

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:  
International Archival Day (9 June 2023)

Lau Susuga I le taitai o le sauniga, lau Susuga I le **Toeaina Malolo, Rev. Vaiao Eteuati**

Minista o A'oga, Ta'alogā ma Aganu'u, lau **Afioga Seu'ula Ioane Tua'au**

Le afioga ia **A'e'au Chris Hazelman**, Ofisa Sili o Pulega - Matagaluega o A'oga, Ta'alogā ma Aganu'u

Ae maise le mamalu ma le paia o le tatou mafutaga I lenei taeao,

E manatu o outou paia ma mamalu, e amata mai I le tai samasama o le Tui-Manu'a se'ia pa'ia le tai ula'ula o Nafanua, o le a le o'o iai se leo.

**Ae o le a fa'aauau atu se fa'amatalaga I le gagana Peretania, i le manulauti ma le fa'amoemoe o lenei taeao ona o lo'o filogia le tatou mafutaga nei.**

- Rev. Elder Vaiao Eteuati
- Hon. Minister, Afioga Seu'ula Ioane Tuā'au
- Lau Afioga A'e'au Chris Hazelman
- National Archives and Records Authority
- Honourable Ministers of Cabinet & Associate Ministers
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Colleagues
- Students
- Ladies & Gentlemen

### **75<sup>th</sup> anniversary International Council of Archives**

Today marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *International Council of Archives* (ICA), which the Government of Samoa is a part of through the *Ministry of Education, Sports, and Culture* as a category A. Since 1948, the *International Council of Archives* has advocated for good archival management and the protection of physical recorded heritage, which Samoa, too, has been tasked to do and has developed for the past 24 years. Today is a celebration of Samoa's National Archives & Records Authority, a dream of our forebearers - they knew of the importance of archival facilities to be "custodians of Samoa's political, social, and at some lengths, cultural memories." O le tofa (foresight and wisdom) of our leaders led to the **National Cultural Centre Trust Act of 1978**, which would push for a National Cultural Centre and maintain a national archive. This year's International Archival Day theme is "Information Today is History Tomorrow." Today, Samoa is an active member of the **Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives** and has united with Pacific governments and archives globally to preserve today's information for tomorrow's generation.

## **What are archives?**

The question we often ask is, what is an archive?

An archive is generally a collection of historical physical documents stored in special facilities that maintain a particular temperature to avoid humidity. In our National Archives, you will find journals by individuals on their experiences in Samoa, colonial papers on the colonial "powers" that occupied these islands, correspondences of when Samoa first initiated interest in self-determination, legal records of court cases, manuscripts of speeches at the United Nations and regional meetings, land surveys and deeds, financial records of established economies, and even photographs.

## **Why are archives significant to society?**

People often do not know the importance of archives in society. Effective management of these documents helps maintain good governance, understanding of the rule of law, and administrative transparency between political parties. In any democratic society, there is access to information by citizens or academic researchers. We can learn from records to understand our past actions to make more informed decisions today. More importantly, through archives, we know about institutions and how societies and individuals thought in our past.

There are different forms of archives. **Private companies** have corporate archives with various documents stored. There are **Historical Societies** with archives based on particular regions, events or an industry. There are **Religious archives** that are faith or denominational, such as the Archdiocese Archives at The Shrine of Three Hearts up at Vaoala. And there are National Archives, such as the one we are celebrating today, as these are materials related to all levels of Government.

Archives are NOT always complete and not always reliable, but this information provided helps you make an informed decision in the context of your society today.

Although we have physical archives, let us never forget the use of the human archives, the knowledge maintained through our **elders**, **parents**, and **forefathers** - - - on history, culture, language, spirituality, healing, and food. Similarly, as we maintain the physical archives with the physical documents, let us preserve the transfer of oral knowledge from our forefathers to allow you and me to make better-informed decisions in the society we live in today. You, too, can be an archivist or a custodian of society's memory.

I'm sure you're familiar when I say every family has an "api" or ledger, *o iina o lo'o tusia ai talaaga o Aiga ma Afioga, ma le fesootaiga ma Aiga Samoa. O totonu o api nei o lo'o fa'amauina ai mea tau fanua, o suafo matai, o le faia o Aiga, ma fa'amaumauga o tala I mafuaaga I mea tutupu I Aiga.* Similar how you will preserve that knowledge with the *api o Aiga*, is the same idea of the significance of a National Archives.

## Imagine

Suppose you can imagine a world without documentation. Can we survive without it? Yes, we can, especially for societies that have stories and genealogies passed orally, but physical documentation is crucial because it enables us to plan intellectually for the future of our families, villages, communities, and country. Our leaders' choices today, from economic development to cultural preservation, are based on what happened yesterday. The more documentation we preserve together with our oral stories, genealogies and language, this creates stronger sense of national identity. It's these historical events that explain where YOU and I are at today.

## My Archival Journey

In my journey as an academic, I have been fortunate to be in different archives for my doctoral research. One of the research areas is **protest and resistance** through organized religion, particularly during nationalist movements of Samoa in the early 1900s and 1920s and -30s.

While pursuing my doctoral studies, my archival research took me to the Bundesarchives in Germany. I was in search of particular documents that related to the Samoan Nationalist leader of the **Mau a Pule (Lauaki Namulau'ulu Mamoe)** and the role of the London Missionary Society during the German colonial period. Being a researcher is a daunting task but very rewarding and exciting. I remember vividly, after hours and hours in the archives and found "good" information, but nothing substantial, I stumbled upon this document **[document]**, which is the actual minutes recorded by Richard Williams, a German representative in Savaii, together with Lauaki and members of the Mau a Pule, and the representative of the London Missionary Society, **Rev. James E Newell**. These particular minutes of the meeting shed light on the Mau a Pule movement and the reverence for Christian missionaries, but it provides context to the photos we often see, such as this one **[photo]**. They say that a picture is "worth a thousand words," but in this case, the words contextualize the events of our past and history.

I want to share a few lines from this meeting highlighting archives' significance to me as an academic researcher. As you see, it states at the top of this document: **Fono i Safotulafai a Manono ma Palauli, Satupaitea ma Saleaula ma Fa'asaleleaga, Aso 29 o Mati, o le tausaga 1909.**

A brief context of this story: As German warships were ready for battle against the **Mau a Pule** nationalists, led by Lauaki Namulau'u, Governor Solf at the time made one last push to avoid war by sending a representative of the London Missionary Society, Rev. James E Newell on his behalf. With a brief context already given, I'd like to begin with the words of Lauaki during such a challenging period in Samoa's colonial past:

**LAUAKI** states: **"O le ā tatou filifili i se tonu o lelei e manuia ai Samoa"**

**ASIATA** from Satupaitea states: **"O le mea ua finagalo iai Pule & Aiga, e usiusita'i lenei nu'u"**

**REV NEWELL:** “Oute le aiā i upu o le Malō. A’o lo’u alofa, ia Samoa ua ou tula’i ai ma o’u valuvalusia o lō outou finagalo, A’o lenei ua tusia e le Kovana lo’u igoa e fai ma ana savali ia te outou. Ua o’u talia le finagalo o le Kovana – O le a o’u apoapoa’i atu ai, ia te outou e pei ona ona talanoa ma Lauaki”

**LAUAKI:** “O le ā talia le galuega alofa a le Kovana ma Viliamu ma M. Neueli. O le a matou malaga i atunu’u e tusa o le poloaiga mamalu a le Malo”

At this moment, Lauaki and those who were part of the **Mau a Pule** agreed to be exiled to Saipan, a German colony then.

This archival material reveals a lot of analysis as a researcher. It confirms the influence of Christianity within Samoan society, even during a potential war, and the power struggles of colonial and Samoan objectives. Still, during these turbulent periods, you witness through these archival documents the maintenance of the basic tenets of *fa'asamoa – o le fa'aaloalo, tautua, ma le alofa i le Atua ma lona Tala Lelei*.

I will conclude with these words,

Archives are not only for academics but for students, artists, filmmakers, journalists, architects, and society. Accessibility is crucial for knowledge and building an informed society, which the National Archives has a process in place.

The theme for today is Information Today is History Tomorrow. History is not only events and peoples that are stuck in the past, but yesterday informs today . . . **ana leai ananafi, leai se asō.**

Let us unite in our efforts to be part of the world archival community dedicated and committed to promoting the preservation, development and use of the archival heritage in Samoa. Let us ALL, Government, development partners, international and local agencies, schools and communities . . . maintain and preserve Samoa's National Archives as they remain repositories of knowledge and Samoa's glorious heritage.

God Bless Samoa, God Bless you all.

Fa'afetai