

27 May 2026

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Personal details removed for proactive release

OIA 30811

Personal details removed for proactive release

Thank you for your email of 17 March 2026, in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

All communications within the ministry, with ministerial offices, and with representatives of the Samoan Government regarding the bestowment of a matai title on the Prime Minister. This should include, but is not limited to, any communications about the Prime Minister receiving the title, any communications about media reporting on the title, and any communication with the Samoan Government about comments by the Samoan Prime Minister on the title.

On 16 April 2026, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 28 working days because responding to your request necessitated the review of a large quantity of information, and due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(a) and (b) of the OIA refers). **Response to your request**

Appendix A at the end of this letter lists the documents being released to you in response to your OIA request.

Excerpts of the documents listed in the table below are being provided to you because the majority of the information contained in these documents does not relate to the bestowment of the matai title, so is outside the scope of your request (section 16(1)(e) of the OIA refers). The excerpts are attached in Appendix B.

Information provided as excerpts		
#	Title	Decision
1.	OVERSEAS VISIT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA AND THE KINGDOM OF TONGA SUNDAY 15 MARCH - WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2026	Out of scope; 9(2)(a)
2.	PRIME MINISTER RT HON CHRISTOPHER LUXON VISIT TO SAMOA and TONGA 15-18 MARCH MEETING BRIEFS	Out of scope; 6(a); 9(2)(a); 9(2)(g)(i)

Information provided as excerpts		
#	Title	Decision
3.	OVERSEAS VISIT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA AND THE KINGDOM OF TONGA SUNDAY 15 MARCH - WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2026 MINISTERS, MPS AND SENIOR OFFICIALS' PROGRAMME	Duplicate information removed - information in Excerpt One.
4.	OVERSEAS VISIT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA AND THE KINGDOM OF TONGA 15 - 18 MARCH 2026 MEDIA PROGRAMME	Out of scope: 9(2)(a)
5.	THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND Pacific Mission 2026: Samoa and Tonga 15-18 March 2026 COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA PACK	Out of scope; 6(a)
6.	THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE Pacific Mission 2026: Samoa and Tonga 15-18 March 2026 COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA PACK	Out of scope
7.	OVERSEAS VISIT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA AND THE KINGDOM OF TONGA SUNDAY 15 MARCH - WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2026 Delegation Programme for Tonga	Duplicate information removed - information in Excerpt One; Out of scope
8.	PRIME MINISTER RT HON CHRISTOPHER LUXON VISIT TO SAMOA and TONGA 15-18 MARCH MEETING BRIEFS	Duplicate information removed - information in Excerpt Two;
9.	SAMOA-NEW ZEALAND STATE DINNER SPEECH – 16 MARCH 2026	Out of scope
10.	PACIFIC MISSION 2026 — SAMOA EVENT DAY SHEET	Out of scope; 9(2)(a)

Some information has been withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

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

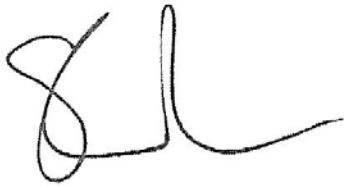
Earlier in the planning process of the Pacific Mission, there was reference to a High Commission grant for a project for Apia Village. This was prior to being informed by the Government of Samoa that it would cover the koha for Apia Village relating to the matai title. As announced during the ava ceremony, the New Zealand High Commission has proceeded with the grant for Apia Village, which relates to their preparations for Samoa's Independence Day on 1 June 2026. The grant was made in recognition of the longstanding and close relationship between New Zealand and Apia Village, including support for the New Zealand engagement with Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) as Apia Village was the "host" village for New Zealand during CHOGM.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website:

www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: 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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Appendix A Document Schedule				
Documents Provided in response to OIA 30811				
#	Date	Document type	Title	Decision
1.	15 Feb 2026	Email	Pac Mission: update: chat	Out of scope; 6(a); 9(2)(g)(i)
2.	16 to 19 Feb 2026	Email	Invitation to join Prime Minister's Mission to Samoa and Tonga (15-18 March 2026)	Out of scope; 9(2)(a)
3.	23 to 24 Feb 2026	Email	Invitation to join Prime Minister's Mission to Samoa and Tonga (15-18 March 2026)	Out of scope; 6(a); 9(2)(g)(i)
4.	25 Feb 2026	Email with attachment	My scribbles on PM-PM meeting briefing layout	Out of scope
5.	26 Feb 2026	Email with attachment	Raw notes - Pacmission Planning Meeting 25/02	Out of scope; 6(a); 9(2)(a); 9(2)(g)(i)
6.	1 Mar 2026	Email with attachment	Samoa Tonga PacMission: Tasking Omnibus to Posts #1, 27 Feb	Out of scope; 6(a); 9(2)(g)(i); attachment released as extract
7.	3 Mar 2026	Email	Brief status	Out of scope
8.	3 Mar to 4 Mar	Email	PM's Pacific Mission comms and media pack	Out of scope; 9(2)(a)
9.	4 Mar 2026	Email	Meeting with Apia Village today	6(a); 9(2)(a)
10.	5 Mar 2026	Email	PM Comms & media pack	Out of scope
11.	9 Mar 2026	Email	Notes: From 9am onwards - Pac stand-up	Out of scope
12.	9 Mar 2026	Email	For review: Pre-departure full delegation material	Out of scope

13.	9 Mar 2026	Email with attachments	Samoa Tonga PacMission Planning Update #18, 9 Mar	Out of scope; 9(2)(a); attachments released as extracts
14.	10 Mar 2026	Email	Samoa Tonga PacMission Planning Update #17, 4 Mar	Out of scope; 9(2)(a); 9(2)(g)(i)
15.	10 Mar 2026	Email	Media Event Day Factsheet - Pacific Mission	Out of scope; 9(2)(a)
16.	11 Mar 2026	Email	Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies	Out of scope; 9(2)(a)
17.	11 Mar 2026	Email with attachment	Draft briefing material for PM - "ava ceremony and saofa"i	9(2)(a)
18.	11 Mar 2026	Email	Senior officials' briefing of PM	Out of scope; 6(a); 9(2)(a); 9(2)(g)(i)
19.	10 to 14 Mar 2026	Email	Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies	6(a); 9(2)(a); 9(2)(g)(i)
20.	13 to 16 Mar 2026	Email	heads up: ANZMIN media event briefs	Out of scope; 9(2)(a)
21.	13 to 16 Mar 2026	Email	heads up: ANZMIN media event briefs	Out of scope; 6(a)
22.	16 Mar 2026	Email	FOR PACPF DM APPROVAL: draft social media post for MFATNZ channels	Out of scope; 9(2)(a); 9(2)(g)(i)
23.	14 to 16 Mar 2026	Multiple Email	Media emails	Out of scope; 9(2)(a); 9(2)(g)(i)

Appendix B – Excerpts

EXCERPT ONE



OVERSEAS VISIT

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON

PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

TO THE

INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA

AND THE

KINGDOM OF TONGA

SUNDAY 15 MARCH - WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2026

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Page 10

MONDAY, 16 MARCH 2026	APIA
Dress code: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of scope • Elei (island) shirt with ula fala (red pandanus necklace) and tapa wrap-around for ava ceremony and matai bestowal (attire pre-positioned by Mills) • Out of scope 	

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0955	0955	Ava Ceremony and Matai Title Bestowal/Saofa'i (pron. Sao-fah-ee) CEREMONY
		Location: Exterior, front of Government Building Duration: 1hr 15 mins NZ Attendees: PM Luxon, Mrs Luxon, full Delegation, Orator ^{s9(2)(a)} and Orator ^{s9(2)(a)} Samoa Attendees: PM La'aulialeamalietao, Samoa Cabinet, Apia Village Representatives Media: All NZ Media present throughout the event Runsheets: 0955 PM Luxon will be seated with Minister Reti, Minister Mitchell, MPs, HOM van Toor ^{s9(2)(a)} MC ^{s9(2)(a)} explains order followed by short lotu (prayer) Cultural protocol Following the speeches, the ava is served ^{s9(2)(a)} will receive a cup of ava first. PM Luxon will be served with the cup of ava – with both hands PM will take the cup, spill a small amount on the floor and say a few remarks and before taking a sip from the ava cup say 'manuia' and give the cup back to the server Ministers, 3 x MPs and HOM van Toor to receive cup of ava MC explains the cultural gifting (sua) Orator ^{s9(2)(a)} will speak on behalf of the PM

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MONDAY, 16 MARCH 2026		APIA
		<p>PM Luxon will be invited to respond before the ceremony ends</p> <p>Event carries on into the matai title bestowal</p>   

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EXCERPT TWO



**NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE**
Manatū Aorere

**PRIME MINISTER
RT HON CHRISTOPHER LUXON
VISIT TO SAMOA and TONGA**

15-18 MARCH

MEETING BRIEFS



Released

Event: Ava Ceremony and Matai Bestowal

Time and date:	9.30am, Monday, 16 March
Venue:	Exterior of Government Building sitting on a stage and the Apia Village matai under a marquee
Media:	In attendance

Objectives

- Participate in the traditional ava ceremony hosted by Apia Village. You will be the first foreign leader to receive the ava ceremony with Prime Minister La'aulialemalietoa.
- To receive a Samoan paramount chiefly matai title Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua (tui-see-nah-veh-mah-oo-loo-moh-toh-oh-too-wah) bestowed by the Apia Village, recognising New Zealand's significant contribution to the people of Samoa through service, partnership and support.
- The ava ceremony is an important Samoan custom, holding significant historical, social and spiritual value. It is traditionally performed to mark special occasions, such as matai bestowal and welcoming of an honoured guest.

Runsheets – NB: This runsheet may change and will be updated when you arrive.

0945 am	<p>You are escorted from the STA VIP room to your seat, by the Apia Village Women's Committee led entourage (they will dance in front of you leading you to your seat – you are not expected to dance but you should walk behind).</p> <p>You are seated in the front row with Minister Reti, Minister Mitchell, MPs, HOM van Toor, ^{s9(2)(a)}</p> <p><i>The rest of the delegation will be seated behind you, including Mrs. Luxon.</i></p>
0955	CEO of MPMC (Samoan DPMC equivalent) ^{s9(2)(a)} welcomes you and the delegation, and the formalities begin with a short lotu (prayer) followed by an ava ceremony.
1000	Ava ceremony – an ava bowl will be positioned in front of the taupou (daughter of the high chief). She will be supported by the Aumaga

	<p>(untitled young men).</p> <p>Pleasantries will be exchanged between matai in Samoan (chiefs representing both sides). You will be supported by two orators from New Zealand who will speak for you.</p> <p>An orator representing the Samoa Government will gather ava sticks presented by Apia village matai including the Samoa Government representatives on a mat and place them in front of the New Zealand delegation. The orator representing the New Zealand delegation will speak to formally acknowledge the ava sticks (gift) and the presiding chiefs and distribute the ava sticks. One stick will be for you (which will be placed beside you on the floor), one for PM La'aulialemalietoa, and the remaining ava sticks will be redistributed to the honoured guests and matai present.</p> <p>Speeches will take place between the orators representing both parties. You are not required to speak during this section of the ceremony.</p> <p>Following the speeches, the ava is served. As the leader of the New Zealand delegation, you will be served first, then followed by PM La'aulialemalietoa, with the rest to be called by name.</p> <p>The tautu ava (the ava server) will bring the ava cup to you. You will take the ava cup, spill a small amount on the floor as a gesture of thanksgiving to God.</p> <p>You will say a few words – an opportunity to thank PM La'aulialemalietoa and the Government of Samoa for the honour and the hospitality extended.</p> <p><i>Suggested remarks:</i></p> <p>Thank you for this warm welcome, we are truly honoured. As we begin our programme today, I look forward to continuing the strong cooperation between our two countries, and our shared aspirations for the well-being of our peoples. Manuia (<i>manu-wee-ah</i>) (the remarks must end with 'manuia' meaning – blessings).</p> <p>You will take a sip (it is not necessary to drink the whole cup), and hand the cup back to the ava server. The rest of those identified to drink will be given a cup of ava to drink.</p>
1045	Matai bestowal ceremony.

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1045	Cultural gifting ceremony (sua).
1055	<p>You will provide brief remarks to acknowledge Apia Village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgements - Prime Minister La'aulialemalietoa and Cabinet, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tuiletufuga Mayor of Apia (<i>pron. Tui-leh-two-faw-nga</i>), ○ Lima (<i>pron. Lee-mah</i>), Apia Member of Parliament, ○ Apia district - my village • Note what this honour means to you, and the special friendship between NZ and the people of Apia. • Highlight NZ's partnership with Samoa.
1100	End of the ava and bestowal ceremony.
1110	You are escorted to the STA VIP room for attire change.

Attendees

New Zealand

- Full New Zealand Delegation
- Your Orators:
 - s9(2)(a) Orator/Cultural Adviser s9(2)(g)(i)
 - s9(2)(a) Orator/Cultural Adviser s9(2)(g)(i)

Samoa (TBC)

- Cabinet Ministers
- Members of Parliament
- Apia Village chiefs
- Community leaders (tbc)

Biographies of Attendees

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§9(2)(g)(i)	§9(2)(a), §9(2)(g)(i) §9(2)(a), §9(2)(g)(i)
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	<p>Tuiletufuga Fritz Tuiavii-Savaiinaea</p> <p>s9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>Mayor of Apia</p> <p>s6(a)</p>
	<p>Lima Graeme Tualaulelei s9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>Apia Member of Parliament</p> <p>s6(a)</p>

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Background

You are receiving a matai (chief) title from the Apia village. Apia village was New Zealand's adopted village during CHOGM Samoa, 2024.

You are the sixth New Zealand Prime Minister to be bestowed a matai title while in office however you are the first to receive it in Apia at the Government Building in this way. Others include:

- Leuluali'iotumua, Sir Bill English – 2017
- Toosavili, Sir John Key – 2009
- Nanai, Rt Hon Jim Bolger – 1997
- Tagaloa, Rt Hon David Lange – late 80s
- Leasapai, Sir Robert Muldoon 1981

Rt Hon Winston Peters holds the matai title 'Vaovasamanaia', bestowed in 2007.

Matai selection

In principle, every Samoan, male or female, is an heir to a matai title pertaining to their kinship and ancestry. However, matai titles are not automatically passed from a matai to their children or direct descendants but are bestowed upon those agreed upon by the extended family.

Matai titles are sometimes conferred upon non-Samoans as an honour by Samoan families and their villages.

Honorary titles are awarded to individuals in recognition of their contribution to the village, district or country. These titles are ceremonial and do not carry the same legal responsibilities or obligation of service as traditional matai titles.

Title bestowal

Matai titles are bestowed upon family members during a cultural ceremony called a saofa'i, which occurs only after discussion and consensus within the family. The saofa'i is a solemn ceremony which marks the formal acceptance of a new matai by their family and village into the circle of chiefs and orators.

Tuisinavemaalumoto'otua is the name of the meeting house of Apia (Maota fonu o Apia) and of the plot of land where the New Zealand High Commission stands. It is a paramount title that has never been bestowed upon anyone in the history of Apia.

The gifting of this title is the highest honour bestowed upon an individual by the family or village, reflecting deep respect and recognition of your relationship with Apia.

Matai title and naming convention

It is common for each 'aiga (family) to have a number of matai titles; however, one title will be the most important and serve as the main matai title.

Following the saofa'i, you will henceforth be known in Samoa as Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua Rt Hon Christopher Luxon.

A matai title is always first in naming convention. When a person is appointed a matai, they retain their Christian name in addition to their new matai title.

As more than one family member can be bestowed the same matai title, each person's Christian name serves to distinguish them. Dividing a family title so that it is shared among more than one family member is also agreed upon by consensus. Samoans explain this by saying that a man has a fasi igoa – a piece of the title. There are two types of matai title – orator and high chief. Your title is Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua.

Orator chiefs

The orator is the recorder of family histories and pedigree (fa'alupega), genealogies (gafa) and events and is indispensable at public ceremonies.

Saofai attire

It customary for the person receiving a matai title, to wear a siapo (tapa) around the waist, a pale agiga across the forehead (a headband adorned with shiny mirrors or glittery beads) and an ula fala (red pandanus necklace). The pale agiga/headress is not mandatory so you will be wearing the ula fala and siapo only.



Page 23

- I was blown away by the incredible Ava ceremony this morning, and so humbled to have received the honour of a Samoan matai title, bestowed upon me by the village of Apia. That title, Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua (*tui-see-nah-veh-mah-oo-loo-moh-toh-oh-too-wah*), recognises the special relationship between New Zealand and the people of Apia.

Pages 39/40

Matai title

- The bestowal of the matai title today was one of the greatest honours I have received as New Zealand's Prime Minister. I receive this honour

IN-CONFIDENCE

IN-CONFIDENCE

on behalf of all New Zealanders and have been learning today about the obligations and responsibilities this signifies.

- I have learnt that it represents the enduring familial bonds between our countries strengthened through service, partnership and support, and gives renewed meaning to the Treaty of Friendship.

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EXCERPT THREE



OVERSEAS VISIT

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON

PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

TO THE

INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA

AND THE

KINGDOM OF TONGA

SUNDAY 15 MARCH - WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2026

**MINISTERS, MPS AND SENIOR OFFICIALS'
PROGRAMME**

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Duplicate information removed.

See Excerpt One (pages 10, 13 and 14).

EXCERPT FOUR



OVERSEAS VISIT

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON

PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

TO THE

INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA

AND THE

KINGDOM OF TONGA

15 - 18 MARCH 2026

MEDIA PROGRAMME

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Pages 7/8

0955	<p>Ava Ceremony and Matai Title Bestowal/Saofa'i (pron. Sao-fah-ee) CEREMONY</p> <p><u>Venue:</u> Government Building (front exterior) <u>Media:</u> All NZ Media present <u>Duration:</u> 1 hour 15 minutes</p> <p><u>Runsheet:</u> 0945 PM Luxon escorted to the Ava Ceremony 0955 Welcome 1000 MC ^{s9(2)(a)} explains order followed by short lotu (prayer) 1005 Ava ceremony and speeches</p>
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	<p>1045 Matai bestowal ceremony - PM Luxon to receive a Samoan paramount chiefly matai title Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua (<i>pm. tui-see-nah-veh-mah-oo-loo-moh-toh-oh-too-wah</i>) [NAME EMBRGOED UNTIL EVENT] bestowed by the Apia Village, recognising New Zealand's significant contribution to the people of Samoa through service, partnership and support.</p> <p>1100 Bestowal ceremony ends</p>
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EXCERPT FIVE

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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

Pacific Mission 2026: Samoa and Tonga

15–18 March 2026

COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA PACK



Page 6

Mr Luxon was bestowed a matai, or chiefly title, from the village of Apia. The title XXXX recognises the special relationship New Zealand enjoys with the people of Apia. He is the sixth New Zealand prime minister to receive a matai while in office.

Page 9

I was honoured to bestowed with the Matai title XXXX from the Apia Village.

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[6(a)]

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EXCERPT SIX



THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE



Pacific Mission 2026: Samoa and Tonga

15–18 March 2026



COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA PACK





Page 12

<p>16/03/2026</p>  <p>Posted</p> 	<p>Guard of Honour/ Saofa'i</p>	<p>Today, the Prime Minister-led Pacific Mission delegation were formally welcomed with an Ava ceremony outside the Samoa Government Building.</p> <p>As part of the ceremony, Mr Luxon was bestowed a matai, or chiefly title, from the village of Apia. The title XXX recognises the special relationship New Zealand holds with the people of Apia. He is the sixth New Zealand prime minister to receive a matai while in office.</p> <p><i>Photo: PM Luxon and PM Minister Laauli handshake, call on Head of State, Guard of honour, Ava ceremony</i></p>
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Page 23

<p>16/03/2026</p>  <p>Posted</p> 	<p>Official welcome to Samoa/Saofa'i ceremony</p>	<p>Today, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and the Pacific Mission delegation were formally welcomed with an Ava ceremony outside the Samoa Government Building.</p> <p>As part of the ceremony, Mr Luxon was bestowed a matai, or chiefly title, from the village of Apia. The title XXX recognises the special relationship New Zealand holds with the people of Apia. He is the sixth New Zealand prime minister to receive a matai while in office.</p> <p><i>PHOTO: Saofa'i, Guard of Honour, Ava ceremony, Call on Head of State and his Good Lady</i></p>
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<p>16/03/2026</p>  <p>Posted</p> 	<p>Guard of honour/ Ava ceremony</p>	<p>Images from last week's formal ceremony to welcome for Prime Minister Christopher Luxon to Apia.</p> <p>As part of the ceremony, the Prime Minister was bestowed with a matai, Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua.</p> <p>This title was gifted by the people of village of Apia – a reflection of New Zealand's strong relationship with the people here.</p> <p>What better way to highlight and celebrate of our shared people-to-people links and cultural connections as Pacific partners.</p> <p>#MFATPacific #PacificMission #Samoa</p> <p><i>Photo: PM Luxon Ava ceremony, Saofa'i pics, guard of honour</i></p>
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EXCERPT SEVEN



OVERSEAS VISIT

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER LUXON

PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

TO THE

INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA

AND THE

KINGDOM OF TONGA

SUNDAY 15 MARCH - WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2026

Delegation Programme for Tonga

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Page 5

0925	0925	Ava Ceremony and Matai Title Bestowal	CEREMONIAL
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Page 9

Duplicate information removed.

See Excerpt One (pages 10, 13 and 14).

Page 12/13

1025	1025	Matai Title Bestowal/Saofa'i (<i>pron. saa-fah-ee</i>)	CEREMONY
		<u>Location:</u> Exterior, front of Government Building	
		<u>Duration:</u> 30mins	

UNCLASSIFIED

12

MONDAY, 16 MARCH 2026		APIA
		<p><u>NZ Attendees:</u> PM Luxon, Mrs Luxon, full delegation and Orator Musu</p> <p><u>Samoa Attendees:</u> PM La'aulialemalietao, Samoa Cabinet, Apia Village, community</p> <p><u>Runsheet:</u></p> <p>Xxxx: Cultural protocol TBC – led by Apia Village</p>

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EXCERPT EIGHT

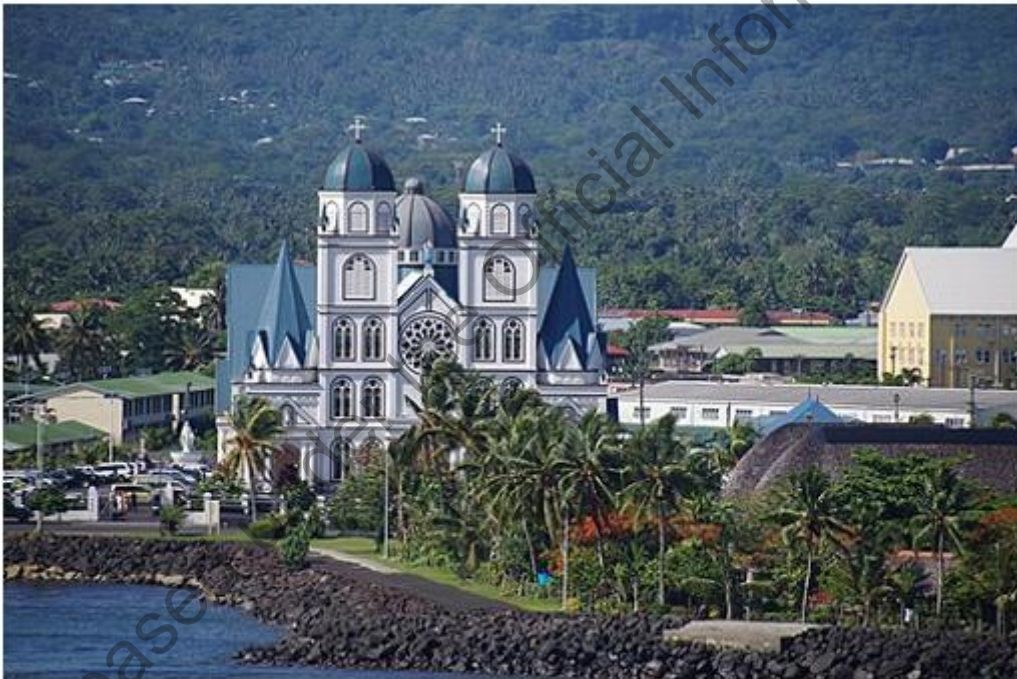


**PRIME MINISTER
RT HON CHRISTOPHER LUXON**

VISIT TO SAMOA and TONGA

15-18 MARCH

MEETING BRIEFS



IN-CONFIDENCE

Page 7

Duplicate information removed.

See Excerpt Two

EXCERPT NINE

SAMOA-NEW ZEALAND STATE DINNER SPEECH – 16 MARCH 2026

Page 1

Matai title

The bestowal of the matai title today- [name] - was one of the greatest honours I have received as New Zealand's Prime Minister. I receive this honour on behalf of all New Zealanders and have been learning today about the obligations and responsibilities this signifies. I have learnt that it represents the enduring familial bonds between our countries strengthened through service, partnership and support, and gives renewed meaning to the Treaty of Friendship.

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EXCERPT TEN

PACIFIC MISSION 2026 — SAMOA EVENT DAY SHEET

Page 1/2

<p>9.55am</p> <p>Government Building (front exterior)</p>	<p>3. <u>Ava Ceremony</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the Flag Raising ceremony, PM Luxon will be escorted to the ava ceremony, a traditional ceremony hosted by Apia Village He will be the first foreign leader to receive the ava ceremony with PM La'aulialemalietoa. <p>About the ava ceremony:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ava ceremony is an important Samoan custom, holding significant historical, social and spiritual value. It is traditionally performed to mark special occasions, such as matai bestowal and welcoming an honoured guest. <p>Sensitive:</p>
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FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS ENQUIRIES, CONTACT MOANA MAKAPELU LEE
 E: MOANA.LEE@MFAT.GOV.NZ C: 69(2)(a)

FOR ALL MEDIA ENQUIRIES SPECIFICALLY FOR TRAVELLING NZ MEDIA DELEGATION
 CONTACT: CORINNE AMBLER
 E: CORINNE.AMBLER@MFAT.GOV.NZ C: 69(2)(a)

• UNCLASSIFIED COVERING CONFIDENTIAL
 • EMARGOED UNTIL EACH EVENT HAS TAKEN PLACE
 • EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Page 2 of 8

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PM Luxon will be bestowed with a Matai, or chiefly title. He will be the sixth New Zealand Prime Minister to receive a matai while in office and the first to receive it in Apia, at the Government Building in this way. Others include: Leuluali'iotumua, Sir Bill English – 2017 Toosavili, Sir John Key – 2009 Nanai, Rt Hon Jim Bolger – 1997 Tagaloo, Rt Hon David Lange – late 80s Leasapai, Sir Robert Muldoon 1981 Rt Hon Winston Peters holds the matai title 'Vaovasamanaia', bestowed in 2007.
--	--	---

From: [VAN TOOR, Si'alei \(API\)](#)
To: [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#); [COGHILL, Lucy \(PACPF\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(GDS\)](#); [TUCK, Evie \(PACPF\)](#); [ZHANG, Francesca \(PACPF\)](#); [DEMAs, Sara \(PACPF\)](#)
Cc: [...API Seconded Staff Distribution List](#); [EVANS, David \(SAPD\)](#)
Subject: RE: Pac Mission: update: chat [SEC=IN CONFIDENCE]
Date: Sunday, 15 February 2026 7:42:59 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[IN CONFIDENCE]

IN-CONFIDENCE

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

I suggest we offer Apia village a 10k HEF grant for a project but will need to be in touch with them to figure out on what ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

IN-CONFIDENCE

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API)
Sent: Sunday, 15 February 2026 1:14 pm
To: [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; [COGHILL, Lucy \(PACPF\)](#) <Lucy.Coghill@mfat.govt.nz>; [CHRISP, Sophie \(GDS\)](#) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>; [TUCK, Evie \(PACPF\)](#) <Evie.Tuck@mfat.govt.nz>; [ZHANG, Francesca \(PACPF\)](#) <Francesca.Zhang@mfat.govt.nz>; [DEMAs, Sara \(PACPF\)](#) <Sara.Demas@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: [...API Seconded Staff Distribution List](#) <APISecodedStaffDistributionList@mfat.govt.nz>; [EVANS, David \(SAPD\)](#) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Pac Mission: update: chat with Peseta today

Out of scope

-

-

-

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Si'alei van Toor

New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa
New Zealand High Commission
Apia, Samoa



Released under the Official Information Act

Out of scope

UNCLASSIFIED

From: COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 11:29 am
To: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>
Cc: Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; PacMissionOfficials <PacMissionOfficials@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: IN-CONFIDENCE:Re: RE: RE: : Invitation to join Prime Minister's Mission to Samoa and Tonga (15-18 March 2026) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks, Lu. Really appreciate your thoughts. And we will await eagerly your advice on the orator. You are likely aware, but the Apia matai title remains under wraps (but good to consider that as you think about an appropriate person).^{Out of scope}

Thanks again!
Zoe

Zoe Coulson-Sinclair (she/her)

Unit manager Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu | Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

T^{s9(2)(a)}

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 10:58 am
To: COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>
Cc: Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; PacMissionOfficials <PacMissionOfficials@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:Re: RE: RE: : Invitation to join Prime Minister's Mission to Samoa and Tonga (15-18 March 2026) [SEC=IN CONFIDENCE]

IN-CONFIDENCE

Out of scope

s9(2)(a)

is definitely a good option, will just take a look at some of the changes on both sides since that trip and reconfirm suitability.

We're preparing advice for 2-3 suitable people for MFAT/PMO to consider (including s9(2)(a) and can submit early next week, is that okay? I also understand Apia township village is considering gifting our PM a matai, so we'll take this into consideration with the names put forward.

Out of scope

Thanks

Lu

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Out of scope

IN-CONFIDENCE

From: COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF)

Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 2:11 pm

To: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>

Cc: Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; PacMissionOfficials <PacMissionOfficials@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: : Invitation to join Prime Minister's Mission to Samoa and Tonga (15-18 March 2026) [SEC=IN CONFIDENCE]

Dear Lu
Out of scope

- Yes, we would please welcome MPP's recommendation on a Samoan orator that could support the PM through an elaborate ava ceremony. Once you provide that name we will still need to have the individual vetted by PMO and our Post.

- Out of scope

-

Thanks again,
Zoe

Zoe Coulson-Sinclair (she/her)

Unit manager Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu | Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

T^{s9(2)(a)}

Out of scope

Out of scope

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UNCLASSIFIED

From: Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 24 February 2026 12:18 pm
To: COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>
Cc: Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; PacMissionOfficials <PacMissionOfficials@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Brody (NUK) <Brody.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.ioane@mfat.govt.nz>; ROBERTSON, Rebekah (DEVPP) <Rebekah.Robertson@mfat.govt.nz>; ZHANG, Francesca (PACPF) <Francesca.Zhang@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: RE: Re: RE: RE: : Invitation to join Prime Minister's Mission to Samoa and Tonga (15-18 March 2026) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

IN-CONFIDENCE

Talofa Zoe,

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Thank you and have a blessed day,

Surava.

Out of scope

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>

Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 10:16 AM

To: COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>

Cc: Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; PacMissionOfficials <PacMissionOfficials@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Brody (NUK) <Brody.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.ioane@mfat.govt.nz>; ROBERTSON, Rebekah (DEVPP) <Rebekah.Robertson@mfat.govt.nz>; ZHANG, Francesca (PACPF) <Francesca.Zhang@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: Re: RE: RE: : Invitation to join Prime Minister's Mission to Samoa and Tonga (15-18 March 2026) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

IN-CONFIDENCE

Talofa Zoe,

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

la manuia,

Surava.

IN-CONFIDENCE

From: [COGHILL, Lucy \(APECPOL\)](#)
To: [CHRISP, Sophie \(GDS\)](#)
Subject: My scribbles on PM-PM meeting briefing layout [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Date: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 4:19:10 pm
Attachments: [Document1 - Compatibility Mode.docx](#)

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Out of scope

Lucy

RESTRICTED

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Annotated Agenda: Meeting with La'aulialemalietoa XXXfull
nameXXX, Prime Minister of Samoa

ONE PAGE (blank spaces OK for PM to handwrite if desired)

Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

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Event Brief: Meeting with La'aulialemalietoa XXXfull nameXXX, Prime Minister of Samoa

Out of scope

Out of scope

Background

This meeting comes following XXX important cultural events including granting of matai title. Out of scope

Out of scope

[Document ID]

Released under the Official Information Act

From: [ZHANG, Francesca \(PACPF\)](#)
To: [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#); [VAN TOOR, Si'alei \(API\)](#); [SINCLAIR, Brody \(NUK\)](#); [MCLANE, Ryan \(PACPF\)](#); [JOE, Kerriane \(PACPF\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(GDS\)](#); [ROBERTSON, Rebekah \(DEVPP\)](#); [COGHILL, Lucy \(APECPOL\)](#)
Cc: Jessica.Dorman@nzte.govt.nz
Subject: Raw notes - Pacmission Planning Meeting 25/02 [SEC=IN CONFIDENCE]
Date: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 3:22:05 pm
Attachments: [Rough File Note - Pacmission Meeting with PMO 25.02.26.docx](#)
[image001.png](#)

[IN CONFIDENCE]

IN-CONFIDENCE

Kia ora koutou,

Out of scope

Ngā mihi,

Francesca Zhang ([she/her](#))

Kaiāpiha Kaupapahere, Hāmoa | Policy Officer, Sāmoa
Te Rāwhiti o te Moana | Pacific Polynesia & French Pacific (PACPF) Division
Manatū Aorere | New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

M: ^{s9(2)(a)} **E:** francesca.zhang@mfat.govt.nz

195 Lambton Quay, Private Bag 18901, Wellington 5045, New Zealand
www.mfat.govt.nz | www.safetravel.govt.nz



IN-CONFIDENCE

Rough File Note - Pacmission Samoa Tonga Planning Meeting 25 Feb 2026

Out of scope

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2 pages removed - out of scope

Out of scope

- Samoa general points
 - Note: once matai title bestowed in Samoa, everyone will refer to PM Luxon using that title - s9(2)(g)(i)
 - Out of scope

Out of scope

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- Out of scope
- Get someone to talk about significance of ava ceremony and matai title bestowal
 - MT: s9(2)(g)(i)

 - Si'alei: maybe s9(2)(a)
- Out of scope

- Ava ceremony and matai title bestowal
 - Need more of a sense of what's involved within the programme
 - Someone needs to tell the media what they can take photos of
 - PM will want to get protocol right
 - API waiting on detailed advice from SMFAT on how the events will run together. Will be very choreographed. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

 - Si'alei: when will PM get briefed by cultural advisors? MT: do at top of officials briefing that morning. 7 minutes. **Action API: put that into the programme.**

Out of scope

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Out of scope

o

o Lunch with PM La'aulialemalietoa

- Out of scope
- Out of scope

talk about what the matai title means. Out of scope

Si'alei: could

Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

4 pages removed - out of scope

From: [VAN TOOR, Si'alei \(API\)](#)
To: [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#); [SINCLAIR, Brody \(NUK\)](#)
Cc: [KIM, Minuk \(OCE\)](#); [ALLISON, Jordan \(API\)](#); [JOE, Kerriane \(PACPF\)](#); [MILLS, Keri \(PRD\)](#); [DEMAS, Sara \(DEVPA\)](#); [LELIEVELD, Rodney \(PRD\)](#); [BRUZZONE, Lorena \(PRD\)](#); [WILLIAMS, Frith \(PACPF\)](#); [GILBRIDE, Andrea \(DEVCO\)](#); [AMBLER, Corinne \(CMD\)](#); [MAKAPELU LEE, Moana \(CMD\)](#); [GAITAU, Dreesana \(NUK\)](#); [BROWNLEE, Victoria \(DS PDG\)](#); [PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [MCLANE, Ryan \(PACPF\)](#); [LEE, Jonathan \(API\)](#); [SA, Leitu \(NUK\)](#); [IOANE, Lavea'i \(API\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#); [ROBERTSON, Rebekah \(DEVPP\)](#); [ZHANG, Francesca \(PACPF\)](#); [ALLISON, Jordan \(API\)](#); [JENS, Esther \(NUK\)](#); [WATSON, Lauren \(DEVPA\)](#); [EVANS, David \(PACPF\)](#)
Subject: RE: Samoa Tonga PacMission: Tasking Omnibus to Posts #1, 27 Feb [SEC=IN CONFIDENCE]
Date: Sunday, 1 March 2026 7:21:36 pm
Attachments: [DRAFT PM Visit Programme as at 1 Mar \(002\).docx](#)
[image001.png](#)

[IN CONFIDENCE]

IN-CONFIDENCE

Out of scope

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Out of scope

7. For the Guard of Honour, Ava Ceremony and Saofa'i, the attire is an elei shirt with a red ula fala (red beaded necklace). The PM will change following the Head of State call into this attire at Taumeasina.

8. The Guard of Honour, Ava Ceremony and Saofa'i will all be held outside the Government Building, reducing delegation movements.

9. Plan A for the Ava Ceremony is in front of the Government Building with seating for the full delegation. Apia Village will lead the Ceremony and are expected to be seated ahead of PM Luxon's arrival. Plan B (wet weather) is the Samoa Tourism Village Fale (30 metres from Government Building). Anyone not receiving ava would likely sit as observers outside of the circle. **(Please note we will test with SMFAT this week how many delegates will receive ava)**

10. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Out of scope

Out of scope

Si'alei van Toor

New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa
New Zealand High Commission
Apia, Samoa

Attached document released as extract



Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

From: [ALLISON, Jordan \(API\)](#)
To: [MCLANE, Ryan \(PACPF\)](#)
Cc: [VAN TOOR, Si'alei \(API\)](#); [IOANE, Lavea"i \(API\)](#); [LEE, Jonathan \(API\)](#); [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#)
Subject: RE: Brief status [SEC=IN CONFIDENCE]
Date: Tuesday, 3 March 2026 10:47:21 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[IN CONFIDENCE]

IN-CONFIDENCE

Evening Ryan,

Just a quick email to note please that I've updated the below event briefs in your [Master](#) with the latest versions:

1. Out of scope
2. Ava Ceremony
3. Saofai Matai bestowal
4. Out of scope

Out of scope

Best, J

Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

From: [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#)
To: [PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [AMBLER, Corinne \(CMD\)](#)
Cc: [JOE, Kerriane \(PACPF\)](#); [MAKAPELU LEE, Moana \(CMD\)](#)
Subject: RE: PM's Pacific Mission comms and media pack [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Wednesday, 4 March 2026 12:20:00 pm

Out of scope

The framing of the bestowal as recognising New Zealand as a whole is spot on. Thank you.

Mauri ora,
Sophie

From: PETERS, Sonya (CMD) <Sonya.Peters@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 4 March 2026 11:54 am
To: CHRISP, Sophie (GDS) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>; AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: JOE, Kerriane (PACPF) <Kerriane.Joe@mfat.govt.nz>; MAKAPELU LEE, Moana (CMD) <Moana.Lee@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: PM's Pacific Mission comms and media pack [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora Sophie,

Linking Corinne in here, who has been in touch with API on various things this morning, including re-pitching the Samoa PR...

s6(a)

As such, we've included a para referencing the matai, as below/**highlighted in yellow**; have look/lets refine/agree here before dropping back into the Master doc, proper...

Na, PDG CMD

Press release: Samoa

17 March 2025

Out of scope

Out of scope

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The Prime Minister also had the privilege of being bestowed a matai, or chiefly title, from the village of Apia. The title XXXX recognises the special relationship New Zealand, and the New Zealand High Commission in Samoa, enjoys with the people of Apia and makes Mr Luxon just the sixth New Zealand prime minister to receive a matai while in office.

Out of scope

ENDS

Sonya Peters

Pacific and Development Communications
Rongotukuwhiti | Communications Division

Manatū Aorere | New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Mobile ^{s9(2)(a)}

Email sonya.peters@mfat.govt.nz

UNCLASSIFIED

From: CHRISP, Sophie (GDS) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 4 March 2026 9:08 am

To: MAKAPELU LEE, Moana (CMD) <Moana.Lee@mfat.govt.nz>; PETERS, Sonya (CMD) <Sonya.Peters@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: JOE, Kerriane (PACPF) <Kerriane.Joe@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: PM's Pacific Mission comms and media pack [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Mōrena kōrua,

Out of scope

After that, would one (or both) of you be able to do a further review?

- Samoa PR: ^{s9(2)(g)(i)} That'll require a fairly significant rewrite. If it doesn't look to clunky, then we should still profile our announcements. ^{s6(a)}
- Out of scope

I've been asked to focus on the PM's background brief today. I should have time later in the day.

Mauri ora,
Sophie

Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

From: s6(a)
To: [VAN TOOR, Si'alei \(API\)](#)
Cc: [IOANE, Lavea'i \(API\)](#)
Subject: Re: Meeting with Apia Village today [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Wednesday, 4 March 2026 7:47:28 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image001.png](#)

s6(a)

s6(a)

Chief Executive Officer
Ministry Foreign Affairs & Trade
GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA
Phone ^{s9(2)(a)} Mob ^{s9(2)(a)}



On Wed, 4 Mar 2026, 13:43 VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API), <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz> wrote:

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 4 March 2026 1:43 pm
To: Peseta Noumea Simi <noumea@mfat.gov.ws>
Cc: IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.loane@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Meeting with Apia Village today

Talofa lava lau afioga

s6(a)

s6(a)

s6(a)

Pls let me know if you have further questions.

Si'alei van Toor

New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa

New Zealand High Commission

Apia, Samoa



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From: [MAKAPELU LEE, Moana \(CMD\)](#)
To: [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#); [AMBLER, Corinne \(CMD\)](#); [JOE, Kerriane \(PACPF\)](#); [ZHANG, Francesca \(PACPF\)](#); [ROBERTSON, Rebekah \(DEVPP\)](#)
Cc: [PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#)
Subject: PM Comms & media pack
Date: Thursday, 5 March 2026 11:14:47 am

Kia ora koutou,

Thank you all for your contributions to our comms pack.

Please find the clean link with the latest amendments:

https://o-wln-gdm/Functions/VisitsManagement/VisitPlanningandImplementation/_layouts/15/DocIdRedirect.aspx?ID=VISI-1204194667-3195

It is now as up to date as possible, aside from a few minor details (e.g., the Matai Chief title in PR

Out of scope

The pack is now with Bernadette, who is reviewing it this

morning.

Out of scope

Ngā mihi nui,

Moana Makapelu Lee

Communications Adviser

Pacific and Development Communications

Rongotukuwhiti | Communications Division

Manatū Aorere | New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

M ^{s9(2)(a)}

moana.lee@mfat.govt.nz

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Out of scope

From: CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF)
Sent: Monday, 9 March 2026 10:10 am
To: ZHANG, Francesca (PACPF) <Francesca.Zhang@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Notes: From 9am onwards - Pac stand-up

Out of scope

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● Matai title – when share with media? **Action: Ask Mark guidance.**

- Out of scope
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Out of scope

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Out of scope

2 pages removed - out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

From: [EVANS, David \(PACPF\)](#)
To: [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#)
Cc: [MCLANE, Ryan \(PACPF\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#)
Subject: RE: For review: Pre-departure full delegation material [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Monday, 9 March 2026 12:58:59 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Out of scope

Re the presentation – I think advisable at this stage to remove references to the matai bestowal. This is still close hold. ^{Out of scope}

Thanks

Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

2 pages removed - out of scope

UNCLASSIFIED

From: [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#)
To: [....TALBOT, Mark \(Inet\)](#); [....DE BOER, Kate \(Inet\)](#)
Cc: [EVANS, David \(PACPF\)](#); [JOE, Kerriane \(PACPF\)](#); [MAKAPELU LEE, Moana \(CMD\)](#); [MCLANE, Ryan \(PACPF\)](#); [KIM, Minuk \(OCE\)](#); [ROBERTSON, Rebekah \(DEVPP\)](#); [ZHANG, Francesca \(PACPF\)](#); [VAN TOOR, Si'alei \(API\)](#); [AMBLER, Corinne \(CMD\)](#); [WALSH, Sarah \(PRD\)](#); [LELIEVELD, Rodney \(PRD\)](#); [GAITAU, Dreesana \(NUK\)](#); [SINCLAIR, Brody \(NUK\)](#); [IOANE, Lavea"i \(API\)](#); [SA, Leitu \(NUK\)](#); [MILLS, Keri \(PRD\)](#); [PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [LEE, Jonathan \(API\)](#); [SCADDEN, Matthew \(ARD\)](#); [GILMORE, Maria \(DS PDG\)](#); [BROWNLIE, Victoria \(DS PDG\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#); [BRUZZONE, Lorena \(PRD\)](#); [DEMAS, Sara \(DEVPA\)](#); [ALLISON, Jordan \(API\)](#); [CARRUTHERS, Michael \(PRD\)](#); [CAVANAGH, Bernadette \(DS PDG\)](#); [SPERRING, Nic \(PACMM\)](#); [GILBRIDE, Andrea \(DEVECO\)](#); [WATSON, Lauren \(DEVPA\)](#)
Subject: Samoa Tonga PacMission Planning Update #18, 9 Mar [SEC=IN CONFIDENCE]
Date: Monday, 9 March 2026 8:56:55 pm
Attachments: [PM Pacific Mission 2026 - Spouses programme 9 Mar.docx](#)
[PM Pacific Mission 2026 - MASTER Programme 9 Mar.docx](#)
[Pacific Mission 2026 - Accommodation Payment Instructions.docx](#)
[Pac Mission 2026 - Mrs Luxon Gift Suggestions.docx](#)

[IN CONFIDENCE]

IN-CONFIDENCE

IN-CONFIDENCE

Tālofa, mālō e lelei Mark and Caitlin,

Out of scope

Action points for PMO

- Out of scope

- Out of scope

- Out of scope

- Out of scope

- **Sharing title bestowal with media:** Grateful you advise at what point we can let the media know about the matai title bestowal.
- Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

Media

- Out of scope

- **Sharing title bestowal with media:** Grateful you advise at what point we can let the media know about the matai title bestowal. **(DPMC action)**

Out of scope

Fa'afetai tele lava, mālo 'aupito,

Zoe

Zoe Coulson-Sinclair (she/her)

Unit manager Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu | Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

T^{s9(2)(a)}

IN-CONFIDENCE

Attached documents in scope released as extracts

Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

IN-CONFIDENCE

From: Mark Talbot [DPMC] <Mark.Talbot@dpmc.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 10:35 am
To: MCLANE, Ryan (PACPF) <Ryan.McLane@mfat.govt.nz>;DE BOER, Kate (Inet) <kate.deboer@dpmc.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Brody (NUK) <Brody.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Samoa Tonga PacMission Planning Update #17, 4 Mar [SEC=IN CONFIDENCE]

Hi Ryan,

Out of scope

Out of scope

- **Dinner Reception.** Out of scope

s9(2)(g)(i)

Out of scope

Out of scope

Best wishes,

Mark Talbot

s9(2)(a)

Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

From: [AMBLER, Corinne \(CMD\)](#)
To: [MAKAPELU LEE, Moana \(CMD\)](#); [LEE, Jonathan \(API\)](#); [JOE, Kerriane \(PACPF\)](#); [KAVAFOLAU, Raewyn \(NUK\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#)
Cc: [PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#); [SA, Leitu \(NUK\)](#)
Subject: RE: Media Event Day Factsheet - Pacific Mission [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 4:30:01 pm
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Moana

Thanks for this.

EVERYONE NOTE: Please don't distribute this to media – I will need to check it and send it once we land. ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}

Ngā mihi

Corinne

Corinne Ambler

Chief Media Adviser

Communications Division

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M ^{s9(2)(a)} **E** corinne.ambler@mfat.govt.nz

This media response has been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. For further information, you can consider [submitting a request](#) under the Official Information Act (OIA). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.



195 Lambton Quay, Private Bag 18901, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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Out of scope

Out of scope

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 10:50 am
To: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.ioane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}
Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

IN-CONFIDENCE

Taeao manuia Si'alei,
Malo le tauata'i, malo fo'i le onosa'i.

Thank you for the updates and appreciate the communication with us.
A meeting sounds good to discuss the aspects and considerations as you have outlined.

^{s9(2)(a)} is teaching all day so available after 5.30pm (NZT). ^{s9(2)(a)} is also included in the email and you may have now contacted him but can also follow up for him to attend online.

We will await your meeting invite and link and look forward to a talanoa today.

Manuia le aso

Soifua ma ia manuia

Nafanuatele Momoemaaitu Lafitaga Mafaufau Peters
Chief Advisor, Partnerships

M ^{s9(2)(a)}

Te Puni Kokiri House, 9 Ronwood Avenue, Manukau, 2014
PO Box 97-005, South Auckland Mail Centre, Manukau, 2240



IN-CONFIDENCE

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 10:29 am
To: Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.ioane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}
; Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: IN-CONFIDENCE:Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Talofa lava Nafanuatele

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Vai and I are available today between 2-4pm if that suits your side for a 30 min-1 hour chat.

Manuia le aso

Si'alei van Toor

New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa
New Zealand High Commission
Apia, Samoa



UNCLASSIFIED

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API)

Sent: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 4:04 pm

To: 'Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters' <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.ioane@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}

; Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: IN-CONFIDENCE:Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies

Thanks for your email Nafanuatele,

We haven't heard yet from ^{s9(2)(a)} however we have passed his details on to Apia Village for them to connect directly. We met the Apia Village council representatives today (Mayor, MP and Secretary etc) and will meet them again on Friday afternoon along with the CEOs of MFAT and MPMC to go over the final runsheet for the ava etc. It would be great if ^{s9(2)(a)} could join us for the Friday afternoon meeting if he is available.

We discussed the gifting arrangements with the Village council reps today and can discuss further on a phone call with you but I think we have this in hand.

We suggest having a call between us after our meeting on Friday afternoon with the CEOs (probably after 5pm but timing is still tbc) so we can provide an update on protocols, gifting etc that has been agreed to.

Thanks,

Si'alei van Toor

New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa
New Zealand High Commission
Apia, Samoa



From: Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>

Sent: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 2:53 pm

To: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.loane@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}

Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>

Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies

IN-CONFIDENCE

Malo le soifua i lua afioga Sialei ma Lavea'i,

I trust this finds you both well as preparations progress for the upcoming mission.

I am writing to follow up on whether ^{s9(2)(a)} has been able to connect with you regarding the 'ava and saofa'i components of the programme. With the list of matai now confirmed, we are seeking your guidance on several cultural dependencies that require your direction before we can finalise our arrangements. In particular, we would appreciate the time to talanoa and confirm the appropriate *lafo* for village and district orators, as well as expectations for gifting and ceremony protocol. As discussed, envelopes will not be used, however *'ie toga* has been advised by the cultural advisors as an alternative; we are open to working with you on sourcing these should that be preferred.

To ensure a coordinated and culturally aligned approach, we propose convening a meeting between you as leads and our cultural SMEs to confirm the agreed process for the ceremonies and associated protocols.

Given the wider briefing scheduled for later today, it would be helpful to signal a proposed meeting time for the Samoan contingent so that we can proceed with clarity and shared understanding.

We welcome your advice on the best way to convene this talanoaga and look forward to working closely with you to ensure that the cultural elements of the programme are delivered with integrity and respect.

Soifua ma ia manuia

Nafanuatele Momoemaitu Lafitaga Mafaufau Peters
Chief Advisor, Partnerships

M ^{s9(2)(a)}

Te Puni Kokiri House, 9 Ronwood Avenue, Manukau, 2014
PO Box 97-005, South Auckland Mail Centre, Manukau, 2240



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have received this message in error, please email or telephone the sender immediately ..

Released under the Official Information Act

From: [Nelson Tiatia](#)
To: [VAN TOOR, Si'alei \(API\)](#)
Cc: [Lu Avia](#); [Surava Elaisa](#); [Florence Malama](#); [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#); [EVANS, David \(SAPD\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#); [Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters](#); [IOANE, Lavea'i \(API\)](#)
Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:Draft briefing material for PM - "ava ceremony and saofa'i"
Date: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 5:52:30 pm
Attachments: [Draft briefing material for PM - "ava ceremony and saofa'i".docx](#)

IN-CONFIDENCE

Talofa lava HC Si'alei and Post team,

I hope this email finds you well.

Following the senior officials' briefing this morning, Bernadette asked that Gerardine brief the Prime Minister on cultural proceedings for the 'ava ceremony and saofa'i at this afternoon's meeting. Accordingly, we prepared the attached document to assist Gerardine with this briefing, noting finer details are still to be confirmed and led by Post.

We aimed to keep the content simple, PM-friendly, and focused on what he will see and do on the day. Mark Talbot from DPMC asked that we send this draft material to Post if it is useful for you to adapt and/or use as you finalise preparations for the Prime Minister.

Please let me know if we can provide more information or assist in any other way.

la manuia,

Nelson Tiatia (he/him)

Senior Analyst

Policy

Ministry for Pacific Peoples

Te Iho Building, 1 Bowen Street, Pipitea, Wellington

IN-CONFIDENCE

Samoa: Mon 16 March, 09:25AM – Ava ceremony and Saofa'i

For: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Prime Minister of New Zealand

Purpose: To provide a simple, practical guide to the cultural ceremonies you will participate in.

Location: Outdoors, in front of Samoa's Government Building

Key Attendees

SAMOA	NEW ZEALAND
Prime Minister La'aulialemalietoa	Prime Minister Christopher Luxon
Samoa Cabinet Ministers and MPs	Mrs Amanda Luxon
MC s9(2)(a), Chief Executive, Samoa Ministry of Prime Minister and Cabinet	Hon Dr Shane Reti
Apia Village Orators and Representatives	Hon Mark Mitchell
	Cultural Expert s9(2)(a)
	Cultural Expert s9(2)(a)
	Full delegation

Event information

During the Pacific Mission March 2026, you will take part in two interconnected Samoan ceremonies.

Together, the two ceremonies represent:

- Respect and honour for your leadership
- A diplomatic and cultural bond between Samoa and New Zealand
- Recognition of the significant Samoan community in New Zealand.

1. The 'Ava Ceremony – Formal Welcome

It may be viewed as similar to a pōwhiri or a formal marae welcome.

It acknowledges your status, establishes the relationship between hosts and guests, and sets the cultural tone for the visit.

2. The Saofa'i [sao-fah-ee] – Bestowal of a Chiefly Title

This ceremony formally installs you as a Samoan high chief. Their decision to bestow this is a significant step towards the objectives of the Mission. It is far more than a cultural honour, it is a declaration of kinship diplomacy that is New Zealand is not just another state, we are viewed as extended family.

Samoa is one of the few countries where customary chiefly authority and democratic governance coexist at every level of society. This ceremony confirms your place within Samoan society.

In Samoa, there are two types of chiefly titles, noble titles and orator titles. Joining the delegation are Savae Sir La'auli Michael Jones, Fiso John Fiso, Namulau'ulu Nu'ualifi Eteroa Lafaele. These delegation members are all high chief titles but not orators, which is why the your Samoan cultural experts ^{s9(2)(a)} and ^{s9(2)(a)}, are of particular importance.

The specific title you receive will be the high chief title, **[insert title]**. Its village chiefs would have undertaken a formal process to ensure it is befitting of your status.

Ceremonies can vary between villages, and much like marae protocols, things can move quickly, shift unexpectedly. Follow the lead of your cultural experts on the day.

Why This Matters

Receiving a Samoan chiefly title is highly prestigious. When a village bestows a title on the Prime Minister of New Zealand, it signifies:

- **Deep connection between Samoa and New Zealand:** This reflects long-standing ties between the two nations and acknowledges the large Samoan diaspora in New Zealand.
- **Recognition of your leadership and goodwill:** The village is welcoming you as a leader and symbolically placing their trust in you.
- **A meaningful cultural honour:** You are becoming part of an extended family. This carries expectations of service, humility, and ongoing relationship.

You will be supported

Throughout this entire ceremony, you will be supported at every step by Samoan cultural experts ^{s9(2)(a)} and ^{s9(2)(a)}, and by the New Zealand High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner. You will not be left to navigate any part of the process alone.

The Samoan language has two distinct levels, standard and oratory. You will have a translator from the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, who is an expert in the oratory language.

If something shifts (which is common), your team will guide your movements, when to stand, when to sit, and when to speak. You can safely follow their cues.

This is very similar to being welcomed onto a marae: protocol can change quickly, things run to the rhythm of the hosts, and you are carried by those who speak and act on your behalf.

Part One: The Traditional Welcome ('Ava Ceremony)

Seating and Opening

You will be escorted to your seat by a senior government official. The final seating plan has not been confirmed yet, but you will be seated with Ministers Reti and Mitchell, MPs, and High Commissioner Sialei van Toor.

Expected seating plan

The seating plan for an ava ceremony typically is a circular arrangement divided into the hosts and visitors.

Cultural experts (of both sides) are seated opposite each other at the front on the side.

Senior dignitaries and highest ranking chiefs both sides are seated opposite each other at the front in the middle.

The rest of the delegation party will be seated behind the front row.

Expected order of proceedings

- MC s9(2)(a) CE of Samoa's Ministry of Prime Minister and Cabinet will offer acknowledgements, explain the order and protocol, followed by a short prayer.
- Your accompanying cultural expert will respond briefly on behalf of the delegation.
- Deliberation between cultural experts.
- The host side delivers a welcome speech.
- Your cultural expert delivers a response on behalf of you and the New Zealand delegation.

Ceremonial Drink

A traditional drink ('ava) is prepared and distributed to key members of both groups.

When you receive the cup:

- Hold it with both hands.
- You may choose to spill a small amount on the ground as a gesture of respect (optional).
- You may then say a few remarks to acknowledge this significant day, and the hospitality of the Samoa government, and conclude with a short acknowledgment such as "manuia" [mah-noo-WEE-ah] (a toast), before taking a sip. You then hold the cup out for the server to collect.
- Following you, Ministers and other members of the delegation will receive a cup of ava.

Gifting

MC s9(2)(a) will explain the cultural gifting, and then your cultural expert, s9(2)(a) will speak on behalf of you and the New Zealand delegation.

Transition: There will be a quick transition between the 'Ava ceremony, and the Saofa'i ceremony. Deputy High Commissioner Lavea'i loane will assist you to don headwear and feather waistband for the title bestowal ceremony.



Image: Former Prime Minister Sir Bill English receiving a Samoan chiefly title in 2017

Part Two: Bestowal of the Title (Saofa'i)

Entry and Initial Acknowledgements

You will be guided to your seat, and the hosting Apia village will sit opposite. This is a “hosts and visitors” arrangement, similar to the layout on a marae.

The hosts offer brief acknowledgements and welcome, followed by a short response from your representative.

Expected order of proceedings

- Delegation enters the ceremony space, with the host village sitting opposite.
- The hosts welcome the delegation.
- The delegation's orator responds to the welcome.
- The hosts speak again and begin preparation of the 'ava.
- The delegation's orator responds again to the preparation of the 'ava.
- While the 'ava is being prepared, the hosts present a debate.
- The delegation's orator responds to the debate.
- The ava is completed and distributed.

Ceremonial Drink

The drink is served again in the same manner as during the welcome. This is considered the Prime Minister's first act in his new role.

Proposed lines are below for you to use in acceptance of the title and 'ava, express gratitude, humility, and respect for the honour being received.

Proposed lines

- Le ava mo Le Atua. Samoa, Apia, o lau pule lea. Fa'afetai, Fa'afetai. Soifua!

Leh ah-vah maw leh AH-too-wah. SAH-maw-ah, AH-pee-ah, aw laow POO-leh LEH-ah. Fa-ah-feh-tai, fa-ah-feh-tai. Soy-FOO-wah!

- I humbly accept the honour that has been bestowed upon me this day.
- I acknowledge the hospitality, love and respect that has been shown today from the village chiefs and orators of Apia [AH-pee-ah], along with the Samoa government.
- It is a privilege that I do not take lightly. Fa'afetai lava, soifua [Fa-ah-feh-tai lah-vah, soy-FOO-wah].

Released under the Official Information Act

Biographies of your cultural experts

s9(2)(a)

Former New Zealand Prime Ministers with Matai titles

Name	Matai title	Year bestowed
Rt Hon Robert Muldoon	Leasapai	1981
Rt Hon David Lange	Tagaloa	Unknown
Rt Hon Jim Bolger	Anae	Unknown
Rt Hon Winston Peters	Vaovasamanaia	2007
Rt Hon John Key	To'osavili	2014
Rt Hon Sir Bill English	Leulua'iali'iotumua	2017

Out of scope

RESTRICTED

From: COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 6:04 pm
To: CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>; VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Brody (NUK) <Brody.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; MAKAPELU LEE, Moana (CMD) <Moana.Lee@mfat.govt.nz>; AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Senior officials' briefing of PM [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Hi all
Out of scope

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Out of
scope

Wider partnership

- Out of scope
- CE MPP – spoke of bestowal as ‘kinship diplomacy’. Demonstrates that NZ is not just a state but extended family. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

Out of scope

Zoe

Zoe Coulson-Sinclair (she/her)

Unit manager Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu

T ^{s9(2)(a)}

E zoe.coulson-sinclair@mfat.govt.nz



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From: [Florence Malama](#)
To: [VAN TOOR, Si'alei \(API\)](#); [Surava Elaisa](#); [Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters](#); [IOANE, Lavea'i \(API\)](#)
Cc: [Lu Avia](#); ^{s9(2)(a)} [Nelson Tiatia](#); [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#); [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#); [EVANS, David \(PACPF\)](#)
Subject: Re: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Saturday, 14 March 2026 3:42:08 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Malo everyone,

Ideally at least 2 helpers. The ies roughly 30feet, tall in height helps to hold them up.

Fa'afetai.

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2026 3:37:33 PM
To: [Surava Elaisa](#) <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; [Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters](#) <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>; [IOANE, Lavea'i \(API\)](#) <Lavea'i.loane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: [Lu Avia](#) <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)} [Nelson Tiatia](#) <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; [Florence Malama](#) <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>; [EVANS, David \(PACPF\)](#) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

How many would you need?

UNCLASSIFIED

From: [Surava Elaisa](#) <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>
Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2026 3:31:31 PM
To: [VAN TOOR, Si'alei \(API\)](#) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; [Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters](#) <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>; [IOANE, Lavea'i \(API\)](#) <Lavea'i.loane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: [Lu Avia](#) <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)} [Nelson Tiatia](#) <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; [Florence Malama](#) <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; [COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe \(PACPF\)](#) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>; [EVANS, David \(PACPF\)](#) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Talofa Si'alei,

Would be great to have NZHC staff on standby to help please.

Ia manuia,

Surava.

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2026 3:07 PM

To: Lafitaga Mafau-fau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafau-fau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.loane@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}

Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: Re: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Talofa lava

Has anyone organized for people to hold up and display the mat ?

Do we need our NZHC staff to help?

Thanks

Sialei

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Lafitaga Mafau-fau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafau-fau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 11:01:01 AM

To: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.loane@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}

Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

IN-CONFIDENCE

Fa'afetai. 6pm it is.
See you all online

Soifua ma ia manuia

Nafanuatele Momoemaaitu Lafitaga Mafaufau Peters
Chief Advisor, Partnerships

M ^{s9(2)(a)}

Te Puni Kokiri House, 9 Ronwood Avenue, Manukau, 2014
PO Box 97-005, South Auckland Mail Centre, Manukau, 2240



IN-CONFIDENCE

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 10:59 am
To: Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.loane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}
Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Yes please 6pm is good.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 10:57 am

To: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.loane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}
; Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

IN-CONFIDENCE

5.45 is good or even 6.00pm if that suits you better.
Fa'afetai

Soifua ma ia manuia

Nafanuatele Momoemaaitu Lafitaga Mafaufau Peters
Chief Advisor, Partnerships

M ^{s9(2)(a)}

Te Puni Kokiri House, 9 Ronwood Avenue, Manukau, 2014
PO Box 97-005, South Auckland Mail Centre, Manukau, 2240



IN-CONFIDENCE

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 10:54 am
To: Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.loane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}
Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks very much

Is 545pm ok as I will be rushing from another meeting? If so I'll send a teams link.

Si'alei

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 10:50 am
To: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.ioane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}
; Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:RE: Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

IN-CONFIDENCE

Taeao manuia Si'alei,
Malo le tauata'i, malo fo'i le onosa'i.

Thank you for the updates and appreciate the communication with us.
A meeting sounds good to discuss the aspects and considerations as you have outlined.

^{s9(2)(a)} is teaching all day so available after 5.30pm (NZT). ^{s9(2)(a)} is also included in the email and you may have now contacted him but can also follow up for him to attend online.

We will await your meeting invite and link and look forward to a talanoa today.

Manuia le aso

Soifua ma ia manuia

Nafanuatele Momoemaaitu Lafitaga Mafaufau Peters
Chief Advisor, Partnerships

M ^{s9(2)(a)}

Te Puni Kokiri House, 9 Ronwood Avenue, Manukau, 2014

PO Box 97-005, South Auckland Mail Centre, Manukau, 2240



IN-CONFIDENCE

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 10:29 am
To: Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.ioane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}
Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: IN-CONFIDENCE:Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Talofa lava Nafanuatele

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Released under the Official Information Act

Vai and I are available today between 2-4pm if that suits your side for a 30 min-1 hour chat.

Manuia le aso

Si'alei van Toor

New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa
New Zealand High Commission
Apia, Samoa



UNCLASSIFIED

From: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API)
Sent: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 4:04 pm
To: 'Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters' <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.ioane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}
Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (SAPD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: IN-CONFIDENCE:Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies

Thanks for your email Nafanuatele,

We haven't heard yet from ^{s9(2)(a)} however we have passed his details on to Apia Village for them to connect directly. We met the Apia Village council representatives today (Mayor, MP and Secretary etc) and will meet them again on Friday afternoon along with the CEOs of MFAT and MPMC to go over the final runsheet for the ava etc. It would be great if ^{s9(2)(a)} could join us for the Friday afternoon meeting if he is available.

We discussed the gifting arrangements with the Village council reps today and can discuss further on a phone call with you but I think we have this in hand.

We suggest having a call between us after our meeting on Friday afternoon with the CEOs

(probably after 5pm but timing is still tbc) so we can provide an update on protocols, gifting etc that has been agreed to.

Thanks,

Si'alei van Toor

New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa
New Zealand High Commission
Apia, Samoa



From: Lafitaga Mafaufau-Peters <Lafitaga.Mafaufau-Peters@mpp.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 2:53 pm
To: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; IOANE, Lavea'i (API) <Lavea'i.ioane@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Lu Avia <lu.avia@mpp.govt.nz>; ^{s9(2)(a)}
Surava Elaisa <surava.elaisa@mpp.govt.nz>; Nelson Tiatia <nelson.tiatia@mpp.govt.nz>; Florence Malama <florence.malama@mpp.govt.nz>
Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE:Preparation for Pacific mission cultural ceremonies

IN-CONFIDENCE

Malo le soifua i lua afioga Sialei ma Lavea'i,

I trust this finds you both well as preparations progress for the upcoming mission.

I am writing to follow up on whether ^{s9(2)(a)} has been able to connect with you regarding the 'ava and saofa'i components of the programme. With the list of matai now confirmed, we are seeking your guidance on several cultural dependencies that require your direction before we can finalise our arrangements. In particular, we would appreciate the time to talanoa and confirm the appropriate *lafo* for village and district orators, as well as expectations for gifting and ceremony protocol. As discussed, envelopes will not be used, however *'ie toga* has been advised by the cultural advisors as an alternative; we are open to working with you on sourcing these should that be preferred.

To ensure a coordinated and culturally aligned approach, we propose convening a meeting between you as leads and our cultural SMEs to confirm the agreed process for the ceremonies and associated protocols.

Given the wider briefing scheduled for later today, it would be helpful to signal a proposed meeting time for the Samoan contingent so that we can proceed with clarity and shared understanding.

We welcome your advice on the best way to convene this talanoaga and look forward to working closely with you to ensure that the cultural elements of the programme are delivered with integrity and respect.

Soifua ma ia manuia

Nafanuatele Momoemaitu Lafitaga Mafaufau Peters

Chief Advisor, Partnerships

M ^{s9(2)(a)}

Te Puni Kokiri House, 9 Ronwood Avenue, Manukau, 2014
PO Box 97-005, South Auckland Mail Centre, Manukau, 2240



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From: [CHRISP, Sophie \(PACPF\)](#)
To: [ALEXANDER, Emily \(AUS\)](#)
Cc: [MESSENT, James \(TPEI\)](#); [LENNOX-MARWICK, Alex \(CBA\)](#); [DUVAL, Ellen \(AUS\)](#); [TAOTUA, Bryce \(CBA\)](#); [O'SHAUGHNESSY, Eamonn \(AUS\)](#); [MEDIA](#); [SHAHRYAR-DAVIES, Alex \(MEA\)](#); [AMBLER, Corinne \(CMD\)](#); [JOE, Kerriane \(PACPF\)](#); [MCLANE, Ryan \(PACPF\)](#); [PLUMMER, Adele \(PACPF\)](#)
Subject: RE: heads up: ANZMIN media event briefs [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Date: Monday, 16 March 2026 4:43:00 pm

Kia ora Emily,

Out of scope

■ Out of scope

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○

■ Out of scope

■ Out of scope

He has had met with Samoa's Head of State, had good discussions with Prime Minister La'aulialemalietoa and his Cabinet, was honoured to participate in a traditional ava ceremony and be bestowed with the matai title Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua by the Apia Village. This title recognises the special relationship between New Zealand and the people of Apia.

■ Out of scope

■ Out of scope

■ Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

Out of scope

Out of scope

Mauri ora,
Sophie

Sophie Chrisp ([she/her](#))

Senior Policy Officer | Kaitātari Matua Kaupapa
Pacific Polynesia and French Pacific Division | Te Rāwhiti o Te Moana
Pacific and Development Group | Whiritaurua
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M s9(2)(a)

E sophie.chrisp@mfat.govt.nz

Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

Out of scope

RESTRICTED

From: CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 16 March 2026 4:08 pm
To: PLUMMER, Adele (PACPF) <Adele.Plummer@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: MCLANE, Ryan (PACPF) <Ryan.McLane@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: heads up: ANZMIN media event briefs [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Kia ora Adele,

Out of scope

Out of scope The below has some generic intro points, a point each on the matai title

The presser is scheduled for Tuesday, 17 March. To make sure we don't get ahead of the PMs announcements I think we should only highlight things that happened today i.e. matai title,

Here are draft points for your review:

■ Out of scope

o

Out of scope

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■ Out of scope

■ It has been highly successful, so far. He has had met with Samoa's Head of State, had good discussions with Prime Minister La'aulialemalietoa and his Cabinet, was honoured to participate in a traditional ava ceremony and be bestowed with the matai title Tuisinavemaumoto'otua by the Apia Village. This title recognises the special relationship between New Zealand and the people of Apia. ^{Out of scope}

■ Out of scope

■ s6(a)

■ Out of scope

Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

Out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act

Mauri ora,
Sophie

Out of scope

Out of scope

UNCLASSIFIED

From: PLUMMER, Adele (PACPF) <Adele.Plummer@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 16 March 2026 2:02 pm
To: Social Media <socialmedia@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: CHRISP, Sophie (PACPF) <Sophie.Chrisp@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: FOR PACPF DM APPROVAL: draft social media post for MFATNZ channels
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

A few suggested typo corrections are in red below Sarah:

Today, the Prime Minister-led Pacific Mission delegation received a formal welcome and Ava ceremony outside the Samoa Government Building. As part of the ceremony, PM Luxon was bestowed a matai, or chiefly, title from the village of Apia.

The title — Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua — recognises the special relationship New Zealand holds with the people of Apia. PM Luxon is the sixth New Zealand

Prime Minister to receive a matai title while in office.

We would also suggest you contact the PMO comms team to see how they are approaching media entries on this.

Adele

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Social Media <socialmedia@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 16 March 2026 12:49 pm
To: PLUMMER, Adele (PACPF) <Adele.Plummer@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: FOR PACPF DM APPROVAL: draft social media post for MFATNZ channels [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora Adele,

Emailing you in David's absence. We've drafted the below social media post for the MFATNZ channels.

Noting the press coverage the PM's matai has had, Daniel Glover our UM has asked that we check for PACPF DM approval before we post given the recent stories about the title may draw comments on the post.

Is this something you'd approve us posting about?

Today, the Prime Minister-led Pacific Mission delegation received a formal welcome and Ava ceremony outside the Samoa Government Building. As part of the ceremony, PM Luxon was bestowed a matai, or chiefly title, from the village of Apia.

The title — Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua — recognises the special relationship New Zealand holds with the people of Apia. PM Luxon is the sixth New Zealand prime minister to receive a matai while in office.

Thanks
Sarah

Sarah Kennerley

Digital Content Adviser, Social Media

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

UNCLASSIFIED

From: GLOVER, Daniel (CMD) <Daniel.Glover@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Monday, 16 March 2026 12:33 pm

To: Social Media <socialmedia@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: FOR YOUR APPROVAL: MFATNZ Post for [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Noting the press coverage, can you please check with David Evans (PACFF) with the point that the stories recently about the title may draw comments on the posts. Please don't proceed with out his agreement.

Daniel Glover



Unit Manager – Communications and Digital

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti



M ^{s9(2)(a)}

E daniel.glover@mfat.govt.nz

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Social Media <socialmedia@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Monday, 16 March 2026 11:18 am

To: GLOVER, Daniel (CMD) <Daniel.Glover@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: FOR YOUR APPROVAL: MFATNZ Post for [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora Daniel,

Please find below a post for the MFAT NZ 's X account (it could also go on Facebook if you're happy with that) for the PM's ceremony in Apia this morning. Felicity Bollen approved the comms plan which the wording has not varied from and Moana has had approved on the ground. There are heaps of photos but I've picked the strongest 4.

Please let me know any other approvals required. I feel the confusion in the media around who requested the title has been cleared up this morning.

Sarah

Today, the Prime Minister-led Pacific Mission delegation received a formal welcome and Ava ceremony outside the Samoa Government Building. As part of the ceremony, PM Luxon was bestowed a matai, or chiefly title, from the village of Apia.

The title — Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua — recognises the special relationship New Zealand holds with the people of Apia. PM Luxon is the sixth New Zealand prime minister to receive a matai while in office.

Sarah Kennerley

Digital Content Adviser, Social Media

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M^{s9(2)(a)}

E sarah.kennerley@mfat.govt.nz

[SeeMail]

UNCLASSIFIED

From: PEEL, Emma (CMD) <emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent on: Sunday, March 15, 2026 4:13:47 AM
To: PEEL, Emma (CMD) <emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz>
CC: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Weekend media queries for RAYDZ [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Follow up: Follow up
Start date: Monday, March 16, 2026 12:00:00 AM
Due date: Monday, March 16, 2026 12:00:00 AM

Categories: Emma

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

PM Luxon - Samoan honour

Radio NZ (Giles Dexter), ABC (Evan Wasuka), Stuff (Jenna Lynch), NZ Herald (Julia Gabel), NZME (Lachlan Rennie) asked about claims from the Samoan government that NZ PM Luxon had asked for a Matai honour to be bestowed during his upcoming visit to Samoa.

The New Zealand High Commissioner did not request a title for Prime Minister Luxon. As is normal in the preparation for a Prime Minister's visit there were detailed discussions with the host government about arrangements. The High Commissioner asked for advance notice of any important announcements or honours to ensure that the Prime Minister could be properly prepared.

Out of scope

The reporter asked follow up questions, *which are being considered.*

Emma Peel

Senior Communications Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M s9(2)(a)

| **E** emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz

[Document ID]

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent on: Sunday, March 15, 2026 12:35:23 AM
To: Julia Gabel <julia.gabel@nzme.co.nz>
CC: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: PM's matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: Transferred to GDM

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora Julia

You can attribute an MFAT spokesperson.

The New Zealand High Commissioner did not request a title for Prime Minister Luxon. As is normal in the preparation for a Prime Minister's visit there were detailed discussions with the host government about arrangements. The High Commissioner asked for advance notice of any important announcements or honours to ensure that the Prime Minister could be properly prepared.

Regards

Emma

Emma Peel

Senior Media Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M +64 21 375 105

This media response has been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. For further information, you can consider [submitting a request](#) under the Official Information Act (OIA). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

195 Lambton Quay, Private Bag 18901, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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From: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 5:41:01 AM
To:TALBOT, Mark (Inet) <mark.talbot@dpmc.govt.nz>
CC: CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>;
MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: PM visit to Samoa: Stuff article [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[RESTRICTED]

- RESTRICTED

Thanks Mark.

In response to today's Stuff article we provided the following response:

Your story this afternoon [PM Luxon to be bestowed honorary matai title in Samoa, at his request | Stuff](#) says the honour of a matai title for Prime Minister Luxon was requested by the New Zealand High Commissioner. This is not the case. Please correct this urgently.

In response to a follow up question from the reporter we responded:

As is normal in the preparation for a Prime Minister's visit there were detailed discussions with the host government about arrangements. The High Commissioner asked for advance notice of any important announcements or honours to ensure that the Prime Minister could be properly prepared.

Thanks
David

- RESTRICTED

From: Mark Talbot [DPMC] <Mark.Talbot@dpmc.govt.nz>
Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 6:18 pm
To: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>; MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: PM visit to Samoa: Stuff article

Hi David

As discussed, the PMO have been asked to respond to a Stuff article suggesting the PM will be bestowed a Matai title in Samoa, specifically suggesting that the PM requested it. Below is their response:

[Document ID]

BEGINS

From a spokesperson for the PM:

"This is incorrect. While the bestowal of an honorary title is a great honour for New Zealand and a mark of our strong relationship with Samoa, it is not something that was requested by the Prime Minister."

ENDS

Cheers

Mark Talbot

s9(2)(a)

[Seemail][Restricted]

From: Jenna Lynch <jenna.lynch@stuffdigital.co.nz>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 5:34:46 AM
To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
CC: Caroline Williams <caroline.williams@stuffdigital.co.nz>
Subject: Re: PM title Samoa [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Emma appreciate this

- **Jenna Lynch**
- Senior Political Correspondent
- s9(2)(a)
-
- c/- Stuff Press Gallery, Parliament Buildings,
- Pipitea, Wellington 6011



On Sat, 14 Mar 2026 at 6:34 PM, MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz> wrote:

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora Jenna

Thanks for your patience on this. You can attribute an MFAT spokesperson.

[Document ID]

As is normal in the preparation for a Prime Minister's visit there were detailed discussions with the host government about arrangements. The High Commissioner asked for advance notice of any important announcements or honours to ensure that the Prime Minister could be properly prepared.

Regards
Emma

Emma Peel

Senior Media Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M +64 21 375 105

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www.mfat.govt.nz | www.safetravel.govt.nz



From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 4:40:12 AM
To: Jenna Lynch <jenna.lynch@stuffdigital.co.nz>;
MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; Caroline
Williams <caroline.williams@stuffdigital.co.nz>
Subject: RE: PM title Samoa [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Received thanks Jenna
I'll get this checked asap.

[Document ID]

Emma

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: Jenna Lynch <jenna.lynch@stuffdigital.co.nz>
Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 5:35 pm
To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; Caroline Williams <caroline.williams@stuffdigital.co.nz>
Subject: PM title Samoa

You don't often get email from jenna.lynch@stuffdigital.co.nz. [Learn why this is important](#)

Kia ora,

Could you please confirm whether the High Commissioner spoke to Samoan counterparts or leadership about the PM receiving a title at all?

If so is it correct that the High Commissioner had asked the Samoan Government for advance notice should Luxon be given the title and is this where the confusion has arisen from?

I have cc'd in Caroline as she is helping amend the story, could you please send the response to both of us.

Thank you

Jenna

--

- **Jenna Lynch**
- Senior Political Correspondent
- s9(2)(a)
-
- c/- Stuff Press Gallery, Parliament Buildings,
- Pipitea, Wellington 6011



From: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>

[Document ID]

Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 5:27:22 AM

To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: PM title Samoa [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Emma, a few revisions below.

As is normal in the preparation for a Prime Minister's visit there were detailed discussions with the host government about arrangements. The High Commissioner asked for advance notice of any important announcements or events to ensure that the Prime Minister could be properly prepared.

Grateful you pass this on to Stuff.

Thanks

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 5:54 pm

To: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: PM title Samoa [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Draft response for review:

s9(2)(g)(i)

Emma

[Document ID]

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 5:42 pm

To: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: FW: PM title Samoa [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Hi all

The reporter's come back with a more specific question. I can start a draft response while you review.

Emma

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 5:05:54 AM

To: COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: PM title Samoa [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

s9(2)(g)(i) . Think we need the full response on this. Stuff Head of News has called me and agreed to drop the story down the story list (less prominence) while we prepare a statement.

Emma

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 6:03 pm

To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: PM title Samoa [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[Document ID]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

How about we leave out the specific example?

Draft response for review:

s9(2)(g)(i)

Emma

- UNCLASSIFIED

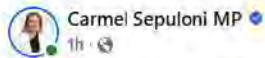
From: PEEL, Emma (CMD) <emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 4:23:29 AM
To: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
CC: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Draft line re: Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Definitely triggered by Stuff post.

[Document ID]



Carmel Sepuloni MP

A number of our NZ PM's and foreign affairs ministers have been bestowed Samoan Matai titles over the years but I do not recall any of them asking for them! Two that were well respected in Samoa - Helen Clark and Jacinda Ardern never received titles. I'm not sure if they were offered them and declined or if it wasn't raised with them but what I know for sure is that neither of them would have even contemplated asking.

Meanwhile Chris Luxon put in a request for a Matai title? All due respect to Samoa and the village from which he will receive the title. I certainly would not want my criticism of Luxon to reflect on them but the shamelessness of the NZ PM - this is embarrassing.

I'm glad I won't be there to witness this - actually none of the three current NZ Samoan MPs (all from the Labour Party) will be there, because the PM didn't invite any of us to be part of his big delegation.



stuff.co.nz

Luxon to be bestowed honorary matai title in Samoa, at his request

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 4:51 pm

To: PEEL, Emma (CMD) <emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz>; AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: Re: Draft line re: Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Emma. Yes please send.

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: PEEL, Emma (CMD) <emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2026 4:46:46 PM

To: AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (PACPF)

[Document ID]

<David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: Draft line re: Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Hi David

Draft line:

Your story this afternoon [PM Luxon to be bestowed honorary matai title in Samoa, at his request | Stuff](#) says the honour of a matai title for Prime Minister Luxon was requested by the New Zealand High Commissioner. This is not the case. Please correct this urgently.

Emma

Emma Peel

Senior Communications Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M s9(2)(a)

| **E** emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz

From: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 4:06:42 AM

To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: Re: Draft line re: Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Emma

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2026 5:01:13 PM

To: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; PEEL, Emma (CMD) <emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz>; AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: Draft line re: Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[Document ID]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Hi David – got through to the reporter – they are working on it now.

Emma

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 4:51 pm

To: PEEL, Emma (CMD) <emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz>; AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: Re: Draft line re: Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Emma. Yes please send.

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: PEEL, Emma (CMD) <emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2026 4:46:46 PM

To: AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: Draft line re: Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Hi David

Draft line:

Your story this afternoon [PM Luxon to be bestowed honorary matai title in Samoa, at his request | Stuff](#) says the honour of a matai title for Prime Minister Luxon was requested by the New Zealand High Commissioner. This is not the case. Please correct this urgently.

Emma

Emma Peel

[Document ID]

Senior Communications Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M s9(2)(a) | **E** emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz

From: Evan Wasuka <Wasuka.Evan@abc.net.au>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 9:19:58 PM
To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: ABC request regarding PM Luxon / Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Many thanks Emma

Evan Wasuka
Mobile: s9(2)(a)

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2026 8:17:46 AM
To: Evan Wasuka <Wasuka.Evan@abc.net.au>
Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: ABC request regarding PM Luxon / Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]
• UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora Evan
Your query to the Prime Minister's office has been passed on to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. You can attribute an MFAT spokesperson.

The New Zealand High Commissioner did not request a title for Prime Minister Luxon. As is normal in the preparation for a Prime Minister's visit there were detailed discussions with the host government about arrangements. The High Commissioner asked for advance notice of any important announcements or honours to ensure that the Prime Minister could be properly prepared.

Regards
Emma

Emma Peel

Senior Communications Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M s9(2)(a) | **E** emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz

[Document ID]

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 9:13:01 PM
To: Matt Young <Matthew.Young@parliament.govt.nz>;
MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
CC: PMO-Press <PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: ABC request for comment on PM Luxon's Matai title [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Received, thanks Matt.

Emma

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: Matt Young <Matthew.Young@parliament.govt.nz>
Sent: Sunday, 15 March 2026 10:09 am
To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: PMO-Press <PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: Fw: ABC request for comment on PM Luxon's Matai title

Hi team,

Another Matai title media query.

Given this one refers to the "NZ government requesting..." rather than the PM, are you able to send Evan the MFAT spokesperson statement?

Many thanks
Matt

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Evan Wasuka <Wasuka.Evan@abc.net.au>
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2026 9:38 AM
To: PMO-Press <PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: Fw: ABC request for comment on PM Luxon's Matai title

[Document ID]

Hello media team,

I'm seeking clarification on comments made by Samoa's Prime Minister during a recent livestream.

In that livestream, the Prime Minister of Samoa said the New Zealand Government had requested a Matai title for Prime Minister Christopher Luxon.

Can you please confirm:

*Is it correct that the New Zealand Government requested a Matai title for Prime Minister Luxon?

If so, who made the request, and through what process?

*If not, can you clarify whether any request or discussion about a Matai title occurred at any level involving the New Zealand Government?

*On Monday morning, Prime Minister Luxon is scheduled to be bestowed the Samoan Matai title Tuisinavemauluto'otua.

However, members of the family of Feagaimalili Bruce Toomalatai--Uta'ile'uo have publicly contested the use of this title and have written to the Justice Minister to challenge this.

*What is the Prime Minister's response to this challenge, and has he been advised of any dispute over the title prior to the ceremony?

We're keen to ensure accuracy before reporting and would appreciate any clarification or context you're able to provide by Sunday 3pm Melbourne time.

Kind regards,

Evan Wasuka
ABC, Radio Australia
Mobile: s9(2)(a)

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 9:22:11 PM

To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; ...TALBOT, Mark
(Inet) <mark.talbot@dpmc.govt.nz>; ...DE BOER, Kate
(Inet) <kate.deboer@dpmc.govt.nz>; AMBLER, Corinne
(CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>

CC: ...APPLETON, Michael (Inet) <Michael.Appleton@parliament.govt.nz>;
...ZOHRAB, Stuart (Inet) <stuart.zohrab@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: [Matai title] FW: Statement Request [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

FYI – same response provided to ABC (Evan Wasuka).

Emma

[Document ID]

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Sunday, 15 March 2026 9:44 am
To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>;TALBOT, Mark (Inet) <mark.talbot@dpmc.govt.nz>;DE BOER, Kate (Inet) <kate.deboer@dpmc.govt.nz>; AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc:APPLETON, Michael (Inet) <Michael.Appleton@parliament.govt.nz>;ZOHRAB, Stuart (Inet) <stuart.zohrab@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: [Matai title] FW: Statement Request [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

FYI – same response just provided to RadioNZ (Giles Dexter).

Emma

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Sunday, 15 March 2026 8:07 am
To:TALBOT, Mark (Inet) <mark.talbot@dpmc.govt.nz>;DE BOER, Kate (Inet) <kate.deboer@dpmc.govt.nz>
Cc:APPLETON, Michael (Inet) <Michael.Appleton@parliament.govt.nz>;ZOHRAB, Stuart (Inet) <stuart.zohrab@parliament.govt.nz>; MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: [Matai title] FW: Statement Request [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

FYI – this is the only further query on this.

Emma

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Sunday, 15 March 2026 8:06 am
To: Lachlan Rennie <lachlan.rennie@nzme.co.nz>; MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Newstalk ZB News <News@newstalkzb.co.nz>
Subject: RE: Statement Request [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

[Document ID]

Kia ora Lachlan
You can attribute an MFAT spokesperson.

The New Zealand High Commissioner did not request a title for Prime Minister Luxon. As is normal in the preparation for a Prime Minister's visit there were detailed discussions with the host government about arrangements. The High Commissioner asked for advance notice of any important announcements or honours to ensure that the Prime Minister could be properly prepared.

Regards
Emma

Emma Peel

Senior Media Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M +64 21 375 105

This media response has been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. For further information, you can consider [submitting a request](#) under the Official Information Act (OIA). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

195 Lambton Quay, Private Bag 18901, Wellington 6160, New Zealand
www.mfat.govt.nz | www.safetravel.govt.nz



• UNCLASSIFIED

From: Lachlan Rennie <lachlan.rennie@nzme.co.nz>
Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 9:01 pm
To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Cc: Newstalk ZB News <News@newstalkzb.co.nz>
Subject: Statement Request

[Document ID]

Kia ora,

I'm seeking the statement in this story regarding the Samoan PM's claim.

Thanks,
Lachlan

[NZ government rejects Samoan PM's claim | Stuff](#)

LACHLAN RENNIE
Multimedia Journalist/Producer

M: s9(2)(a) **P:** s9(2)(a)
E: lachlan.rennie@nzme.co.nz



From: Giles Dexter <Giles.Dexter@rnz.co.nz>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 8:50:36 PM
To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] - RE: RNZ - PM Matai [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Emma

- **Giles Dexter** | Political Reporter, Press Gallery
- RNZ, PO Box 123, Wellington, New Zealand, 6140
- DDI: s9(2)(a)
- Mobile: s9(2)(a)
- www.rnz.co.nz



From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2026 9:41:25 am
To: Giles Dexter <Giles.Dexter@rnz.co.nz>

[Document ID]

Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] - RE: RNZ - PM Matai [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora Giles

You can attribute an MFAT spokesperson.

The New Zealand High Commissioner did not request a title for Prime Minister Luxon. As is normal in the preparation for a Prime Minister's visit there were detailed discussions with the host government about arrangements. The High Commissioner asked for advance notice of any important announcements or honours to ensure that the Prime Minister could be properly prepared.

Regards

Emma

Emma Peel

Senior Media Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

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This media response has been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. For further information, you can consider [submitting a request](#) under the Official Information Act (OIA). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

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www.mfat.govt.nz | www.safetravel.govt.nz



- UNCLASSIFIED

[Document ID]

From: Giles Dexter <Giles.Dexter@rnz.co.nz>
Sent: Sunday, 15 March 2026 9:38 am
To: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RNZ - PM Matai

Morning MFAT team,

Is there any comment regarding the Samoa PM claiming the High Commissioner had told him that PM Luxon had asked for his matai title? PMO saying La'auli is incorrect so just wondering what the MFAT/High Commission take is.

Thanks,
Giles.

- **Giles Dexter** | Political Reporter, Press Gallery
- RNZ, PO Box 123, Wellington, New Zealand, 6140
- **DDI:** s9(2)(a)
- **Mobile:** s9(2)(a)
- www.rnz.co.nz



From: Mark Talbot [DPMC] <Mark.Talbot@dpmc.govt.nz>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 5:18:06 AM
To: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
CC: CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>;
MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: PM visit to Samoa: Stuff article

Hi David

As discussed, the PMO have been asked to respond to a Stuff article suggesting the PM will be bestowed a Matai title in Samoa, specifically suggesting that the PM requested it. Below is their response:

BEGINS

From a spokesperson for the PM:

"This is incorrect. While the bestowal of an honorary title is a great honour for New Zealand and a mark of our strong relationship with Samoa, it is not something that was requested by the Prime Minister."

[Document ID]

ENDS

Cheers

Mark Talbot

s9(2)(a)

[Seemail][Restricted]

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 5:36:54 AM
To: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
CC: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Urgent correction [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

First response to Jenna Lynch, Stuff.

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: PEEL, Emma (CMD) <emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 4:54 pm
To: newstips@stuff.co.nz
Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Urgent correction [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Hi team

Your story this afternoon [PM Luxon to be bestowed honorary matai title in Samoa, at his request | Stuff](#) says the honour of a matai title for Prime Minister Luxon was requested by the New Zealand High Commissioner. This is not the case. Please correct this urgently.

Regards

Emma

Emma Peel

[Document ID]

Senior Communications Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M ^{s9(2)(a)} | **E** emma.peel@mfat.govt.nz

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent on: Saturday, March 14, 2026 5:37:33 AM
To: EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
CC: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: PM title Samoa [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Second response to Jenna Lynch, Stuff.

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Saturday, 14 March 2026 6:34 pm
To: Jenna Lynch <jenna.lynch@stuffdigital.co.nz>; Caroline Williams <caroline.williams@stuffdigital.co.nz>
Cc: MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: PM title Samoa [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora Jenna

Thanks for your patience on this. You can attribute an MFAT spokesperson.

As is normal in the preparation for a Prime Minister's visit there were detailed discussions with the host government about arrangements. The High Commissioner asked for advance notice of any important announcements or honours to ensure that the Prime Minister could be properly prepared.

[Document ID]

Regards
Emma

Emma Peel

Senior Media Adviser

Communications Division | Rongotukuwhiti
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

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[Duplicate email]

From: AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent on: Monday, March 16, 2026 6:18:07 PM
To: JAQUIERY, Anna (CMD) <Anna.Jaquiery@mfat.govt.nz>
CC: MAKAPELU LEE, Moana (CMD) <Moana.Lee@mfat.govt.nz>; PETERS, Sonya (CMD) <Sonya.Peters@mfat.govt.nz>; MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Fw: Herald story [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

- UNCLASSIFIED

FYI

Corinne Ambler

Chief Media Adviser

Communications Division
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M s9(2)(a) **E** corinne.ambler@mfat.govt.nz

This media response has been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. For further information, you can consider [submitting a request](#) under the Official Information

[Document ID]

Act (OIA). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

- UNCLASSIFIED

From: AMBLER, Corinne (CMD) <Corinne.Ambler@mfat.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 7:02 AM
To: VAN TOOR, Si'alei (API) <Si'alei.VanToor@mfat.govt.nz>; COULSON-SINCLAIR, Zoe (PACPF) <Zoe.Coulson-Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; CAVANAGH, Bernadette (DS PDG) <Bernadette.Cavanagh@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (PACPF) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>
Subject: Herald story

Samoa's PM tells Christopher Luxon to ignore negativity on social media over matai title

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/samoas-pm-tells-christopher-luxon-to-ignore-negativity-on-social-media-over-matai-title/3KBFV5YTDRGTVCHDR6H7NF5G6I/undefined>

Corinne Ambler

Chief Media Adviser

Communications Division

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M s9(2)(a)

E corinne.ambler@mfat.govt.nz