



OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

17 April 2026

Public Notice: Beware of Romance Scams Targeting the Vulnerable Community Members.

The National Reserve Bank of Tonga (NRBT) wishes to alert the public to a continued rise in financial scams, typically called "Romance Scams", affecting our community.

The NRBT urges the public to stay cautious when building relationships through the Social Media platform with someone that you do not genuinely know or have seen. These scammers exploit emotions, building fake romantic relationships to gain trust before tricking individuals, with common red flags as reflected below.

Red Flags

The NRBT urges the public to be suspicious of the following:

- **Too Fast, Too Soon:** The person professes strong feelings or "love" after only a few days or weeks of talking.
- **"Love" that Asks for Money:** They will eventually ask for money for fake emergencies, medical bills, travel costs to visit you, or to pay for a "package" or gift.
- **Avoiding Video Calls/Meetings:** They always have excuses why they cannot meet in person or use a camera, often claiming to be working overseas (e.g., oil rig, military, or foreign businessman).
- **Moving Off the Platform:** They immediately pressure you to move from safe messaging apps (like Facebook Messenger) to private, encrypted apps like WhatsApp or Viber.
- **Unusual Payment Methods:** Requests to send money via cryptocurrency, gift cards, or unconventional wire transfers.
- **Partnering or investing in a business** offering you partnership in a business investment where you need to chip in as a partner and pay an amount for investment purposes.
- **Gifting in exchange for various fees you have to pay** A gift will be on its way but a fee payment is needed to be sent over/paid before receiving the lavish gift.

What NOT to Do

- **Do NOT send money:** Never send money, bank details, or your debit/credit cards to someone you have only met online.
- **Do NOT share personal information:** Do not provide your passport, banking details, or address and debit/credit cards details
- **Do NOT believe in quick riches:** Ignore stories about high-value gifts, inheritance, or secret investment opportunities.
- **Do NOT trust caller ID:** Scammers can spoof numbers to make them look local.

If you believe you have fallen victim to a scam, contact your bank immediately to block your accounts and bank cards, and file a report with the Tonga Police Cybercrime Unit.

For more information, contact the National Reserve Bank of Tonga on (+676 24057) or email: nrbt@reservebank.to | website: <http://www.reservebank.to>

----- END -----