

**Agenda Item 13: Statistical Training Progress:**

**ii. SNZ/ Samoa to advise progress in certificate in official statistics**

## **Building Official Statistics User Capability in the Pacific**

The National Certificate in Public Services (Official Statistics) is a tertiary level course comprising 4 taught units and a work placed based project that applies data to decision making.

The Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) has been vital in the successful start to this programme, as has been the Support of the Tokelau National Statistics Offices. In particular staff and managers of the SBS have worked tirelessly in assisting with candidate selection, and in dealing with the details of logistic and other arrangements needed to make things work. We also acknowledge the leadership and support of the government Statisticians, Kele Lui and Sefuiva R Muagututia themselves, in promoting and supporting this project.

The 23 candidates are from a range of agencies including: Tokelau National Statistics Office (2), Samoa Bureau of Statistics (7), Samoa Audit Office, Office of the Electoral Commission, Scientific Research of Samoa, Samoa Qualifications Authority, Ministry of Finance and others. We thank the relevant managers of the participating agencies for their support and encouragement towards their staff, as well as their assistance in helping identify suitable work place projects for candidates.

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Andrew Tideswell (Statistics NZ) and Australian based project assessor Dr Neil Bechervaise visited Apia to meet certificate candidates and their managers and to explain the practical workplace based projects where candidates use data to analyse or recommend decisions. Candidates have proposed a rich range of topics to examine such as: assessing the effectiveness of Public Service training, examining seasonality of migration, analysis of Year 12 examination results and some possible contributing factors, understanding government motor vehicle costs, assessment of the distribution of breadfruit varieties, economic growth factors for Samoa, understanding implications of tax settings on the growth of multinationals, and others.

The delivery of the four taught units started 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015 with the weeklong teaching of 2 units, completed 20<sup>th</sup> March.

The first unit was an analysis of the legal and ethical issues in the collection of and use of data in a public service context. The unit drew on the application of the UN principles in official statistics, as expressed in the statistics acts and rules of Samoa and of Tokelau, and their application on the ground. This unit was delivered by Statistics NZ Principal Statistician and Respondent Advocate, Paul Brown, with support from Senior Analyst Emma Mawby.

During the second week Emma Mawby delivered a unit on interpretation of and drawing conclusions from descriptive statistical information. This unit included data display, calculating summary and descriptive statistics. Course materials were adapted include Samoa and Tokelau statistical outputs such as the Tokelau CPI and the Samoa HIES.

Assessment is a cyclic process, with candidates making their initial submissions to assessors and modifying them based on feedback before resubmitting. At 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015, all candidates had submitted research plans for consideration. Dr Rawstron returned to Apia on 18<sup>th</sup> May to deliver 3 days of group and individual tutorials to assist candidates with their resubmissions of their first 2 units. Almost all had made their initial submissions of the first 2 taught units with half having resubmitted their first unit and the first “passes” being recorded. This is an extremely high level of engagement.

Looking forward, the remaining 2 taught units will be delivered in Apia in the weeks 17th-21st August and 24th- 28th August. We are targeting the vast majority of candidates to have completed their courses by the end of the 2015 calendar year.

One of the pleasing aspects of the delivery of this course in Apia has been identifying staff who have an interest in and expertise to assist in teaching this course elsewhere in the Pacific. Informal discussions have begun with them and their managers.