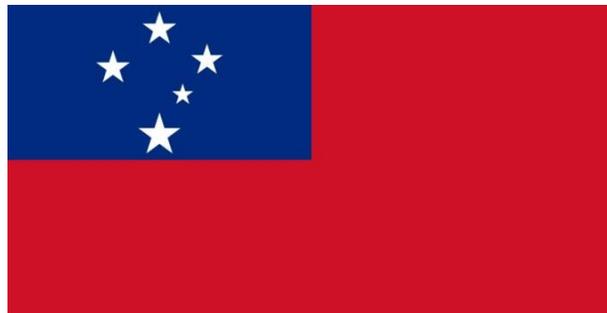




**ETHNIC COUNCIL
OF SHEPPARTON AND DISTRICT Inc.**

Reg. No. A6321

Samoan Community Profile



February 2016

Country Background

Official Name

Independent State of Samoa

Location

Samoa is located south of the equator, about halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand in the Polynesian region of the Pacific Ocean. The total land area is 2,842 km² (1,097 sq mi), consisting of the two large islands of Upolu and Savai'i which account for 99% of the total land area, and eight small islets.

These are the three islets in the Apolima Strait (Manono Island, Apolima and Nu'uolupa), the four Aleipata Islands off the eastern end of Upolu (Nu'utele, Nu'ulua, Namua, and Fanuatapu), and Nu'usafe'e (less than 0.01 km² – 2½ acres – in area and about 1.4 km (0.9 mi) off the south coast of Upolu at the village of *Vaovai*). The main island of Upolu is home to nearly three-quarters of Samoa's population, and its capital city is Apia.¹



Population

As of 1 January 2016, the population of Samoa was estimated to be 193,471 people. This is an increase of 0.60 % (1,156 people) compared to population of 192,315 the year before. In 2015 the natural increase was positive, as the number of births exceeded the number of deaths by 3,300. Due to external migration, the population declined by 2,144. The sex ratio of the total population was 1.068 (1,068 males per 1,000 females) which is higher than global sex ratio. The global sex ratio in the world was approximately 1,016 males to 1,000 females as of 2015.

During 2016 Samoa population is projected to increase by 1,163 people and reach 194,634 in the beginning of 2017. The natural increase is expected to be positive, as the number of births will exceed the number of deaths by 3,320. If external migration will remain on the previous year level, the population will be declined by 2,157 due to the migration reasons. It means that amount of people who leaves Samoa to settle permanently in another country will prevail over the amount of people who moves into the country in order to settle there as permanent residents .²

History

The oldest date so far from remains in Samoa has been calculated by New Zealand scientists to a likely true age of circa 3,000 years ago from a Lapita site at Mulifanua during the 1970s.

The origins of the Samoans are closely studied in modern research about Polynesia in various scientific disciplines such as genetics, linguistics and anthropology. Scientific research is ongoing although a number of different theories exist; including one proposing that the Samoans originated from Austronesian predecessors during the terminal eastward Lapita expansion period from Southeast Asia and Melanesia between 2,500 and 1,500 BCE. The Samoan origins are currently being reassessed due to new scientific evidence and carbon dating findings from 2003 and onwards.

Intimate sociocultural and genetic ties were maintained between the eastern Lapita colonies and the archaeological record supports oral tradition and native genealogies that indicate inter-island voyaging and intermarriage between prehistoric Samoans, Fijians, and Tongans.

Contact with Europeans began in the early 18th century. Jacob Roggeveen (1659–1729), a Dutchman, was the first known European to sight the Samoan islands in 1722. This visit was followed by French explorer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville (1729–1811), who named them the

Navigator Islands in 1768. Contact was limited before the 1830s which is when English missionaries and traders began arriving.

Mission work in Samoa had begun in late 1830 by John Williams, of the London Missionary Society arriving in Sapapali'i from The Cook Islands and Tahiti. According to Barbara A. West, "The Samoans were also known to engage in 'headhunting', a ritual of war in which a warrior took the head of his slain opponent to give to his leader, thus proving his bravery." However, Robert Louis Stevenson, who lived in Samoa from 1889 until his death in 1894, wrote in *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa*, "... the Samoans are gentle people."

The Germans in particular began to show great commercial interest in the Samoan Islands, especially on the island of Upolu where German firms monopolised copra and cocoa bean processing. The United States laid its own claim and formed alliances with local native chieftains, most conspicuously on the islands of Tutuila and Manu'a.

Britain also sent troops to protect British business enterprise, harbour rights, and consulate office. This was followed by an eight-year civil war, during which each of the three powers supplied arms, training and in some cases combat troops to the warring Samoan parties. The Samoan crisis came to a critical juncture in March 1889 when all three colonial contenders sent warships into Apia harbour, and a larger-scale war seemed imminent. A massive storm on 15 March 1889 damaged or destroyed the warships, ending the military conflict.

The Second Samoan Civil War reached a head in 1898 when Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States were locked in dispute over who should control the Samoa Islands. The Siege of Apia occurred in March 1899. Samoan forces loyal to Prince Tanu were besieged by a larger force of Samoan rebels loyal to Mata'afa Iosefo. Supporting Prince Tanu were landing parties from four British and American warships. After several days of fighting, the Samoan rebels were finally defeated.

American and British warships shelled Apia on 15 March 1899, including the USS *Philadelphia*. Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States quickly resolved to end the hostilities and divided the island chain at the Tripartite Convention of 1899, signed at Washington on 2 December 1899 with ratifications exchanged on 16 February 1900.

The eastern island-group became a territory of the United States (the Tutuila Islands in 1900 and officially Manu'a in 1904) and was known as American Samoa. The western islands, by far the greater landmass, became German Samoa. The United Kingdom had vacated all claims in Samoa and in return received (1) termination of German rights in Tonga, (2) all of the Solomon Islands south of Bougainville, and (3) territorial alignments in West Africa.

The German Empire governed the western Samoan islands from 1900 to 1914. "Overall, the period of German rule was the most progressive, economically, that the country has experienced."^[18] Wilhelm Solf was appointed the colony's first governor. His actions and conduct became "... paternal, fair and absolute." In 1908 when the non-violent Mau a Pule resistance movement arose, Solf did not hesitate to banish the Mau leader Lauaki Namulauulu Mamoe to Saipan in the German Northern Mariana Islands.

The German colonial administration governed on the principle "there was only one government in the islands." Thus, there was no Samoan Tupu (king), nor an alii sili (similar to a governor), but two Fautua (advisors) were appointed by the colonial government. Tumua and Pule (traditional governments of Upolu and Savaii) were for a time silent; all decisions on matters affecting lands and titles were under the control of the colonial Governor.

In the first month of World War I, on 29 August 1914, troops of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force landed unopposed on 'Upolu and seized control from the German authorities, following a request by Great Britain for New Zealand to perform their "great and urgent imperial service."

From the end of World War I until 1962, New Zealand controlled Samoa as a Class C Mandate under trusteeship through the League of Nations, then through the United Nations. There followed a series of New Zealand administrators who were responsible for two major incidents. In the first incident, approximately one fifth of the Samoan population died in the influenza epidemic of 1918–1919. Between 1919 and 1962, Samoa was administered by the Department of External Affairs, a government department which had been specially created to oversee New Zealand's Island Territories and Samoa. In 1943, this Department was renamed the Department of Island Territories after a separate Department of External Affairs was created to conduct New Zealand's foreign affairs.

In 1919, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Epidemic concluded that there had been no epidemic of pneumonic influenza in Western Samoa before the arrival of the SS Talune from Auckland on 7 November 1918. The NZ administration allowed the ship to berth in breach of quarantine; within seven days of this ship's arrival influenza became epidemic in Upolu and then spread rapidly throughout the rest of the territory.

The second major incident arose out of an initially peaceful protest by the Mau (which literally translates as "strongly held opinion"), a non-violent popular movement which had its beginnings in the early 1900s on Savai'i, led by Lauaki Namulauulu Mamoe, an orator chief deposed by Solf. In 1909, Lauaki was exiled to Saipan and died en route back to Samoa in 1915.

By 1918, Samoa had a population of some 38,000 Samoans and 1,500 Europeans.

However Samoans greatly resented New Zealand's colonial rule, and blamed inflation and the catastrophic 1918 flu epidemic on its misrule. By the late 1920s the resistance movement against colonial rule had gathered widespread support. One of the Mau leaders was Olaf Frederick Nelson, a half Samoan and half Swedish merchant. Nelson was eventually exiled during the late 1920s and early 1930s, but he continued to assist the organisation financially and politically. In accordance with the Mau's non-violent philosophy, the newly elected leader, High Chief Tupua Tamasese Lealofi, led his fellow uniformed Mau in a peaceful demonstration in downtown Apia on 28 December 1929.

The New Zealand police attempted to arrest one of the leaders in the demonstration. When he resisted, a struggle developed between the police and the Mau. The officers began to fire randomly into the crowd and a Lewis machine gun, mounted in preparation for this demonstration, was used to disperse the demonstrators. Chief Tamasese was shot from behind and killed while trying to bring calm and order to the Mau demonstrators, screaming "Peace, Samoa". Ten others died that day and approximately 50 were injured by gunshot wounds and police batons. That day would come to be known in Samoa as Black Saturday. The Mau grew, remaining steadfastly non-violent, and expanded to include a highly influential women's branch.

After repeated efforts by the Samoan independence movement, the New Zealand Western Samoa Act 1961 of 24 November 1961 granted Samoa independence effective 1 January 1962, upon which the Trusteeship Agreement terminated. Samoa also signed a friendship treaty with New Zealand. Samoa, the first small-island country in the Pacific to become independent, joined the Commonwealth of Nations on 28 August 1970. While independence was achieved at the beginning of January, Samoa annually celebrates 1 June as its independence day.

Travel writer Paul Theroux noted marked differences between the societies in Western Samoa and American Samoa in 1992. In July 1997 the government amended the constitution to change the country's name from Western Samoa to Samoa. American Samoa protested against the move, asserting that the change diminished its own identity.

In 2002 New Zealand's Prime Minister Helen Clark formally apologised for New Zealand's role in the events of 1918 and 1929.

On 7 September 2009 the government changed the driving orientation for motorists: Samoans now drive on the left hand side of the road. This brought Samoa into line with many other countries in the region. Samoa thus became the first country in recent years – and the first in the 21st century – to switch to driving on the left.

At the end of December 2011, Samoa jumped forward by one day, omitting 30 December from the local calendar, when the nation moved to the west of the International Date Line. This change aimed to help the nation boost its economy in doing business with Australia and New Zealand. Before this change, Samoa was 21 hours behind Sydney, but the change means it is now three hours ahead. The previous time zone, agreed on 4 July 1892, operated in line with American traders based in California.¹

Ethnicity, language and religion

Ethnicity

92.6% of the population are Samoans, 7% Euronesian (people of mixed European and Polynesian ancestry) and 0.4% are Europeans, per the CIA World Factbook. Only the Māori of New Zealand outnumber Samoans among Polynesian groups.¹

Language

Samoan and English are official languages. Samoan Sign Language is used by at least some of the deaf population.¹

Religion

Samoans' religious adherence includes the following: Christian Congregational Church of Samoa 31.8%, Roman Catholic 19.4%, Methodist 15.2%, Assembly of God 13.7%, Mormon 7.6%, Seventh-day Adventist 3.9%, Worship Centre 1.7%, other Christian 5.5%, other 0.7%, none 0.1%, unspecified 0.1% (2011 estimate).^[1] The Head of State until 2007, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, was a Bahá'í convert. Samoa hosts one of seven Bahá'í Houses of Worship in the world; completed in 1984 and dedicated by the Head of State, it is located in Tiapapata, 8 km (5 mi) from Apia.¹

Culture

The fa'a Samoa, or traditional Samoan way, remains a strong force in Samoan life and politics. Despite centuries of European influence, Samoa maintains its historical customs, social and political systems, and language. Cultural customs such as the Samoa 'ava ceremony are significant and solemn rituals at important occasions including the bestowal of matai chiefly titles. Items of great cultural value include the finely woven 'ie toga.

Matai is the chiefly system of Samoa, central to the organization of Samoan society. It is the traditional indigenous form of governance in Samoa, including American Samoa. The term comprises the prefix fa'a (Samoan for "in the way of") and the word matai (family name or title).

Of central importance in the system are the matai, the holders of family chief titles, and their role in looking after their family. Fa'amatai is the key socio-political system of governance and way of life (fa'a Samoa) in Samoan culture. Ingrained in the fa'amatai system is the welfare and well-being of the extended family ('aiga) and the protection of family property, consisting most importantly of customary land.

It is common for each 'aiga to have a number of matai titles, however, one particular title will be the most important and serve as the main matai title. The title of a family matai which is peculiar and particular to that family is the subject of tradition and is faithfully recorded by the family and passed on from generation to generation.

In Samoan culture, the concept of serving and taking on the responsibility for the welfare of the family is integral to the fa'amatai system. Various members of the family are called on in turn to support their matai in carrying out their role and responsibilities according to Samoan tradition, cultural obligations and duty. This often involves the family contributing money and important cultural items such as 'ie toga (fine mats) as well as food which the matai presents on behalf of the 'aiga to ensure the family's obligations are met in their village or wider community.

Men and women have equal rights to matai titles in Samoa. The 2011 official census of independent Samoa identified a total of 16,787 matai (8.9%) living in the country from a total population of 187,820. Of the total number of matai, 15,021 (89.5%) were male and 1,766 (10.5%) were female.⁵

Samoan mythology includes many gods with creation stories and figures of legend such as Tagaloa and the goddess of war Nafanua, the daughter of Saveasi'uleo, ruler of the spirit realm Pulu. Other legends include the well-known story of Sina and the Eel which explains the origins of the first coconut tree.

Most of Samoans are spiritual and religious, and have subtly adapted the dominant religion of Christianity to 'fit in' with fa'a Samoa and vice versa. As such, ancient beliefs continue to co-exist side-by-side with Christianity, particularly in regard to the traditional customs and rituals of fa'a Samoa. The Samoan culture is centred on the principle of vāfealoa'i the relationships between people. These relationships are based on respect, or fa'aaloalo. When Christianity was introduced in Samoa, most Samoan people converted. Currently 98% of the population identify themselves as Christian.

Samoans live a communal way of life, participating in activities collectively. In a Samoan village, each aiga or family live on family land that and the traditional Samoan fale (houses) are open with no walls, using blinds made of coconut palm fronds during the night or bad weather. Though each family within the family may live in their own fale, the family is one – everyone works the same land, cook together, eat at one 'fale ai' or family dinner house, pray in one home together and are only separated by night to rest. This is still practised today in Samoa and to an extent in the countries, towns that Samoans migrate to.

The Samoan word for dance is siva with unique gentle movements of the body in time to music and which tells a story, although the Samoan male dances can be more physical and snappy.^[60] The sasa is also a traditional dance where rows of dancers perform rapid synchronised movements in time to the rhythm of wooden drums (pate) or rolled mats. Another dance performed by males is called the fa'ataupati or the slap dance, creating rhythmic sounds by slapping different parts of the body. This is believed to have been derived from slapping insects on the body.

The form and construction of traditional architecture of Samoa was a specialised skill by Tufuga fai fale that was also linked to other cultural artforms.¹

Education and Economy

Education

The literacy rate is estimated to be 97% in Samoa, where education is provided by the state in tandem with 5 religious missions, all following a common syllabus. The first 4 years of primary education take place at village schools, following which brighter pupils move on to district schools instead, where the medium of education is English. The only exception to this rule is found in Apia, where urban schools manage the entire process.

The Samoan government controls all secondary schools where the medium is English again. It goes almost without saying that the few there are, are grouped in larger settlement areas, with children in outlying areas already forgotten.

There are several higher education institutions in Samoa, including the College of Tropical Agriculture and a Trades Training College.

The jewel in the tiny island nation's crown though is the National University of Samoa established in 1984 to provide certificate, diploma and undergraduate degree programs, and also technical and vocational training. Its faculties include Arts, Business & Entrepreneurship,

Education, Nursing & Health Science, Science, Business & General Studies, Engineering, and Maritime Training. The complex is arranged around modern version of a fale, or traditional beach hut.³

Economy

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in purchasing power parity (PPP) in 2006 was estimated at \$1.218 billion USD. The industrial sector is the largest component of GDP at 58.4%, followed by the services sector at 30.2% (2004 est.). Agriculture represents only 11.4% of GDP (2004 est.). Samoan labour force is estimated at 90,000.

The country currency is the Samoan tālā, issued and regulated by the Central Bank of Samoa. The economy of Samoa has traditionally been dependent on agriculture and fishing at the local level. In modern times, development aid, private family remittances from overseas, and agricultural exports have become key factors in the nation's economy. Agriculture employs two-thirds of the labour force, and furnishes 90% of exports, featuring coconut cream, coconut oil, noni (juice of the nonu fruit, as it is known in Samoan), and copra.

Outside of a large automotive wire harness factory (Yazaki Corporation), the manufacturing sector mainly processes agricultural products. Tourism is an expanding sector which now accounts for 25% of GDP. Tourist arrivals have been increasing over the years with more than 100,000 tourists visiting the islands in 2005, up from 70,000 in 1996.

The Samoan government has called for deregulation of the financial sector, encouragement of investment, and continued fiscal discipline. Observers point to the flexibility of the labour market as a basic strength for future economic advances. The sector has been helped enormously by major capital investment in hotel infrastructure, political instability in neighbouring Pacific countries, and the 2005 launch of Virgin Samoa a joint-venture between the government and Virgin Australia (then Virgin Blue).

In the period before German colonisation, Samoa produced mostly copra. German merchants and settlers were active in introducing large scale plantation operations and developing new industries, notably cocoa bean and rubber, relying on imported labourers from China and Melanesia. When the value of natural rubber fell drastically, about the end of the Great War (World War I), the New Zealand government encouraged the production of bananas, for which there is a large market in New Zealand.

Because of variations in altitude, a large range of tropical and subtropical crops can be cultivated, but land is not generally available to outside interests. Of the total land area of 2,934 km² (725,000 acres), about 24.4% is in permanent crops and another 21.2% is arable. About 4.4% is Western Samoan Trust Estates Corporation (WSTEC).

The staple products of Samoa are copra (dried coconut meat), cocoa bean (for chocolate), and bananas. The annual production of both bananas and copra has been in the range of 13,000 to 15,000 metric tons (about 14,500 to 16,500 short tons). If the rhinoceros beetle in Samoa were eradicated, Samoa could produce in excess of 40,000 metric tons (44,000 short tons) of copra. Samoan cocoa beans are of very high quality and used in fine New Zealand chocolates. Most are Criollo-Forastero hybrids. Coffee grows well, but production has been uneven. WSTEC is the biggest coffee producer. Rubber has been produced in Samoa for many years, but its export value has little impact on the economy.

Other agricultural industries have been less successful. Sugarcane production, originally established by Germans in the early 20th century, could be successful. Old train tracks for transporting cane can be seen at some plantations east of Apia. Pineapples grow well in Samoa, but beyond local consumption have not been a major export.¹

Samoan Community in Australia

Polynesians settled in the Samoan archipelago of three islands around 1000 BC.

Germany, Britain and the United States of America all competed for control of the archipelago until 1899, when the western part of Samoa passed to Germany and the eastern islands became American Samoa. Following World War II, New Zealand administered Western Samoa as a League of Nations Mandate and then as a United Nations trusteeship until its independence in 1962. In 1997, Western Samoa changed its name to Samoa.

During the early part of the twentieth century, Australia established trading companies in Samoa that led to a small intake of Samoan migrants to Australia. The migrants came to Australia for commerce, education and missionary purposes. The 1921 Census recorded 110 Samoa-born people in Australia.

During the 1970s the number of Samoans coming to Australia increased as a result of educational programs sponsored by Australia. By 1981 there were 780 Samoans in Australia and this number rose to 2,200 people in 1986. By 1996 there were around 10,000 Samoa-born in Australia.

The latest Census in 2011 recorded 19,092 Samoa-born people in Australia, an increase of 25.3 percent from the 2006 Census. The 2011 distribution by state and territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 7,877 followed by Queensland (6,473), Victoria (4,022) and Western Australia (364).⁴

The Samoan Community in Shepparton

Population

In Shepparton today, 55.56% of Samoan's were born in New Zealand, with 44.44% born in Samoa. Before 1994, there were Samoan's that lived in the community during fruit picking season and would leave at the end of each season.

The first Samoan family to migrate to Greater Shepparton arrived in 1995. A family of six and by the end of 1997 part of their extended family arrived taking the total of Samoan's in the area to 85 – a total made up seven families. This number in the past 10 years has quadrupled, with the most recent migrated family arriving in 2015.

The population of Samoan's live in Shepparton South area, with 10% living outside of Shepparton in neighbouring town like Murchison and Mooroopna.⁶

Language & Religion

Samoan's living in Shepparton speak Gagana Samoa or the Samoan language in the home as well as English. Many families encourage their young to speak the Samoan to ensure they do not forget the language of their heritage. Outside of the home the language most spoken by Samoan's is English and their gagana is not learned anywhere else but in the home. There are currently three Samoan denominations in the community of Shepparton of which 65% of the Samoan's attend. The other 35% attend English speaking Christian denominations or do not attend at all. Like life in Samoa, Samoans in Shepparton attend the denomination in which their matua or elder attends and the whole family is expected to attend together.

Samoan Christian Denominations are ministered by Samoan Ministers and they are not only Minister to his congregation but is also seen as the father of that certain community of Samoan. All things pass through the Minister and families in his congregation are dependent on his approval of whether they participate or not – regardless of whether it is church related or community.⁶

Education

Samoan families are large in numbers. In Shepparton each Samoan family has an estimated 3 – 6 children within one single family. This is considered normal in the Samoan community as numbers of children can reach as high as 13 within a single family.

All Samoan children attend schools within the Greater Shepparton area, with the majority of the youth attending Shepparton High School, followed by Wanganui Secondary College and Notre Dame College.

Education is an important aspect of life and surviving. Samoan parents from a young age of a child is taught the importance of getting an education. For many of these parents, education was not a priority for them, rather ensuring the extended family was taken care of was. Because of this many of these parents only received a primary level education or High School education or none at all. Children of Samoan families in Shepparton all attend school and are expected to attend and complete schooling to the best of their ability or higher.

If a child is seen skipping school within the community, it is shunned in the Samoan community and could result in serious consequences for that child when news reaches his parents. It is also seen as bringing shame to your family if you are seen as doing contour to what your parents expect or the community at large.

Today, many Samoan's in Shepparton have received a General Education certificate through courses offered in the community as well as Diploma's in Early Childhood Education. Currently, to date 55% of the community have been awarded Vocational qualifications and a total of four University graduates in the Samoan community with the highest achievement being a Master's degree.⁶

Employment

As noted in population, Samoan families migrating to Greater Shepparton area was due to employment. The late 90's there was word that there was plenty of work in these areas and work that could earn you 'big money'. All Samoan families arrived here for 'fruit picking' and working in the orchards was again like many part of the Samoan way was done together as a 'family'. This meant everyone from the youngest to the oldest went fruit picking in order for their family to make money to survive.

This meant if you went to school, you would attend school and from here home and straight to the orchards to help your family. Most families fruit pick today, however many of the women have gained qualifications in the Early Childhood sector and now either run family day-cares or work in day-cares throughout Greater Shepparton, while the men fruit pick.

The younger generations are encouraged to work indoors and are not expected to do hard labour work like fruit picking, like they were 18 – 19 years ago. Many now work in hospitality, administration roles and in the government and community sector.⁶

Issues

In today's society many of the issues that arise in one community is common in other communities.

Specific to the Samoan community in Greater Shepparton, issues that are faced on a day to day basis are the inability to communicate with others in the English language or to be understood by others, insecurities in self or with others, trust issues, pride or lack thereof.

Other issues that have been plaque the Samoan community in Shepparton include:

- Lack of space and opportunity to learn more about their culture and share it in the community. This also includes the opportunity to celebrate their culture as a community to the greater community.
- Space for the youth to mingle, learn together and get to know each other. The youth not having a voice in their home, the community and if any, a voice in the greater community.
- Lack of Samoan interpreters working within the community to assist their people in understanding the information provided by places like Centrelink, VicRoads, or even in schools.
- Unrecognized qualifications or experience by local employers and therefore underutilized educated individuals in the community who are working in labour work to make a living or unemployment.
- No central location for help for the community, leaving them isolated to only their family to assist or church in which they associate with.

Though some of these issues can be addressed by the individual or the community itself, many of the issues can gain a solution through working in collaboration with local government and relevant stakeholders.⁶



1 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samoa>

2 <http://countrymeters.info/en/Samoa>

3 <http://www.classbase.com/countries/Samoa/Education-System>

4 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/02_2014/samoa.pdf

5 Final Population and Housing Census 2011*. Samoa Bureau of Statistics. July 2012. Retrieved 2 October 2012

6 Samoan's in the Goulburn Valley Survey – 2016 (all survey's received via Survey Monkey; prepared disseminated and collated by Know Your Roots – Mellisa Silaga

