

**AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION
NUKU'ALOFA**

7 June 2013
MEDIA RELEASE

Tonga and Australia Working Together on Education



From left to right: Australia's High Commissioner to Tonga, HE Mr Brett Aldam, Honourable Minister for Finance and National Planning, Mr Lisiata 'Akolo and Tonga's Minister for Education and Training, the Hon Dr 'Ana Taufe'ulungaki.

The Australian High Commissioner to Tonga, His Excellency Mr Brett Aldam, joined the Minister for Finance and National Planning, the Honourable Lisiata 'Aloveita 'Akolo, and the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon Dr 'Ana Taufe'ulungaki, to sign an AUD10.5 million (TOP17.65 million) Agreement that launched Phase 2 of the Tonga Education Support Program (TESP).

The support will be provided over three years and will target primary school education.

The Hon 'Akolo acknowledged Australia's support to the development of education in Tonga.

“Despite our tight fiscal conditions, it is essential that we can continue to upgrade the quality of our education to ensure that we have students with the skills to meet the demands of a growing and

changing economy. Good education is critical to provide responsible citizens who will engage in the development of stronger communities.”

The Hon Dr Taufe’ulungaki, who delivered the vote of thanks, was grateful for Australia’s continued support to raise the quality of universal basic education and improve the Ministry of Education and Training’s sector management.

“Over the next three years, the Ministry will ensure that all children in the universal basic education years have access to and experience quality education.”

Mr Aldam said the launch of Phase 2 of the TESP reflected a shared commitment to delivering high quality education in Tonga.

“Promoting opportunities for all through education is a priority for Tonga and Australia under our Partnership for Development. Australia is delighted, therefore, to be able to support Tonga’s continuing focus on childhood literacy and numeracy as key building blocks for the future.”

The program will support the work of the Ministry of Education and Training in promoting access not only to basic education but also to a learning environment that helps teachers and students to achieve strong results. It follows Australia’s recent announcement of direct budget support of AUD5 million (TOP8.7 million) to the Tongan Government to assist with health and education sector salaries. Australia and Tonga also continue to work closely together in the Higher Education and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sectors.



Signing of the agreement by HE Mr Brett Aldam and Hon Lisiata ‘Akolo (Hon Dr ‘Ana Taufe’ulungaki on the far right)

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