



Joint Media Release

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The Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI), together with the Tonga Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP) and Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC), held a Public Financial Management (PFM) Symposium in Tonga from 4 – 6 September 2018. Australia was pleased to provide financial support to PASAI for the event.

The theme of the Symposium was 'Strengthening PFM for Better Service Delivery'. The event brought key stakeholders together to review progress against implementation of the Tonga PFM Roadmap 2014/15 – 2019/20.

Hosted by Tonga's MFNO and co-facilitated by PASAI and PFTAC, the Symposium was attended by over 60 participants representing Government Ministries, Parliament, National Reserve Bank of Tonga, public enterprises, faith-based and civil society organisations, media entities, regional institutions, and development partners. Speakers shared valuable perspectives on Tonga PFM reform through presentations and/or panel discussions.

Lively discussions centred on how PFM can help Government to provide more efficient and effective service delivery in a transparent and accountable way, and these valuable inputs will be incorporated into an update of the Tonga PFM Roadmap. This process helped participants understand that the Roadmap is a living document that should be reviewed and updated regularly. These 'lessons learned' will be used across all other Pacific countries that have PFM Roadmaps in place.

The MNFP will reactivate its PFM Steering Committee to propel the way forward for reform. The PFM Symposium has also highlighted the need to re-institute a regional PFM forum, with Pacific PFM institutions coming together more often to hold regular meetings and obtain updates on PFM issues.

HE Andrew Ford, the Australian High Commissioner to Tonga, emphasised in his opening remarks the importance of PFM to achieve efficient and effective allocation of public services and build public trust in government. This was followed by the opening address of the keynote speaker, Hon. Mateni Tapueluelu, Acting Minister for Finance and National Planning, who stated: *“We need to speak with one clear voice and everyone is responsible.”* This became a recurring theme throughout the three days, underlining the need for all delegates to work together, collaborate, communicate and coordinate to achieve the outcomes of the Roadmap and improve the government service delivery to the people of Tonga.

Closing the Symposium, the Speaker of Tonga Legislative Assembly, Lord Fakafanua, summed it up. *“This is an ideal platform for stakeholders to share strategies involved in PFM reform initiatives. This symposium is a testament and commitment to move forward”*. The way forward will be the responsibility of all stakeholders and it is hoped implementation will result in positive outcomes for the citizens of Tonga.



PASAI would like to thank and acknowledge the ongoing support of Australia DFAT and NZ MFAT, and the great collaborative working relationship with Tonga's Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Tonga's Office of the Auditor-General, PFTAC, development partners and local PFM experts in delivering this Symposium.



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