

# New Zealand and Samoa celebrate 50 years of Friendship Treaty

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*The unveiling of a gift to the House of Representatives by a visiting delegation from the Legislative Assembly of Western Samoa in 1955. Photo: Parliamentary Collection.*

On the Table in the centre of the Chamber of the House of Representatives lies an impressive wooden 10-slot tray, a memento of the close relationship New Zealand has enjoyed with Samoa for many years. The tray was presented to the House on 8 September 1955 by a visiting delegation from what was then the Legislative Assembly of Western Samoa.

A Parliament of the day noted the gift's "significance as a token of the enduring ties and friendship which have long existed between our two peoples." The tray holds papers and documents essential to the House's business and serves as a daily reminder of New Zealand's longstanding and unique relationship with Samoa. From December 1946 until independence on 1 January 1962, Western Samoa was a United Nations Trust Territory, administered by New Zealand.

This year marks 50 years since the **Treaty of Friendship between New Zealand and Samoa was signed on 1 August 1962, 7 months after Samoa gained full independence**. Samoa is the only nation with which New Zealand enjoys a Treaty of Friendship. The treaty contains seven articles that emphasise the closeness of the relationship and recognises "friendship, confidence, and a mutual endeavour to obtain for their peoples fuller opportunities for social progress".

Samoans made up around 50 per cent of New Zealand's Pacific Island population as at the 2006 census. A number of MPs in the current New Zealand Parliament across all political parties either were born in Samoa or are of Samoan heritage.

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friendship between Samoa and New Zealand will be further highlighted this week as a number of Parliament visit Samoa, led by the Prime Minister the Rt Hon John Key.