



This initiative is supported by PacWastePlus-a 85-month project funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to sustainably and cost effectively improve regional management of waste and pollution.

# Tonga

## ASBESTOS REMOVAL AND MANAGEMENT

### Addressing Legacy ACM in Tonga

Disposal best practice and establish appropriate legislation and policies



## Tonga Project Summary

### THE ISSUE

Asbestos Contaminated Materials are prevalent in Tonga. Studies done in 2014 and 2015 documented asbestos containing materials in many public and private buildings. These buildings pose a risk to human health due to the potential for release of asbestos fibres.

Asbestos has been classified as a known human carcinogen (a substance that causes cancer) and inhalation of asbestos fibres that have become airborne can cause serious lung disease.

### THE SOLUTION

Created an enabling environment for the management of asbestos containing materials through the implementation of the asbestos importation ban and by developing a minimum standard of operation management by the asbestos management code of practice.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Adopt appropriate regulations and/or policy to eliminate the importation of asbestos and asbestos containing materials into Tonga.
2. Enhance the capacity of local officials and government staff to execute the ACM Regulations
3. Develop a Strategic Action Plan which details the short- and long-term management options for eventual removal/abatement of ACM in Tonga and execute the removal of asbestos containing materials from selected sites in Tongatapu

### Data & Education

- Waste Audit
- Regional Data Collection Monitoring and Reporting Framework
- Data Collection for Organic Materials
- Waste Profiling
- Education and Awareness Support
- Waste Management Decision Tool
- Research Documents approved by the Research Advisory Group
- Organics management guidance documents

### Legislative Environment

- Legislative & Regulatory Stocktake and National Option Paper
- Product Stewardship Scheme Feasibility Study
- Development of drafting instructions for an Asbestos importation ban
- Development and adoption of an Asbestos Management Code of Practice

### On-Ground Activities

- Removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials from selected government buildings in Tongatapu
- Development of a case study to provide lessons learned for future ACM removal actions

### Capacity Building

- Capacity Needs Analysis
- Sustainable Financing study tour to Australia
- Build Capacity of Government Staff and Stakeholders: Asbestos Management, Education and Awareness Training, Healthcare Waste Incinerator Maintenance and Operation, Healthcare Waste Management, Hazardous Materials Management, Schools Education Curriculum



The project created the enabling environment for the holistic management of asbestos containing materials through the implementation of the asbestos importation ban and by development of a minimum standard of operation management through the asbestos management code of practice.

The use of the Code of Practice by the construction and demolition industry improved their response to the presence of asbestos containing materials by proactively and effectively identifying and appropriately managing asbestos containing materials, thereby protecting workers and the public from the potential risk of exposure.

Government and private industry partnered to utilise the new asbestos management standards for abatement when removing asbestos containing materials from several public buildings, ensuring the safety of workers and the community who visited or worked in these buildings.

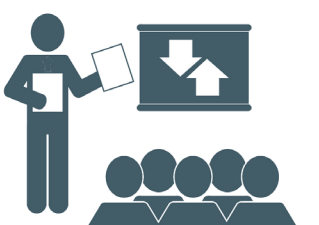
This enabling environment is further supported by the community's increased understanding of the risk of exposure to asbestos containing materials and learning how to live safely with asbestos.

*We would like to thank the EU, SPREP and the PacWastePlus programme for engaging a consultant to not only repair our incinerator but also for the valuable training provided to our hospital staff, and incinerator operators on how to properly operate and maintain the incinerator.*

*Ms Temaleti Mausia,  
Public Health Division Health Inspector for Prince Ngu Hospital*

**32** permanent workers and **8,800** visitors per year that are no longer exposed to the potential risks from asbestos containing materials by removal from four government buildings.

**15** people received formal training in the proper management and removal of asbestos containing materials

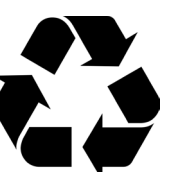


**2,672 m<sup>2</sup>** of asbestos contaminated material was removed from public buildings in Tongatapu, and landfilled locally.



**1** Asbestos Management Code of Practice and Supplemental Guidance endorsed.

**1** Repaired healthcare waste incinerator (Prince Ngu Hospital)



**36,300** community members reached via social media, TV, and radio

## About PACWastePlus

The Pacific – European Union (EU) Waste Management Programme, PacWastePlus, is a 85-month programme funded by the EU and implemented by SPREP to sustainably and cost-effectively improve regional management of waste and pollution.