



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW MAOTA FONONO



The Government of Samoa, with the generous support of the Commonwealth of Australia, is redeveloping the Maota Fono at Malae o Tiafau, Mulinu'u.

As construction of Samoa's new Maota Fono approaches completion, it is worth reflecting upon the various means by which the community has been engaged in the project for the benefit of all Samoans.

Community engagement commenced with the building design. The new Maota Fono includes a large public gallery for observing Parliamentary sessions. Visitors will be supported through the provision of hearing support and translation assistance during proceedings. In addition, media broadcasting capabilities will ensure outreach of the Parliamentary sessions to the whole country via television media and live radio coverage.

During the building design process, the National Advocacy Organisation of People with Disabilities - Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA), was consulted to review and provide input to ensure everyone can access the Maota Fono without difficulties. The intention is to re-engage with NOLA upon completion of the Maota Fono and ensure that there is ease of access across the entire Parliamentary complex at Mulinu'u.

The Australia – Pacific Technical Coalition (APTC) in Apia has benefited from and supported construction of the Maota Fono. Students from the College have undertaken a number of site visits to view construction process and utilise this experience to support their studies. Some students have gone further and secured employment with the project's main contractor – Craig Construction Limited.

APTC have also supported the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (OCLA) through sourcing an Australian training provider to deliver Facilities Management training for the maintenance staff of OCLA. The training was delivered at the APTC campus in Apia earlier this year in February 2018.

There was a public design consultation taking in the cultural aspect of the building and beautiful surroundings. An opportunity was presented locally for a number of various Samoan artisans to contribute selected cultural items that will be key features in the Maota Fono.

Economically, the project is providing important benefits to the country. The project is built by Samoans for Samoans, and much of the funding for construction of the project is directly injected into the Samoan economy through local suppliers, sub-contractors and consultants. In turn, this enhances Samoa's overall economic activity and provides employment opportunities for the local community, both directly and indirectly.

There has been significant documentation of the construction, whereas OCLA have released a series of media updates and features to keep the community informed of the status of the project, and also some of the key aspects included in the building design (e.g. environmental considerations) and construction process (e.g. work health and safety performance).

The new Maota Fono promises to set a new benchmark for buildings in Samoa. We hope it is a facility the whole country can be proud of.

*For more information on this project visit: <http://www.palemene.ws/new/redevelopment-of-maota-fono-at-mulinuu/>*

