Dr Jemaima Tiatia-Seath is a Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) Pacific Postdoctoral Fellow based at the University of Auckland’s Centre for Pacific Studies of the Faculty of Arts. She is near completion of her research entitled - ‘Suicide and Samoans: The Journey towards Prevention’, a qualitative study which involved interviews with Samoans engaged in a mental health service as a result of a suicide attempt or ideation (thought). It explored the individual’s perceptions and issues they believed contributed to their behaviour/ideation and examined culturally relevant factors they considered would help prevent future behaviours.

Dr Tiatia-Seath is also principal investigator of an HRC and Ministry of Health funded - ‘Suicide Prevention for Tongan Youth in New Zealand’ project. The primary aim of this national study is to engage Tongan communities and families to develop new ethnically specific ways of understanding and addressing suicide prevention for Tongan youth in New Zealand by: determining the most salient issues regarding suicide amongst this population; advancing ethnic specific approaches for Pacific suicide prevention; addressing gaps in the field of suicidology and mental health in general; and raising awareness of youth suicide amongst Tongans and wider Pacific communities. The duration of the project is 20 months.

In February 2014 she visited the John A. Burns School of Medicine with colleagues from Te Whare Kura, a thematic research initiative funded by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Auckland. The aim of her visit was to develop international collaborative research links to create future work in the field of Pacific communities and youth suicide prevention. While there she consulted with the “Hawaiian Caring Communities Initiative: Community – Academic Partnerships for the Youth Suicide Prevention Project”. Dr Tiatia-Seath engaged with Deborah Goebert, Dr.P.H. Professor and Associate Director and, Research Director of the National Center on Indigenous Hawaiian Behavioural Health.

In January 2014 Dr Tiatia-Seath will be visiting the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa with another group of researchers from Te Whare Kura. The group will be hosted by Associate Professors Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula and Kāwika Tengan from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa to consolidate a Letter of Understanding by formulating a research agenda. Thereafter she hopes to strengthen the international research collaborations established from her previous visit and to meet further researchers working in her field of academic interest.

Dr Tiatia-Seath was born in Tokoroa, New Zealand but has been brought up and resides in West Auckland, she descends from the villages of Taga and Salelologa in Samoa.