

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

### Remarks of the Ombudsman

Malo e lelei,

The 13th IOI World Conference, 13—17 May at The Hague Netherlands has energised the carrying out of duties in the light of the overall Ombudsman theme, ‘Act Together for Our Tomorrow’.

Island Hopping continues to be at the forefront of community engagement and our proactive efforts.

The June quarterly pictures for FY23/24, is a new initiative.

All the best,

‘Alisi Numia Taumoepeau, KC  
**Ombudsman**

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### Themes of the Quarter

April – ACCOUNTABILITY

May – INDEPENDENCE

June – EFFICIENCY

### “Welcome to the International City of Peace and Justice” - HM King Willem-Alexander



Image from ‘The Royal House of Netherlands’ website of HM King Willem-Alexander at the opening of the 13th IOI

The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) convened at The Hague, Netherlands for the 13<sup>th</sup> IOI World Conference on the 13 – 17 of May. The delegation from the Office of the Ombudsman Tonga included Mrs. ‘Alisi Numia Taumoepeau, KC (Ombudsman) and Mr. Roman Vaihu (Director of Investigation).

King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands opened the conference with a speech welcoming delegates from around the world to the ‘international city of peace and justice’. His Majesty emphasized the vital role Ombudsmen play in advocating for citizens who encounter problems due to actions of government. He highlighted the importance of transparency, independence and good governance.

The IOI held breakout sessions featuring a wide range of mandates that different Ombuds Offices focused on. The sessions allowed for a rich outcome of experiences from all over the world. The conference centred on the overall theme of “Act Together for Our Tomorrow”.

## FY 2023-24 AT A GLANCE (Part I)

His Majesty King Tupou VI views Office of the Ombudsman Information Booth at the Royal Agricultural Show at Vava'u held in July 2023



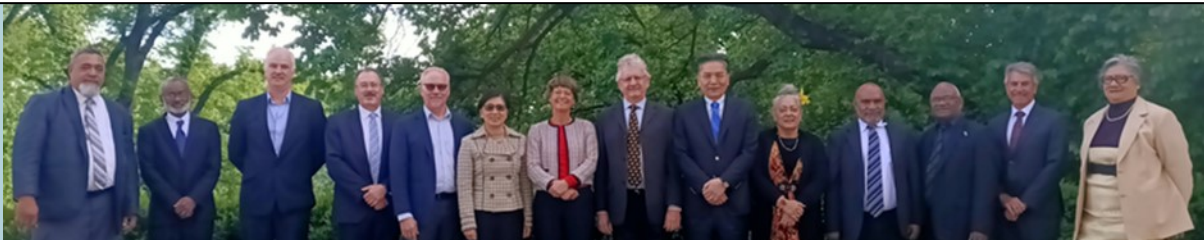
Island Hopping: Outreach to the Outer Islands of Ha'apai  
In January 2024



OMB 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary – 'PROFESSIONALISM' featuring Ombudsman 'Alisi Taumoepeau, Attorney General Linda Folaumotu'i, Former Ombudsman 'Aisea Taumoepeau, Former CEO of Health Dr. Siale 'Akauola, Secretary of FWC Rev. 'Alifeleti 'Atiola (22/08/24)



Australasian Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR) Conference Members, Melbourne, Australia (31/10/23)



United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) Atlanta Conference in December 2023



Pacific Triangle of Integrity at Port Vila, Vanuatu on the 13-15<sup>th</sup> February



## Oceania Perspectives on Human Dignity



Far left: Vilai 'Ilolahia, Middle: Ombudsman 'Alisi Taumoepeau, 2nd from the right: Attorney General Linda Folaumoetu'i, Far right: Tevita Ka'ili Professor of Anthropology & Cultural Sustainability

The Oceanian Perspective on Human Dignity Conference was held on the 23 – 25 April at Brigham Young University in La'ie Hawaii. The Conference created an opportunity for leaders, experts and scholars to expand on perspectives of human dignity. Delegates from Tonga included Mrs. Linda Folaumoetu'i (Attorney General), Mrs. 'Alisi Taumoepeau (Ombudsman) and Dr. Mele Tupou-Vaitohi (Senior Law Lecturer at Victoria University, New Zealand).

The Ombudsman shared insight into what human dignity looks like in the form of a 5-year-old school girl, Melaia Tuamei'api of Tungua, Ha'apai. Melaia is selected as 'Office of the Ombudsman Resilience Star'. In the aftermath of the Hunga-Tonga Hunga-Ha'apai volcanic eruption and tsunami, she was captured in a photo to be carrying a bundle of papers and said to be looking for her school backpack. In the face of adversity, this 5-year-old girl saying "Yes this is my reality, but I have my future to focus on" portrays a strong sense of what human dignity looks like for a Tongan.



Top left: Tongan Ombudsman 'Alisi Taumoepeau, Bottom Left: Senior Law Lecturer Dr. Mele Tupou Vaitohi

## STAFF

### Faith Culture

The Office maintains a faith culture that allows staff to lead the Office in prayer and devotion at the beginning of each month.



Left Image: Deputy CEO Sateki 'Ahio, Middle Image: Principle Investigating Officer Pilimisolo Tamo'ua, Right Image: Senior Investigating Officer Mele'ofa Mohenoa

### Monthly Devotion of April

The April Monthly Devotion was led by Mrs. Sisilia Tokai (Senior Assistant Secretary) and Miss 'Akanesi Fa'otusia (Assistant Secretary). Their text was based on the scripture *1 Corinthians 15: 17-19*. Their theme of "Hope in Christ" befitted the Easter weekend and encouraged staff to commit all workings to God.

### Monthly Devotion of May

The May Monthly Devotion was led by Mr. Pilimisolo Tamo'ua (Principle Investigating Officer) and Mrs. Mele'ofa Mohenoa (Senior Investigating Officer). Their text was based on *Psalms 80: 1-19* with their theme of "The God we pray to is a mighty God". They emphasised the importance of trusting in God for the month of May as well as the months ahead.

### Monthly Devotion of June

The June Monthly Devotion was led by Mr. Sione Topui (Legal Officer) and Mr. Mosese Uili (Senior Investigating Officer). Their text was based on *John 5: 1-11*. Their theme: "Only through God can we attain true freedom". This message was befitting of Tonga's Emancipation Day that was observed the day before.

## FY 2023-24 AT A GLANCE (Part II)

**September 2023 All Staff Meeting**  
Guest Speakers: Former Ombudsman 'Aisea Taumoepeau, Rev. Tevita Finau & Mrs. Valeti Finau



**Office of the Ombudsman 2023 Staff Retreat**



**Staff of the Office of the Ombudsman at the Monthly Devotion of March**

**In-House training by Director of Investigation Mr. Roman Vaihu in February 2024**



## Outreach / Talafatongia

Outreach is essentially the efforts to bring the information and services of the Office to the general public inclusive of all remote areas of Tonga. Outreach is therefore, without a doubt, the duty of all staff of the Ombudsman Office.

### Radio Talk-Back Program

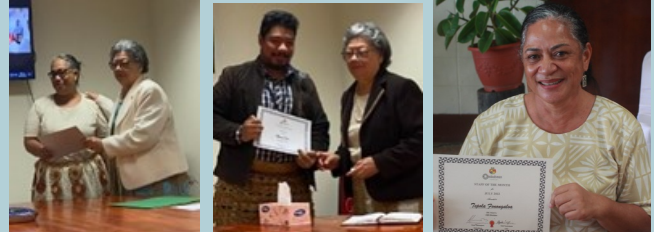
A monthly radio talk-back and/or television program is an important form of outreach that allows the public to engage with Staff of the Ombudsman on the services the Office provides. A radio talk-back program on 30 April was held by staff members Mosese Uili (Senior Investigating Officer), 'Etivoni Pifeleti (Investigating Officer) and Hengihengi Fifita (Returning scholar). The staff had a lively program engaging with 12 callers regarding the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman Office, procedural fairness, and questions regarding potential complaints.

### Quarterly Newsletters

Quarterly Newsletters are published every quarter, posted on the Office Website and sent to different Ombudsman Institutions and

Tongan groups of the region. This allows the general public of Tonga as well as the regional and international community, to stay engaged with the works of the Office.

## Staff Of The Month (SOTM)



Top left: Konikotia Taunaholo (Junior Accountant) and Ombudsman 'Alisi Taumoepeau, Top Middle: Mosese Uili (Senior Investigating Officer) and Ombudsman 'Alisi Taumoepeau, Top right: Tepolo Fonogaloa (Lead Officer of Vava'u Office)

Three staff members of the Office received recognition for their outstanding performance during the quarter. The SOTM for April was awarded to Mrs. Konikotia Taunaholo (Junior Accountant), May was awarded to Mrs. Tepola Fonongaloa (Lead Officer in Vava'u Office) and June was awarded to Mr. Mosese Uili (Senior Investigating Officer).

## Public Holidays/Events of the Quarter

1<sup>st</sup> of April – EASTER MONDAY

25<sup>TH</sup> of April – ANZAC DAY

4<sup>th</sup> of June – EMANCIPATION DAY OBSERVANCE

24<sup>th</sup> of June to 02<sup>nd</sup> of July – FWC 100<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE

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