



Compass of Innovation and Success

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SELA FAKAPELEA – BUSINESSWOMAN IN THE PACIFIC MARITIME INDUSTRY

Meet Sela Fakapelea, 52 years old and from the village of Vaini, Tongatapu in the Kingdom of Tonga. She is also the President for the Tonga Women In Maritime Association (Tonga WIMA) which had recently launched on the 25th April, 2017 during the Pacific Women In Maritime Association (PacWIMA) Executive Committee Meeting in Tonga. Mrs. Sela Fakapelea currently runs and manages a shipping agency called Motu Shipping Agency.

Motu Shipping Agency was set up in 1998 as a family business of a sole trader type, operated by Mrs. Sela Fakapelea with the assistance of her husband. *“The main purpose of Motu Shipping Agency is to provide sustainable employment opportunities for Tonga seafarers. We are the Crewing Agent for Norfolk Island Shipping Services, an Operator of the Tongan Registered vessel, M.V. Norfolk Guardian”,* said Mrs Fakapelea. She added that they are also responsible for the proper certification of vessel to comply with international maritime regulations.

Mrs. Sela Fakapelea is the Manager of the Motu Shipping Agency, whom she is solely in charge of the overall operation and proper financial accountability of the agency. Her role is of great importance in the progress of the agency and at the same time creates a positive contribution to the economy of Tonga for the past 15 years of service. In addition, the standard of living and the level of education of families of its employees has also been improved..

With her role as President of the Tonga WIMA, the additional responsibility is a great challenge to her as she commented that *“although multitasking is sometimes very tiring, these skills really helps me to be cost effective and efficient in the activities of the business and at the same time, being strategic on how better Tonga WIMA can carry out its activities. This creates an opportunity not only to be women seafarers but to engage in other achievable maritime sector such as Recreation under Commercial Services.”*

When asked on how she sees herself and her contribution towards other women to become interested in the maritime sector, she stated that despite being both a Manager for Motu Shipping Agency and President for Tonga WIMA, she sees it as a blessing on her life and being able to impart her experience, and inspire other women to excel in the maritime sector as there are educational opportunities for

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women to capitalize on and invest in maritime as a career, be it shore-based or sea-based and a means of sustaining themselves, their families and the economy.

Her motivation for other women in general, *“Women are capable of being leaders, operating businesses, and succeeding in the maritime sector – be it shore-based or sea-based, so it is essential that we must encourage, inform, open up opportunities, net working and empower each other in the maritime sector.”*

PacWIMA extends its best wishes to Mrs. Sela Fakapelea in her current role as President for Tonga WIMA and in managing and operating the Motu Shipping Agency. The work that she is doing contributes a lot in the recognition and creating visibility of women in the Maritime Sector, which is one of PacWIMAs agenda in achieving *SDG 5 – in inspiring women and girls and promoting female professionals in the Maritime Sector in the Pacific.*

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