



**AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION  
NUKU'ALOFA**

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MEDIA RELEASE

**KOLOVAI HEALTH CENTRE RE-OPENS**



Tonga's Minister for Health, Lord Tu'i'afitu and First Secretary Scott McLennan, from the aid program of the Australian High Commission

Kolovai Health Centre re-opened its doors today after receiving a refurbishment funded by the Australian Government.

Tonga's Ministry of Health and the Kolovai community marked the occasion by hosting a celebratory event. This was attended by the Minister for Health, Lord Tu'i'afitu, and First Secretary Scott McLennan, from the aid program of the Australian High Commission.

Kolovai Health Centre is the fourth health centre in Tonga to be refurbished with the support of the Australian Government. Houma, Nukunuku and Kolonga Health Centres were refurbished in 2011, and Fua'amotu Health Centre is next in line.

The Australian Government provided around TOP20,000 for the Kolovai refurbishments, which included an extension to the building, a new entrance and ramp, re-tiling, plumbing, paint, furnishings and medical equipment.

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“Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease are reaching epidemic levels in Tonga, claiming the lives of many Tongan people. Health centres like this one are helping to halt this increase in illness,” Mr McLennan said.

In 2009 the Australian Government committed A\$7.5 million to improve healthcare in Tonga through the Tonga Health Systems Support Program. The program addresses diabetes, strokes and hyper-tension, which are all on the rise in the country.

The program has developed an Advanced Diploma of Nursing in Non-Communicable Diseases with the help of Professor Jill White of the University of Sydney. Twenty local nurses were chosen to take part in the 30 week course which will finish in December.

“Early next year there should be a nurse trained in prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases in every health centre across Tonga,” Dr Toakase Fakakovikaetau, Non-Communicable Disease Community Health Coordinator, said.

The Kolovai Health Centre will provide important health services to 10 villages in the Hihifo district, which consists of 558 households.



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