

# MINISTRY OF REVENUE & CUSTOMS NEWSLETTER



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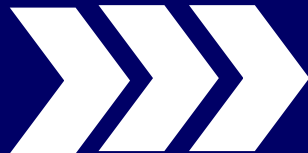
## HIGHLIGHT:

Australian Border Force and Ministry of Revenue and Customs Tonga signing the Forward Work Plan on Cooperation, Engagement & Capacity Building.



## Inside this issue:

- Signing of the Forward Work Plan on Cooperation, Engagement Capacity Building
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## Signing of the Forward Plan on Cooperation, Engagement and Capacity Building by Australian Border Force (ABF) and Ministry of Revenue and Customs (MORC)



Photos above: L-R. Chief Executive Officer for Ministry of Revenue & Customs, Mr. Michael Cokanasiga & Australian Border Force Commissioner, Mr. Michael Outram APM



Early in April 2024, Australian Border Force Commissioner, Michael Outram APM met with Mr. Michael Cokanasiga, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Revenue and Customs, while in Sydney for the World Customs Organization's 25th Asia/Pacific Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference. Most of our Pacific partners attended the conference in good numbers. By signing the Forward Work Plan on Cooperation, Engagement, and Capacity Building, the two leaders seized the chance. The goal of the Forward Work Plan is to give the ABF and MORC, who already have a tight connection, a stronger foundation. Both organizations are fully committed to this improved collaboration and will keep working together to address common border issues around the Pacific.

## Australian Border Force's Border Fundamentals Training Course in Vava'u and Tongatapu

It was an honour for the ABF to host the training course's inauguration ceremony at the Fe'ao Moe Ngalu Customs Building. Her Excellency Rachael Moore, the Australian High Commissioner, and Shane McLennan, the Police Commissioner, were the honoured guests at this ceremony. ABF was also honoured to welcome Lord Fakatulolo, the Hon. Governor of Vava'u, to the opening ceremony at Vava'u. Fifty officers from the Division of Immigration, Tonga Police and Ministry of Revenue and Customs joined this training. In addition, to offering a strategic overview of local and regional border security challenges, the ABF's Border Fundamentals Course is meant to satisfy the demands of Pacific regional partners for 'core' practical skills that are essential to border protection procedures. Important maritime border security abilities are also covered in this training.



## Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing WCO's TENTACLE-Asia/Pacific Sub-Regional Workshop



Attendees from the Kingdom of Tonga, Tonga Police, National Reserve Bank & Ministry of Revenue and Customs

The World Customs Organization (WCO) held its largest Anti-money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing (AML/CTF) workshop to date, which was proudly hosted by the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS). This was a significant step towards strengthening the integrity of trade and financial systems in the Asia-Pacific region. This historic occasion, which was held in the FRCS Headquarters in Suva, was a component of the WCO's TENTACLE-Asia/Pacific Sub-regional Workshop series. The WCO's targeted campaign against large-scale cash smuggling, which encompasses the illicit trade in precious metals and jewels, is called Project TENTACLE. 74 participants attended the course, including representatives from INTERPOL, the EGMONT Group of FIUs, the Regional Liaison Officers in Asia Pacific (RILO AP), and 10 Customs administrations, 6 Financial Intelligence units (FIUs), and 6 Police administrations, the forum plays a crucial role in enhancing the ability of participants to combat money laundering and terrorism funding inside the Customs domain.



Ministry of Revenue and Customs

### MEDIA RELEASE

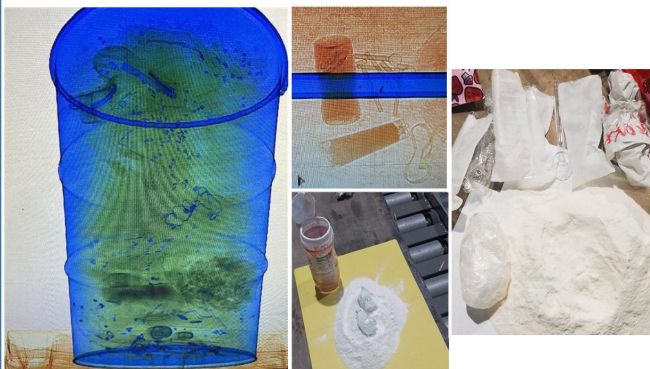
#### SEIZURE OF METHAMPHETAMINE BY TONGA CUSTOMS

The Ministry of Revenue and Customs intercepted and seized approximately 137.36 grams of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia that arrived in a metal drum containing personal items sent to a 45-year-old Tongan female of Kololo'ou, Tongatapu.

The illicit drugs were intercepted on Thursday 4th April 2024 after Customs inspections using X-ray scanners detected substances inside 2 resealed *caffemate* containers. The consignment originated from United States of America (USA).

The illicit drugs were seized with the assistance of Tonga Police and the consignee was also handed over to Tonga Police for necessary processing and investigations are ongoing.

To strengthen border security, the Ministry of Revenue and Customs' Customs continues to work closely with Tonga Police and other law enforcement authorities to combat the trade in illicit drugs.



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## PACER Plus Dialogue for Revenue Mobilisation Workshop



In the PACER Plus Dialogue for Revenue Mobilisation session, participants examine methods for sustainable economic growth and examine how Trade liberalization has affected Pacific nations. The essence of Revenue mobilization in the Pacific, including an examination of its past, present, and future, was covered in part of this workshop. The crucial role Tax Administrations play in raising revenue, methods to improve revenue collection, and the possible effects of modifying tax laws were all discussed. The Customs and Tax Administrations from PACER Plus parties and signatories, including the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Tonga, came together for the three-day event. The goal of this program is to provide officials with the tools they need to manage revenues well.

## Public Service Commission (PSC) Induction Training



The Ministry is always delighted to assist the Public Service Commission in clarifying salary guidelines or Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax to new civil servants in the government. We continue to be extremely supportive and educational to our brothers and sisters in different line ministries.

Please find the Ministry's Annual Report for Financial Year 2022/2023 in these links below;



[https://www.revenue.gov.to/.../MORC\\_AR%20FY%202223...](https://www.revenue.gov.to/.../MORC_AR%20FY%202223...)

[https://www.revenue.gov.to/.../MORC\\_AR%20FY%202223\\_TONGAN...](https://www.revenue.gov.to/.../MORC_AR%20FY%202223_TONGAN...)

## Paotoloaki Awareness in 'Eua and Vava'u

The Ministry was delighted to launch Paotoloaki Awareness throughout the islands, beginning with 'Eua and Vava'u. It was an excellent experience, and it became evident that the majority of individuals, including small businesses, were unaware of their primary responsibility for revenue collection. And for that reason, the ministry is holding this awareness campaign to increase the people's understanding of their tax responsibilities, reduce tax fines, and teach them about the timing and methods of tax collections.



Photo above: from Angaha 'Eua

Photo above: 'Eua civil servants



Photos above: Clerks and Small businesses



Photos above: from Pangai, Ohonua, Ta'anga, Houma and Tufuvali 'Eua



Photo above: Lord Fakatulolo

Photos above: Town and District officers from Vava'u



Photos above: from Longomapu Vava'u



Photos above: from Pangaimotu, Leimatu'a, Feletoa and Mataika Vava'u



Line Ministries

Photos above: from Ta'anea Vava'u