

Press Release: 03/11/2017

## **FIRST NIUEAN FEMALE CERTIFIED AS A DIVER IN THE NIUE POLICE DIVE SEARCH & RESCUE SQUAD**

For the month of November 2017, we are featuring a young female from Niue. Introducing Ms. Juliana Tongahai who is a Police Constable in the Niue Police Department. Niue is a remote island in the Pacific. It is becoming increasingly popular as a tourist destination with many of the tourists taking to the water for fishing and marine life adventures. During holiday periods such as Christmas and Easter, many “off island” locals come home to visit family and friends. The island is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean which has unpredictable tide flows.

Juliana, as she is fondly called, explained how she came about the opportunity to be trained as a Diver in the Niue Dive Search & Rescue Squad. She stated that earlier this year, the Niue Police trained seven officers which included her to undertake Search and Rescue at sea. With the completion of this course, the Niue Police established its first ever Dive Search & Rescue Squad. This special team is responsible for all underwater search operations including the search for evidence and missing people in Niue. This also was seen as one of the solutions to the issue of Niue not having any training of such due to the lack of resources to adequately deal with people needing assistance at sea.



Juliana with her colleagues at the Niue Police Dive Search and Rescue Squad

*To be selected as one of the 7 Police Officers to undertake and complete an Advanced Adventure Course right through to Diver Stress & Rescue Course was mind blowing and over whelming. It was a task that I never thought I would consider, however I can only be thankful for the opportunity given to me – Ms. Juliana Tongahai, Diver – Dive Search and Rescue Squad, Niue Police.*

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson – [mjoseph@msaf.com.fj](mailto:mjoseph@msaf.com.fj) | Vice Chairperson – [domenefa@nmsa.gov.pg](mailto:domenefa@nmsa.gov.pg) | Coordinator – [Sidney.lkiua@mail.gov.nu](mailto:Sidney.lkiua@mail.gov.nu) | Public Relations & Communications Officer – [jordanna.mareko@cssp.gov.ws](mailto:jordanna.mareko@cssp.gov.ws) | Member – [Antonia.Tanny@gmail.com](mailto:Antonia.Tanny@gmail.com) | Member – [ktonga@infrastructure.gov.to](mailto:ktonga@infrastructure.gov.to)



*Compass of Innovation and Success*

Cook Islands | Federated States of Micronesia | Fiji | Kiribati | Nauru | Niue | Palau | Papua New Guinea | Samoa | Solomon Islands | Tonga | Tuvalu | Vanuatu

Interestingly, in October, Niue acquired its first dedicated SAR vessel and now have sufficient trained crew members to ensure it can be launched and operated quickly when it is required in a SAR situation. This is part of New Zealand's commitment to ensuring Niue has all the support it needs to crew the new SAR vessel and conduct effective SAR operations around the island. The SAR vessel is an extremely valuable asset but without trained people to operate it effectively and ensure it is maintained properly, it would be of little use. SAR operations in Niue are managed by the Police and the availability of the SAR vessel and trained crew including Juliana has improved the response rate to SAR incidents.

In times of need, Niue Police has always had the support and assistance from Government Agencies and especially Private Sectors and the general public who volunteer their time, their local expertise and their own resources when any incidents takes place in Niuean waters.

According to Juliana, *"the impact of any maritime incidents is heart breaking as a nation, we grieve together. Therefore it is imperative that safety at sea is to ensure that we get home safely to our loved ones for all rescuers, victims and if possible, to retrieve the bodies of those that were lost at sea"*.

With such achievements, it has built public trust and confidence in the Niue Police to adequately undertake tasks such as Boarder Security, Search, Rescue and Recovery operations.

*"Being taught with a new set of skills such as this, the lives of Niuean and those whom we have saved depend on what we have learnt. There is no room for error. Niue's Maritime motto is, "safety at sea means always getting home"* stated Juliana.

According to her, this is a great achievement for women in the Maritime area, especially in Niue and being the first ever female to be trained and certified as a Search and Rescue officer at sea. Juliana affirmed that with the right mind-set, commitment and an incredible team, the opportunity was a blessing itself and being able to enter into a beautiful and astounding world that is in pristine clear water within the Rock of Polynesia, haka motu fakahalehele ko Niue.

Ms Juliana Tongahai is grateful on behalf of Niue Police and being the only female to be blessed with the opportunity to be trained, for the awesome partnership with Australian Federal Police (AFP) for endorsing and supporting their request to fund diving gears for the sole purpose of dive rescue. *"They (AFP) have gone above and beyond and funded our full diving kit, Fakaau Lahi Mahaki (thank you very much) AFP for your endless support to Niue Police"*.

In Niue, maritime and policing is a male dominated environment, however, with Ms. Juliana Tongahai's achievement, this is something she wants to share with her colleagues and extends her gratitude to the

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Chairperson – [mjoseph@msaf.com.fj](mailto:mjoseph@msaf.com.fj) | Vice Chairperson – [domenefa@nmsa.gov.pg](mailto:domenefa@nmsa.gov.pg) | Coordinator – [Sidney.lkua@mail.gov.nu](mailto:Sidney.lkua@mail.gov.nu) | Public Relations & Communications Officer – [jordanna.mareko@cssp.gov.ws](mailto:jordanna.mareko@cssp.gov.ws) | Member – [Antonia.Tanny@gmail.com](mailto:Antonia.Tanny@gmail.com) | Member – [ktonga@infrastructure.gov.to](mailto:ktonga@infrastructure.gov.to)

Email: [pacwima@gmail.com](mailto:pacwima@gmail.com) Website: [www.pacwima.org](http://www.pacwima.org)



*Compass of Innovation and Success*

Cook Islands | Federated States of Micronesia | Fiji | Kiribati | Nauru | Niue | Palau | Papua New Guinea | Samoa | Solomon Islands | Tonga | Tuvalu | Vanuatu

Niue Chief of Police – Mr. Tony Edwards who was the Coordinator for the whole event earning her a spot in the Niue Dive Search & Rescue Squad.

*Message to other women and girls considering a career in maritime –  
**To my sisters, strive and aim high, seek positive feedbacks and refuge to those who encourage you to do better. Let us authentically grow ourselves, grow our career and grow our organization for the betterment of our Pacific Islands – Ms. Juliana Tongahai, Diver – Dive Search and Rescue Squad, Niue Police.***



PacWIMA extends its congratulations to Ms. Juliana Tongahai in her great achievement as well as in her current role within the Niue Police Department. Ms. Sidney Lui-Ikua, who is also the Coordinator of PacWIMA, works alongside Ms. Juliana Tongahai at the Niue Police Department. It is very rare in Niue to have women take on such roles with confidence. Both their achievement is a great inspiration to our Pacific Women and also contributes to the recognition and 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*

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Chairperson – [mjoseph@msaf.com.fj](mailto:mjoseph@msaf.com.fj) | Vice Chairperson – [domenefa@nmsa.gov.pg](mailto:domenefa@nmsa.gov.pg) | Coordinator – [Sidney.Ikua@mail.gov.nu](mailto:Sidney.Ikua@mail.gov.nu) | Public Relations & Communications Officer – [jordanna.mareko@cssp.gov.ws](mailto:jordanna.mareko@cssp.gov.ws) | Member – [Antonia.Tanny@gmail.com](mailto:Antonia.Tanny@gmail.com) | Member – [ktonga@infrastructure.gov.to](mailto:ktonga@infrastructure.gov.to)

Email: [pacwima@gmail.com](mailto:pacwima@gmail.com) Website: [www.pacwima.org](http://www.pacwima.org)