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## Tonga's first Justices of the Peace

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Nuku'alofa, Tonga



From left, 'Amelia Helu, Tevita Fakatou, Salote Fukofuka, Sioape Tu'iono and 'Ofa Likiliki. Supreme Court, Nuku'alofa. 19 June 2014

Tonga's first Justices of the Peace were sworn in at the Nuku'alofa Supreme Court, on Wednesday, 18 June.

According to a spokesperson from the Crown Law, the introduction of JPs into Tonga Judiciary System was an initiative of the Ministry of Justice, and it will help ease off the backlog of work that traditionally has been the responsibility of judges.

This backlog of work is more prominent in the rural areas and in densely populated areas of Nuku'alofa.

The Jps are appointed for a year, from 1 July 2014 until 30 June 2015.

The main duties of a JP include:

- Witnessing documents and taking oaths;
- Hearing and determining bail applications;
- Hearing and determining search warrant applications;
- Issuing subpoenas;
- Determining applications for emergency protection orders under the Family Protection Act;
- Acting as a contact point for community members to reach the judiciary for help.

A total of 19 Justices of the Peace were sworn in by Lord Chief Justice, Hon. Scott and Chief Justice Hon. Cato.

There are six JPs for Tongatapu, five for Vava'u, four for Ha'apai, two for Niuatoputapu and one each for 'Eua and Niuafo'ou.

Among the 19 JPs, four are women: 'Amelia F. L. Helu, Fangaloto, Salote Fukofuka, Fangaloto, and 'Ofa-ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Kolomotu'a, Tongatapu, and Mele Kafo'atu Taufaeateau, Neiafu, Vava'u;

Other Tongatapu JPs: Siale Afuhia Fukofuka, Ma'ufanga; Sioape Tu'iono, Nukuhetulu; Tevita Kaufana Fakatou, Tatakamotonga; Semisi Veatupu Tongia, Te'ekiu.

'Eua JP: Siosaia Hausia, 'Ohonua.

Ha'apai JPs: Sione Palu, Foa Island; Kisione Taulani, Ha'afeva; Me'ite Fukofuka, Nomuka; and Sione Siotonu Fakahua, Pangai.

Other Vava'u JPs: Haniteli Fa'anunu, Eastern District; Moleni Fe'aomoeata Taufa; Viliami Pasikala, Neiafu; and Salesi Kuvaka, Western District.

Niuatoputapu JPs: Sione Feingakau 'Iloa and 'Aisea Ta'ofi.

Niuafo'ou JP: 'Inoke Tuaimeiafi, Petani.

