



19th September 2018 **The President of the Free Church of Tonga, Rev. Semisi Fonua launched the Phase 3 of the Tuku Ifi Leva (Quit Smoking Now) Campaign 2018 this morning, to highlight the risks of tobacco use at Falemasiva Hall, Tailulu College.**

Rev. Fonua said that Tuku Ifi Leva (Quit Smoking Now) campaign targets all Tongans who smoke or who may be at risk from smoking in the future.

“Smoking and smokeless tobacco use are almost always initiated and established in adolescence. Besides its long-term effects on adults, tobacco use produces specific health problems for adolescents.”



He believes that preventing tobacco use in adolescences may be an easier task than helping adults break the habit of smoking and overcome its ill effects.

Chief Executive Officer for the Ministry of Health, Dr. Siale ‘Akauola said, “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 second-hand smoke, will be left disabled by cancers, diseases, infections, asthma and other serious health complications caused by tobacco use.”



The Ministry of Health with the support of the Tonga Health Promotion Foundation, the Australian Government and the World Health Organization provided quick facts to emphasize risks of tobacco use:

1. Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death worldwide. It kills about half of all long-term smokers.
2. 46% of males and 13% of females smoke in Tonga, with about 90% of this population smoking daily.
3. Tobacco causes cancer in almost every part of the body. It also causes other chronic illnesses such as heart and respiratory diseases, strokes, and blindness.
4. Smoking not only kills people, it causes serious illness and disability that prevents people from caring for their family and pushes them into poverty.
5. There is no safe level of second-hand smoke. Even brief exposure can be harmful.
6. Second-hand smoke causes serious health problems to unborn babies and children. It also increases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome.

The Tuku Ifi Leva (Quit Smoking Now) Campaign 2018 will use a variety of hard-hitting media campaign throughout Tonga over a 6-week period including TV, Radio, Press, Facebook, Billboards, Posters, and Bus Stickers. The campaign, adapted specifically for Tonga, graphically shows the risks of tobacco use and the impact of deadly second-hand smoke on children.

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