

Towards

transdisciplinary understandings

Western science separates knowledge into many disciplines and most scientists are highly specialised in narrow domains. This reductionist approach, whereby scientists know more about less, is science's greatest strength and its major weakness. While science makes advances within specific domains, complex interdisciplinary problems remain a perpetual challenge.

Indigenous knowledge holders, however, have no such barriers. They possess expertise that extends across bio-physical and social domains. Herders are knowledgeable about the welfare of their livestock, the soils that make good pasture, the rains that trigger growth, and prices in the marketplace.

So when scientific and indigenous knowledge experts come together to address complex problems such as biodiversity loss or climate change adaptation, scientists from several disciplines in the natural and social sciences need to be at the table.

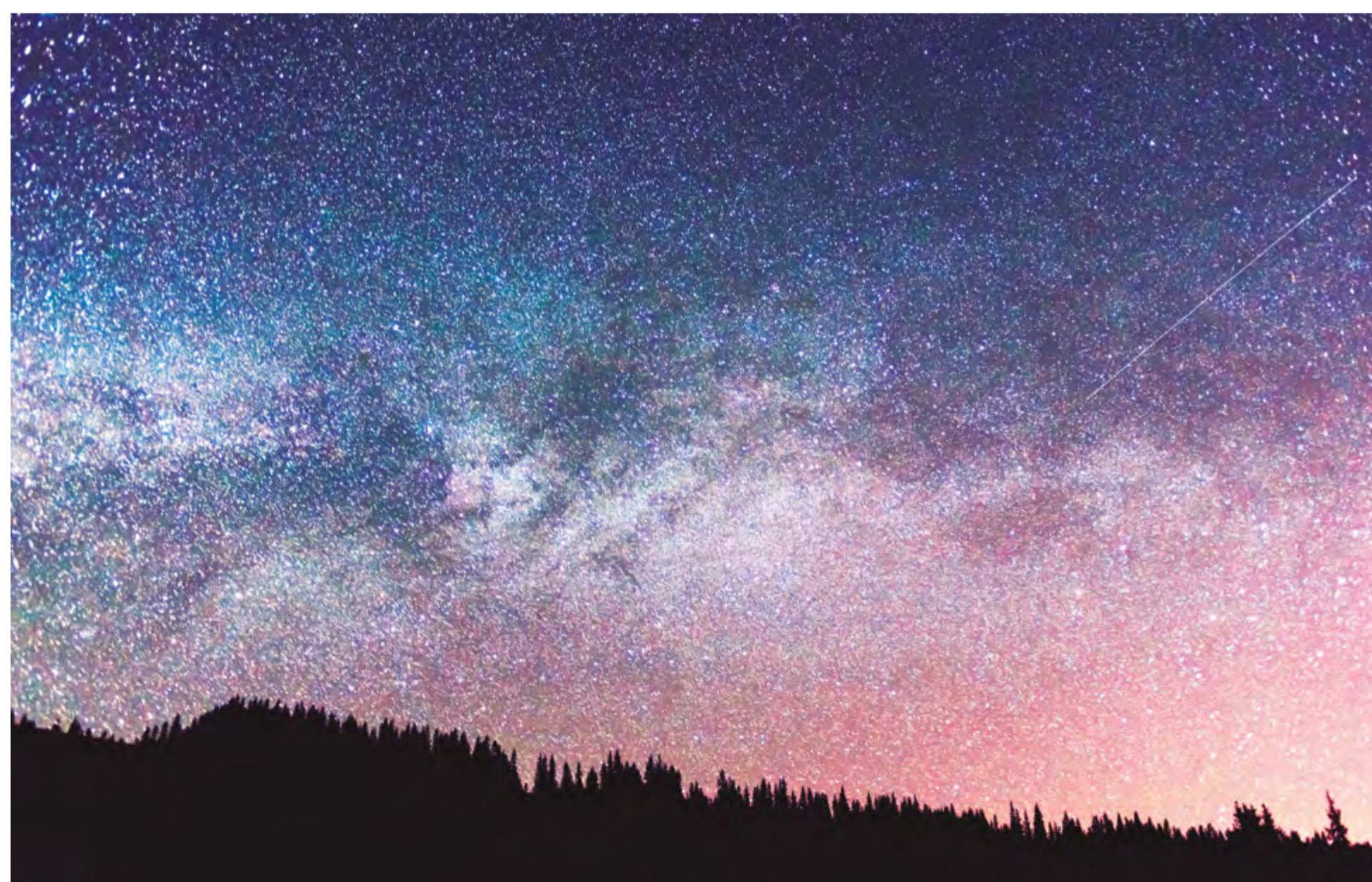


THE TRADITIONAL SEASONAL calendar of Tongan farmers shows that weather patterns have changed.



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INDIGENOUS ANDEAN FARMERS forecast the nature of rainy seasons by observing the size and brightness of the Pleiades star cluster.



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FULANI PASTORALISTS in the Sahel interpret changes in winds, clouds, temperature and flowering plants.



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