



GOVERNMENT OF NIUE

MEDIA RELEASE

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SIR COLLIN TUKUITONGA VISITS NIUE AS PART OF A GLOBAL STUDY ON THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Alofi, Niue – 10 July 2023 – Sir Collin Tukuitonga has been in Niue as part of a team to conduct research on the effects of climate change on health, environmental and economic outcomes in Niue. One of the aims of the research includes establishing the cultural acceptability of cool roofs to home occupants, quantifying the causal effects of cool roof coatings on indoor temperature, energy use, and carbon emissions as well as quantifying cool roof coating effects on human health and comfort.

It is Sir Collin's first visit to Niue since his appointment as a Knight's Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit as part of June 2022 Queens Birthday Honors list. He is the 3rd Niuean to be presented with this honor in recognition of his long service and dedication to public health in the Pacific region and its people.



Sir Collin has been on the island as part of a team to evaluate interventions and manage the effects of heat on health among households in Niue. The global study is funded by the University of Auckland and supported by Wellcome Trust, a global charitable foundation. The team comprises of experts from leading academic institutions, foundations, and governments including Sir Collin Tukuitonga, Dr. Noak Bunkley, and Dr. Chris Bullen.

The research objectives over the next 3 years the project will assess whether a passive home-cooling technology can reduce the burden of heat stress indoors. Niue is one of the six countries selected to conduct randomized controlled trials to estimate the incremental cost-effectiveness of cool roof coatings in comparison to standard roofing.

Sir Collin Tukuitonga said, "We plan to conduct the cluster-randomized controlled effectiveness trial alongside the cool roof mechanism study starting mid-2024. If we identify that cool roofs positively impact people's health and wellbeing, we will install them on the roofs of the participants allocated to the control arm for free at the end of the study".

Premier Tagelagi and Cabinet welcomed Sir Collin and his team and are pleased to be part of the study. Premier Tagelagi stated, "The weather over the November to March period is starting to feel hotter each season, as part of the effects of climate change. The concept of a coating applied to a roof that may cool the temperature of that building and bring a positive impact to the lives and health of people is an exciting one for us and we look forward to the commencement of the project in 2024. We wish the team and Sir Collin Tukuitonga a safe journey back to New Zealand."

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