



**AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION
NUKU'ALOFA**

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MEDIA RELEASE

Latest Intake of Australian Volunteers for 2014 arrive in Tonga



Australian High Commissioner, His Excellency Brett Aldam (second from left) and High Commission staff welcome the seven new volunteers to Tonga

The third group of Australian volunteers for 2014 arrived in Tonga this week as part of the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program. The new group consists of seven volunteers who will work within Tongan Government ministries and non-government organisations, in support of Tonga's development goals.

The volunteers will be working in various areas including paediatric rehabilitation, media and communications, vocational training and statistics and information management. The Tongan Government has identified these as key areas for the development of the country, and these volunteers will be in placements in a variety of fields for periods of up to one year.

Ian Plant will be joining the Pouono Campus of Tupou Tertiary Institute (TTI) in Neiafu, Vava'u and is looking forward to his role as a Carpentry Trainer. "Skills in building are vitally important in Pacific Countries. Having an adequately trained local workforce in Tonga strengthens the country's ability to recover after natural disasters like Cyclone Ian" said Ian. His project will involve assessing the existing curriculum and staff proficiencies, then facilitating practical training with a strong focus on safety and requirements and building techniques.

Ian's supervisor at TTI, Tevita Ika is excited about hosting a volunteer and the opportunities it brings to TTI's students. "Building skills are also transferable, allowing students to take up skilled positions here in Tonga and overseas, providing great financial support to their families."

The volunteers will be placed in the following organisations: Mango Tree Centre, Ministry of Infrastructure, Tupou Tertiary Institute, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, the Tonga National Centre for Women and Children, and 'Ahopanilolo Technical Institute. The arrival of this latest group brings the total number of volunteers currently working in Tonga to 23.

AVID is a key part of Australia's aid program in Tonga, and Australian volunteers play a vital role in encouraging development. Volunteers work with local counterparts to build the skills and knowledge of local staff. This ensures a lasting benefit to the organisations long after the volunteers' assignments are over.

Should you wish to know more information on the AVID Program in Tonga, please contact David Wyler, In-Country Manager, Austraining International, at 26464, or email david.wyler@austraining.com.au

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