

## DECEMBER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

### 1) Remarks of the Ombudsman

Malo e lelei,  
Our Theme for the current year is, Act now, Ngaue Leva.  
It has been a busy, eventful quarter.  
The highlights of the Quarter are :-  
Island hopping in outreach; and meeting up with 5 year old Melaia Tuaime'i'api a Resilience Star; Community Engagement. OMB summit; International Engagement on "Ombudsman in a changing world"; UNCAC Review Tonga; and Commonwealth Forum of National Human; Law week; Tuku Fonua at Pouono ; Human Rights Institutions Biennial Conference.  
Malo.

#### Highlights

November 4th—Tonga National Day & Constitution Day

December 4th—King Tupou I Day

December 9th—International Anti-Corruption Day

#### Themes

October—Rule of Law

November—Constitution

December—Anti-Corruption

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### Resilience Star



5-year-old Miss Melaia Tuaime'i'api of Tungua, Ha'apai.

On the left: 5-year-old Melaia Tuaime'i'api looking for her school backpack

Ms. Melaia Tuaime'i'api of Tungua Ha'apai, a 5-year-old school girl has been named the Ombudsman Office's resilience star. Amidst the Hunga-Tonga Hunga-Ha'apai volcanic eruption and tsunami aftermath, Melaia was captured in a photograph by Free Wesleyan Church first-responders with a bundle of papers. She explained that she was looking for her backpack for school. She is a beautiful example of resilience found in the remote island of Tungua, Ha'apai.

This is the epitome of resilience that should be highlighted. Investigating Officer, 'Etivoni Pifeleti, hand-carried a school backpack to the Resilience Star in the island of Tungua, Ha'apai to hold her up as a model of resilience.

### Christmas – "OMB Brass"



The Office celebrated Christmas on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December. Ombudsman Mrs. 'Alisi Taumoepeau and CEO Roman Vaihu thanked the staff for their perseverance and commitment in the Office throughout the year.

The Office hosted the Tupou Tertiary Institute Band, celebrating Christmas with the community.

## 2) Outreach and Community Engagement

Ha'apai—Local Governance and Community Engagement Outreach 26 September 2024

The outreach originated from a complaint against a town officer. The town officer was found to have complied with all relevant laws and regulations.

Mr. Roman Vaihu (CEO), Mr. Sateki 'Ahio (D/CEO), Mr. Sione Topui (Legal Officer), Mr. Pilimisolo Tamo'ua (Principal Investigating Officer) and Mr. Latu Vehikite (Systems Administrator) conducted an outreach program to the outer islands of Ha'apai in consultation with the Prime Minister's Office division responsible for the local government.



From Left to Right.

1st Row:- Sateki Áhio (D/CEO), Siosifa T Maka (Pulefakavahe ó e Vahenga Kauvai), Roman Vaihu (CEO), Hon. Dr. Pita Taufatofua (Governor of Haápai), Siosaia L Tongaónevai ( Pulefakavahe Vahenga Lifuka), Robert Hoeft (Pulefakavahe Vahenga Foa), Kaloni Áholelei ( Ófisakolo Felemea)

2nd Row:- Kisione Latu ( Ófisakolo Muitoa), Fine Tuákoi (Ófisakolo Pukotala), Sione Vailahi (Ófisakolo Faleloa), Polonga Tauálupe ( Ófisakolo Óúa), Pilimisolo Tamo'ua (Principal Investigating Officer), Tupou Tamale (Ófisakolo Pangai), Lupe Kulikefu (Ófisakolo Haáteihosii), Toekava Puleánga (Ófisakolo Kotu), Maopa (Local Government), Vili Tupou (Ófisakolo Fangleóunga), Lesita Palu ( Secretary of Haápai Governor).

3rd Row:- Sione Topui (Legal Officer), Viliami Tukutau (Ófisakolo Lotofoa), Tevita Kaufana ( Ófisakolo Koulo), Ínoke Fono (Ófisakolo Holopeka), Sione Palu (Ófisakolo Haáfakahenga), Mai-kolo Talanoa (Ófisakolo Hihifo), Folau Vaomoúnga (Ófisakolo Moúngaóne), Ófa Tapaevalu (Ófisakolo Haáno).

4th Row:- Sateki Vaiomoúnga (Ófisakolo Tungua), Sione P Fualalo (Fotuhaá), Sione. A. Fifita (Ófisakolo Haáfeva).

## Radio Talk-Back



Mosese Uili (Senior Investigating Officer) & 'Etivoni Pifeleti (Investigating Officer) engaging with the public through radio

Monthly radio talkback programs provide an opportunity for staff members of the Ombudsman Office to engage with the public in sharing vital information of the operations of the Office and answering general inquiries posed by the public.

Two (2) talk-backs were conducted this quarter. The October talk-back was led by investigating officers Mosese Uili and 'Etivoni Pifeleti. The December talk-back was led by CEO Roman Vaihu and Senior Investigating Officer Mosese Uili. Radio talkback programs featured productive dialogue with the public and addressed concerns.

## Law Week



The Office of the Ombudsman, as in previous years, took up the invitation by the Attorney General's Office to take part in Tonga's Law Week 2024. The theme was "***Laws for the Conversation and Protection of Tonga's Ocean and its Resources***". This was an opportunity to support this year's theme of laws and stand together with the legal sector in promoting the rule of law. Mosese Uili (Senior Investigating Officer) and 'Etivoni Pifeleti (Investigating Officer) manned the Ombudsman booth, interacting with the general public and supporting awareness and advocacy for good governance.





Hon. Samiu Vaipulu inspecting the Ombudsman booth  
Anti-corruption Commissioner Mr. Chris LaHatte with Investigating Officer 'Etivoni Pifeleti



Mosese Uili (Senior Investigating Officer), Rose Kautoke from the AGO, Sateki 'Ahio (D/CEO) and 'Etivoni Pifeleti (Investigating Officer).

## Vava'u

### i. Tuku Fonua ki Langi at Pouono

The commemoration Service was led by Her Majesty the Queen Nanasipa'u as the Guest Speaker of the day. Civil servants



were given the morning off work so as to attend the ceremony at Pouono. Various groups from different denominations were also present with some choirs.

### ii. Pinktober

Pinktober fosters hope and advocates for change as cancer affects everyone with no exception. I had the privilege, to speak words of encouragement to the women of Vava'u during one of the Pinktober program.

**iii. Inaugural Sub-National Women's Fono – starts at Pouono. Initiated by WCCC- with the aim of elevating women's voices in the Community**



## 3) International Engagement

### International Ombudsman Summit 2024

The Summit, with the theme “Ombudsman in a Changing World: Learning from the Past; Preparing for the Future”, provided a platform for Ombudsman from around the globe to exchange insights and share experiences and best practices. It also enabled meaningful discussion about evolving challenges faced by Ombudsman Institutions, as well as in-depth deliberations on future developments and solutions. Ombudsman Taumoepeau attended the First International

Ombudsman Summit at Hong Kong in early December. The summit also marked the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Ombudsman Office.

### Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Biennial Conference

The CFNHRI Biennial Conference was held in Apia Samoa on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of October in the preliminary meetings leading up to CHOGM 2024. The conference identified effective approaches to ensure the protection of human rights of Commonwealth countries. Dialogue and sharing of best practices included Human Rights issues and deliberations on upholding the rule of law. Ombudsman Taumoepeau was in attendance.

### UNCAC Review



The UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) Follow-Up and Implementation Workshop was held in Tungi Colonnade on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November. The workshop included the Attorney General's Office, Anti-Corruption Commissioner's Office, Ministry of Police, Auditor General's Office and the Office of the Ombudsman. Discussions focused on ways to enhance collaboration between government agencies, civil society, and international partners against corruption, and promote integrity and good governance.

## 4) STAFF

### Inhouse Training

Sione Topui (Legal Officer) and Sateki 'Ahio (D/CEO) led an in-house workshop on the Ha'apai Local Government Outreach. This workshop briefed the staff on the types of cases that arise in the outer islands, in this case, the islands of Ha'apai. The emphasises was on the importance of local government outreach and community engagement

### Monthly Devotions

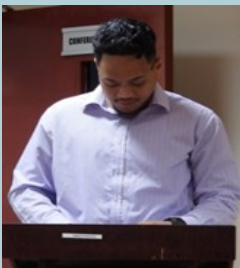
The Staff of the Office gather at the first working day of each month to give thanks to God.

#### October



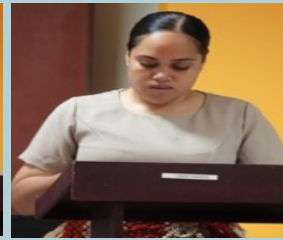
The monthly devotion for October was led by Mr. Roman Vaihu (CEO) and Ms. Mele Vao (Receptionist). Their text was based on *Colossians 1:27* which encouraged staff to give God the glory, because Christ lives within us, so that we too can share in the glory of God.

#### November



System Administrators, Latu Vehikite and Douglas 'Akau'ola led the office in the November devotion. Their theme was based on the theme of the quarter, the Constitution. Their text was based on Psalms 19: 7-14 which spoke of the Law of the Lord and served as a rich reminder to uphold. The laws of the Kingdom and in doing so, bring joy.

#### December



The last devotion for the year was led by Sateki 'Ahio (D/CEO) and 'Akanesi Fa'otusia (Assistant secretary). Their text was based on 2 Samuel 7: 1-11. The scriptures reminded the staff to trust in the Lord because He has a plan for each person.

### Christian Workers Fellowship 2024

Staff attended the Christian Workers Fellowship on the 8th of November hosted by the Retirement Fund Office. The Christian Workers Fellowship has been active for many years, started and run by public servants for all workers in the private and public sector.

### Honouring Diligence

#### Staff of the Month (SOTM)

During the quarter, staff were awarded SOTM and acknowledged for their dedication and commitment to the office. The staff of the year is especially acknowledged in December for all -year-round diligence and upholding values of

**October** – Pilimisolo Tamo'ua (Principal Investigating Officer)



**November** – Mele Vao (Receptionist)



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