



# A SUPER TIME IN SAMOA

Above > AVI PACTAM deployee and Legal Consultant, Bill Martin, with colleagues at the NFP Legal Department, Samoa.  
Photo > Courtesy Bill Martin.

***A two year placement with Australian Volunteers International as a legal consultant in Samoa, saw Victorian QC and barrister, Bill Martin enhance legislation, procedures and systems in Samoa's National Provident Fund (NPF).***

» **A** two year placement with Australian Volunteers International as a legal consultant in Samoa, saw Victorian QC and barrister, Bill Martin enhance legislation, procedures and systems in Samoa's National Provident Fund (NPF).

With up to 40 years experience working mostly in Victoria's legal sector, Bill's experience working in role as part of AusAID's Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism (PACTAM) allowed him to apply his legal skills across different areas of the law.

While training and advising the NPF Legal Department staff in new systems and legal procedures, Bill also completed a review of all legal documentation used by NPF, increased the department's debt recovery activities and wholly revised the National Provident Fund Act.

After conducting a range of consultations and participating in many meetings with relevant management personnel, a planned

review of the National Provident Fund Act soon turned into a total redraft of policies, statutes and regulations. After overseeing the redraft, Bill was also involved in the relevant Cabinet Submissions necessary to implement the amendments as law.

Bill's next key objective was to improve the NPF's debt recovery systems. With the support of a dedicated legal team, Bill oversaw the delivery of an advertising and media campaign to increase awareness of legal obligations of Samoan employees and employers, which was supported with an amnesty against prosecution and registration campaign employers and employees.

Following the amnesty, the NPF conducted wide scale prosecutions against defaulting employers. These activities have culminated in dramatic increases in revenue for the NPF and resulted long-term changes to the NPF's debt recovery systems.

Further to these tasks Bill delivered Member Services training on the new NPF Act, which

also involved developing relevant training materials. He also introduced monthly monitoring of member accounts, assisted the Legal Department in litigation and provided advice to the Samoan Parliamentary Pension Scheme.

During his time in Samoa, Bill was joined by his wife Marie, who found herself helping out at Don Bosco's training centre. She helped out with teaching English and working as a teaching aide for children with a disability.

After facing a few challenges in sourcing accommodation, Bill and Marie describe their time in Samoa, as the most rewarding (at times frustrating) experience of a lifetime.

After adjusting to the normal working week, a major task after being self-employed for nearly 40 years, Bill identified new ways to use his legal background, developed a newfound patience in the workplace, realised his ability to work across cultures and discovered some of the best snorkelling in the world. <