



GOVERNMENT OF NIUE

MEDIA RELEASE

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INVESTIGATION OF NIUE GROUNDWATER, ASSESSMENT FOR CARCINOGENIC DETERMINANDS

Alofi, Niue – 21 August 2024 - The Niue Public Health Division has received a comprehensive report following a thorough investigation into concerns over a potential link between water quality and the increasing number of cancer cases on the island.

On the 9th February 2024, the Public Health Division requested assistance from the World Health Organization (WHO) to explore concerns about the quality of Niue's groundwater. This inquiry came up due to concerns that certain contaminants in the water might be linked to a rise in cancer cases. The last study on this matter was carried out in 2010 with support from the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC).



In response, the World Health Organization (WHO) agreed to conduct a chemical analysis of Niue's water, which commenced in April 2024. Technical and expert support was provided, and water samples were collected from key areas with significant population density and historical concerns. These areas included the villages of Alofi, Vaiea, Liku, Mutalau, Tuapa, and the Niue High School reservoir.

These samples were analysed at Hill Labs in New Zealand. The results showed that the levels of determinands were below the maximum accepted value (MAV) threshold set by WHO and New Zealand standards, and there were no carcinogens detected. Carcinogenic determinands refer to substances that have the potential to cause cancer when present in drinking water. These can include certain chemicals, heavy metals, or organic compounds that may pose health risks over time.

The findings are clear that Niue's groundwater is unlikely to be a contributing factor to the increase in cancer cases on the island. The final report was completed in May 2024 with the collaboration between various stakeholders. The Niue Public Health, Niue Fook Hospital, and the Department of Utilities have been instrumental in this investigation.

The Niue Health Department extends its gratitude and acknowledgment to the World Health Organisation, Hill Labs, Department of Utilities (Water Division) and Department of Environment, Mr John Dennis who is the Environmental Health Consultant (NZ) Ltd and WHO Wash Specialist and all parties involved for their invaluable support in ensuring the health and safety for Niue's community.

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