

3 September 2012 **The Ministry**



of Police issued the latest report on its operation to continue with policing community safety and law and order.

According to the Press Statement released from the Police Commissioner's office on 3 September, the Police Commissioner Grant O'Fee said that 27 witnesses have come forward as a result of the operation carried out last Friday evening in Nuku'alofa. Police are working on interviewing them all further. All information is valuable he said and is gratified that so many people have had the courage to come forward.

The Commissioner has been in regular contact with the PM who is acting Commissioner of Police. Both are of the same mind that an inquiry into the culture of the Tongan police to address the broader issues of violence within the ministry would be helpful.

"I am most grateful for the assistance and support of the PM throughout this sad business especially over his support for the inquiry" said Mr O'Fee. "We have not got into the finer detail of the inquiry and it will take some time to work through the terms of reference and membership."

As far as the Nuku'alofa station is concerned the Commissioner has ordered tenders to be called for CCTV cameras in the cell block and processing area of the main station. This work has been prioritised in view of the recent death. "I would like the cameras to be installed as soon as we can. Realistically it will take some time for the equipment to be sourced, tenders to be called etc but the sooner the better. All major stations in New Zealand as well as some Pacific islands have the system installed which records all action taken in the charge room and cell block" he said.

The experience in New Zealand was that the CCTV was beneficial for exposing any excess

use of force and also for exposing false allegations that are sometimes made against police officers.

ENDS

Authorised by Commander Grant O'Fee, Commissioner of Tonga Police, Ministry of Police, Fire Services and Prisons, Nuku'alofa. **Issued by:** *Ministry of Information and Communications, Nuku'alofa, September 2012*

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