

OUR ENVIRONMENT OUR HERITAGE

HERITAGE POLICY STATEMENT

The **National Heritage Conservation Policy** provides a framework for the sustainable management of Samoa's natural and cultural heritage. As well to promote a close and consultative relationship between government and relevant non-government stakeholders on the issue of heritage and heritage preservation, this policy also seeks to ensure continued beneficial community access to heritage sites while enhancing the economic advantages of heritage conservation.

Natural heritage refers to outstanding physical, biological and geological formations, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants in addition to areas of environmental, scientific or aesthetic value. **Cultural heritage** covers monuments, architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements of structure of an archaeological nature, groups of buildings, cave dwellings and combinations of features that are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.

Part of the policy is publicised and published below:

BACKGROUND TO THE FORMULATION OF THE POLICY

Prior to Samoa's ratification of the World Heritage Convention in 2001 Cabinet had approved the conservation of four heritage buildings in Apia - the Supreme Court Building, old Customs House, the Western Samoa Trust Estate Corporation building and the Head of State's residence at Moto'otua. However, the Customs House has since been demolished to make way for the development of the new Development Bank of Samoa. Although some plans were developed no restoration work has been done due to lack of funds. The National Environment Management and Development Strategies identified the conservation of heritage as a key environmental component that contributes to the heightening of perceptions of our environment and the strengthening of our knowledge and understanding of history. Further the preservation of heritage is essential not only for the evaluation of change, but also to help confirm our identity as people.

Samoa's cultural and natural heritage is a source of inspiration for its people and an integral aspect of Samoan cultural identity. The aesthetic significance, particularly of Samoa's outstanding physical and biological features is invaluable. This policy recognises that cultural and natural heritage are among the priceless and irreplaceable possessions not only of each nation but also of mankind as a whole.

EXPECTED BENEFITS FROM THE POLICY INITIATIVE

It is expected that the adoption of this policy will:

- Enhance the enabling environment for national development
- Increase awareness among Samoans about their natural and cultural heritage
- Encourage the protection and conservation of heritage sites
- Promote greater understanding and appreciation of Samoan cultural identity
- Improve public access to heritage sites
- Supports income-generating activities based on heritage resources

RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAMOA

The National Heritage Conservation Policy supports the vision of Government in its Strategies for the Development of Samoa, which identifies the value of natural and cultural heritage in tourism product development. It also promotes an enabling environment for personal and business investment.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Implementation will be the responsibility of the Capacity Building & Human Resources Development Section of the Corporate Services Division. In the medium- to long-term, qualified staff headed by a Principal Officer is required for more rigorous policy management. At present there are limited opportunities for the identification and conservation of heritage and considerable effort is required to build capacity in this regard.

LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There are a number of existing legislation that deal with aspects of heritage, namely the Samoan Antiquities Ordinance 1954; Forests Act 1967, National Parks and Reserves Act 1974; Youth, Sports & Cultural Affairs Act 1976, National Cultural Centre Trust Act 1978, and the Robert Louis Stevenson Foundation Act 1991. The proposed MNRE Bill 2003 also identifies the preservation and conservation of Samoa's heritage as one of the functions of the MNREM. There is a need to review these acts to reflect the objectives and goals of the National Heritage Conservation policy.

DETAILED STATEMENT OF THE POLICY

GOAL:

The sustainable management of Samoa's natural and cultural heritage resources, in recognition of their significance to the lives of Samoan people, for the benefit of present and future generations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Create public awareness and improve understanding of Samoa's natural and cultural heritage
2. Identify national sites of significant heritage value for preservation
3. Strengthen cooperation among local stakeholders to implement heritage preservation programmes
4. Incorporate heritage preservation into environmental planning and assessment
5. Develop global partnerships to support the preservation of national heritage



Paia Dwarfs Cave



Sapapalii church



Pulemelei starmound

You can view the full version of this policy at our website www.mnre.gov.ws or obtain a copy from our office - DBS building - Level 3 / 5

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