



## GOVERNMENT OF NIUE

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **OFFICIAL HANDOVER OF THE OXYGEN PLANT AT NIUE FOOU HOSPITAL**

**Alofi, Niue – 15 July 2024** - Today, the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for the Western Pacific, Dr. Saia Ma'u Piukala, officially handed over the newly commissioned Oxygen Plant at the Niue Ffoo Hospital. Dr. Piukala arrived on the island on the 12 July 2024 and was accompanied by Dr Kim Eva Dickson, WHO Representative for Niue.

The commissioning of the Oxygen Plant for the Niue Ffoo Hospital will provide the essential medicine necessary for the treatment of respiratory diseases such as COVID-19 and pneumonia. Dr. Piukala acknowledged the generous funding from the European Union of approximately USD385,000.00 for this plant and the building within. The Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen system is fully equipped to meet Niue's needs, operational training will be underway to ensure its effective use and maintenance.



Dr. Piukala emphasized the importance of ongoing support for the Oxygen Plant's operation. "I strongly encourage the Government of Niue to establish a three-year preventative maintenance contract with the installers of this plant to support its efficient operation. WHO has covered the first year of this contract".

Furthermore, Dr. Piukala highlighted the need for collaborative efforts moving forward by working closely with the WHO and utilize all available resources in implementing the areas agreed upon in the Country Cooperation Strategy 2024-2029.

The Minister for Social Services, Hon. Sonya Talagi expressed gratitude on behalf of the Government and people of Niue: "Thank you, Dr. Saia Ma'u Piukala, and the European Union, for this critical infrastructure, which will not only strengthen Niue Ffoo Hospital services but also increase our resilience against climate change, economic shocks, and generate revenue from other sectors of the island. I acknowledge the Director of Health, Mrs. Minerva Ikimau, Niue Ffoo Hospital staff, building contractors, former Director of Health, Dr. Edgar Akau'ola, and everyone who has worked tirelessly leading up to today."

During their visit, they met with the Acting Premier and Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Mona Ainu'u, and the Minister of Social Services, Hon. Sonya Talagi. Dr. Piukala also toured the Niue Ffoo Hospital, the Niue Fresh Hydroponic Farm, and the Vanilla Farm, and engaged with the Hakupu Council of Women over the weekend. We also extend our gratitude to the Niue Tonga Community on the island for the hospitality shown during his visit.

Dr. Saia Ma'u Piukala is the first Pacific Island national to be appointed as WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Piukala for his visit and contributions, and we wish him safe travels as he departs Niue today.

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**For further information, please contact:**

Anzee Mougavalu, GON Communications Officer, Email: [NiueGovernment.Media@gov.nu](mailto:NiueGovernment.Media@gov.nu)