

Briefing report

Education Review Office (ERO): Proposal for ERO to visit Samoa

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| Date | 16 September 2019 |
| Security Level | N/A |
| ERO Priority | Medium |
| ERO Reference | M19-39 |
| Date requested | ERO initiated |
| Date due | ERO initiated |
| Proactive release | Recommended |

| Addressee | Action sought | Deadline |
|------------------------------|--|----------|
| Minister of Education | <p>It is recommended that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note that ERO has been invited to join a delegation from Victoria University of Wellington to visit Samoa focussed on supporting strengthened education provision in Samoa b) agree that ERO's CRO and Manager Pacific Services visit Samoa as part of a joint delegation in the week of 30 September to 4 October 2019 | |



Attachments:

***Education Review Office (ERO):
Proposal for ERO to visit Samoa***



Comments:

Minister's Office to complete

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Referred to: | |
| Date signed by Minister: | |

Our Ref: M19-39

16 September 2019

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Proposal for ERO to visit Samoa

Purpose

1. To seek your agreement to ERO joining a delegation from Victoria University of Wellington to visit with Samoa from 30 September to 4 October.

Background

2. Over the past year ERO has established a close working relationship with the Faculty of Education of Victoria University of Wellington (VU) focussed on potential collaboration and the exchange of personnel.
3. As part of this collaboration ERO has been asked to join a delegation from VU to visit Samoa from 30 September to 4 October. The delegation is being led by Associate Professor Hon Luamanuvao Dame Winnie Laban Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika) with Victoria University of Wellington. The delegation includes Professor Stephen Dobson, Dean, Faculty of Education and Professor Gregor Coster, Dean, Faculty of Health. The intention of this delegation is to look at how Victoria University and ERO as joint partners, might support the strengthening of the health and education provision in Samoa.
4. Victoria University has established a partnership with the National University of Samoa (NUS) in the health sector ("Grow Your Own") aimed at supporting the development of the health workforce in Samoa. This programme is sponsored through the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). As part of this visit it is the intention of VU to explore the potential at Ministerial, senior official and university levels opportunities for extending this model to the education workforce.
5. ERO has also had interest from those working in education in Samoa about our work in school improvement and system reviews.
6. Samoa and New Zealand's relationship is guided by a Treaty of Friendship signed in 1962. This treaty contains seven articles that emphasis the closeness of the relationship and recognises "friendship, confidence, and a mutual endeavour to obtain for their people's fuller opportunities for social progress". The Government's Pacific Reset launched in 2018 confirms first and foremost New Zealand's commitment to the Pacific,

with \$79.77 million in development funding provisioned for Samoa for 2018-2021. In this education and health are long-term priorities.

7. We have had recent involvement in a review and advisory capacity in respect of the education systems of the Tokelau, Niue and Timor-Leste. ERO is also providing a support role to the Cook Islands in terms of their review capability.
8. Recent discussions between MFAT and ERO have focussed on establishing a medium-term work programme in respect of our Pacific engagement as opposed to what has been more ad-hoc requests for country-based reviews and support.

Potential role of ERO

9. There are several areas where ERO might be able to support Samoa in the strengthening of their schooling and early learning system. These include the potential to support system level assessment and in strengthening current provider evaluation/review practices and capability.
10. The intention of ERO accompanying this VU delegation would be to scope and hear from Ministers and senior government officials their priorities for education reform and improvement, and from this how we might contribute.
11. The VU visit programme will include meeting with the acting Vice Chancellor and deans of the health and education faculties within NUS, but equally they have established meetings with the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture (Hon Loau Solamalemalo Keneti Sio), and the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (Dr Karoline Afamasaga-Fuata'i) in which they would like ERO to play a lead role.
12. ERO sees this engagement as an initial step in building relationships, and better understanding the challenges that this Pacific nation faces in the delivery of high-quality education. Any engagement would be with a view to establishing a long-term country to country relationship as opposed to individual commissioned projects. Our focus would look to building internal evaluative capability to support ongoing system improvement, help determine priorities for further investment and provide some confidence around the impacts of initiatives and investments.
13. We propose that ERO accept this invitation and that a joint team of the Chief Review Officer (given the senior ministerial and official engagement) and ERO's Manager Pacific Services, form part of this joint delegation to Apia.
14. MFAT are aware of this proposed visit and its purpose and are supportive of our engagement. Part of the meeting schedule for the delegation will include engagement with New Zealand's High Commissioner to Samoa.

Recommendations

15. It is recommended that you:

- a) **note** that ERO has been invited to join a delegation from Victoria University of Wellington to visit Samoa focussed on supporting strengthened education provision in Samoa **noted**
- b) **agree** that ERO's CRO and Manager Pacific Services visit Samoa as part of a joint delegation in the week of 30 September to 4 October 2019 **agree/disagree**



Nicholas Pole
Chief Executive and Chief Review Officer

NOTED/APPROVED



Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

18/9/19