



INCREASING RESILIENCE IN TONGA WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY AUSTRALIA PACIFIC CLIMATE PARTNERSHIP



Wiring new transformers on 'Eua



Renewable energy on 'Eua helps disaster resilience



Female line technicians install new wirings on 'Eua

Reducing Tonga's dependence on imported fossil fuels for power generation is a top priority for the Government of Tonga. Australia is working with the government and other donors to help ensure people in remote areas of Tonga have reliable and affordable energy to support sustainable development.

The Outer Island Renewable Energy Project (OIREP) began in 2013 with the aim of increasing the reliability, efficiency and affordability of power in nine of Tonga's outer islands. This multi-donor project is led by the Asian Development Bank and is co-financed by Australia, the European Union, the Second Danish Cooperation Fund for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency for Rural Areas, and the Global Environment Facility. It is worth approximately \$36.36 million, of which Australia contributed \$6.7 million.

On the island of 'Eua a solar plant was installed, and a rehabilitation program was completed with new electricity poles and wirings, reinforcing and disaster proofing the power grid. This total network upgrade faced its first serious test in February 2018 when Cyclone Gita devastated the country's infrastructure.

On 'Eua a complete recovery of all systems took **only two weeks** with a crew of three people. In contrast, on the country's main island Tongatapu, complete recovery took five weeks with a crew of 150 people. The combination of rehabilitating the power grid and harnessing renewable energy sources contributed to a significantly faster recovery on 'Eua after the disaster.

OIREP is also helping Tonga meet its goal of utilising renewable energy for 50 percent of the country's electricity needs by 2020, and increasing gender equity in the energy sector by training and employing female line technicians. The project has also been implemented on the islands of Ha'apai, Vava'u and the Niuaus and is on track to ensure Tonga's remote communities are able to pursue sustainable development pathways that are more disaster and climate resilient.

For more information or assistance from the Support Unit contact: helpdesk@apclimatepartnership.com.au