



AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION IN TONGA

Australia is committed to helping the people of Tonga meet the challenge of climate change.

At the 2016 Pacific Islands Forum, Australia announced a climate change and resilience support package to the Pacific of \$300 million over four years. This is part of the \$1 billion climate finance Australia pledged at the 2015 Paris climate change meeting to reduce emissions and build resilience in developing countries over five years.

To take action on climate change, Australia's focus is on climate research and information, building resilience and increasing country capacity to respond to disaster events. This support aligns with the Framework for Regional Development in the Pacific, endorsed by Pacific Island Forum leaders, which outlines an integrated approach to addressing climate change and disaster resilience. Australia also works to support Tonga's commitments under its Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCCC.

KEY RISKS AND CHALLENGES

Tonga is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to its geographical location and its socio-economic characteristics. Tonga is susceptible to a wide range of climate change impacts, including: increasingly intense tropical cyclones; extreme rainfall events leading to flooding; coastal erosion; heat waves; drought; ocean acidification; and sea level rise.

Climate change is projected to erode community coping capacity, threaten growth and critical infrastructure and undermine development gains. Climate change will affect food and water security, as well as human health. Most of Tonga's residents and critical infrastructure are located on vulnerable atoll islands, principally the very low lying Tongatapu.

OPPORTUNITIES

National climate change policies, strategies and legislation provide a solid basis for enhanced climate change action. Tonga has committed to meeting 50 per cent of its energy needs from renewable



Then Tongan Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Siaosi Sovaleni (Tonga), and Australian High Commissioner, H.E. Andrew Ford, cut the ribbon on the Huelo 'O E Funga 'Eua Solar Farm

sources by 2020 and to integrating resilience across all sectors.

Under its aid partnership, Australia will continue to support the government and people of Tonga to

Increasing energy security on remote islands

Since 2012 Australia has been working with the Tongan Government, the Asian Development Bank and the European Union to reduce Tonga's reliance on imported diesel for its energy needs by increasing accessibility to renewable energy technologies on remote outer islands.

Key successes of the Outer Islands Renewable Energy Program include construction of a 550kWh solar plant with a 660kW battery storage system in Ha'apai and a 200kW solar plant in 'Eua. These systems are helping communities access clean and reliable energy and reducing costs.

build climate resilience and pursue environmentally sustainable development pathways.

BILATERAL PROGRAMS

Australia invested an estimated \$8.6 million in climate change support to Tonga over 2015-16 to 2017-18.

Australia will continue to support Tonga's transition to renewable energy through reducing its dependence on imported fossil fuel by increasing continuous, reliable, safe and affordable solar energy. By integrating climate risks across the aid program, we will also help increase Tonga's resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The current Australia-Tonga Aid Partnership (2016-2019) includes disaster resilience as a cross-cutting issue.

Work is ongoing to build resilience and integrate the risks of climate change into all key sectors of the aid program.

REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Tonga benefits from Australia's regional climate change programs, which total over \$50 million (2015-16 to 2017-18). Our programs work to:

- Build capacity of national meteorology services and measure sea level rise through the Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific;
- Improve access to and use of climate information for decision making and knowledge management through the iCLIM program;
- Strengthen climate and disaster risk and resilience across key sectors, across four

countries including Tonga, through the Pacific Risk Resilience Program; and

- Provide technical support to integrate climate change across our programs.

Australia also provides support to the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), whose mandate includes addressing priority climate change issues.

These programs build on our long-term support for climate science in the Pacific.

GLOBAL PROGRAMS

Tonga further benefits from Australian global humanitarian and disaster risk reduction programs, including via contributions to global climate finance mechanisms, including the Green Climate Fund (\$200 million committed over four years from 2015) and the Global Environment Facility (\$93 million committed, 2014-15 to 2017-18). These funds support a wide range of resilience building and emissions reduction projects in the Pacific region.

Australia uses its seat on the Green Climate Fund Board and the Global Environment Facility Council to streamline processes, highlight the climate change challenges and vulnerability of Pacific island countries and advocate for Pacific focused proposals.

The Green Climate Fund has approved the Pacific Renewable Energy Investment Program, which includes US\$5 million for a technical assistance facility to prepare and implement sub-projects for Tonga and six other Pacific island countries.

ESTIMATED SECTORAL SPLIT OF BILATERAL CLIMATE CHANGE INVESTMENTS IN TONGA (AUD MILLIONS)

