

22 July 2022

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Tēnā koe

I refer to your email of 9 June 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*"29 April 2022: Brief for Call: Planning for 60th Anniversary of Independence and the Samoa-New Zealand Treaty of Friendship"*

The document relevant to your request is attached. We have withheld some information under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and
- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that we may publish this response (with your personal details redacted) and enclosed documents on the Ministry's website.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Sarah Corbett  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Call with Samoa Minister of Police, Prisons and Corrections Services, Faualo Lefau Harry Jeffrey Schuster

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**Briefing Addendum:** *Planning for 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence and the Samoa-New Zealand Treaty of Friendship*

### Summary

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Samoa has impacted the nation's plans for its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events to mark independence on 1 June and the signing of the Samoa-New Zealand Treaty of Friendship on 1 August. The Government of Samoa is still considering which anniversary events might be possible, and we continue to plan for high-level commemoration in the New Zealand system – including by leveraging the visit of Samoa Prime Minister, Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, in June.

### Samoa's Planning

This remains uncertain given the outbreak of COVID-19, s9(2)(g)(i)  
Details as advised to us s6(b)(i)

### Independence

- Samoa is considering delaying Independence Day celebrations from June to September to coincide with Teuila festivities. (Established in 1991, Samoa's Teuila Festival showcases Samoa's culture for a week each year)
- A church service to mark Independence is being planned for December.
- s6(b)(i)

### Treaty of Friendship

- Yet to be confirmed, but Samoa hopes to do something to mark the occasion.

### Suggested Action

Minister Sio might take the opportunity to ask what the Minister knows of plans to mark the anniversaries, noting New Zealand's own plans (as below) and keenness to participate – hopefully through attendance by New Zealand VIPs s9(2)(f)(iv)

## Aotearoa New Zealand's Planning

Given Samoa's COVID-19 outbreak, our plans for engagement in Samoa's commemorations are tentative. However, we have more certainty as to what might be possible in New Zealand, particularly with growing assurances that Prime Minister Fiamē will be able to visit Aotearoa New Zealand in June.

### *Independence*

- In early March, the New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa, Dr. Trevor Matheson, hosted a reception to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations with guests that included Samoa's Head of State and Prime Minister.
- With high level visits looking unlikely in the immediate term, we are looking at virtual activities until travel becomes possible. For example, we are investigating with Government House whether the Governor General would provide a virtual message to the Government and people of Samoa to contribute to whatever small-scale events the Government of Samoa is able to undertake in Samoa.
- s9(2)(f)(iv), s6(b)(i)

### *Treaty of Friendship*

- New Zealand launched the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo with Government of Samoa.
- The High Commission in Apia is considering small-scale activity to mark Independence and the Treaty of Friendship, such as social media campaigns and competitions which commemorate the relationship.
- Prime Minister Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa looks quite firm to visit Wellington in mid-June. s9(2)(f)(iv)

Prime Minister Ardern,

s9(2)(f)(iv) Foreign Minister Mahuta and yourself will be key to the visit's success. A diaspora event, probably in Auckland, is also anticipated.

- The High Commission in Apia is looking at options for hosting a monthly meeting of the Samoa Chamber of Commerce, starting in the second half of the year, s9(2)(g)(i)

## Suggested Action

Minister Sio could note the efforts under way to mark the events in New Zealand, and note the planning the Ministry of Pacific Peoples is also undertaking, s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv) s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)

Reiterating our

enthusiasm for a visit by Prime Minister Fiamē would also be welcome.