

29 August 2023

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I refer to your email of 31 July 2023 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*the work programme for the ambassador for gender equity (Pacific) and what they have been doing for the past year. Can I also get a copy of all briefings, reports, memos etc on their work.*

On 25 August 2023 the time limits for responding to your request were extended by an additional 10 working days because the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request are such that a proper response couldn't reasonably be made within the original time frame (section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA refers).

The Ambassador for Gender Equality (Pacific) / Tuia Tāngata role supports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to deliver on strategic goals linked to Sustainable Development Goals 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reduced Inequality) through lifted engagement with Pacific partners, and by amplifying the voices of the Pacific on gender and SOGIESC-related rights.<sup>1</sup>

During her term as Tuia Tāngata, Ambassador Louisa Wall has connected with governments, intergovernmental organisations and technical experts, rights-based advocacy groups, sporting bodies, faith-based organisations and community groups. Ambassador Wall has fostered these connections during visits to Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga and Niue, and through engagements with Pacific diaspora based in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ambassador Wall has also participated in fora focused on SOGIESC-related rights in Buenos Aires, Sydney and Geneva.

In the past year (the period 30 July 2022 to 31 July 2023), Ambassador Wall has supported a range of initiatives to improve equity and inclusion, raising the profile of the Ministry's engagement on gender equality and human rights in the Pacific. Examples of how the Ambassador has supported these initiatives within scope of your request from the last twelve months include:

- Advocating for gifted rights for Pacific television networks of televised coverage of women's sport, to help inspire and grow participation among women and girls in the Pacific who almost never have access to view women's sport;
- Participating in the inaugural Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders Meeting (PIFWLM) that agreed to revitalise the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration in July 2022;

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<sup>1</sup> Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sexual Characteristics (SOGIESC)

- Leading Aotearoa New Zealand's delegation at the Equal Rights Coalition biennial meeting in September 2022;
- Advocated for the development of a memorandum with Argentina to collaborate on LGBTQIA+ Indigenous Rights in October 2022;
- Leading New Zealand's delegation to Sydney WorldPride in March 2023, funding nine representatives from Pacific civil society organisations to participate in the WorldPride Human Rights Conference and facilitating a talanoa between Pacific MPs and Pacific activists;
- Participating in a Lowy Institute podcast on LGBTQIA+ rights and issues in the Pacific in March 2023, alongside Niuean fakafifine activist Phylesha Brown-Acton;
- Coordinating with external experts to produce a Te Reo Māori glossary of indigenous LGBTQIA+ terminology for sharing with Pacific counterparts;
- Participating in a Global Women Breakthrough Leaders event in Samoa in April 2023;
- Participating in the Pacific Feminist Forum in Fiji in May 2023;
- Participating in the launch of the Pacific Feminist Fund in Fiji in May 2023;
- Speaking on the topic of the intersection of anti-corruption and gender equality at the Pacific Conference on Governance in May 2023;
- Participating in a webinar on countering online misogyny organised by the National Council of Women New Zealand in June 2023;
- Engaging with the US-led Global Equality Fund, resulting in New Zealand becoming a full member of the initiative in June 2023;
- Funding the participation of two Pacific women MPs at the Women Deliver Conference in Kigali, Rwanda, in July 2023 following nominations by the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians group;
- Participating in a forum on Spirituality, Gender Identity, Faith and the Law hosted by the Tonga Leiti's Association in July 2023;
- Engaging with the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous People on the impacts of the legacies of colonialism on the rights of LGBTQIA+ members of Indigenous Peoples, and moderating a panel at the 16<sup>th</sup> session in July 2023;
- Participating as speaker at the Oceania Pacific Women Deliver convening event hosted by the Victorian Government in June 2023;
- Participating in The Commonwealth Equality Network (TCEN was created in 2013 to catalyse meaningful change to end discrimination based on SOGIESC) meeting in Tonga in July 2023;
- Participating in the Sri Lanka Women's Parliamentary Caucus Study visit to New Zealand in July 2023, discussing inclusion policy and gender and LGBTQIA+ equality issues with delegates;
- Funding the Pacific Women's Sports Mentoring Programme pilot launched in August 2023, designed to bring 10 Pacific women sports leaders to Aotearoa New Zealand for capacity-building and support them to deliver a strategic lift to women's sport in their home countries;

- Participating in the three-day wānanga for all Pacific women Members of Parliament (Tuakana, Teina, Whenua, Talanoa) in August 2023, facilitated through the Tai a Kiwi (Stronger Pacific Parliaments) programme.

### *Reports and Briefings*

A link to the formal reporting from Ambassador Wall, as well as her 2022-2024 work plan, can be found at: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/proactive-publication-of-reporting-on-gender-equality-ambassador/>.

Reports relating to recent engagements will be made available within the next six weeks, therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information is, or soon will be, publicly available through the link provided above.

In addition, to support the Annual Review and Estimates processes, notes that provide background on, and summarises of, the work of Tuia Tāngata – Pacific Ambassador for Gender Equality, were prepared. These are attached as Annex One and Annex Two.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) 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

## Annex One – 2021/2022 Annual Review

# Ambassador for Gender Equality (Pacific)/Tuia Tāngata

Contact point – Sarah Auld, Policy Officer, DS PDG

## Talking points

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### *State of gender and SOGIESC-related rights in the Pacific*

- Evidence points to pervasive gender inequality remaining a key barrier to social stability, economic progress and health and well-being across the Pacific.
- The Pacific region has some of the highest prevalence of violence against women in the world, almost double the global average.<sup>2</sup>
- Across the Pacific, women's representation in parliament stands at approximately 8.7% with only two women heads of state, compared to the global average of 26%.
- Persons of diverse SOGIESC (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics) face multiple and intersecting forms of violence, discrimination, criminalisation, and structural exclusion in the Pacific.<sup>3</sup>

### *Ambassador for Gender Equality (Pacific)/Tuia Tāngata*

- Louisa Wall, New Zealand's Ambassador for Gender Equality (Pacific)/Tuia Tāngata, was appointed on 2 May 2022.
- The purpose of the role is to forge partnerships and amplify the voices of the Pacific on gender and SOGIESC-related rights. The strategic goals are to:
  - Increase representation and empowerment of, and full and effective participation of women and girls in all their diversity in leadership, supporting transformative change of those formal and informal customs, norms, practices, and laws in society that create or perpetuate gender inequality and social exclusion based on gender through the Pacific; and
  - Reduce inequality within and among Pacific countries based on gender or sexual identity, so that people of diverse SOGIESC enjoy equal consideration and protection in policy and law enabling the full realisation of their human rights.

A major focus of the last 10 months has been building relationships and engaging key stakeholders from across Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific region. Tuia Tāngata has connected with government, intergovernmental organisations and technical experts, rights-based advocacy groups, sporting bodies, faith-based organisations and community groups during visits to Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands,

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<sup>2</sup> National research shows the rate of lifetime experience of gender-based violence (GBV) is high in Tonga (79%), Samoa (76%), Kiribati (73%), Fiji (72%), Vanuatu (72%) and Solomon Islands (64%) PIF Second SDG Quadrennial Report (PIFS, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> Same-sex relations are still [criminalised in seven Pacific Island countries](#) (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu).

and Tonga, as well as hearing from Pacific diaspora based in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- Tuia Tāngata has supported a range of initiatives to improve equity and inclusion, thereby increasing and raising the profile of the Ministry's engagement on gender equality and human rights in the Pacific. Examples include:
  - Participating at the Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders' Meeting and facilitating consultations in Aotearoa New Zealand on the revitalisation of the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration;
  - Successfully advocating for gifted rights for Pacific television networks of televised coverage of women's sport, to help inspire and grow participation among women and girls in the Pacific who almost never have access to view women's sport;
  - Funding for a Pacific Women's Sports Mentoring Programme pilot that will bring 10 Pacific women sports leaders to Aotearoa New Zealand for capacity-building and support them to deliver a strategic lift to women's sport in their home countries;
  - Leading New Zealand's delegation to Sydney WorldPride (inaugural hosting in Asia-Pacific/Southern Hemisphere), funding nine representatives from Pacific civil society organisations to participate in the WorldPride Human Rights Conference and facilitating a talanoa between Pacific MPs and Pacific activists;
  - Leading Aotearoa New Zealand's delegation at the Equal Rights Coalition biennial meeting;
  - Coordinating with external experts to produce a Te Reo Māori glossary of indigenous LGBTIQ+ terminology for sharing with Pacific counterparts; and
  - Engaging with the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous People on the link between indigenous peoples, LGBTIQ+ rights and colonialism and agreeing to chair a panel during the Human Rights Council meeting in July 2023.

## Background

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1. Aotearoa New Zealand has a strong history of protecting and promoting human rights at home and internationally. Human rights advocacy is integral to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Strategic Objectives, and Aotearoa New Zealand's International Human Rights Action Plan 2019-2023 sets out four top-tier priorities for Aotearoa New Zealand's international human rights engagement. These include gender equality, women's empowerment and political participation, and sexual orientation and gender identity.
2. The role of Tuia Tāngata/Ambassador for Gender Equality (Pacific) was established on a two-year fixed-term basis, and was filled by direct appointment. The role's objectives include supporting the Ministry to deliver on strategic priorities linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goals 5 (gender equality) and

10 (reduced inequalities). The role is responsible for developing partnerships and leading initiatives that support effective participation by, and equal leadership opportunities for, women and LGBTIQ+ peoples, at all levels of decision-making in the Pacific. The Tuia Tāngata role also leverages sports diplomacy to support improved outcomes for women and girls. These issues are crucial to creating fair societies and are proven to support economic growth and development.

3. The Ambassador has engagement, dialogue and collaboration with stakeholders across the sector and region, including but not limited to:

- United Nations Women;
  - United Nations Development Programme;
  - Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat;
  - Pacific Community (SPC);
  - Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network;
  - International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) Oceania;
  - Global Equality Caucus;
  - Pacific Feminist Forum;
  - Pacific Council of Churches;
  - Pacific Ambassador, diplomatic and thematic envoy networks;
  - New Zealand Ministry for Women Manatu Wahine;
  - New Zealand Defence Force;
  - Equal Rights Coalition;
  - Pacific Islands Chiefs Of Police Women's Advisory Network;
  - PACIFICA INC;
  - Civil society advocacy groups throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific; and
  - Pacific Defence Gender Network.
- Internal reporting on the work of Tuia Tāngata, as well as the Work Plan, is available on the Ministry [website](#).

## Appendix: Media statements

Reporting on the work of Tuia Tāngata [proactively released by MFAT](#) (accurate as at 18 February 2023), including:

- [Formal message: \*\*Samoa\*\* visit by Ambassador for Gender Equality Pacific Tuia Tāngata \(18-25 October 2022\)](#)
- [Formal message: Human Rights: Equal Rights Coalition Global LGBTI Conference, \*\*Buenos Aires\*\* \(8-9 September 2022\)](#)
- [Formal message: Ambassador Wall's visit to \*\*Tonga\*\* \(1-5 September 2022\)](#)
- [Formal message: Inaugural visit to \*\*Fiji\*\* by New Zealand's Ambassador for Gender Equality \(16-24 August 2022\)](#)
- [Formal message: \*\*Cook Islands\*\* first visit by Ambassador for Gender Equality \(27-29 June 2022\)](#)
- [Pacific Gender Equality Ambassador Work Plan 2022-2024](#)

MFA – Appointment announcement, 7 April 2022: [Louisa Wall appointed Pacific Gender Equality Ambassador | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

Proactive Release: Tuia Tāngata Position Description: [Proactive Release: Tuia Tangata, appointment of Ambassador for Gender Equality \(Pacific\) | New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(mfat.govt.nz\)](#)

Proactive release: Tuia Tāngata Submission: [Proactive Release: Tuia Tangata, appointment of Ambassador for Gender Equality \(Pacific\) | New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(mfat.govt.nz\)](#)

Released under the Official Information Act

## Annex Two – Estimates 2023/24

### Tuia Tāngata – Pacific Ambassador for Gender Equality

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#### Talking points

- Evidence points to pervasive gender inequality remaining a key barrier to social stability, economic progress and health and well-being across the Pacific.
- The Pacific region has some of the highest prevalence of violence against women in the world, almost double the global average.<sup>4</sup>
- Across the Pacific, women's representation in parliament stands at approximately 8.7%, compared to the global average of 26%. Levels of female political leadership in the region are the lowest in the world, and only two women have served as the heads of their government in the Pacific Islands region (outside Australia and New Zealand).
- Persons of diverse SOGIESC (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics) face multiple and intersecting forms of violence, discrimination, criminalisation, and structural exclusion in the Pacific.<sup>5</sup>
- Aotearoa New Zealand has articulated gender equality and women's empowerment as a key foreign policy and development cooperation priority. Our goal is to achieve transformative change for women and girls in all their diversity in the Pacific and beyond.
- Louisa Wall, New Zealand's Ambassador for Gender Equality (Pacific)/Tuia Tāngata, was appointed on 2 May 2022.
- The Ambassador Gender Equality (Pacific) / Tuia Tāngata role supports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to deliver on strategic goals linked to Sustainable Development Goals 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reduced Inequality).
- The role complements a wider programme of IDC activities by lifting dialogue with Pacific partners and amplifying the voices of the Pacific on gender and SOGIESC-related rights.
- During her term as Tuia Tāngata, Ambassador Wall has connected with government, intergovernmental organisations and technical experts, rights-based advocacy groups, sporting bodies, faith-based organisations and community groups.
- Ambassador Wall has fostered these connections during visits to Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands, and Tonga, and through engagements with Pacific diaspora based in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ambassador Wall has also participated in regional fora focused on SOGIESC-related rights in Argentina and Australia.

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<sup>4</sup> National research shows the rate of lifetime experience of gender-based violence (GBV) is high in Tonga (79%), Samoa (76%), Kiribati (73%), Fiji (72%), Vanuatu (72%) and Solomon Islands (64%) PIF Second SDG Quadrennial Report (PIFS, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> Same-sex relations are still [criminalised in six Pacific Island countries](#) (Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu), down from seven, with the Cook Islands having recently repealed its criminalising provisions.



- The role also uses the powerful tool of sports diplomacy to support improved outcomes for women and girls and LGBTIQ+ peoples. These issues are crucial to creating fair societies and are proven to support economic growth and development.
- Tuia Tāngata has supported a range of initiatives to improve equity and inclusion, thereby increasing and raising the profile of the Ministry's engagement on gender equality and human rights in the Pacific.
- Examples of initiatives for the upcoming financial year include:
  - Funding Pacific participation in the Women Deliver Conference, one of the largest multi-sectoral meetings to advance gender equality globally, in July 2023; and
  - Engaging with the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous People on the link between indigenous peoples, LGBTIQ+ rights and colonialism and agreeing to chair a panel during the Human Rights Council meeting in July 2023.

## Background

Aotearoa New Zealand has a strong history of protecting and promoting human rights at home and internationally. Human rights advocacy is integral to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Strategic Objectives, and Aotearoa New Zealand's International Human Rights Action Plan 2019-2023 sets out four top-tier priorities for Aotearoa New Zealand's international human rights engagement. These include gender equality, women's empowerment and political participation, and sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Pacific Resilience Approach that was agreed by Cabinet in October 2021 guides Aotearoa New Zealand's engagement with the Pacific. It recognises equity, inclusivity and human rights as critical to enabling broad economic growth, well-being and stability in the region. Objectives for delivering on this approach are set out in the International Development Cooperation Programme's Strategic Action Plans for Human Rights, Gender, and Child and Youth Wellbeing.

The role of Ambassador for Gender Equality (Pacific)/Tuia Tāngata was established on a two-year fixed-term basis and was filled by direct appointment. The role of Ambassador for Gender Equality (Pacific)/Tuia Tāngata was established on a two-year fixed-term basis from May 2022 and was filled by direct appointment.

The role requires mana, strong networks across the Pacific region, an understanding of political, legal and parliamentary processes, experience in advocacy, and knowledge of gender, women's leadership, LGBTIQ+ issues and sports diplomacy.

4. Examples of the support Tuia Tāngata has provided across a range of initiatives include:
  - Participating at the Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders' Meeting and facilitating consultations in Aotearoa New Zealand on the revitalisation of the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration;
  - Successfully advocating for gifted rights for Pacific television networks of televised coverage of women's sport, to help inspire and grow participation among women and girls in the Pacific who almost never have access to view women's sport;

- Funding for a Pacific Women's Sports Mentoring Programme pilot that will bring 10 Pacific women sports leaders to Aotearoa New Zealand for capacity-building and support them to deliver a strategic lift to women's sport in their home countries;
- Leading New Zealand's delegation to Sydney WorldPride (inaugural hosting in Asia-Pacific/Southern Hemisphere), funding nine representatives from Pacific civil society organisations to participate in the WorldPride Human Rights Conference and facilitating a talanoa between Pacific MPs and Pacific activists;
- Leading Aotearoa New Zealand's delegation at the Equal Rights Coalition biennial meeting; and
- Coordinating with external experts to produce a Te Reo Māori glossary of indigenous LGBTQIA+ terminology for sharing with Pacific counterparts.

Office of the Deputy Secretary  
Pacific and Development Group  
May 2023

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