

Australian
Volunteers

Australian
Aid 

Australian Volunteers Program Tonga

Australian volunteers have supported partner organisations in Tonga to achieve their development goals since 1965. The Australian Government's Australian Volunteers Program continues this rich history.

The Australian Volunteers Program develops long-term, mutually respectful partnerships with organisations across the Pacific, Asia, and Africa to contribute to locally led change and the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The program aims to:

- Support partner organisations to progress their development objectives
- Increase program participants' cultural awareness and build stronger connections across countries
- Increase key stakeholders' appreciation of the value of volunteering

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Our work in Tonga

Helen Sitani, Deputy Principal, and Sosefina Fineanganofa, Australian volunteer Youth Mentor, at partner organisation Ahopanilolo Technical Institute in Maufanag.
Photo: Teagan Glenane

1

Australian volunteer Sports Development and Administration Officer Felicity George with her colleague Tavake Fangupo, NRL Tonga Manager, at NRL Tonga in Nuku'alofa.
Photo: Teagan Glenane.

2

Anaise Uatahausi (L), Admin/Finance Officer, Salote Fungavai (C), CEO, and Siaoisi Vaka (R), Smash Down Barriers Development Officer, at the Tonga Table Tennis Federation.
Photo: Teagan Glenane

Our team in Tonga works closely with our partners to understand their priorities and objectives. Together with our partners, we identify how the program can support them and how that support might change over time.

The program provides support across a range of development priorities in Tonga, including:

- Improving health services
- Disaster management and risk reduction
- Empowerment and protection of women and girls
- Disability inclusion
- Public health and health promotion
- Economic/private sector development
- Environment/climate change
- Skills training

In Tonga, we partner with organisations working in a broad range of sectors, including health, education, and government and civil society. Program partners are mainly government agencies and local or national NGOs.

Most volunteer assignments are with partners in Nuku'alofa. The program also supports partners through remote volunteer assignments.

The program facilitates opportunities for partners to connect with each other, exchange knowledge and share experiences. For example, partners participate in online and face-to-face workshops that focus on specific sectors or topics such as disability inclusion, gender equality and safeguarding.

"

Grateful to work alongside our Australian volunteer. The staff's capacity has been improved in different ways, and our volunteer is truly an inspiration and a great mentor. Overall, this assignment is a great learning experience for all of us."

Victorina Kioa, CEO of the Public Service Commission, Office of the Public Service Commission

1



2



Since 2018
the program
in Tonga has
supported

25+

partner
organisations

70+

Australian
volunteers

85+

volunteer
assignments

6

small
grants

Small grants

From time to time, our partners can apply for small grants to support their vital work and progress towards achieving their development objectives.

Small grants have supported over 200 partners to deliver hundreds of projects across the program. Projects have been across a range of thematic areas including gender equality, disability and social inclusion, climate action and organisational strengthening.

Australian organisations

We also partner with Australian organisations who share our commitment to locally led change. We support existing partnerships between overseas partners and Australian organisations and identify opportunities for new partnerships. Australian partners contribute to skills and knowledge exchange and support volunteer recruitment.

3

Minoru Nishi, Managing Director of Nishi Trading, with Australian volunteer Agronomist Hans Porada in Utulau, Tonga.
Photo: Teagan Glenane



"Through the sharing of skills and expertise, supporting locally led development and building strong connections, volunteers truly experience meaningful cross-cultural exchange and forge long lasting partnerships and friendships."

Debra Allan, Country Program Manager – Australian Volunteers Program, Tonga

About our volunteers

Our program is all about people – volunteers, partners and the communities in which they live and work.

We value volunteers who are open to mutual learning and skills exchange, and who are committed to contributing to partners' priorities in support of locally led change.

We are committed to ensuring that international volunteering is inclusive and accessible to Australians from a range of backgrounds, with diverse perspectives, identities and abilities. We recognise the

unique strengths and skills that people with diverse backgrounds and experiences offer, and we work with volunteers to remove barriers they may face.

Each volunteer assignment requires specific skills and experience. Australian volunteers work in a broad range of sectors including community and social development, health, science, engineering and architecture, skilled trades, education, disaster and emergency management, gender equality and child protection.

4

Australian volunteer Marijke Frantzen with Vika Unga from Tonga Fire and Emergency Services at their station in Tofoa.
Photo: Teagan Glenane

5

Stall holders making floral arrangements at the local market in Tongatapu.
Photo: Teagan Glenane



In-country

In-country volunteering enables volunteers and partners to share their skills, knowledge and culture, and form long-lasting relationships along the way.



Remote

Through remote volunteering Australians are supporting organisations overseas to achieve their development goals anywhere, anytime.



Hybrid

By combining remote and in-country phases, hybrid volunteering offers our partners and volunteers flexibility while still allowing for genuine connections and meaningful skill sharing.

Spotlight on Office of the Public Service Commission

The Office of the Public Service Commission (PSC) facilitates human resource services including human resource management, workforce and performance development, remuneration, setting policy and standards, and monitoring legislation.

PSC has been a partner of the Australian Volunteers Program since 2017, and has received one Impact Fund Grant from the program.

Australian volunteer Alex George completed a remote assignment with PSC as an Organisational Review Mentor, working closely with the organisational review team to build capacity of staff to independently conduct effective reviews on government ministries. With Alex's support, staff also strengthened their working relationships with human resource staff in the line ministries.

Australian volunteer Karen Jean Higgins completed an assignment as a Data Analysis and Analytics Mentor, assisting PSC staff in developing a database comprising employment data of all government ministries. With Karen's assistance, staff were trained to use Power BI including creating and monitoring dashboards, which will enable PSC to finalise a Public Service Registry, reduce errors and increase team efficiency in data analysis.

Both volunteers assisted in developing the organisation's monitoring and evaluation processes, and the improved monitoring and evaluation approaches are now embedded in the work of PSC on a day-to-day basis. Other positive changes brought about by Alex and Karen's support include improved data usage and quality, which now actively championed by PSC's leadership team.

Staff also benefitted from face-to-face training and workshops and developed skills in ICT and monitoring and evaluation, which has helped them to perform their day-to-day tasks with increased effectiveness and confidence.



The Australian Volunteers Program is guided by principles that ensure we



Support locally led change



Grow strong relationships and partnerships



Value volunteering



Evolve good practice and embrace innovation



Enhance diversity and inclusion



Ensure accountability and value learning

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The Australian Volunteers Program is funded by the Australian Government.
The program is managed by AVI in a consortium with DT Global and Alinea International.

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