

SAMOA

# IMPACT STORIES

APTC   
AUSTRALIA-PACIFIC  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
CREATING SKILLS FOR LIFE

Australian  
Aid 



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**About the Australia-Pacific Technical College**

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## Message from the Australian High Commissioner to Samoa

Australia recognises that quality education is critical to improving livelihoods. It enables all people, regardless of their background, opportunities which lead to gainful employment and improved livelihoods.

In short, education enables development. Quality education is crucial to helping people gain the skills they need to obtain work and to lead productive lives.

Since the Australia-Pacific Technical College opened its doors in Samoa in 2007, it has provided Samoans and other Pacific Islanders with the opportunity to gain the skills they need in order to work and lead productive lives. By aligning education and skills with labour market needs, the Australia-Pacific Technical College promotes economic growth in the Pacific and fuels private sector development through skills development.

Over the last 10 years, the Australia-Pacific Technical College has played an important role in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Samoa. Each year, approximately 100 Samoan students gain new skills and qualifications through courses offered by the Australia-Pacific Technical College. Government and employers recognise Australia-Pacific Technical College's reputation for delivering high-quality and relevant courses.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College has worked closely with the Samoa Qualifications Authority to strengthen the capacity of local Technical and Vocational Education and Training providers by offering Certificate IV courses in Training and Assessment. The Australia-Pacific Technical College has also been developing courses specifically for Samoans, based on local demand, such as the Certificate III in Education Support, offered in Samoa for the first time in 2017.

Since 2007, over 1300 Samoans have graduated from the Australia-Pacific Technical College in a range of qualifications, including hospitality, cookery, tourism, carpentry, plumbing, sheet metal fabrication, and community services. These qualifications have opened doors for graduates in new or improved employment and the potential to work overseas.

Around 98 per cent of the Australia-Pacific Technical College graduates are now in gainful employment. Importantly, these students report that their Australia-Pacific Technical College qualification, an Australian standard qualification, has transformed their lives, providing them with better employment opportunities.

**Her Excellency  
Ms Sue Langford**



## Message from the Chief Executive Officer

At the Australia-Pacific Technical College, success extends beyond the number of men and women who gain internationally recognised qualifications.

In a region where relationships matter, the Australia-Pacific Technical College has embraced a partnering approach, working with governments, Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions and the private sector to ensure that the Australia-Pacific Technical College training meets labour market demands and produces job-ready graduates.

Thriving communities and societies have one thing in common – a skilled, qualified and capable workforce. Technical and vocational skills are in high demand across the region; in trades, hospitality, tourism, health and community industry sectors. Without these formal qualifications, Pacific Island workers can find themselves stalled on the career ladder. But success is also measured by the lasting impact of the difference that learning can make in the lives of individuals, their families and communities.

This collection of Samoan graduate profiles highlights the impact of learning at the Australia-

Pacific Technical College on individuals and communities, and the contribution to strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training across the Pacific.

There are many more stories of success that could have been told, that could have been highlighted in this publication. The process of selecting the stories to be told was not an easy one. I wish to extend my gratitude to all those who so willingly shared their stories and who gave their time to allow the writers to conduct interviews and research.

I wish to thank the Australian Government for their support. I also thank the Pacific Island Governments and people who have worked with the Australia-Pacific Technical College to realise the results you will read about in the following pages.

On behalf of all at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I hope you enjoy reading these stories. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to enhance opportunities for the citizens of the Pacific Island Countries that we serve.

**Denise O'Brien**  
**Australia-Pacific Technical College**





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FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

PALAU

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SOLOMON ISLANDS

AUSTRALIA

# GOAL

Contribute to a more prosperous Pacific driven by a skilled, competitive and productive workforce

**11152**  
Total Graduates

**40%**  
FEMALE  
GRADUATES

**60%**  
MALE  
GRADUATES

**14**  
Pacific  
Island  
Countries

**5**  
Campus  
Locations

MARSHALL ISLANDS

NAURU

KIRIBATI

TUVALU

SAMOA

COOK ISLANDS

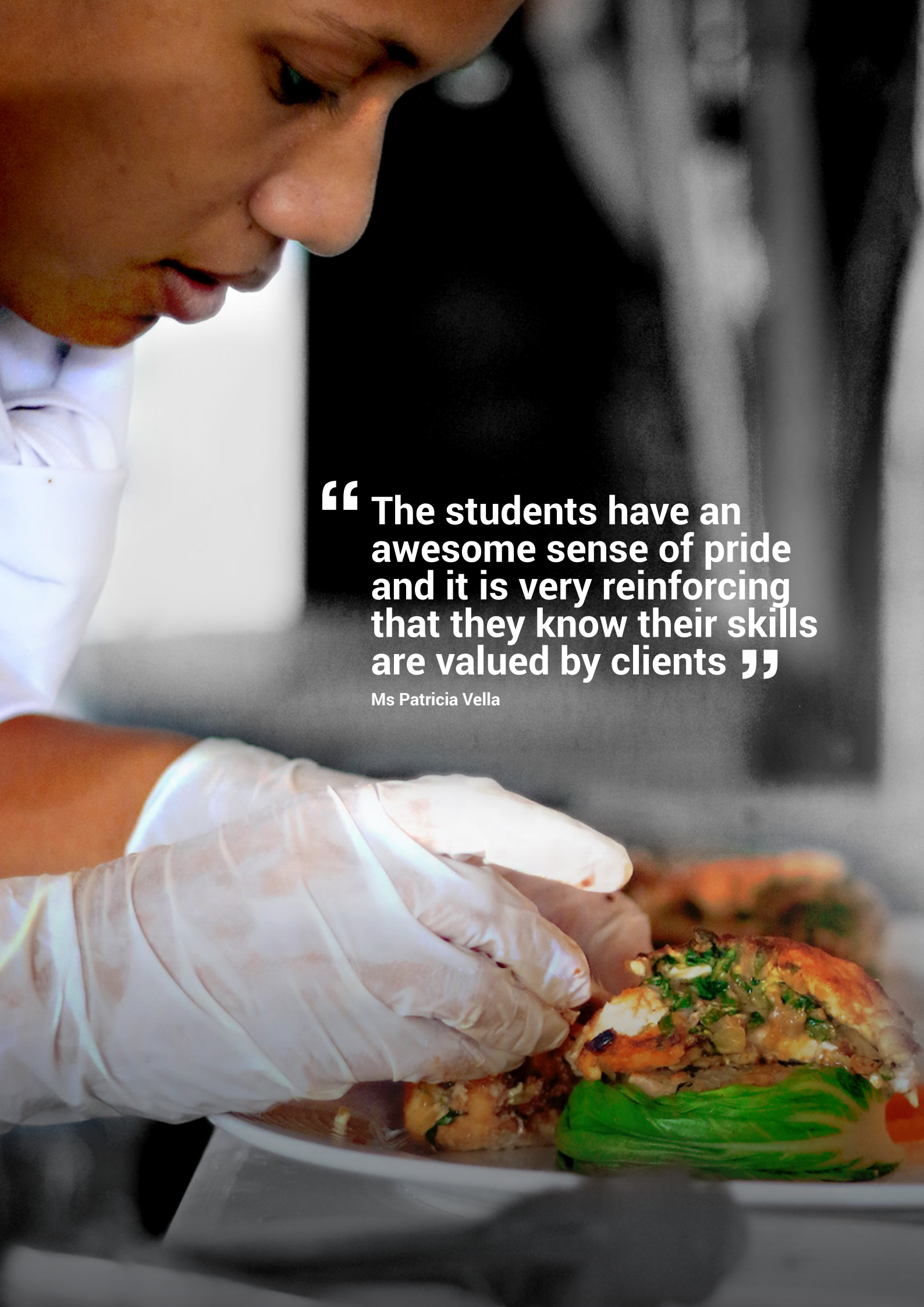
VANUATU

FIJI

TONGA

NIUE





**“ The students have an awesome sense of pride and it is very reinforcing that they know their skills are valued by clients ”**

Ms Patricia Vella



## COOKING UP A STORM: TRAINING SAMOA'S NEXT GENERATION OF CHEFS

Commercial Cookery students from the Australia-Pacific Technical College showed true passion for their profession and won high praise by international judges at the 2016 Samoa Salon Culinaire – the national version of MasterChef.



This is a glowing testament to the quality of training provided by the Australia-Pacific Technical College, especially in the cookery trade, where the College has trained 144 skilled Samoan chefs to meet the growing demand of the country's culinary industry.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College training, working with local input, has caught the eye of industry because graduates have a high level of professionalism, food presentation and organisational skills.



What makes Australia-Pacific Technical College graduates so appealing to clients and hospitality employers is the reinforcement of employability attributes such as honesty, reliability and punctuality. In addition, an understanding of appropriate personal presentation, the use of protective equipment and workplace health and safety are key features of learning at the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

Australia-Pacific Technical College's Country Manager in Samoa, Ms Patricia Vella said that such overwhelmingly positive feedback and success further fuels the passion students have for cookery – an essential ingredient for a growing industry that demands more inspired professional and skilled chefs and hospitality workers than ever before.

She said, "The students have an awesome sense of pride and it is very reinforcing that they know their skills are valued by clients."

Developing cookery skills through training facilities like the Visions Restaurant in Samoa

A critical aspect of their training has been the opportunity to use their skills in practical industry events including the Samoa Salon Culinaire, Oka Festival, World Chefs Day and the Latin Film Festival.

Such opportunities are often considered 'once-in-a-lifetime' for students that come from small villages or remote areas.

"Cookery in some areas of Samoa can be limited in terms of menus, service and scale. To be involved in an international event is just marvellous and may be the only time the students get that opportunity," Ms Vella said.

At the first Samoa Salon Culinaire, held in 2016, five participating Australia-Pacific Technical College students won medals, two of whom won gold medals.

One of the gold medallists, Mr Tusitala Niko, said the achievement was something he is proud to share with others.

"I want to encourage others to come and study at Australia-Pacific Technical College and lift the standards of their workplaces."

For him, the gold medal is a souvenir of the competition and the skills he has learned along the way.

**“For most of the students, it was their first time being in front of a large audience, so it was a great opportunity for them to build up their confidence”**

Ms Daniella Ah-Leong Leota

One of the great outcomes of participating in competitions is the boost in confidence for students like Mr Niko, who said, "I felt very excited and happy to have won against professional chefs."

Mr Niko looks forward to working hard in his workplace. In a few years, he hopes to open his own café.

Australia-Pacific Technical College's Commercial Cookery Trainer, Ms Daniella Ah-Leong Leota said, "For most of the students, it was their first time being in front of a large audience, so it was a great opportunity for them to build their confidence."

Ms Ah-Leong Leota encourages her students not to be afraid to take up challenges in their life.

"You must have the confidence and passion to take on challenges, and if you fail, you can always pick yourself back up and try again," she said.

## SUPPORT FOR A BOOMING INDUSTRY



Winning students of the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery program at the Samoa Salon Culinaire

While there is a broad knowledge of cookery throughout Samoa, the blossoming tourism sector and influx of new hospitality businesses, is creating a demand for an increased level of professionalism in the sector.

Basic training is essential, and Ms Ah-Leong Leota believes that the Australia-Pacific Technical College program is indispensable as it transforms the careers of those with limited knowledge.

“This course will upskill students holistically as well as with the basics. It is learning everything from knife skills to making desserts, baking, preparing poultry and meat, cleaning, safety and more,” she said.

**“ This course will upskill students holistically as well as with the basics. It is learning everything from knife skills to making desserts, baking, preparing poultry and meat, cleaning, safety and more ”**

Ms Daniella Ah-Leong Leota



To help the culinary industry develop further, the Australia-Pacific Technical College supports the recently established Samoa Culinary Association to provide pathways for local Samoan people that may not have a strong education background.

Association President, Mr Joe Lam said he is very pleased to partner with the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

“The Australia-Pacific Technical College is a springboard to better training and better chefs, and without it, our Association wouldn’t survive because we don’t have the resources and the personnel to train kitchen workers to become chefs,” he said.

With a shortage of skilled workers in Samoa, Mr Lam believes it is important to see students immersed in industry events and competitions.

“Practical learning is the fastest way that people pick up things, so being exposed to work experience, kitchen placements, competitions and festivals is really important.”

Industry events are a great way to bring the community together and promote the industry as a viable and rewarding career for Samoan people.

Exposure to different modes of working and practising various skills helped chefs to become more creative in an area of the world where supply of produce could be limited and inconsistent.

“You have to learn to be more creative as a chef in Samoa because you’re not working with perfectly round tomatoes or perfectly straight beans, the flavours are better but you have to be creative,” Mr Lam adds.

In all corners of the industry, it was evident that Australia-Pacific Technical College training improved the sector and set a new benchmark.

**“ You have to learn to be more creative as a chef in Samoa because you’re not working with perfectly round tomatoes or perfectly straight beans, the flavours are better but you have to be creative ”** Mr Joe Lam



## AMAZING TAVITA

### GOLD MEDALLIST AT SAMOA SALON CULINAIRE

At 23 years of age, Australia-Pacific Technical College cookery student, Ms Amazing Tavita has worked her way from a kitchen hand to a gold medallist as she impressed judges at the Samoa Salon Culinaire.

"It was my first time participating in this kind of competition and I didn't expect to win. I was nervous as my competitors had five or six years of experience, but my trainer, parents and classmates were all encouraging me."

After her move from a kitchen hand to a cook, Ms Tavita was eager to improve her skills and see the overall standard of cookery improve. She heard about the Australia-Pacific Technical College from a friend who had graduated from the College.

"In Samoa, we have jobs but the standard is low. I enrolled at the Australia-Pacific Technical College to learn more skills in cooking and get more experience," she said.

Ms Tavita said she will continue to work on her confidence and found her trainer very helpful and encouraging. Her advice to young kitchen hands, chefs, or those looking for work in a growing industry is to "just go for it."

"If you have the passion and know what you want to be, just go for it. If you want to learn something, don't be scared, nobody is perfect. All of us have different skills and knowledge, but if we do something from our heart, we can achieve anything," she said.

After winning the gold medal, her ambitions continue to grow. She is currently working as a Chef at the Tanoa Hotel and has further hopes to continue studying and learning patisserie.

### QUICK FACTS

**899**

**Pacific Islanders**

with Certificate III in Commercial Cookery qualification

**144**

**Samoaan Nationals**

with Certificate III in Commercial Cookery qualification

**318**

**Total Female Graduates**

Certificate III in Commercial Cookery

**63**

**Samoaan Female Graduates**

Certificate III in Commercial Cookery





**“ Because we work with Australian standard equipment and facilities, our graduates have the opportunity to apply that knowledge and lift the standards in the countries they work in ”**

Mr Alexander Shearer





Hands-on training in designing plumbing systems



## TRAINING IMPROVES PACIFIC-WIDE PLUMBING CAREERS AND STANDARDS

As construction in Samoa and the Pacific continues to expand, the need for skilled workers in areas such as plumbing is critical to ensure the safety and wellbeing of citizens as well as visitors to the country.

Having qualified and well-trained plumbers is critical in ensuring improvement in plumbing standards so that clean water is more accessible and wastewater is managed at an international level.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College is helping build the capacity and technical skills of plumbers through its Certificate III in Plumbing program. This qualification provides a high level of technical skills and knowledge of everything from sanitation to waste removal, hot water systems, drainage, roofing and more.

“In Samoa’s case, you don’t have big establishments with set standards. Most plumbing employers are small sole traders or companies that employ two or three people,” Australia-Pacific Technical College’s Country Manager in Samoa, Ms Patricia Vella said.

Australia-Pacific Technical College’s Plumbing Trainer, Mr Alexander Shearer said that despite efforts to introduce standards, many small companies revert to old ways of working.

“This is where Australia-Pacific Technical College graduates are beginning to create a change. Because we work with Australian standard equipment and facilities, our graduates have the opportunity to apply that knowledge and lift the standards in the countries they work in,” Mr Shearer said.

Ms Vella said that partnerships between vocational training providers and professional bodies is increasingly important in trade areas like plumbing.

To help lift plumbing standards in Samoa, the Australia-Pacific Technical College has formed a partnership with the Plumbers' Association of Samoa.

Unregistered and unqualified "bush" plumbers operating in Samoa is also a concern for government and industry stakeholders. The newly-legislated Plumbers' Association of Samoa is encouraging workers in the trade to obtain registration and lift current plumbing standards through available training.

Vice-President of the Plumbers' Association of Samoa, Mr Meki Taula explains that the role of the Association is to monitor and regulate the standards in the industry.

"We would like to have more members registered and have them take up relevant training to become qualified so that they can do better work and be compensated better," he said.

With the resources and quality training delivered at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, the Association is encouraging members to seek further training at the College.

**“ We would like to have more members registered and have them take up relevant training to become qualified so that they can do better work, and be compensated better ”**

**”** Mr Meki Taula

"The Association is lucky to have the Australia-Pacific Technical College work with us. Having registered plumbers with an authentic qualification and trained to internationally-recognised Australian and New Zealand standards by the Australia-Pacific Technical College is very important for this industry to grow effectively," Mr Taula said.

Mr Taula said the establishment of the Association and the standard of training offered by the Australia-Pacific Technical College was elevating plumbing as a career choice in Samoa.

Mr Shearer believes the partnership between Australia-Pacific Technical College and the Association is having an impact beyond Samoa.

"Students from other countries who are studying in Samoa are keen to know how things are done and have met with the Plumbers' Association of Samoa to learn how to set up similar bodies in their home countries."

He said this was a positive sign that students will not only learn skills in Samoa but will take ideas to improve the industry in their countries.

## WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

Insights from Australia-Pacific Technical College Plumbing graduates

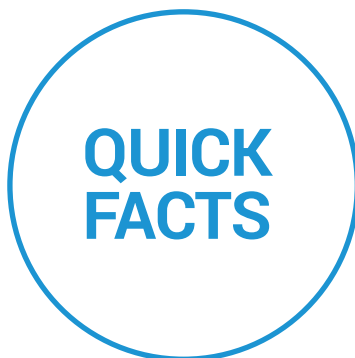


**A TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENT:** “As a Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and Plumbing Inspector, studying at the Australia-Pacific Technical College has really helped me understand a lot of new things – hot water systems, temperate valves, the materials for pipes and sizing and so on. I had never heard of those things before, so it is helpful when I have to design drawings to map out my plan before I carry out an activity. I know how to size the pipe according to the design.” [Mr Akira Kobayashi](#)

**A NEW LEASE OF CONFIDENCE:** “Using what the Australia-Pacific Technical College taught me onsite and in the classroom is really helpful. I can now communicate with my manager and the contractor about the best standards. Before I would hardly talk to the contractor but now I can talk to them about what is the correct way to do things and have the confidence to give advice on what we should do.” [Mr Akira Kobayashi](#)



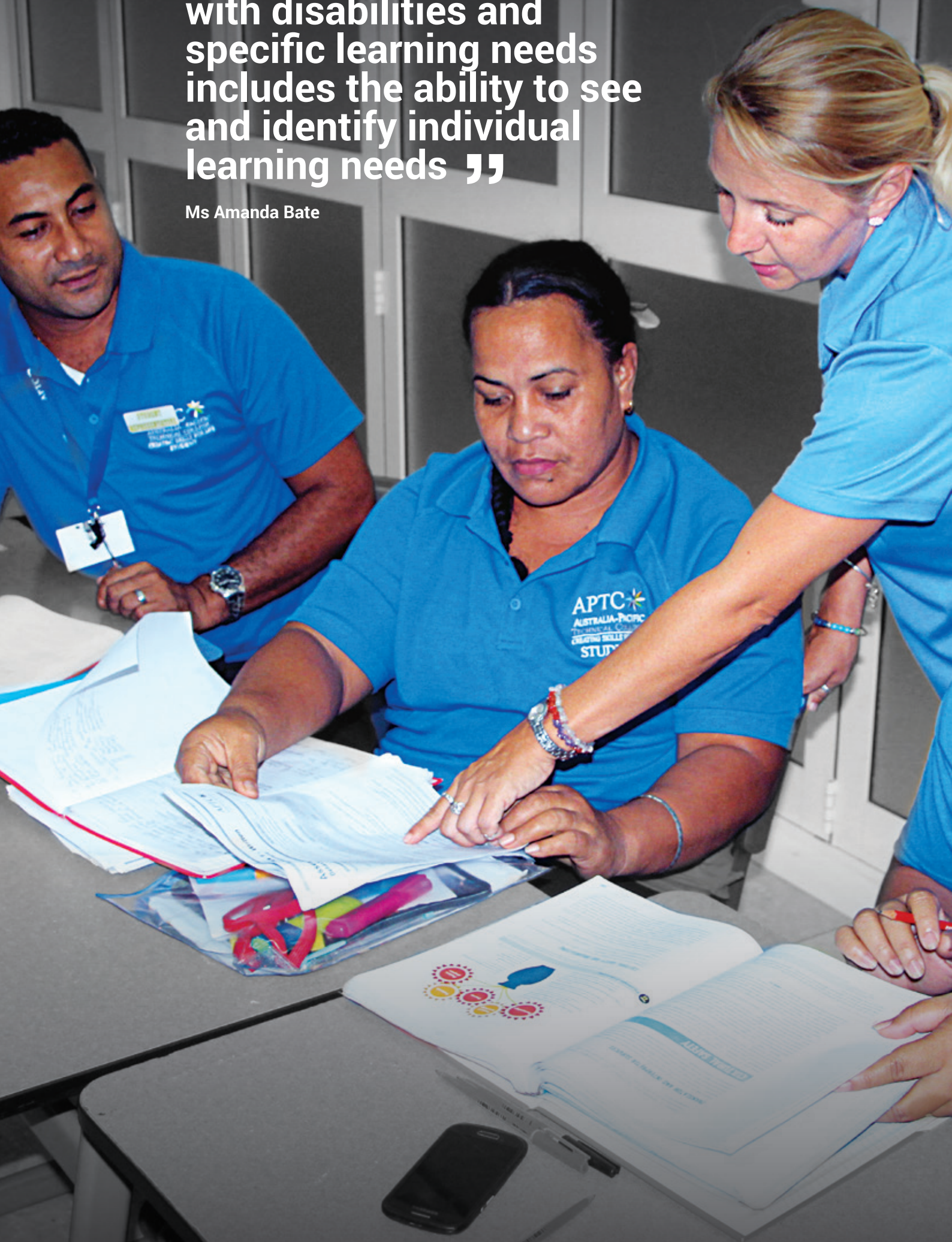
**A SKILL UPGRADE:** “As a plumber and trainer, I wanted to upgrade my qualifications, and the Australia-Pacific Technical College provided the full package with up-to-date materials. If you run your own plumbing business, one of the major challenges is that clients do not have enough money to buy the right material and that hinders the way you perform in terms of quality standards. The Australia-Pacific Technical College and the new Plumbers’ Association of Samoa is helping us to reinforce the standard and what is in the books.” [Mr Aaitui Palaamo](#)





“ Working with children with disabilities and specific learning needs includes the ability to see and identify individual learning needs ”

Ms Amanda Bate







## PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

The Australia-Pacific Technical College is building the capacity of local teachers to help ensure all children in Samoa have access to education.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College introduced the Certificate III in Education Support program in Samoa to train teacher aides to support teachers in a range of educational settings to improve learning outcomes for children, especially those who once may have been excluded.

In 2017, the first cohort of 18 students successfully completed the program.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College's industry consultation found that there was a strong desire for inclusive education, explained Ms Patricia Vella, Australia-Pacific Technical College's Country Manager in Samoa.

"Typically, in a developing country, only those children who are intellectually and physically able to manage in a classroom will attend school. Children with visual, hearing, physical or intellectual impairments are kept at home, and do not have access to education."

"This makes their situation more difficult because without access to education, there is no way to improve their circumstances," she added.

Sharing of ideas to learn and support an inclusive education environment and improve educational outcomes

Australia-Pacific Technical College's Certificate III in Education Support Trainer in Samoa, Ms Amanda Bate explained that when it comes to teaching students with a diversity of needs, the course aims "to flip the convention for educators to focus not on the disability and what the child cannot do, to what the child can do."

To help achieve this new outlook, Ms Bate often refers to the "iceberg" analogy in class.

"Students realise that what we see on the surface of a person is not all there is – as with the iceberg, there is much under the surface which we cannot see. Part of working with childrens with disabilities and specific learning needs includes the ability to see potential and explore and identify individual learning needs," she said.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College is helping to change stereotypes of disabled children in their communities with examples of inclusion.

As part of their training, Australia-Pacific Technical College students were involved in helping facilitate the 'Special Olympics Tournament', giving them the opportunity to focus on the abilities of all children and to appreciate how things can be modified to ensure everyone has a chance to reach their potential.

Such activities, industry learning and placements have been "eye openers" for Australia-Pacific Technical College students, explained Ms Bate.

"The students have learned that every individual is capable but we need to provide support for children to reach their potential," she said.

**“ to flip the convention for educators to focus not on the disability and what the child cannot do, to what the child can do ”**

Ms Amanda Bate

The program looked closely at a number of disabilities and their characteristics as observed in classroom settings, as well as strategies to support these students, and encourage self-determination and independence. Students also developed different views on children with disabilities

"There were many comments from students over the semester about how they now realise that they didn't appreciate the abilities of children, rather they focused on their disability. The students have a new appreciation for all learners and their individual needs."



## GRADUATE INSPIRED TO BE POSITIVE ROLE MODEL



Ms Faamalama Fogavai-Turner  
with students in class

One of the pioneering students of the Australia-Pacific Technical College's Certificate III in Education Support program, Ms Faamalama Fogavai-Turner said the program is important to not only increase knowledge, but to learn how to be a positive role model in a school.

"The program brought an understanding of finding a teaching approach that fits each learner and how to cater for each individual learner's needs, as well as how to work in a positive and sustainable work place."

Ms Fogavai-Turner who used to teach in her village in Upolu, has been inspired to find new ways of delivering education.

"Even though we were from different backgrounds and had different views on helping and teaching children, the program encouraged us not to label or think lightly about our students. We learned to be flexible and adapted ourselves to the student's learning worlds."

After completing her studies, Ms Fogavai-Turner took up the role of a Vocational Training Assistant at the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

"My work here at the Australia-Pacific Technical College is adding to my experience as a Samoan teacher. Everything I am doing and teaching is helping me develop the ability of other teachers, so that they learn and spread the importance of making sure there is education for all."

**“ I can tell the difference in the confidence of those workers who have trained at the Australia-Pacific Technical College ”**

Ms Pouli Manu Taialofa Naseri







## SAMOANS WIN OVERSEAS JOBS THROUGH UPSKILLING



The Australia-Pacific Technical College has not only contributed to improving individual careers and local communities, but as Samoan carpentry graduates prove, it can create pathways for Pacific Islanders to international opportunities.

Seven Certificate III in Carpentry graduates from Samoa are now working in Christchurch, New Zealand, to help with the Canterbury post-earthquake rebuild.

With their internationally-recognised qualification and knowledge of Australian carpentry standards, these graduates were able to secure employment abroad as part of the Canterbury Trade Pilot Initiative and further develop their skills.

The Certificate III in Carpentry qualification is one of the most successful programs offered by the Australia-Pacific Technical College, said Certificate III in Carpentry Trainer, Mr Paka Wakanivonoloa.

“Many of our graduates have successfully gone on to pursue their careers overseas. Some are in Australia and New Zealand working in private companies and some have gone on to supervisory roles or are managing projects,” said Mr Wakanivonoloa.

Building skills and experience within the construction industry for graduates like Gregory Su'a (left) to confidently take up international work opportunities



The Australia-Pacific Technical College training meets Australian standards and this creates greater appeal to international employers as graduates are able to demonstrate they are work-ready, reliable, punctual and have achieved a high standard of learning.

The Apia Employment Company, which assisted in finding workers for the Canterbury Trade Pilot Initiative, has found this to be the case.

The Chief Executive Officer, Ms Pouli Manu Taialofa Naseri, said that many clients who come to seek their services specifically ask for Australia-Pacific Technical College graduates.

"I have a lot of employers seeking people with skills and confidence, especially those with qualifications from the Australia-Pacific Technical College."

Ms Naseri believes an Australia-Pacific Technical College qualification is of "tremendous value."

**“ Many of our graduates have successfully gone on to pursue their careers overseas. Some are in Australia and New Zealand working in private companies and some have gone onto supervisory roles or are managing projects ”** [Mr Paka Wakanivonoloa](#)

One of the biggest barriers for people in finding work is the lack of confidence needed to promote their skills and experience.

"A lot of Samoan job seekers find it pretty hard to promote themselves and that can often be a barrier because an employer does not have the time to read a lengthy curriculum vitae or work around shyness. If you cannot promote yourself, you often miss out."

Ms Naseri noticed that the Australia-Pacific Technical College graduates she has worked with, often have more confidence due to the quality of training.

"I can tell the difference in the confidence of those workers who have trained at the Australia-Pacific Technical College."

## BRIGHT FUTURES EMERGE FROM DISASTER EXPERIENCES

Australia-Pacific Technical College graduates, Mr Alapati Toomata and Mr Gregory Su'a are from Samoa, and currently in New Zealand employed through the Canterbury Trade Pilot Initiative.

Mr Toomata enrolled at the Australia-Pacific Technical College to not only receive a qualification, but also develop his skills and thinking processes.

Undertaking an Australian carpentry qualification exposed Mr Toomata to skills and knowledge in a much broader context, as well as provided him with insight into self-management, setting goals, and appropriate work processes.

"Learning new things is the best part of working on the Canterbury Trade Pilot Initiative. I have gained experience reading large-scale plans, site setting, developing and implementing the planning process, and working with new materials," he said.

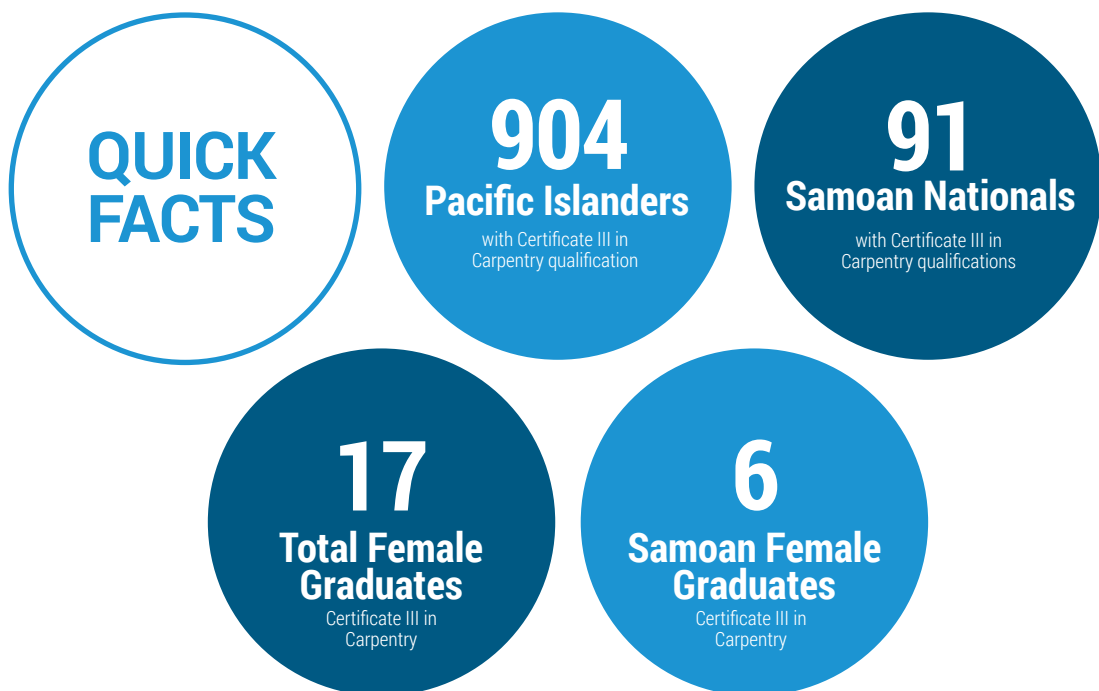
Mr Toomata is a great example of where an Australia-Pacific Technical College qualification can lead, and encourages others to pursue upskilling.

His fellow graduate, Mr Gregory Su'a initially undertook study at the Australia-Pacific Technical College to help his family.


With the skills he learned, Mr Su'a has set up his own building business, employing eight workers. His training and the experience at the Australia-Pacific Technical College has had a big impact on his confidence and his belief in what is possible for the future.

"Before I was afraid to work by myself, but after my training, I had the knowledge, the skills and the confidence."

He is now contracted on the NZD300 million Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct build in central Christchurch, working on seismic joints, a crucial part of a large building to allow movement during earth tremors.







**“ The benefit of the partnership with Australia-Pacific Technical College is that we will have enough nurses who have the quality training to perform as registered nurses ”**

Ms Tauaitala Lees





## CREATING NEW ASPIRATIONS FOR HEALTH SERVICE WORKERS



For Samoans who did not complete secondary education, qualifying as a nurse was a far-off dream. This is slowly changing with the collaboration between the Australia-Pacific Technical College and the National University of Samoa.



This joint venture is opening previously closed doors for unskilled health care workers, boosting industry capacity and easing the traditional workload on nursing staff.

According to Samoa's National Health Sector Plan (2008-2018)<sup>1</sup>, one of the challenges faced by the health sector in Samoa is limited physical and human resources. Developing skilled human resources was identified as a key area, which can bring about improvements in the health sector.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College and the National University of Samoa responded to this need to upskill health workers.

The outcome was to provide internationally recognised training so workers with low formal skills or education are upskilled to be able to assist nurses to perform basic health care competently and professionally.

### REFERENCE:

1: [http://www.wpro.who.int/health\\_services/samoa\\_nationalhealthplan.pdf](http://www.wpro.who.int/health_services/samoa_nationalhealthplan.pdf)

Providing health workers with skills in basic health care to assist patients and medical professionals

These routine tasks include attending to the personal care needs of patients, ensuring a hygienic environment, as well as doing basic medical observations such as taking blood pressure and reading medical records.

National University of Samoa's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Asofou So'o, explains that the recognition of the Australia-Pacific Technical College qualification has provided a pathway to the Diploma and Bachelor programs, which helped fill the gap of skilled health workers.

This partnership has enabled students to study to become qualified nurses. For many, this was an opportunity they thought would never be open to them, said Australia-Pacific Technical College's Country Manager in Samoa, Ms Patricia Vella.

"What is particularly attractive about the Certificate III in Health Services Assistance program is that it is accessible to those without previous qualifications who may not have done well at school, or were not encouraged in an academic pathway. In this case, the qualification also gives them a ticket into an even higher pathway in terms of nursing," she said.

A total of 18 Australia-Pacific Technical College Health Services Assistance graduates have gone on to pursue higher qualification at the National University of Samoa. Of these, 16 students have continued to the Bachelor of Nursing program.

By the end of 2017, it is expected these Australia-Pacific Technical College graduates could gain a Bachelor of Nursing from the National University of Samoa.

In addition to nursing pathways, the partnership with National University of Samoa has built capacity and a community of professionals delivering to international standards.

This was accomplished by working closely with trainers, facilitating teacher training, securing funding for facilities and equipment, improving industry engagement and the introduction of competency-based assessment.

**“ In this case, the qualification also gives them a ticket into an even higher pathway in terms of nursing ”** Ms Patricia Vella

Head of School of Nursing at the National University of Samoa, Ms Tauaitala Lees said, "We have a shortage of nurses in Samoa, but what we are looking for is quality, not just quantity."

"The benefit of the partnership with Australia-Pacific Technical College is that we will have enough nurses who have the quality training to perform as registered nurses," she added.

Relevance of training comes from continuous engagement and consultation with the industry about what skills are needed and what can be learned on and off the job to ensure programs are sustainable for students and employers.

There is no doubt that the qualification has created space for new and exciting aspirations among students and health care workers in Samoa.

“Without these opportunities, the aspirations of auxiliary health workers would never have been tapped into. Individuals would never have aspired to be a nurse had it not been for completing the Australia-Pacific Technical College program, nor would they realise they had the capability to do that,” Ms Vella said.



Learning the basics of health care



## WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

Insights from Australia-Pacific Technical College Health Services Assistance graduates enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing Program at the National University of Samoa



"Learning key skills such as anatomy, first aid and caring for patients at the Australia-Pacific Technical College has helped me greatly in my current studies that I am undertaking at the National University of Samoa. During class, we elaborate on those very skills. I hope to be a nurse and look after patients with these new skills." [Feanai Tuiuli](#)



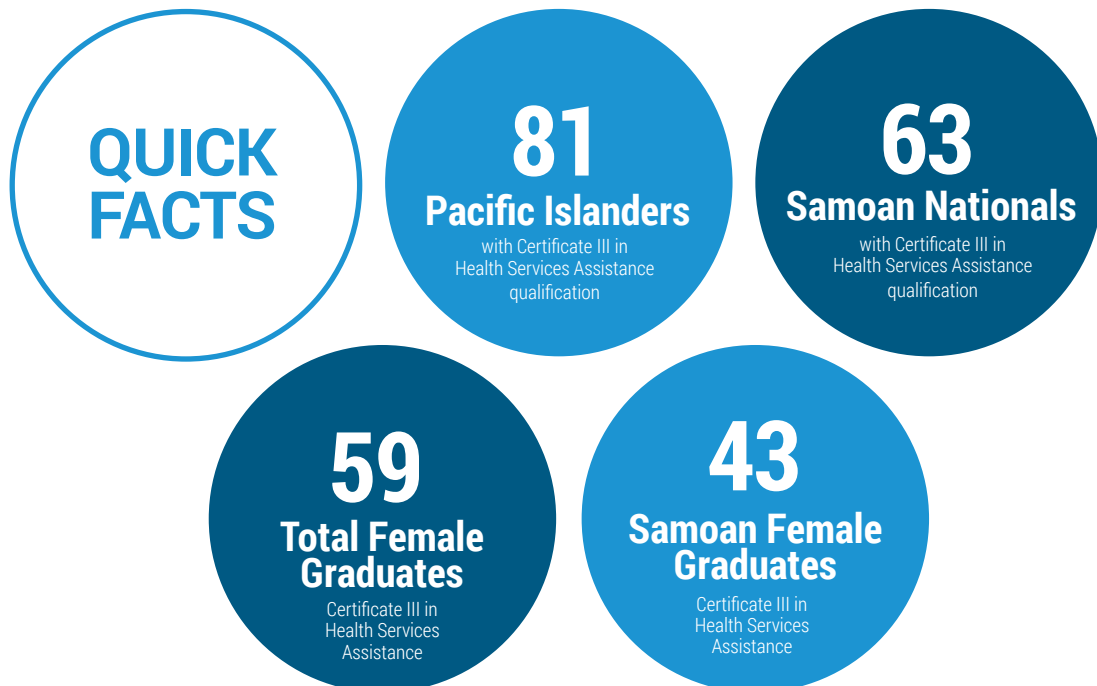
"I have been working as an auxiliary nurse. Studying at the Australia-Pacific Technical College offered new challenges and helped me to gain more knowledge about nursing and how to communicate with patients." [Messie Lesatele](#)



"To be a nurse is quite an opportunity. I went to the Australia-Pacific Technical College because I wanted to know more about the kind of care that we provide to people and build on my nursing knowledge. Now I get to use this knowledge to help people in my community and my loved ones." [Rosa Asonai](#)



"My Australia-Pacific Technical College experience was great because the College provided all the relevant resources. We learned many different things - from the basics to how patients are cared for in different countries. Now, I am doing my Bachelor in Nursing Degree at the National University of Samoa, and it is easier for me since I already have some experience and knowledge from the Australia-Pacific Technical College. I plan to go straight into nursing in the future." [Samasoni Toetu](#)



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