



Memorandum

IN CONFIDENCE

Samoa Public Service Commission: Public Service Fale engagement post-Election

Date: 6 August 2021 **Security Level:** IN CONFIDENCE

Minister: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for the Public Service

Report No: 2021/0214

Purpose

This briefing updates you on engagement by the Public Service Fale alongside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with the Samoa Public Service Commission following the recent election of a new government in Samoa.

Action

We recommend that you forward this memorandum to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Overview

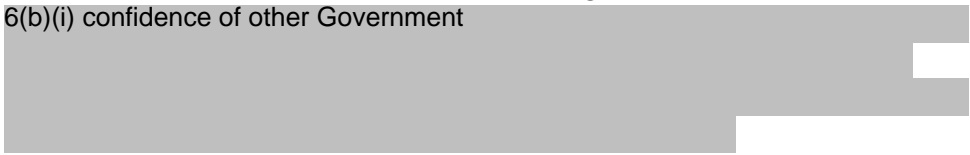
Background

1. The Public Service Fale (the Fale) is located within Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. The Fale works with Pacific Public Service Commissions in sixteen Pacific Island Countries and Territories to support their aspirations for strengthening public sector governance and effectiveness, and to contribute to improved wellbeing, prosperity, and regional stability for their people. The Fale is funded for five years by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade (2020-2024).

Context

2. Following the outcome of the recent General Election in Samoa, the Fale and the NZ Public Service Commissioner have, through MFAT, offered direct support to the Samoa Public Service Commission as they prepare to brief and advise the incoming administration led by Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mata'afa.
3. Samoa has not had a change in administration since 1982, and the previous Prime Minister was appointed in 1998. This means that most current public servants will not have worked with any other government.
4. The Fale's offer of support has been welcomed by Prime Minister Fiame who has sought a meeting with Peter Hughes, the New Zealand Public Service Commissioner, to discuss working together and the scope of support for the Samoa Public Service.
5. The Fale is working with MFAT and the High Commission in Apia on meeting arrangements, which we expect to take place in coming weeks.

Possible focus areas for Samoa

6. Prime Minister Fiame is also the Minister for the Public Service in Samoa. The new Government's manifesto refers to 'trusted governance' as a priority area.
- 6(b)(i) confidence of other Government
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Building on existing relationships

7. The Fale has well-developed working relationships with the Samoa Public Service Commission and Peter Hughes has previously worked with Prime Minister Fiame, including when she was Minister for Women in a previous administration.
8. We have offered our support to Samoa in the spirit of Pacific partnership and to do what we can to help ensure the Samoa Public Service is well positioned to engage with their new Ministers and Cabinet.
9. Our discussion with Prime Minister Fiame and our Samoa Public Service Commission colleagues would focus on doing the right things at the right time to build trust and confidence with new Ministers as they establish their priorities for the electoral term. We understand that most of the new Cabinet are new to Parliament. Given the significance of the next period and the need to work closely with the public service, we believe offering practical, experienced support may help positively with the transition.

Practical tools and support

10. There is a range of practical things that the Fale could offer, including:
- Mentoring and coaching for the new Samoa Public Commissioner and selected chief executives as appropriate, including from the NZ Public Service Commissioner directly.
 - Advice on the engagement model used in New Zealand, and templates and tools that can be adapted, e.g. the NZ public service chief executives performance expectation framework, accompanied by workshops and virtual meetings to talk about practice and how we use our model.
 - Offering support (through officials) for the new Government's public service reform agenda including advice on legislative reform should that be relevant.
 - Advice on refreshed Cabinet processes including the Cabinet Manual. The NZ Cabinet Office has indicated its willingness to assist as required.

Keeping you informed

11. We will advise you when the meeting with Prime Minister Fiame is confirmed and the outcome of discussions.

Manager

Tania Ott, Deputy Commissioner, Public Service Fale