

# MINISTRY OF REVENUE & CUSTOMS NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 1

## WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER



### MORC UPDATES

#### 1. Welcoming our new Minister!

Despite the fact that Hon. Mateni Tapueluelu had previously served as our minister, the ministry was delighted to welcome him back as our new minister.



1. MORC's Minister, Hon. Mateni Tapueluelu & CEO, Mr. Michael Cokanasiga



2. Ms. Eden Moala and the new cashier @ QSW

#### 2. New cashier at Queen Salote Wharf

In January 2025, the ministry was happy to announce the opening of our second Customs cashier station at the ROYCO Shed at Queen Salote Wharf (QSW).

#### 3. First WCO expert trainer in Harmonized System, Ms. Lisa Ann Filikitonga

In February 2025, the World Customs Organization (WCO) officially announced the first Tonga Customs officer to be an expert trainer in the area of Harmonized System (HS)



3. Ms Lisa Ann Filikitonga – WCO expert trainer on the Harmonized System (HS)



# NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2025



Photo above: Minister, Hon. Mateni Tapueluelu; CEO, Mr. Michael Cokanasiga and Executive staff

Friday, January 31, 2025 – The Ministry of Revenue & Customs warmly welcomed its new Minister, Hon. Mateni Tapueluelu, with a morning devotion at the Customs Fe’ao mo e Ngalu Building. The heartfelt event was attended by ministry staff and officials, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the Ministry’s journey.

In his opening remarks, the Ministry’s CEO, Mr. Michael Cokanasiga, congratulated Hon. Tapueluelu on his appointment. Mr. Cokanasiga assured the Minister that the Ministry’s staff would continue to work diligently and remain committed to his leadership. He expressed confidence that under Hon. Tapueluelu’s guidance, the Ministry would continue to thrive.

Hon. Tapueluelu responded with a message of optimism and faith, emphasizing the importance of starting each day with God at the center. He highlighted the two core priorities of the Government: efficiency and effectiveness. “When we focus on these principles, everything will work itself out,” Hon. Tapueluelu said, encouraging the staff to remain focused and united as they move forward in serving the public. The Minister also took the opportunity to express his gratitude to the former Minister for his leadership and dedicated service.

The Minister’s visit marked an encouraging start to his tenure, and the Ministry looks forward to working together with him to continue improving services for the people.



Photo above L-R: CEO, Michael Cokanasiga; Ana Li Kasitati Tai from ROYCO; Eden Moala; Veimau Fe’aomoeata; Sau Niulala

The Ministry was pleased to announce the launch of our second Customs cashier counter at the ROYCO Shed at Queen Salote Wharf (QSW). This initiative aims to enable Customs to better handle the high volume of cargo cleared daily. This new cashier counter is designated to serve all QSW cargo, including cargo stored at the ROYCO Shed, vehicles, and Full Containers Loads cleared from QSW. The launch of this initiative coincides with the celebration of International Customs Day 2025 which celebrates theme “CUSTOMS DELIVERING ON ITS COMMITMENT TO EFFICIENCY, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY.”



Photo above L-R: Alifeleti Lynch; Mapa Manuofetosa; CEO, Michael Cokanasiga; Sau Niulala; Viliami Manumu’a; Veimau Fe’aomoeata

DCEO Mrs. Pipiena Tanaki joined the third Tonga National Business Conference (TNBC) 2025 hosted by the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development (MTED), in collaboration with the Tonga Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc. (TCCI).

Government officials, business executives, and members from the private sector convened over two days to talk about how to promote innovation and propel long-term growth.

Roundtable discussions on the 2023 TNBC’s suggestions, which included CEOs and top officials from Ministry of Revenue & Customs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forest, and Ministry of Tourism.

Key sessions covered topics such as:

- Women in Business Growth
- E-commerce opportunities
- What it takes to run a business
- Financing businesses
- Attracting and retaining good employees
- How businesses can be more innovative

## Empowering Local Innovation, Driving Sustainable Growth: Highlights from the Tonga National Business Conference 2025



Photo above L-R: CEO for Ministry of Fisheries, Dr. Vailala Matoto; rep from Ministry of Finance, Tufui Faletau; rep from MORC, Pipiena Tanaki; CEO for Ministry of Tourism, Viliami Takau, CEO for MAFF, Viliami Manu





Customs officer, Lisa Filikitonga and Revenue officer, Pipiena Tanaki attended this four-day workshop in Samoa. Discussions about the vital role that Customs administration plays in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) began off the revenue mobilization. In the context of trade liberalization, Customs plays a crucial role in managing revenue collection, maintaining compliance, and facilitating trade. Among the topics covered in this event were methods for closing income gaps brought on by lower tariffs under Free Trade Agreements. The emphasis is on striking a balance between trade growth and revenue streams, which includes upgrading laws and systems, increasing capacity, and exchanging information.

## PUBLIC NOTICES!!

We wish to inform the general public and Customs stakeholders that commencing on Monday 27/01/2025, the Customs office will no longer issue manual warrant number stamps on our payment receipts.

Instead, customers making payments to Customs for imports and exports clearance, will be issued a payment receipt from our Customs system which will have a unique reference number.

This new change will also allow Customs to pilot the setup of an additional cashier counter at the Royco Shed on Queen Salote Wharf to process payments for Queen Salote Wharf cargo only.

We hope that this initiative will help make our processes more efficient for the public as we strive to deliver on our commitment to serving you.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at 7400-662.



## Pacific Women's Professional Development Program (PWPDP)



To start the last stage of the 2025 PWPDP, thirty up-and-coming female Customs officers from 17 Pacific countries have traveled to Suva, Fiji.

By empowering future female leaders in Customs posts in the Pacific to further their career routes, the Australian Border Force initiative, in collaboration with Oceania Customs Organization and RMIT University, enhances regional security.

In addition to preparing participants for upcoming developments in International commerce, the six-week program promoted Customs networking and gave them vital leadership skills. By highlighting the crucial role that women play in Customs, the ABF and its partners are dedicated to creating a safe, prosperous, and independent Pacific area, according to ABF Deputy Commissioner Regional Operations Vanessa Holben.

Representatives from Tonga Customs had the privilege in attending this program including Palolo Tupou, Toatepi Fainga and Melenaita Latu and we look forward to learning so much from these strong ladies.

## Public Service Commission (PSC) Induction

Public Service Commission conducts an induction training for new permanent employees every year, and the Ministry of Revenue and Customs is always happy to participate and give a presentation on Income Tax or Withholding Tax on employment income widely known as PAYE.

We will keep collaborating with all Line Ministries to give all of our new hires the correct information, as this session was very productive.




## Paotoloaki Program on PAYE



The Ministry would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who took the time to attend this Paotoloaki Program on PAYE.

The workshop was a tremendous success, and we are thrilled by the high level of participation and discussion.

To continue supporting each other in the development of Tonga with accurate tax information, we will be hosting more Paotoloaki workshops on other specific tax subjects that have been identified as common issues. When you understand it, it will assist with your tax compliance and being happy about paying the right amount of tax.



**Tonga**

**CUSTOMS AND EXCISE MANAGEMENT ACT (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2025**

**Arrangement of Sections**

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**CUSTOMS AND EXCISE MANAGEMENT ACT [CAP. 11:03]**

*IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by section 45 of the Customs and Excise Management Act [Cap. 11:03], the Minister responsible for revenue and customs, with the approval of Cabinet, makes the following Order:—*

**1 Short Title and Interpretation**

- (1) This Order may be cited as the Customs and Excise Management Act (Amendment) Order 2025.
- (2) The Customs and Excise Management Act Order 2007, as amended, listing prohibited and restricted imports and exports published in the Government Gazette Supplement Extraordinary No. 3 on 21 January 2008, as amended, shall be referred to as the "Principal Order".
- (3) This Order shall come into force on the date of gazettal.

**2 Schedule 1 amended**

Schedule 1 of the Principal Order is amended by repealing paragraph 10.

Made at Nuku'alofa this 27<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025.

**Hon. Matani Tapueluchi**  
Minister responsible for Revenue and Customs



★★★★★

# CONGRATULATIONS

## *On Your Achievement*

Tonga Customs' first officer to receive accreditation as a World Customs Organization (WCO) Expert Trainer in the area of Harmonized System.

"When I am unable to comprehend the HS and its technological features, I feel horrible, however, I kept pushing myself to improve knowing this will be the finest opportunity for not only myself, but for the Ministry and the people of Tonga. I would like to inspire my colleagues to keep going and have faith in their capacity to learn. LET'S SUPPORT EACH OTHER AND KEEP STRIVING FOR KNOWLEDGE TOGETHER!"

- Lisa Filikitonga



**LISA ANN FILIKITONGA**

WCO expert trainer in the area of Harmonized System

## CONTACT US



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