



AUSTRALIA PACIFIC ISLANDS BUSINESS CONFERENCE

Minister of MWTI - Hon Olo Fiti Va'ai Remarks

I extend my warm greetings as we gather in Australia, following the tradition of acknowledging the traditional custodians of this land, past, present, and emerging.

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic Corp,

President and members of the Australia Pacific Islands Business Council,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Talofa Lava!

Good Afternoon!

I, as the Minister of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure, am grateful for the opportunity, courtesy of the Australia Pacific Islands Business Council, to present Samoa's infrastructure initiatives at this conference, themed "DEVELOPING

SUSTAINABLE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE BLUE PACIFIC."

Samoa's Transport and Infrastructure Sector Plan from 2023-2028 is a collaborative effort between the government, private sector, and relevant stakeholders, with the objective to “Strengthen connectivity, with eased accessibility through secured transport services and safeguarding the resilience of our infrastructural and land developments to elevate the quality of life for all”.

Within this plan, we prioritize reviewing and improving sector policies and regulations to harmonize land, sea, and air services. We've also partnered with funding agencies to assess infrastructure

vulnerabilities, guiding us in funding and upgrading climate-resilient projects.

Key priorities include increasing the disaster readiness of our main ports, Faleolo International Airport, and Apia International Port. We have just completed the Universal Security Audit Program (USAP) by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) for our Civil Aviation Operations. Some of the main infrastructure developments currently being implemented at Faleolo International Airport are to ensure that Samoa continues to comply with International Civil Aviation Regulations.

Samoa in its 5 year plan will improve and climate proof its road networks and bridges. We're also expanding our water and

renewable energy networks and enhancing our shipping services. Lastly, we aim to strengthen our partnerships with educational institutions in Samoa.

For our 5-year plan to become successful, Samoa endeavours to strongly advocate for the following.

1. Firstly, our Government prioritises the use of our local people and local resources. We believe that it is our Samoan people who are experiencing first-hand the impacts of climate change thus they have the community-based solutions to inform the designs and construction of the upgrading of Samoa's infrastructure. We're committed to leveraging our local workforce and resources, aiming to engage in partnerships, joint ventures, and twinning arrangements with Australian and New Zealand firms.

2.Secondly, we seek solutions to the challenges posed by our heavy reliance on imports, including high diesel and freight costs.

3.Lastly, a recent survey in Samoa has found that Samoa's private sector in particular the Samoan road contractors have been greatly affected by the migration of its skilled people to Australia and New Zealand under the Labour Mobility Schemes. While we enjoy the influx of remittances to Samoa from seasonal workers, we also know how important our people are and their valuable contribution towards the success of Australia and New Zealand's economic growth. Samoa is currently reviewing its policies and is actively seeking grant funding opportunities from Australia and New Zealand to offset the skills drain.

This conference marks a significant milestone, uniting government and private sector representatives from Australia and the Pacific. I applaud the Australia and Pacific Islands Business Council for this initiative and trust that the discussions here will yield practical solutions and benefits for our nations.

Lastly, we eagerly anticipate hosting member countries at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in October 2024 in our "Beautiful Samoa."

I wish you all a safe journey to your home countries.

Faafetai tele lava! Good day!