



GOVERNMENT OF NIUE

19 October 2022

INFORMATION RELEASE

NIUE NATIONAL AWARDS

The Government of Niue is pleased to release the Honours List on the occasion of celebrating the 48th year of self-government.

DISTINGUISHED CROSS

Hon Pokotoa Ikiua Lalotoa Sipeli

The Government of Niue (GON), on Saturday, 17 September 2022 in Sydney, Australia awarded The Distinguished Cross to Hon. Pokotoa Ikiua Lalotoa Sipeli for his dedication and lifetime services to the people of Niue. Hon. Sipeli has continued to serve Niue for the last 62 years, with 32 years in the Niue Public Service in the Education sector and 30 years and counting as a Member of the Niue Legislative Assembly for the Constituency of Liku. During this time, he significantly contributed to imparting knowledge, shaping the minds, and inspiring many Niuean children who are now leaders. Hon. Sipeli is a great mentor to many current and past politicians, a great listener and communicator, and a man with a big heart, presence, and a great sense of humour. For this reason, he was awarded the Distinguished Cross Medal, an honour bestowed on him for his many years of outstanding service to the people and nation of Niue.

COMMUNITY SERVICE STARS

Sergeant Albert Tasmania

Mr. Launoa Gataua

Mr. Robert (BJ) Rex

We have a special addition to this year's Honours Awards. The Government of Niue would like to award three Community Service Stars to members of our community for acts of bravery worthy of recognition. These decorations are awarded in respect of the selfless act of courage and valor these young men took, placing themselves in danger during a search and recovery incident at sea back in 2019. At the risk of losing their own lives, they volunteered for the recovery of one of our own people who was taken too soon. The weather that day was extremely tumultuous with the forecast discouraging marine folk from venturing close to the sea. These men went above and beyond what would have been expected of any individual and displayed outstanding courage involving extraordinary seamanship skills in very difficult conditions.

Today we honour Sergeant Albert Tasmania, Mr. Launoa Gataua and Mr. Robert Rex with a Community Service Award for Acts of Bravery.

Mr. Pitasoni Mahalo Tanaki

Pitasoni Mahalo Tanaki has been nominated for the Community Service Star recognising his value for his shared knowledge and teaching of the Vagahau Niue as well as translating and interpreting and his contribution to the Niue Dictionary and other Niue literature. Mr. Tanaki started his career as a school teacher at Tuatea Primary School, he trained to be a pastor and served as the resident Pastor for Liku from 1970 to 1972 when he changed careers and joined the Department of Education as a Vagahau Niue teacher from 1973-1992. He was part of the original team for the Niue Dictionary and we are grateful for the mammoth legacy they left behind for us and future generations. Not many people have the knowledge and skills to lecture Vagahau Niue at University level but Mr. Tanaki can emphatically state that he is indeed one of a very few elite Niueans who is still living and fulfilling many of his elders wishes and dreams of offering such a course for the improvement of our peoples Vagahau Niue. He is indeed a national treasure; and we are truly grateful and privileged to learn from him.

PUBLIC SERVICE MEDALS

Mrs Fakahulahettoa Funaki

Fakahulahettoa Mitimeti Funaki affectionately known as Nena Hula was a dedicated mainstay and anchor of the Department of Education for nearly 5 decades. As teacher and later in the department as a Vagahau Niue Specialist. In 1991 she was part of a team of 6 to commence work on Niue's first dictionary Tohi Vagahau Niue to be researched and compiled by Niueans, the bilingual Tohi Vagahau Niue was finally launched in 1997. In 2014, Nena Hula was appointed as a member of both the Niue Language Commission and Taoga Niue Council. Nena Hula also walked her talk and has authored many stories, poetry and songs. Nena Hula has dedicated her life to educating generations of Niuean, many whom have gone on to hold high positions in the public service and others in high positions in New Zealand, Australia and even England. It is a huge achievement in a teacher's lifetime to witness your student becoming valuable and productive individuals contributing to Niue's nation building.

Mr Atapana Siakimotu

Atapana Siakimotu devoted some 45 years of his life in serving the people of Niue in one form or another. The public service medal is in recognition of his contribution towards the Department of Education as a teacher, School Principal and later the Director of Education. It is also for his role as the Consular General for Niue from 1997 until the Niue Consulate Office in Auckland closed in 2001, his service as the Speaker to the Niue Assembly from 2002 until 2011 and finally, the Chairmanship of the Niue Public Service from 2015 to 2018. Mr Siakimotu was not one for accolades but his contribution to Niue is unquestioned. His commitment to serve his island and his people was unwavering. It is important to note that Mr Siakimotu accepted this award prior to his passing. His award will be presented to his family upon their return to Niue to lay him to rest.

Note: This is only the third year for Niue's Honours List, giving recognition to those of our people who have given exemplary service for their island. Before submitting for an award, nominators must contact the Premier's Department first.

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