

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Faces of Integrity



Lord Fakafanua (Speaker
of Parliament)



Rev. Dr. Tu'ipulotu



Sister Dr. Katie Kanongata'a



'Aisea Taumoepeau
(Former Ombudsman)



John Hyde of UNODC

Remarks of the Ombudsman

Malo e lelei,

Greetings from Tonga at the closure of the September Quarter, 2024. The Quarter was packed with investigation and community engagement at national, regional and international level under our theme of “Act Now”.

Celebrations of Ombudsman Anniversary

and national events concluded with the successful hosting by Tonga of the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting.

As our last newsletter for the year, we wish you all a blessed and joyous Christmas.

'Alisi Numia Taumoepeau, KC
Ombudsman

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Highlights

August 26th to 30th—Pacific Islands Forum 2024

September—For the Women

July 14th—Birthday of King Tupou VI

September 17th—Birthday of Crown Prince
Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala

(Both birthdays were marked by a
national public holiday)

Themes

July—Transparency

August—Ki-Ama

September—Bill of Rights
(Constitution)

Ombudsman Office 23rd Anniversary & Retreat



Lord Fakafanua



Sateki 'Ahio D/CEO, Justice Tupou, Ombudsman 'Alisi Taumoepeau & Former Ombudsman 'Aisea Taumoepeau



Mark Battershill & Kevin Finn of NZ LANWorx



Sister Dr. Katie Kanongata'a, Lord Fakafanua & Rev. Dr. Tu'ipulotu

The Office of the Ombudsman celebrated its 23rd Anniversary and Retreat themed “NGAUE LEVA – Act Together For Our Tomorrow” on 22 August at Seabreeze Resort. The day was split into two sessions consisting of the anniversary celebration and the annual staff retreat.

The Office was honoured to have esteemed guest speakers Lord Fakafanua, Rev. Dr. Tu'ipulotu Katoanga, Mr 'Aisea H. Taumoepeau, John Hyde of UNODC and Sister Dr. Katie Kanongata'a who each gave their take on the theme with their respective experiences. Distinguished guests included Acting Lord Chief Justice, Justice Petunia Tupou, Anti-Corruption Commissioner Chris Lahatte, and our LanWorx Consultants, Mark Battershill and Kevin Finn.

The keynote speaker, Lord Fakafanua, spoke passionately about the theme of, “Act Together For Our Tomorrow”, emphasising the need for public institutions to work harmoniously through the embodiment of good governance and integrity.

The afternoon session focused on the staff retreat with presentations from Sateki 'Ahio on the workings of the Corporate Division and Pilimisolo Tamo'ua on proactive outreach strategies. The event was concluded by Ombudsman 'Alisi Taumoepeau who highlighted the importance of the office annual retreat—“it allows us to step back and have productive conversations on what we do, how we do it, and what we can do better”.



Roman Vaihu (CEO)



Sateki 'Ahio (D/CEO)



Pilimisolo Tamo'ua
(Principal Investigative
Officer)



Staff of the Ombudsman Office



Staff of the Ombudsman Office

Collab with New Zealand Ombudsman Team



Staff of the Ombudsman and the New Zealand team



Hsu-Ee Khoo (Senior Investigation Trainer) & Renee Vaoleti (Senior Advisor) with staff

The Office has a collaborative plan of cooperation and support with the Office of the Ombudsman New Zealand. In early September, the Office welcomed Hsu-Ee Khoo (Senior Investigation Trainer) and Renee Vaoleti (Senior Advisor) from the New Zealand Office to commence a week-long training. The training engaged productive conversations on the International Ombudsman Self-Assessment Tool (IOSAT) used to identify areas of strength, areas for further development and areas for mutual assistance, between both offices.

Tatala 2.0



NZ LANWorx Team with the Ombudsman and staff

From August 19th to 22nd, Mark Battershill & Kevin Finn from the NZ LANWorx Team visited the office

to conduct training sessions with the Investigation Division on the Complaint Management Software (CMS) 'Tatala 2.0'.

The CMS system allows the Investigation Division to efficiently store and navigate different complaints brought to the Office. The trainings were centred on collecting information to specifically tailor 'Tatala 2.0' to reflect the work processes of the Office of the Ombudsman Tonga. The User Acceptance Testing (UAT) process is ongoing and the investigation team is ensuring that the implemented systems meet the requirements and functioned as intended.

Valuable Insight from Statistics Department of Tonga



The Statistics Department and the Ombudsman Staff

A team from the Statistics Department of Tonga, headed by Telekaki Latavao, was invited to present to the office on the population and housing statistics of Tonga. The meeting was on August 6 and aimed at gathering in-depth knowledge on where the Office can best target its Outreach Programs in relation to the most urban villages of the outer islands.

“INSPIRED BY COMPASSION”



Ombudsman and her staff with Pisila Manu and members of the Free Wesleyan Church of Mataika

The Ombudsman, Mrs. 'Alisi Numia Taumoepeau, preached on Sunday, 21st July, at the FWC at Mataika on the heart-warming theme of "Fakalotofo'ou: Kuo langa 'a ho fatu he 'ofa?" or "Renewal: Is your soul inspired by compassion and moved to action?"

The staff of the Ombudsman Office, Roman Vaihu (CEO), Sateki 'Ahio (D/CEO), Pilimisolo Tamo'ua (Principal Investigating Officer), Mosese Uili (Senior Investigating Officer), Sisilia Tokai (Senior Assistant Secretary) and 'Akanesi Fa'otusia (Assistant Secretary) took part in the praise of the Sunday service, centred on compassion and healing.

STAFF

Outreach is the Duty of All Ombudsman Staff

Outreach educates the public on the functions and mission of the Office. It creates a pathway for the public to utilise the office to keep government agencies accountable and in turn fosters good governance and integrity in the Kingdom.

i. Radio Talk-Back Programs



Roman Vaihu (CEO), Pilimisolo Tamo'ua (Principal Investigative Officer), 'Etivoni Pifeleti (Investigator) & Mosese Uili (Senior Investigative Office)

Radio outreach programs were conducted on 11 July, 17 July and 12 September. There were

7 callers altogether who posed questions about the jurisdiction of the Office, ways to lodge a complaint and procedural fairness. All questions were readily answered by CEO, Roman Vaihu and Investigating Officers, Pilimisolo Tamo'ua, Mosese Uili and 'Etivoni Pifeleti, as well as posted on the Ombudsman Facebook Page.

ii. 'Eua Outreach



D/CEO Sateki 'Ahio and Investigating Officers, Pilimisolo Tamo'ua and 'Ofa Tu'i'onetoa with the 'Eua community

The Office carried out an interactive Outreach Program from 29 July – 2 August in the outer island of 'Eua led by D/CEO, Sateki 'Ahio and investigating officers, Pilimisolo Tamo'ua and 'Ofa Tu'i'onetoa. The team was able to engage with many institutions and communities including Hango Agricultural School, Lofangahau College, 'Eua High School, Angaha Government Office, Office of Tonga Communication and Corporation (TCC), the villages of Kolomaile and Ha'atu'a, and the communities of Ta'anga and Mango. Complaints were lodged along the way.

iii. Vava'u Outreach



Fifita Fili (Executive Officer) conducting outreach at a retail store

The Vava'u staff carried out an outreach program in the months of June and July to the local retail shops on the island. Staff members Tepola Fongaloa (Officer in Charge) and Fifita Fili (Executive Officer) visited retail shops in Vava'u from Neiafu to Ngaunoho, as well as the Eastern District—the village of Koloa.

iv. Quarterly Newsletters



Quarterly Newsletters are posted on the Office of the Ombudsman Tonga website and sent out to local ministries, regional and international Ombuds Institutions, and Tongan communities. These Quarterly Newsletters are an Outreach Initiative whereby the Office updates the public on its workings, functions and duties within the past quarter.

The Ombudsman visits Vava'u



Ombudsman 'Alisi Taumoepeau, KC visited the Office of the Ombudsman Vava'u branch on 23rd

July with staff members Konikotia Taunaholo (Accountant), Latu Vehikite (System Administrator) and 'Akanesi Fa'otusia (Assistant Secretary). The Ombudsman paid a courtesy call to the Governor of Vava'u Lord Fakatulolo, as well as chaired fruitful discussions with the Ombudsman staff of Vava'u on various issues and advice, including potential outreach programs to the Niua Islands.

In-House Training



Ombudsman 'Alisi Taumoepeau & CEO Roman Vaihu for August training

The August In-House Training was led by Ombudsman Alisi Taumoepeau, KC on Outreach, Roman Vaihu (CEO) on the Corporate Report and 'Akanesi Fa'otusia (Assistant Secretary) on the Quarterly Newsletter. In-House training provides an opportunity for staff from different divisions to become more acquainted with the internal workings of the office, such as the importance of outreach, the essential purpose of the Corporate Report, and the Quarterly Newsletters.

Staff Of The Month (SOTM)



Left and Middle Image: Me Saafi Via and Latu Vehikite with Ombudsman. Right-side Image: Hamani Topui with CEO

Each month, the office recognizes and celebrates a staff of the Office for their diligence and integrity. Congratulations to the staff of the month for July, Me Saafi Via (Computer Operator), Latu Vehikite (System Administrator) for August and Sione Topui (Legal Officer) for September.

Monthly Devotion



From left to right: Sateki 'Ahio (D/CEO), Luseane 'Aho (Senior Accountant) & 'Ofa Tu'i'onetoa (Investigative Officer)

In the beginning of each month, the Office of the Ombudsman share faith values whereby selected staff members lead the Office in prayer and devotion.

i. JULY

The July devotion was led by Sateki 'Ahio (D/CEO) and Sione Topui (Legal Officer). Their theme 'A Wise Heart' was based on *Psalms 90:12*. This scripture reminded the staff of how short life is and with that realization, continuous perseverance towards knowledge and wisdom should follow.

ii. AUGUST

The August Devotion was led by staff members, Luseane 'Aho (Senior Accountant) and Me Saafi Via (Computer Operator). Their theme "Get up and Shine Bright" was based on the scripture *Isaiah 60:1 & 2*. Their text served as a reminder to all staff to cultivate all talents under the light of the Lord and in doing so, shine bright as a beacon for others to follow.

iii. SEPTEMBER

The September Devotion was led by investigating officers 'Ofa Tu'i'onetoa and 'Etivoni Pifeleti on the scripture *1 John 3:22*. They linked their theme "The duties of the Ombudsman Office are Constitutional and Spiritually Aligned" to the theme of the month "Constitution and Bill of Rights". Their text highlighted the important pillars of transparency, honesty, accountability and integrity, all of which are at the core of the Ombudsman Office.

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