

Guest Editorial

Malo e lelei and Greetings to you all

It gives me great pleasure to write the Guest Editorial note for this Pacific Health Dialog (PHD) issue on Tonga. I believe this is very timely and appropriate for Tongans to write and publish articles on themselves and what matters most in life which is life itself. But in order to enjoy a good quality life, we have to be healthy and happy.

The health and wellbeing of Tongans and other Pacific island people give The Friendly Island Satellite Communications Ltd, otherwise known as Tongasat, an important imperative as pioneers. We are elated with the opportunity to participate in, the efforts to enhance dialogue about health through PHD. The latter is a regional communication medium for all interested in the development and achievement of the health of our Pacific nationals. Tongasat, through its satellite resources, is a medium for international communication. Therefore, this collaboration is compatible.

Tongasat has shown great interest and support by participating in the development of Telehealth in the region since its inception in Noumea, New Caledonia in 1998. We believe that establishing Telehealth Network in the region will definitely improve health output in terms of consultation, referral and transfer of patients who need extra-speciality care not available locally, distance education and training, and decrease in professional isolation. Tongasat carries this belief in all its international marketing negotiations on satellite resources. Contextually, Tongasat's contribution towards the publication of this PHD issue enhances our willingness to assist, on endeavors to promote better health for Tongans, as well as for all nationals of the Pacific region.

I have the privilege of being in the Special Feature to look at the social context of alcohol. Other authors support this theme on mental health, traditional medicine, alcohol and kava, and the Tongan youths' experience with alcohol. All of us are very concerned with the role of alcohol in undermining the fabric of the Tongan society. We also came to the conclusion that the destructive consequences of alcohol are not inevitable and very modifiable given the resources and the opportunity to perform.

Most of the papers in this issue of PHD highlight health situations surrounding Tongans in Tonga and abroad. However, the editors have included papers about other Pacific Islanders in order to maintain the regional flavour. There are papers on Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji.

A very different paper, a role-play by Salesi Katoanga is about a Tongan family dialogue. However, by changing the name, the scenario could be any Pacific family. This is the first time PHD has included a play in the Journal,

Of note is the large number of Tongans who have contributed to this issue. These people and other Tongans should be encouraged by this publication to analyse Tongans and record their intellectual property for sharing with others, Tongans must give license to their intellect and be custodians of the information about Tonga and its people. This is empowering, as we are the experts on ourselves.



PHD is now six years old and this is the twelfth issue. This achievement so far warrants heartfelt congratulation and appreciation for the great effort and perseverance of all who are directly and indirectly involved with the PHD workshop. It is a prototype for regional co-operation of the sponsoring regional health organisations. I understand that this is largely a labour of love that still contributes to PHD's 'healthy' and worthwhile existence. Therefore, I appeal to the private sector business community to contribute in kind and cash to maintaining the current efforts and developing this as the great medium for dialogue in the Pacific and a collaborative tool for health.

Lastly, I pray to God and hope that all readers of PHD and their friends will join Tongasat in its effort to support communication, and regional and international dialogue for health through Telehealth and this medium, the PHD.

Malo 'aupito.

'Ofa atu and God bless
HRH Princess Salote Pilolevu Tuita