



19th September 2018 **The Ministry of Health launched a hard-hitting campaign today highlighting the dangers of tobacco use.**

Tuku Ifi Leva (Quit Smoking Now) will run for six weeks on TV, radio, press and Facebook throughout the Kingdom of Tonga, commencing 19th of September 2018.

The campaign graphically shows the risks of tobacco use, with a specific focus on heart attacks and strokes.

With 46% of men and 13% of women smoking, tobacco use in Tonga is among the highest in the world. Up to half of these men and women can be expected to die as a direct result of their smoking habits.

Many more Tongans, including children and adults affected by secondhand smoke, will be left disabled by cancers, diseases, infections, asthma and other serious health complications caused by tobacco use.

Tupou Tuilautala, Senior Tobacco Officer at the at the Tongan Ministry of Health, said today "We know that smokers will lose about 10 years of their life. That is ten years without children, families and loved ones. We believe all Tongans have a right to live smokefree".

The recent increase in tobacco tax is also part of a broader strategy by the Government of Tonga to motivate Tongans to stop smoking. According to Mr Tuilautala "The average price of a packet of cigarettes in Tonga is now about \$18 pa'anga. For someone who smokes one packet a day, that's about \$6,500 spent on cigarettes every year, and \$65,000 over 10 years. That's a

huge financial burden on Tongan families” he said.

Smokers motivated to quit by the campaign can receive advice and support from trained Ministry of Health staff through a newly established toll-free Quitline (0800 333).

Earlier this year, the *Tuku Ifi Leva* campaign was awarded the WHO 'World No Tobacco Day Award' its “outstanding contribution to the fight against tobacco use in the region”.

The *Tuku Ifi Leva* campaign is delivered as part of The Tonga National Strategy to Prevent and Control Non-Communicable Disease 2015-2020 (The National NCD Strategy).

The National NCD Strategy is based on the best practice principles for tobacco control outlined in the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, ratified by Tonga in 2005.

Ongoing delivery of the National NCD Strategy, including the *Tuku Ifi Leva* campaign, is made possible through the support of the Australian Government, the Tonga Health Promotion Foundation (TongaHealth), and the World Health Organization.

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To access a Press Kit available to media outlets reporting on the

***Tuku Ifi Leva* campaign, please visit: www.TapulfiTonga.com**

Tonga launches hard-hitting campaign to show the hidden dangers of smoking

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To view the campaign ad go to: <https://www.tapuifitonga.com/watch>