

A photograph of a sunset over a vast blue ocean. The sun is a bright yellow orb on the horizon, casting a shimmering path of light across the water. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds. In the distance, a thin, dark line of land, likely an island or atoll, stretches across the horizon.

**Tackling tobacco on small atolls:**

**Tales from a  
VSA stint in  
Tokelau**

**Louise  
Thornley**

# Overview



**Context**

**Project**

**Reflections**

# 1. TOKELAU CONTEXT

# Remote



Earth

Valeria



Tuvalu

Tokelau

Apia

Matā'ufu

Wallis and  
Futuna

Samoa

Apia

American  
Samoa

Labasa  
Vanua Levu

Ba  
Nadi  
Fiji  
Suva

Tubou

Neiafu

Niue

Google









A dramatic seascape featuring a large, dark, and ominous storm cloud that dominates the upper left and center of the frame. The cloud is thick and textured, with some lighter patches where light breaks through. Below the cloud, a small, low-lying island is visible in the distance, covered in dark green trees and some buildings. The water in the foreground is dark blue with gentle ripples. The overall mood is somber and atmospheric.

**Small**







**Atafu**



**Nukunonu**



**Fakaofu**

**1499  
residents**

**20% away**

**60% have lived  
overseas**





# Tight-knit









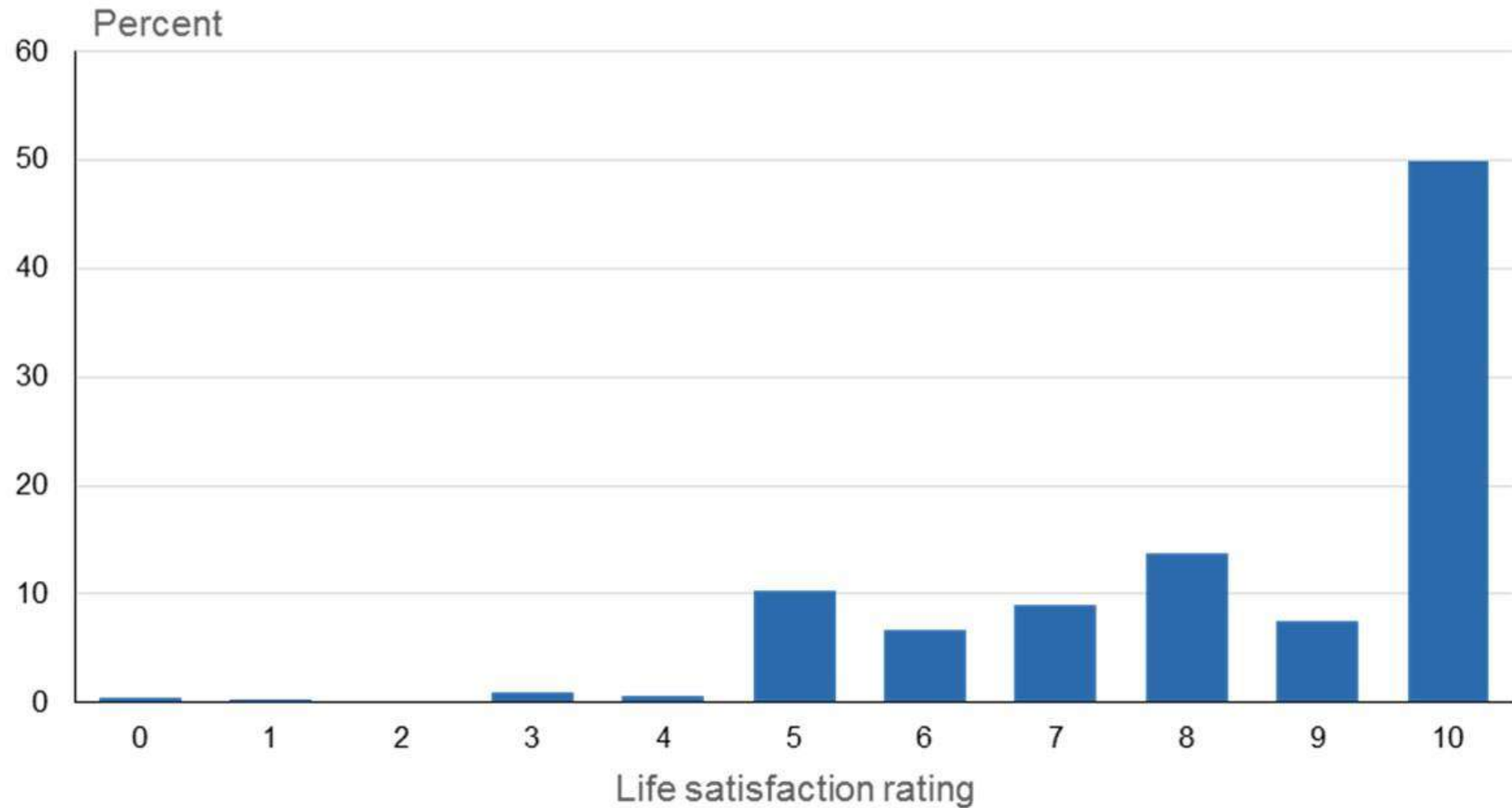






# Life satisfaction ratings of Tokelauan's

Usual residents, aged 15 years and over, present in Tokelau on census  
night  
2016

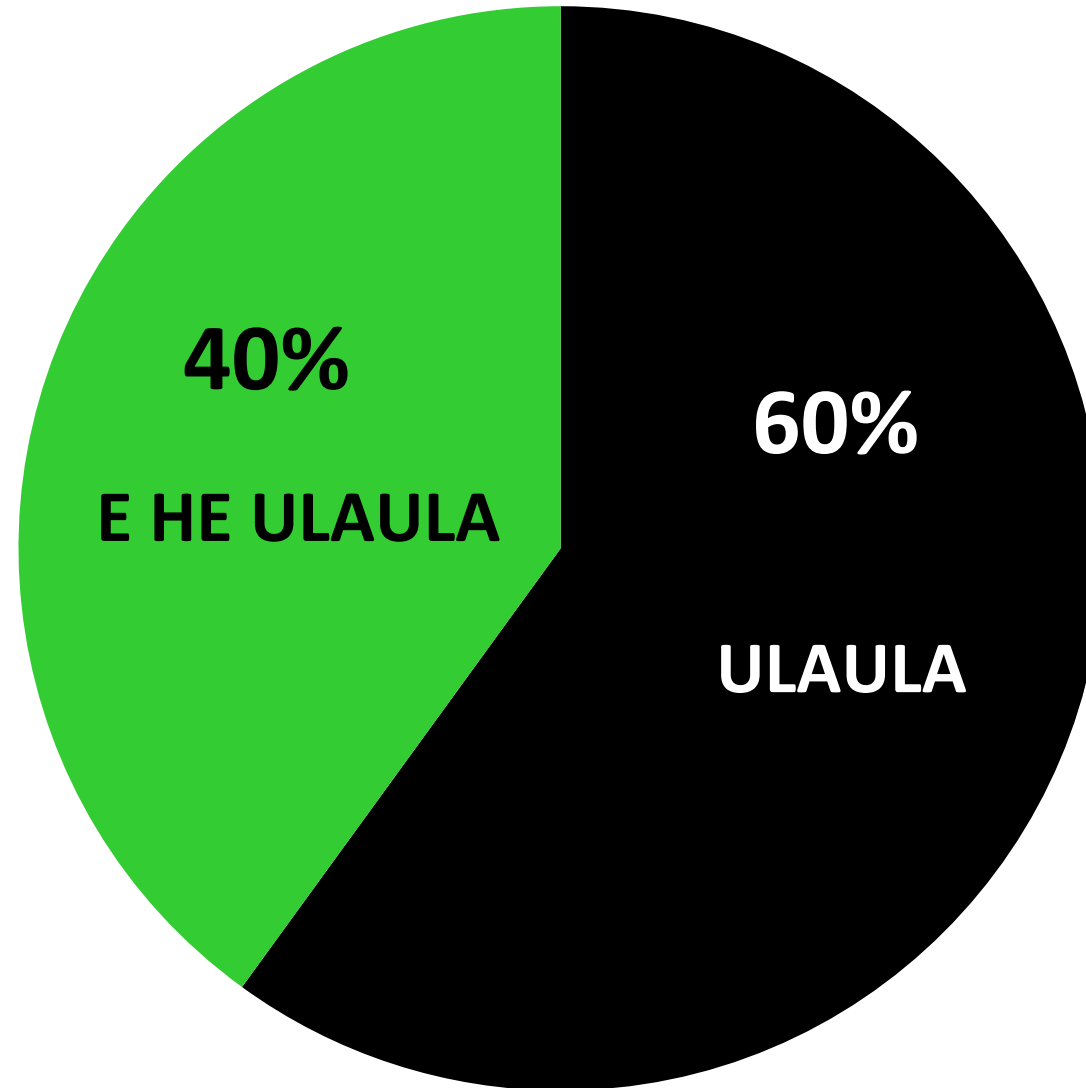


**2. TOBACCO  
CONTROL  
PROJECT**

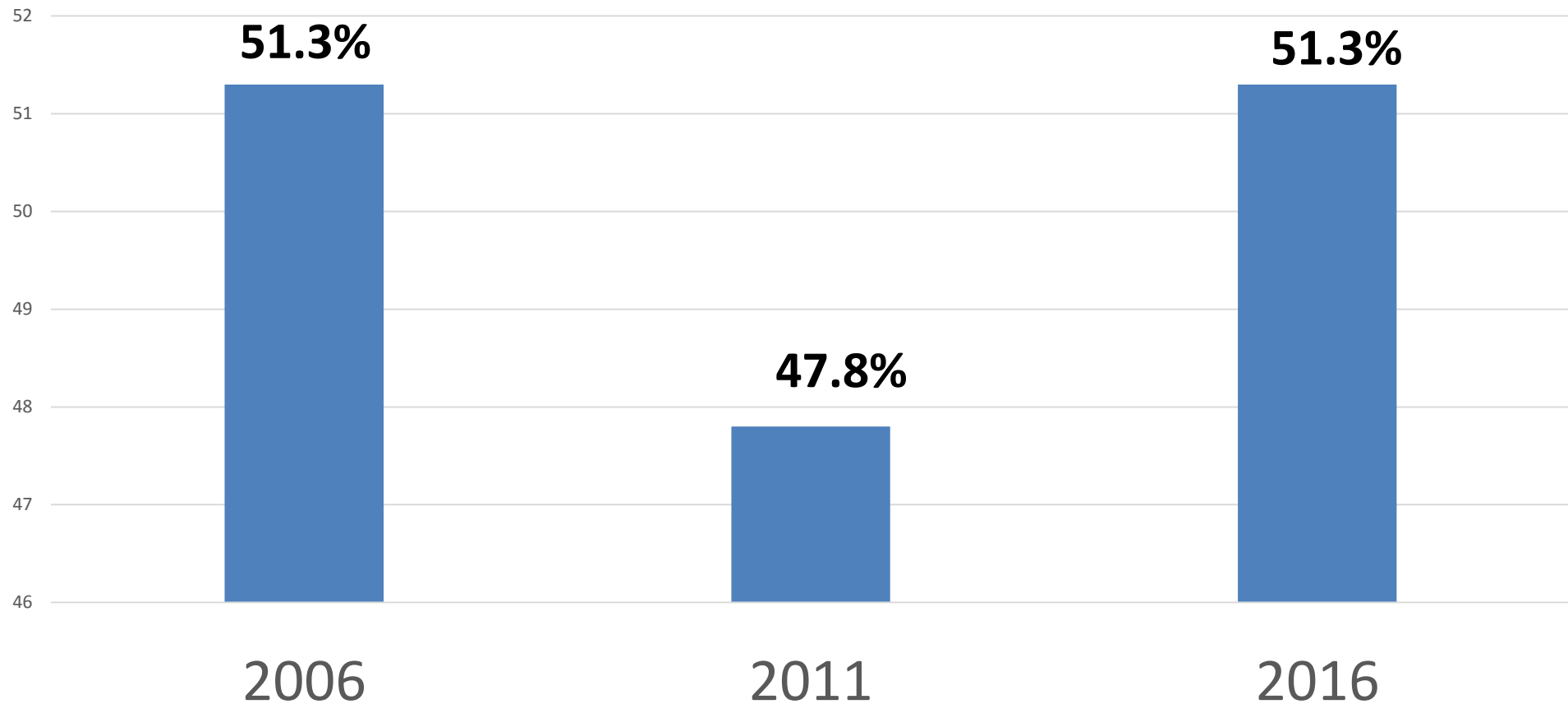


# ULAULA MA TE HE ULAULA I TOKELAU

18 – 69 tauhaga te matutua

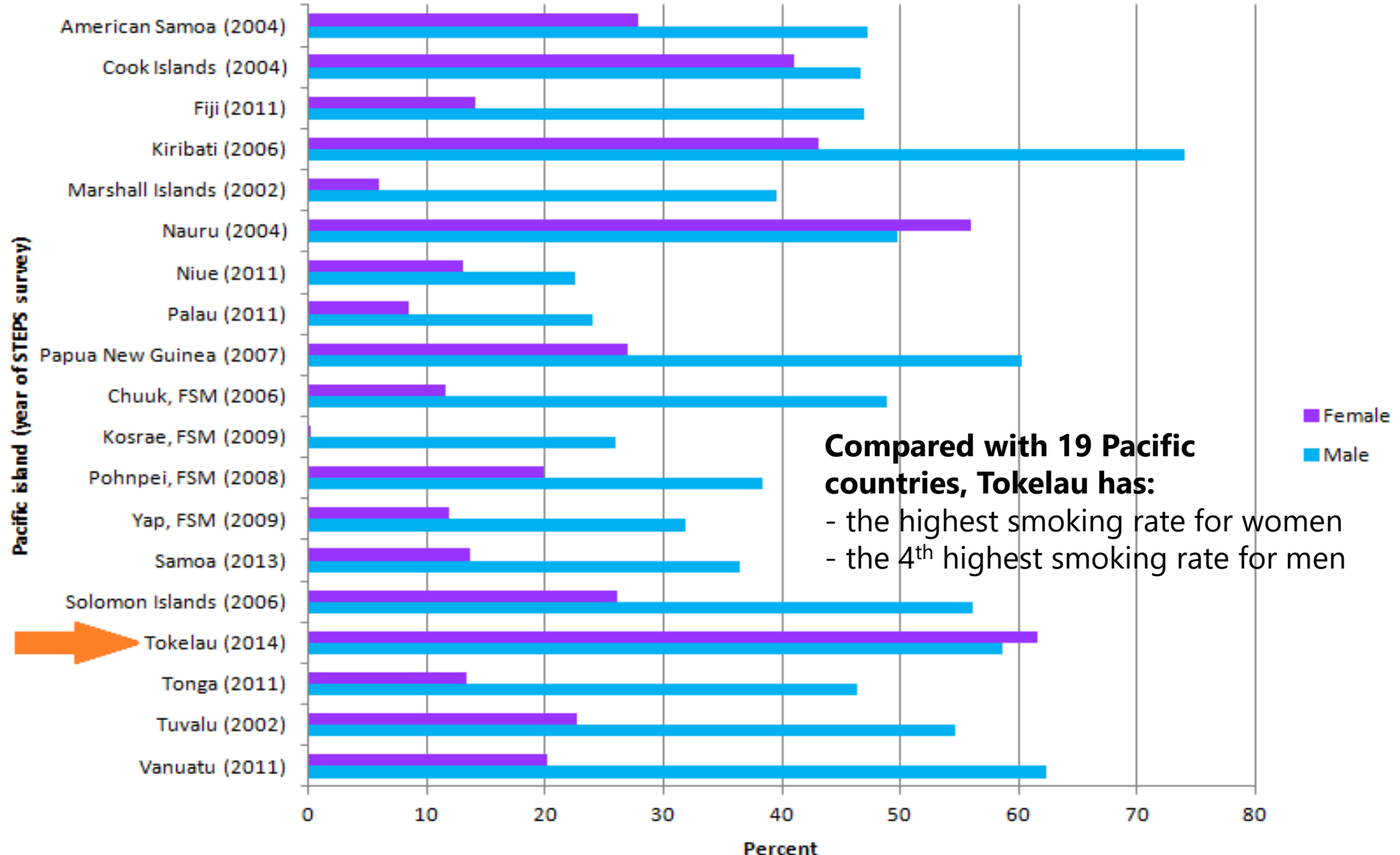


# Proportion of Tokelau adults who smoke regularly



# Tulaga o te Ulaula i te Pahefika

Tulaga o te ulaula i tagata matutua, e kehekehe na tauhaga





# Store spending

Cigarettes  
and alcohol  
26%

Nearly a  
pack a day  
on average



source: Tokelau National Statistics Office)



## **HEALTHY ISLANDS BEST PRACTICE RECOGNITION**

*is presented to*

### **Department of Health, Tokelau**

*For their exemplary project*

### **Fizzy drink-free Tokelau**

*Given on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015 on the occasion of the  
Eleventh Meeting of the Ministers of Health of the Pacific Island Countries  
in Yanuca, Fiji*



# Consultation

Village councils

Women, men

Political leaders

Church leaders

Children and youth

Health

School

Police

Store managers









<b>Participation breakdown</b>	<b>Nukunonu</b>	<b>Atafu</b>	<b>Fakaofu</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Number of participants</b>	220	220	150	590
<b>Percentage of population</b>	66%	62%	36%	53%



# Summary of findings

- Support for policy action & 2025 goal
- Concern about effects on families/children
- Quit attempts (77%)





**What did  
we call  
for?**

# 5-year plan to 2021

Policy	Examples
Reduce tobacco imports	Target reductions for store and personal imports Police check, monitoring
Increase retail price	Annual tax increases to \$20 NZ by 2020 Spend on health and village development
Increase support to quit	Training for health staff and others Quit support expertise

Also: Increase public awareness and expand tobacco-free areas



**Where to  
next?**



# 3. Reflections

# Opportunities for progressing tobacco control in Tokelau

- Political support at village and national levels
- Support for an endgame goal and wider Pacific 2025 goal
- Already achieved 100% solar power and a national ban on fizzy drinks
- Small island nation
- Existing partial bans on alcohol
- Wake-up call

# Challenges for tobacco control in Tokelau

- Many leaders and role models are still smoking
- Pervasive smoking culture and normalisation of smoking
- Misinformation / limited awareness of current tobacco-free policies and minimum age law
- Small, isolated, low-income country – and distinct atolls separated by distance



# **Strengths and limitations**

**Wide consultation**

**Children and youth  
involved**

**Expert advice**

**Volunteer**

**Less time in Fakaofu**

**Group recording**

**Reluctance to  
disagree**

**Outsider**







**Te lumanaki?**

# **Fakafetai lahi:**

**Silivia Tavite**

**Alapati Tavite**

**Lameka Sale**

**Barbara Tali**

**Fala Faafoi**

**Lolo Tumuli**

**Lupe Kilino**

**Rosa**

**Ashton Kelly**

**Nick Wilson**

**Robert & Ruth**

**Beaglehole**

**VSA Wgtn Samoa**





**Louise & Joe's blog**

**<https://www.vsa.org.nz/blog/volunteer-blogs/past-blogs/louise-thornley-and-joe-wilson-tokelau/>**

**Documentary: The Solar Nation of Tokelau**

**<https://vimeo.com/146467851>**

**Tokelau Census Report**

**VSA website / vacancies**