



## Media Release

Thursday 15 December 2016

### **“Man died trying to save a 13 year old boy from drowning”**

*Please attribute Statement to Deputy Commissioner Pelenatita Fe’ao Vaisuai*

A man in his mid to late 30s from Te’ekiu has died following an incident at the Fotua Beach in the village of Kala’au in the Western District of Tongatapu yesterday, Wednesday 14 December at 5:10pm.

The Youth of Te’ekiu Mormon Church had gathered at Fotua Beach for an end of the year camping and fishing when the incident occurs. The deceased jumped in to the water when he noticed the 13 year old youth was being sucked in to a hole in the fringing reef, approximately 80-100 meters from land.

He managed to get hold of the 13 year old and tried to get them back over the reef but as the current was too strong they crashed into the reef rocks and he lost his grip on the 13 year old.

Another 36 year old man who was at the beach saw what happened and swam out to assist them. The current was very strong and they were swept out to the open water.

Call for assistance was relayed to the Nukunuku District Police at this time and a local boat was dispatched to the scene and rescued the 13 year old boy and the 36 year old man, while recovering the body of the deceased who at this time was floating in the water.

Police continues to complete their inquiries as well as awaiting a report from the Doctor, in order to arrange for an inquest. Police pay their condolences to the family.

Police would like to thank Mr Steve Burling and his two friends from Ha’atafu for their assistance during the rescue and recovery of the deceased body.

Police would like to remind people of the importance of keeping safe while out in the water, during this summer holiday. Beware of the tide, current and conditions.

**END.**

ENDS

Issued by the: *Tonga Police Media & Communication Officer, Tonga Police Headquarters, Longolongo, (676) 23 318, (676) 23 323 Fax: (676) 23 036; for media enquiries – Email: [siaadams@police.gov.to](mailto:siaadams@police.gov.to) or [siaadams@gmail.com](mailto:siaadams@gmail.com)*