

Appreciative Report to the FIG Foundation
FIG Working Week 2025 – Brisbane, Australia
5–10 April 2025

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the FIG Foundation and Mr. John Hohol for the generous grant and the opportunity to attend the FIG Working Week 2025 in Brisbane, Australia. Being selected as a grant recipient was not only an incredible honor, but also a transformational experience—one that exceeded all expectations.

As a first-time attendee of a FIG event, I was struck by the scale, diversity, and energy of the conference. The Working Week, themed “*Collaboration, Innovation, and Resilience: Championing a Digital Generation*”, brought together professionals from around the world to explore the future of surveying and geospatial science. Although the core of the event was a three-day conference, the surrounding pre- and post-events made it a truly full and engaging week.

One of the most meaningful highlights was participating in the **Reference Frame in Practice (RFIP)** pre-events, where I had the opportunity to present on the work we are doing in Tonga to establish a CORS (Continuously Operating Reference Station) network. Coming from one of the Small Island Developing States in the Pacific, this was a huge opportunity—not only to share Tonga’s progress in modernizing geodetic infrastructure, but also to contribute to important conversations around resilience and data standards across the region.

Attending this seminar has been an incredibly valuable experience for me—not just as a surveyor looking after Tonga’s geodetic infrastructure, but also as someone still early in their professional journey. One of the biggest benefits has been the chance to connect with experts and peers from across the region and beyond. Learning directly from those who face similar challenges—or who have already found effective solutions—has been both enlightening and empowering.

It also gave me a much deeper appreciation for the global perspective on geodetic reference frames and how essential they are in supporting disaster resilience, climate response, and smart infrastructure development. For a small island nation like Tonga, these conversations are especially crucial as we work to modernize our systems and align more closely with international best practices.

But perhaps most importantly, this experience reaffirmed something personal for me: even though I got into surveying by chance, I now know I’m exactly where I’m meant to be. It’s incredibly motivating to see where this profession can take you—and it’s inspired me to keep growing, learning, and contributing—not just in Tonga, but to the wider geospatial community.

Beyond the technical content, what made the experience truly special was the people. I met passionate professionals from all over the world, reconnected with old university friends, and found myself in a community that felt both international and welcoming. The connections made and the stories exchanged will stay with me for years to come.

Ministry of Lands, Survey, Planning and Natural Resources

Thank you once again to the FIG Foundation for making this life-changing opportunity possible. I return home energized, better equipped, and deeply inspired to keep working toward a stronger, more resilient geospatial future in the Pacific.

With sincere gratitude,

Ansela Paea Fifita

Tonga – Grant Recipient, FIG Working Week 2025



Receiving my grant certificate from John Hohol during the Grant Recipients Showcase at FIG Working Week 2025 in Brisbane.