

MEDIA RELEASE

SVSG Partners with Western Sydney University to Deliver Grassroots Digital Transformation Research for Samoa

*04 November 2025
Apia, Samoa*

Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) has concluded a significant two-month grassroots research initiative in partnership with Western Sydney University, aimed at shaping an inclusive and sustainable digital future for Samoa.

Led by PHD researcher Melinda Ah Chong from the School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment at Western Sydney University, the project titled "Designing Competitive Digital Transformation for Samoa" focuses on understanding how grassroots communities view the current digital landscape, the challenges they face, and what technology solutions work best for them.

Through extensive talanoa-based consultations, the research engaged four key target groups within the SVSG community: Village Representatives, Nofotane women, Youth Empowerment & Advocacy members, and SVSG staff. The research enabled participants to openly share real-life experiences, identify problems, and collaborate on prototype ideas that address Samoa's complex social and digital challenges.

Planning for the project commenced in late 2022, with formal Western Sydney University approval in May 2023. A rigorous Human Research Ethics process followed, with final approval granted in January 2025. The full research program was delivered from 2 October to 2 December 2025, with draft findings to be shared with participants in January 2026 for review.

SVSG President Siliniu Lina Chang stated: "This research ensures that the real voices of our people are heard as Samoa embraces digital transformation. Too often, technology is introduced without truly understanding the needs of the grassroots. By working together through this partnership, we are safeguarding a future where digital tools are meaningful, accessible, and shaped by the communities they are meant to serve."

The project marks an important milestone in SVSG's ongoing efforts to support community-driven change, strengthening both social wellbeing and digital empowerment for Samoa's most vulnerable.

END

2017: Innovation & Excellence Team Award – Samoa Public Service
2018: Finalist, International Children’s Peace Prize 2018 – Kids Right Foundation of Amsterdam, Netherlands
2018: Human Rights Champion in Samoa – UNESCO
2019: Innovation for Sustainable Development Award – Commonwealth Secretary-General
2020: Nominated Person(s) of the Year – Samoa Observer
2021: Outstanding Contributions to Human Rights Promotion & Protection – Samoa Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI
2023: Healthy Islands Best Proposal Award – World Health Organization
2026 Noble Peace Prize Nomination