

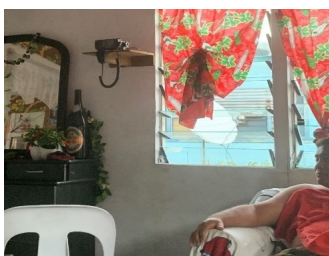


10th August, 2020 - The Departments of Communication, Meteorology and Energy of the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Communications & Climate Change (MEIDECC) went on a joint mission to the Island of Tofua in the Ha'apai group to install - 1) VHF Radio Communication System, 2) Remote Activated Receiver RAR-Radio, and 3) Solar Street Light from 23 July to 1 August, 2020.

Local community of about 100 people of the island were relieved and happy that finally, they have means of communications not only to Ha'apai group but also to the rest of Tonga.

The Department of Communications had successfully installed new VHF Radio Communication Systems for Tofua and the island of Kotu so that they get connected 24/7 and communicated at the same time to the rest of the Ha'apai Group.

There were few times, as explained by the Town Officer of Tofua, they have to make smoke signal as the only means of communications especially at emergency and natural disasters when boats are kept away from rough seas.



VHF Radio Communication System

The base station for these VHF radio systems was installed at the residence of Kotu Town Officer so that he can call Tofua daily from 7am, 12noon and 7pm unless in case of emergency as it may occur from time to time.



NEWS Project RAR Radio

Two Remote Activate Receiver (RAR) Radios were also installed at Tofua, provided under the National Early Warning System (NEWS) Project, same project where the Tonga Broadcasting Commission's new Studio Building was constructed. Not only accessing the A3Z radio broadcasting service but these radios will automatically received emergency warnings once triggered from the Tonga Meteorological Warning Centre at Fua'amotu when natural disaster occur.

Tofale Lavaulu, a resident of the island is happy and thanks that now he can listen to the radio from Nuku'alofa.



Solar-power Street Light.

The Department of Energy also installed a solar-power first ever street light at Kolo, the island's main gathering area, sitting right above the anchorage harbour. Solar system also provides power for the RAR system and other smaller powered devices.

Some residents refer to the lone street light as the island's lighthouse.

Tonga's Meteorological Service intends to install more VHF radios in the island under the Pacific Resilience Project or PREP, the same project where the Schools that were affected by TC Gita are currently being constructed.

At the same time, Government is surveying options to install mobile phone coverage and water tanks to the island.

These developments are only part of the Government's effort to ensuring that no one is left behind particularly, those that live in the remote outer-islands, like the island of Tofua, at Ha'apai.

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Issued by: The Department of Communications of MEIDECC.