

# Australian Volunteers Program in Samoa

In 2020-21 the Australian Volunteers Program in Samoa supported eight volunteers and six partner organisations, with a focus on health security and economic recovery and stability in response to COVID-19.

*'With [Samoa's] water industry being male dominated, the volunteer showed us the importance of women stepping up to also be part of the plumbing and water sectors, allowing us to see that everyone plays a role in managing rural water systems and supplies.'* – Partner organisation spokesperson

In 2020-21 in Samoa, the program supported:

**6**  
partner organisations

**4**  
partner organisations with Impact Grants

**8**  
volunteers

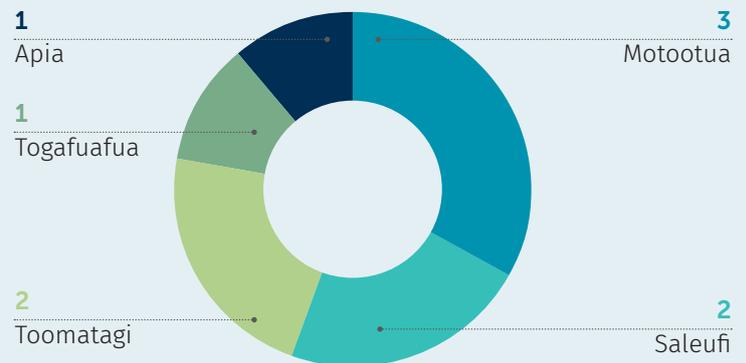
**9**  
remote assignments

## Gender and age of volunteers

Women 100% Men 0%



## Location of assignments



## Most common types of partner organisations



## Most common professions of volunteers



In 2020-21, in accordance with Australia's COVID-19 Development Response Plan, the Australian Volunteers Program supported partner organisations to implement their response and recovery efforts, aligned with the Samoa's local and national priorities.

During this time, eight remote volunteers completed nine assignments in the health, water, climate change, disaster management and IT sectors. The majority of the assignments were in Motooua, Saleufi and Toomatagi, and most partner organisations work within the health sector.

The program strengthened relationships with partner organisations through the development of new platforms of communication, participation in the Global Webinar Series, and funding opportunities.

The Samoa Cancer Society, National University of Samoa and the Independent Water Scheme Association received support from the Australian Volunteers Program Impact Fund. The Independent Water Scheme Association presented their work in the program's Global Webinar Series, which helped to increase opportunities for knowledge sharing among partner organisations and volunteers in similar sectors.

The program celebrated and promoted international volunteering in Samoa through the sharing of volunteer stories and partner organisation activities on DFAT and program social media. This included coverage of the Independent Water Scheme Association with their remote volunteer Mark Abela, who was Samoa's first remote volunteer. The program also celebrated International Volunteer Day with the Volunteer Service Abroad, Peace Corps and UN Volunteers, which was covered by a Samoan local newspaper.



Australian volunteer and paramedic Krystelle Syme, working as a Medical Services Advisor at the Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Apia, Samoa. She is pictured with colleagues (from left to right) Malo Tagiilima (Cadet Firefighter), Tali Mikaele (Firefighter Level 01) and Viliamu Vili (Cadet Firefighter) at the Apia Fire Station. Photo: Darren James.

### Spotlight on The Samoa Cancer Society

The Samoa Cancer Society aims to reduce the number of Samoan people diagnosed with cancer and ensure the best quality of life for those affected. From 2017 to 2020, three Australian volunteers: Valerie Weller, Maria Beatriz Cuesta Briand and Antonia Every, assisted the Society to achieve its goals in palliative care, communications, and research.

The volunteers provided support and specialist expertise to help the Society to move towards its vision of a cancer-free Samoa. It now has a clear strategic direction, and the evidence base and advocacy capacity to achieve its goals.

With support from Australian volunteers, staff developed an understanding of how to create effective education and awareness activities about cancer prevention, early detection and treatment, and strengthened their research collaboration with the National University of Samoa School of Medicine.

Staff secured a grant to study the barriers to early detection of cancer, which will improve their research, data analysis and reporting skills. They developed and implemented a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework, which further strengthens their advocacy strategy. The society now advocates for evidence-based policy changes and services that will minimise the impact of cancer in Samoa.

Staff also developed consistent national guidelines on palliative care, which included arranging a national palliative care forum of government and community stakeholders to inform the development of the guidelines.

[australianvolunteers.com](http://australianvolunteers.com)

#AusVols

@ausvols

[samoa@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:samoa@australianvolunteers.com)

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