

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Chief Executive Officer's Remarks

V. V. V. Good Governance

The June Quarter coincided with the end of the FY2020/21. It was busy and eventful. Our budget, the 2021/22 Appropriation Act 2002, was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 10th June, 2021, and assented to by His Majesty Tupou VI on 24th June, 2021.

Our newsletter maintains its original vision of spreading Good Governance news and encouraging our regular readers to pass it on. Likewise, to listeners to our live radio talk-back programs, you are encouraged to pass on the good governance news.

We are back with nearly normal outreach, engaging in big community gatherings including church conferences, addressing public sector CEO Forum, and gearing up to our Vicennial celebration.

We acknowledge the tireless efforts of our front liners in keeping Tonga COVID-free and our colleagues from APOR, across Asia and the Pacific and IOI for their continuing assistance and ensuring that the closing of borders opens virtual, live zoom conferences and professional sharing.

Vaccinated. Victorious. Vicennial. Keep safe.



Ombudsman Office celebrates Vicennial anniversary

The Office of the Ombudsman will celebrate its Vicennial Anniversary (20 years) of service beginning with a Thanksgiving at the FWC Centenary Church, Nuku'alofa. The theme of the celebration embraces the importance of being Vaccinated, Victorious (in Good Governance) and Vicennial (V. V. V.)

A special program of activities is being prepared to highlight 20 years of advocating for good governance in Tonga. The program proper will begin on Sunday, 15th August and Neiafu, Vava'u where a new branch of the office will be opened at Neiafu on Friday, 20th August.



Above left – His Majesty, King Tupou VI, officiates at the investiture ceremony of the new President of the FWC, Rev. Dr. Tevita Havea, during the 97th Annual Conference at 'Eua.



Above – The new Heilala Tangitangi Royal Palace at 'Eua.

Ombudsman addresses Public Service CEO Forum

The Ombudsman, Mr. 'Aisea Taumoepeau, SC., presented to the forum of the Chief Executive Officers of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), held on Thursday, 29th April.



Mr. Taumoepeau highlighted, amongst others, the underpinning principles of having an Ombudsman who serves as an available independent complain mechanism, promotes the adherence to the Rule of Law, and the enhancement of public officials' decision-making processes. All these services are provided free-of-charge by the Office of the Ombudsman.

It was the first time to conduct a training program at this forum. It was attended by 11 CEOs from the Ministries of Education and Training, Justice, Finance, Tourism, Trade and Economic Development, Public Enterprises, Statistics, Revenue and Customs, Fishery, Public Service Commission and the Attorney General's Office. The CEO of PSC, Dr. Lia Maka, extended on behalf of the forum, her gratitude for holding the training session. The feedback has been positive and constructive.

DID YOU KNOW ...

... That every officer of the Ombudsman Office is expected to outreach for the office at every opportunity at work and in the community.

Engaging the community

It has been a tradition for the office to conduct outreach programs during the annual royal agricultural shows on Tongatapu and the outer islands. However, due to the absence of the shows in 2020 and 2021, it was an opportune time to capitalize on a large gathering of people.

New Genre - The Office of the Ombudsman has ventured into a new platform of outreach, this time, the annual conferences of churches. The President of the Church of Tonga, Rev. Dr. Tu'ipulotu Katoanga, allowed the office to outreach in their Annual Conference. This was held in May with approximately 100 members attending. The engagement with the question and answer session was active. Through live zoom link, many of their congregations in New Zealand, Australia and the United States joined the outreach and also asked questions pertaining to matters of interests like land and other government services. Additionally, the annual conference of the Free Wesleyan Church, held in the island of 'Eua in June, provided a platform for the office to hold clinics and speak during one of the sessions of the conference.

The Director of Investigation, Roman Vaihū, responded to land matters, power and jurisdiction of the office, amongst others. It was also empowering to receive questions from members of the conference who joined the live zoom from various church centers in New Zealand, Australia and the United States. Reaching out to Tongans in the diasporas on process and contacts for any complaints against public administration was facilitated through zoom.



Above: Some of the representatives of the Church of Tonga's General Conference 2021.

Investigation Division

Did you know?

The Office of the Ombudsman initiated two (2) Own Motion Investigations (OMI) during the June Quarter, 2021.



Above: The CEO, Mrs. 'Alisi Taumoepeau, KC., and the Outreach Team, during the FWC General Conference 2021, at 'Eua.



Above: The D/Principal, Ms. Temalisi Finau, D/CEO of the Office of the Ombudsman, Mr. Sateki 'Ahio, teachers and students of the LDS Middle School of 'Eua.

The CEO also led a team that carried out several outreaches during the FWC Annual Conference 2021 at 'Eua. Various genres of OPs were held for the people of 'Eua and visitors alike. They included a speech at one of the sessions of the conference, receiving people with queries in the information booth set up for three (3) days at 'Eua, held clinics to the public for five (5) days, as well as a physical OP for the first time to teachers and students of the LDS Middle School of 'Eua.

Outreach programs – Thirteen (13) OPs were carried out during the quarter in varying genres. These included three (3) live radio talk-back programs, 1 Ombudsman Training to CEO Forum, 2 community OPs, 2 Churches' OPs, 1 Newsletter, 3 Information booths and Clinics (at 'Eua) and 1 School OP at 'Eua.

The monthly live radio Felafoaki programs on both Radio Tonga 1 (A3Z) and 87.5FM provided a proactive platform where callers' queries and concerns were responded to immediately. Questions often raised in these types of outreach ranged from land matters, more empowerment for the office to take complaints to court, concern over poor services of some of the MDAs and PEs, amongst others.



Above: Some of the representatives of Tongatapu 1 (left) and Tongatapu 4 (right) who attended the outreach programs held in June.

Public awareness—A new promotional video is being aired daily at peak time over Radio and TV Tonga. It portrays the message of good governance to constantly remind that the office is a complaint platform if MDAs and PEs do not follow the key principles of GG in their decision making and services. Traditional dances performed by young students in Tonga and New Zealand are highlighted in the video as torchbearers of good governance.



In-house training - During the quarter, the CMD held two training sessions as part of an in-house effort to first empower the staff members on the works of each division. The CMO focused on a comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of the performance of the division in the 2020/21 term of the current Corporate Plan. Effective outreach programs have been conducted and an ongoing effort to determine and identify new genres of OPs to maximize public awareness. The core aim is to amplify the message of good governance and the services of the office to be heard throughout the Kingdom and the diaspora, made possible via zoom.

Staff

Recruitment - Paula Mafi (*below*) was recruited on 12th April, as Assistant Communication & Media Officer (A/CMO).



Mr. Kalisipo Fotu'aika Latu Jr 'Ataveifoa



Promotion - Jane 'Atiola and Latu Vehikite

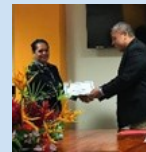


Staff of the Month

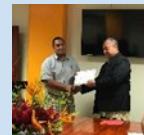
April – Mrs. Jane Lavemai, Accountant



May – Mele'ofa Mohenoa, Senior Investigation Officer



June – Fotu'aika 'Ataveifoa, Driver



The Office of the Ombudsman was set up to accept and investigate public complaints against the services and administrative decisions of government MDAs & PEs. [Our services are free.](#)

Call us on 0800 662 or 7401451 for information and assistance.

Tonga goes into second COVID-19 jab

About 55% have received their second AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccination as of Friday, 23rd of July, according to information from the Ministry of Health.

There were 28,765 people vaccinated with Dose 1 in Tongatapu and 'Eua of which 15,560 have received their second dose, accounting to 55%. The second round of the vaccination program is currently underway on Tongatapu.

Of Tonga's total population of 100,651 (as of 2016), about 65,305 who are 18 years and above are eligible for vaccination. That's about 60% of the total population, according to the Ministry of Health.

Healthy living

In sports ... OMB/RFB Mateialona Lions celebrate 3rd place

The OMB and Retirement Fund staff joined together to compete under the Mateialona Lions in the Tonga Corporate Netball Tournament 2021. Participating from our office were Litia Tonga, Soane Hehea and Roman Vaihū.

Roman and Litia were prize winners of the tournament. In the individual awards of Tier 1, Roman and Litia were awarded with the Best Defender Male and Female, respectively. Roman also received a cash prize in the 1st male weight loss competition.

The Mateialona Lions was awarded the Most Improved Tier 1 team and came 3rd in the Tier 1 competition.

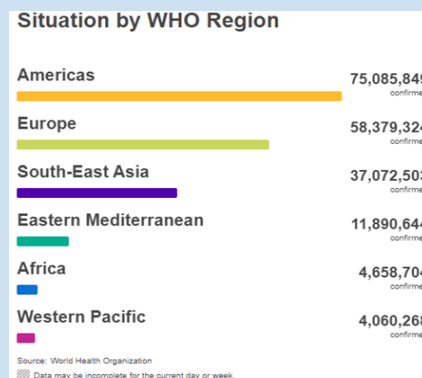
The seven (7) principles of Good Governance being promoted to guide the services and administrative decisions of the government are the—Rule of Law, Independent, Integrity, Transparency, Effective and Efficient, Accountability & Clarity of Purpose.

For more information, call us toll-free on 0800 662 or email—investigation@ombudsman.to or reach us via Facebook Messenger on our page—Office of the Ombudsman. Our website is www.ombudsman.to.

Published by the Office of the Ombudsman, Tonga. Editor – Chief Executive Officer. Content & Layout – Communications & Media Officer (CMO). Photos—A/CMO © OMB Office, 2020. For all enquiries and complaints, please contact us toll-free on 0800 662 | email – investigation@ombudsman.to | Facebook Messenger - Office of the Ombudsman | Website – www.ombudsman.to | Location – 2nd Floor, Retirement Fund Board Building, Cnr. Mateialona & Lelue Rd., Kolofo'ou | Tel: (676) 740 1451 or 740 1463.

Let's check the latest global statistics on the pandemic from WHO ...

Globally, as of 5:54pm CEST, 27 July 2021, there have been 194,608,040 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 4,170,155 deaths, reported to WHO. As of 25 July 2021, a total of 3,696,135,440 vaccine doses have been administered.



3rd placing Tier 1 – OMB/RFB Lions

Here are the results for season 2021:

Individual awards:

Best Defender Female Tier 1 – Litia Tonga (OMB/RFB)

Best Shooter Female Tier 1 – Sovaki Fakava (OMB/RFB)

Best Defender Male Tier 1 – Roman Vaihu (OMB/RFB)

Weight-loss awards:

1st Male weight loss competition – Roman Vaihu (OMB/RFB)

Team awards:

Most improved team Tier 1 – OMB/RFB Lions

