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Friday, 4th September 2009

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### Helping Samoa change lanes

By Susan Sandys September 4 2009

Spraymarks Road Marking managing director Darcy Prendergast has just returned home from undertaking the company's first offshore contract, marking roads in Samoa.

The project was part of upgrading work Samoa is undertaking as it switches from right- to left-side driving.

While the change is controversial and residents have protested, Mr Prendergast said everyone was friendly to himself and colleague Rikki Symonds as they re-marked 38 kilometres of centre line from Samoa's central airport to the capital city of Apia, as well as roads within Apia itself.

However, the pair did encounter some difficulties when it came to communicating with the up to 15 Samoans they employed each day to help them.

Mr Prendergast said while they were hard workers, the majority did not speak fluent English.

"We only had a couple that spoke reasonable English, so there was a lot of sign language going on," Mr Prendergast said.

However, sign language has limitations, and minor frustrations resulted such as road signs not being installed in time in rapidly changing traffic situations.

There was the odd "run through" where a motorist drives through freshly applied paint, necessitating extra work by the Spraymarks crew in blacking out and repainting.

Mr Prendergast and Mr Symonds worked 12 to 14 hours per day six days per week during their two-week stay, in temperatures around 30°C.

The product they were applying is a new specialised longlasting paint for heavy traffic areas, and requires attention to detail.

They travelled on their road marking vehicle at just 1.5 to two kilometres per hour.

The product and special road marking machine was shipped over in advance.

Mr Prendergast said the company had learned much from its first offshore job, and would look at other offshore work as it aims to expand its business.

And as for the switch between left- and right-hand driving in Samoa, Mr Prendergast believes it will be a tough call for residents to get used to, but wishes them well.

"They still have a lot of logistical things to work through," Mr Prendergast said.

Pictured: Darcy Prendergast travelled at 1.5 to 2 kilometres per hour as he re-marked roads in Samoa as the country switches driving sides. - Photo Kirsty Graham 020909-KG-024



### Front Page



### Today's Poll

#### Does Tinwald need traffic lights?

- Yes, traffic lights will improve road safety in Tinwald
- No, traffic lights are not needed in Tinwald

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