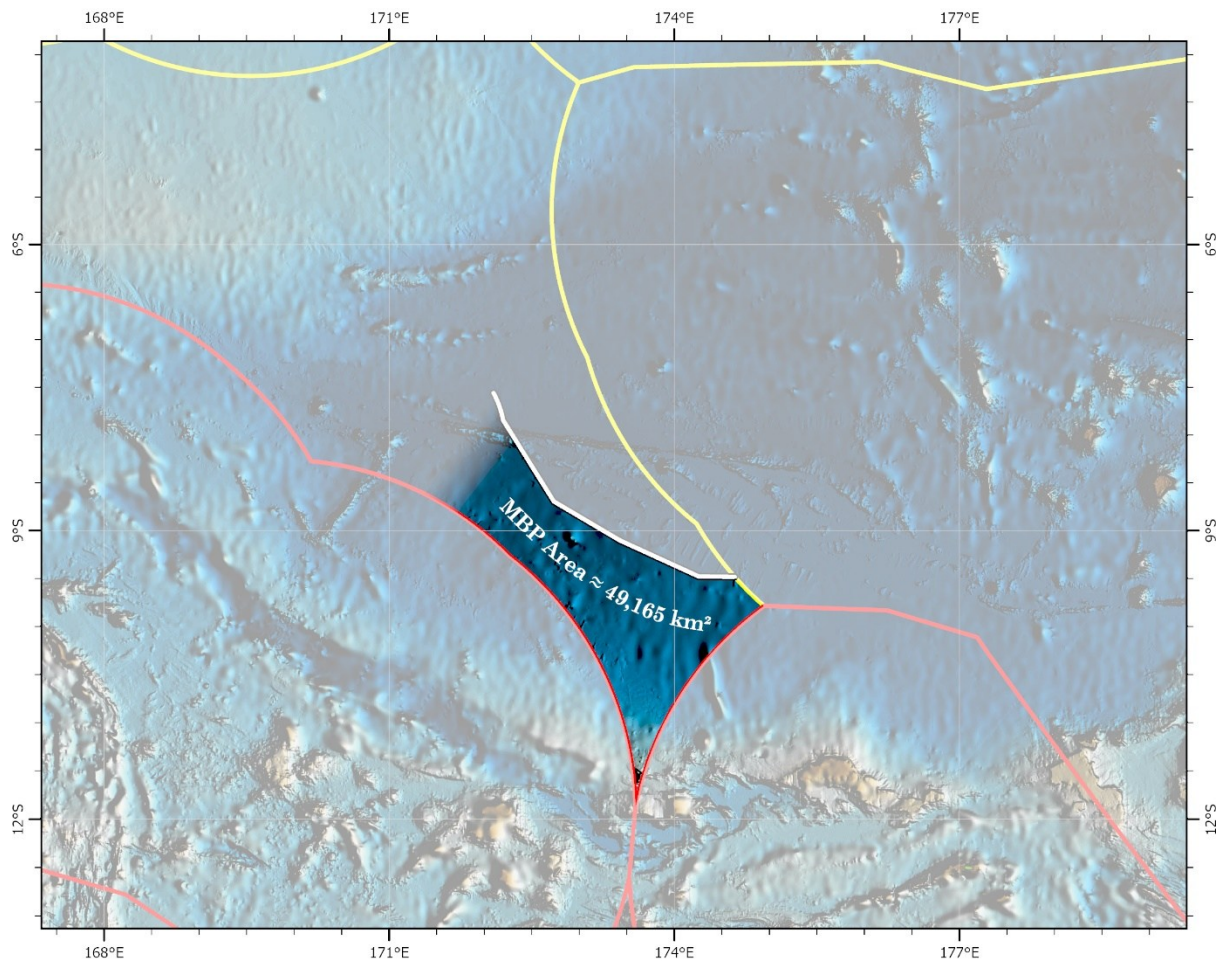


Figure 1: Map showing the approximate area of continental shelf beyond 200 M for the MBP Region. Submitting coastal States' 200 M in red. Other coastal States' 200 M in yellow.



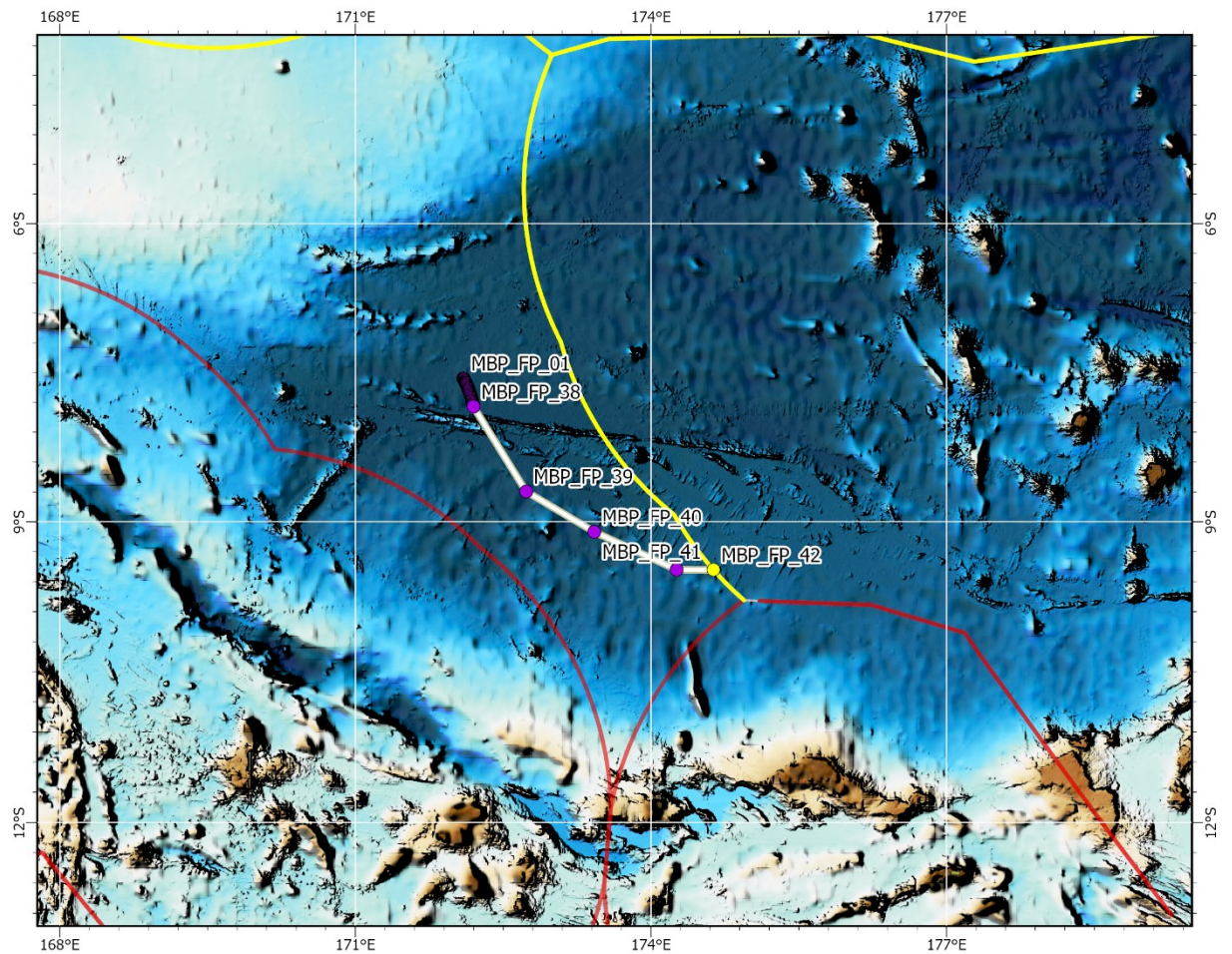


Figure 2: Map showing the outer limits of the continental shelf (white line) for the MBP Region. Fixed Points derived from FOS + 60 M shown in purple and the Fixed Point located on the 200 M limit of Tuvalu shown in Yellow. Submitting coastal States' 200 M in red. Other coastal States' 200 M in yellow.



Table 1: Table of Fixed Points delineating the outer limits of the continental shelf for the MBP Region. All coordinates in WGS84.

OLCS fixed point	Latitude	Longitude	Distance from previous point (M)	Method
MBP_FP_01	-7.5586205	172.0975467	0.00	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_02	-7.5615486	172.0991226	0.20	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_03	-7.5689579	172.1030309	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_04	-7.5763993	172.1068774	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_05	-7.5838725	172.1106617	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_06	-7.5913768	172.1143837	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_07	-7.5989118	172.1180429	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_08	-7.6064769	172.1216393	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_09	-7.6140716	172.1251725	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_10	-7.6216954	172.1286422	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_11	-7.6293477	172.1320483	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_12	-7.6370281	172.1353904	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_13	-7.644736	172.1386685	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_14	-7.6524708	172.1418821	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_15	-7.660232	172.1450312	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_16	-7.6680191	172.1481154	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_17	-7.6758316	172.1511346	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_18	-7.6836688	172.1540886	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_19	-7.6915303	172.1569771	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_20	-7.6994156	172.1597999	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_21	-7.707324	172.1625569	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_22	-7.715255	172.1652478	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_23	-7.7232081	172.1678725	0.50	FOS + 60M

OLCS fixed point	Latitude	Longitude	Distance from previous point (M)	Method
MBP_FP_24	-7.7311827	172.1704307	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_25	-7.7391783	172.1729224	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_26	-7.7471943	172.1753472	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_27	-7.7552301	172.1777051	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_28	-7.7632853	172.1799959	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_29	-7.7713592	172.1822194	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_30	-7.7794513	172.1843754	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_31	-7.787561	172.1864638	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_32	-7.7956878	172.1884845	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_33	-7.803831	172.1904373	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_34	-7.8119902	172.1923221	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_35	-7.8201648	172.1941387	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_36	-7.8283542	172.195887	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_37	-7.8365578	172.1975669	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_38	-7.844775	172.1991782	0.50	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_39	-8.6950271	172.7323434	59.87	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_40	-9.102033	173.4269524	47.88	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_41	-9.4796478	174.2595343	54.30	FOS + 60M
MBP_FP_42	-9.4822286	174.6357914	22.31	200M other

