

Government of Tokelau

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Ulu o Tokelau launches MV Kalopaga – Keynote address



The MV Kalopaga was officially launched earlier this afternoon by the newly inaugurated Ulu o Tokelau, Hon Afega Gaulofa.

The vessel, wholly funded and construction in Malaysia managed by the Tokelau government showcases, "Tokelau's 'can do' attitude", said Hon. Gaulofa who is also the Minister for Transport.

He dedicated the historical milestone to "our elders, for it is they who dared to dream of this day – yet most are no longer with us today."

The meaning behind the colours of Kalopaga were explained in detail and reminded the audience of Tokelau's enduring connection to its fourth island – Olohega (also known as Swains Island).

"The distinctive yellow of Olohega which also represents hope, refreshed outlook and a new beginning," he stated.

The occasion also served to remind Tokelau and its international partners of the broader aspirations of its national Transport Plans that includes an air service as well as training of local Tokelauans as seafarers to operate its vessel in the future.

At the last, Hon Gaulofa acknowledged New Zealand's partnership in developing its transport infrastructure and urges the two governments to "Let's keep working together and keep the momentum going forward!"

The full transcript of Hon Gaulofa's speech is printed in full below.

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Keynote Address: Ulu o Tokelau, also Minister of Transport, Hon Afega Gaulofa on the official launch of the cargo vessel MV Kalopaga

Venue: MV Kalopaga

Date: February 5, 2018

Good afternoon. I acknowledge the:

- Honorable Taupulega members – Te Kau Hauatea,
- Honorable General Fono members
- Honorable and fellow Ministers
- Friends and colleagues from New Zealand

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honor to be standing here on such an exciting occasion.

First, let me congratulate you Tokelau and the three Taupulega for your wisdom and especially, your dedication in achieving this major milestone.

The launch of the Kalopaga is a proud moment for all Tokelauans.

With your blessings, I would like to dedicate this day to our elders, for it is they who dared to dream of this day – yet most are no longer with us today.

It is notable that the Kalopaga is launched today on the same day of the opening of the General Fono, and of the Inauguration of the Ulu as a response to those who do not believe in the

prospects of Tokelau's "can do" attitude. Thank you all for your prayers and hard work in turning the wishes of our ancestors into reality!

More than 1,100 workers helped build this Vessel.

More than 15 skilled trades were used throughout the construction.

The vessel includes more than 10 kilometers of piping, supporting more than 20 systems; and she is comprised of over 100,000 individual parts.

Kalopaga is clad in the four traditional colors of Tokelau.

The distinctive yellow of Olohega which also represents hope, refreshed outlook and a new beginning.

The red of Fakaofa characterizes safety and security.

The Green of Nukunonu is the color of life, renewal, nature, and energy.

And the Atafu blue is the color of the sky and sea which is often associated with depth and stability.

Let us be reminded of who we are, of our journey and responsibility as stewards of our precious resources.

Before I conclude, I want to share some more progress on Tokelau's Transport Plan as a whole.

On the broader level, Tokelau's Transport Plan is about ensuring that our people, of every background get equal opportunities with productivity and prosperity. And that all of these opportunities take us closer to meeting our strategic goal which simply put: is to improve the quality of life for our people.

This ship also embodies the other strategic goals, which are to run and manage our own vessel, and to do so with, and as Tokelauans.

To date:

- An inter-island vessel is currently under construction.
- The Ship to Shore project will commence in April on Atafu
- Talks are underway for the next phase of the Transport Plan: the air-strip(s)

All of this activity has, and will continue to generate increased opportunities for Tokelau that will ultimately improve the quality of life of our people. These include investments for the training for our seafarers.

My colleagues and fellow Council members, let me convey my heartfelt congratulations to all of you.

The Ulu, thank you for the leadership. Ki te kiato matua o te vaka, Malo te tiu. Te foe mua ma te foe liu, Malo te tau. As a Member of Council, I am so proud to be here today.

I also would like to acknowledge New Zealand and progress to date, and the effective refreshed relationship shared by our Government. Let's keep working together and keep the momentum going forward!

Thank you again, all of you for your hard work, and congratulations on this auspicious day!

Ko Tokelau ke ola.



TOKELAU OVERVIEW

Tokelau is a non-self-governing territory of New Zealand. It is located in the Pacific Ocean north of Samoa and south of the Equator (9 00 S, 172 00 W). It is only accessible by boat, taking an estimated 28 hours to reach the closest atoll, Fakaofu, a further three hours to Nukunonu, and another six hours to Atafu.

It is made up of the three small atolls named above, separated from each other by high seas. The total land area is approximately 12 km². The total sea area of the exclusive economic zone is approximately 518,000 km². The height above sea level is between 3-5 meters, the maximum width is 200 meters. Tokelau is therefore particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and impacts of climate change such as sea-level rise.

The people of Tokelau are New Zealand citizens. Their relationship hailed by the United Nations as a model for other territories and administering countries to follow.

The population of 1499 (2016 census) is spread approximately equally among the three atolls (Atafu (541); Fakaofu (506) and Nukunonu (452)). The traditional lifestyle was subsistence but Tokelau has moved to a cash economy. The only natural resource of any current economic significance is the fishery of the exclusive economic zone.

Tokelau has no main town; each island has its own administrative centre, hospital, school and basic infrastructure. There are no airstrips or harbours. Access is by ship only, through the Port of Apia, Samoa.

There are approximately 7000 Tokelauans living in New Zealand, and smaller communities live in Australia, American Samoa, Samoa, Rapa Nui, and Hawaii.



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