

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

1) Remarks of the Ombudsman

Mālō e Lelei | Literally, grateful you are well.

In the context of Tonga today, I am pleased with the progress we continue to make. Empowered by the constitutional mandate of Independence and the statutory direction to investigate complaints relating to public administration.

This period was marked by increased community engagement, with emphasis on local Government.

The challenges of delayed public services, gaps in agency coordination, and the consequential difficulties experienced by ordinary citizens continue to feature in the complaints.

We are determined to serve with integrity and advocate for efficient and accessible service to all.

The thematic focus this quarter, are Rule of Law, Integrity and Good Governance.

The stakeholders are acknowledged and international colleagues for their continued support. Thank you to all the staff for their unwavering commitment.

Mrs. 'Alisi Numia Taumoepeau, KC

Ombudsman.



Highlights

January 1— New Year's Day

March 18— Good Friday

March 18 to March 21— Easter Weekend

Themes

January— Rule of Law

February— Integrity

March— Good Governance

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2) National Summit



The Office participated fully in the National Development Summit for Tonga on 18th – 21st March 2025. The Ombudsman, Chief Executive Office, Legal Officer Topui and Senior Accountant 'Aho also attended.

The summit was for national dialogue on the pathways for Tonga's Strategic Development Framework (TSDF) III for 2026 – 2036.

The Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Roman Vaihu presented on Governance with Mr Simone Sefanaia, Chairman, Public Service Commission and Ms Mele Mangisi CEO, Anti-Corruption Commission.

Questions from the participants included thematic area of governance and development of governance in the public services and the priority areas in the next 10 years. The feedback and comments from the presentation was generally positive. Aspects identified for improvement in future public engagements.

3) Staff of the Month

We celebrate dedication, commitment, and excellence in the workplace. Each month, we recognize one outstanding staff member whose performance has gone above and beyond expectations. The recipient is awarded the 'Staff of the Month' certificate. This recognition not only highlight individual achievement but also inspire and motivate others to strive for excellence in their own roles. It reinforces our shared values of professionalism, teamwork, and integrity—helping us grow stronger together as we continue to serve with purpose and passion.

January

Mr. Mosese Uili, Senior Investigator, Investigation Division, has been named Staff of the Month for January. His dedication, professionalism, and consistent contribution to the team's success have not gone unnoticed. Congratulations, Mosese, and thank you for your outstanding work!



February

Mr. Douglas 'Akau'ola, IT Officer, is recognised for his exceptional work and dedication. In appreciation of his outstanding performance, he has been awarded the Staff of the Month Certificate. Congratulations, Douglas!



March

Mr. Tevita Kafoa, V.I.P. Driver, has been recognized for his outstanding performance and exceptional efforts. In acknowledgment of his dedication, he has been awarded Staff of the Month for March. Congratulations, Tevita!



4. Retirement Deputy C.E.O.



This month, we bid farewell to Mr. Sateki 'Ahio, Deputy CEO of the Ombudsman's Office, who has served with dedication since 21st January 2021. Mr. 'Ahio has made an impact in demonstrating humility, and a commitment to service. His calm leadership, supportive nature, and experience have uplifted his fellow workers. A special farewell lunch was hosted by the staff on 14th February 2025. Staff members present shared stories, messages, and memories of kindness, humour, and dedication. It was a powerful reminder of the positive ripple effect that one individual can have on an entire organisation. As Mr. 'Ahio retires, his legacy remains in the respect, compassion, and service.

Study Leave

Miss 'Akanesi Fa'otusia (Assistant Secretary) has commenced study leave this quarter to pursue a degree in Law. We wish her every success in her academic endeavors and look forward to her return upon completion of her studies.



New Recruitment

Mr. John Paul Loloea joined the team this quarter as a newly recruited driver. We welcome Mr. Loloea to the organization and are confident that he will make a valuable contribution to our operations.



5. Outreach & Community Engagement

A. Radio-talkback Programme.

As part of our ongoing commitment to public engagement two radio talkback sessions aimed at raising awareness about the services we provide. These sessions are platforms to inform and educate the public about their rights and the Office. The public is encouraged to participate by asking questions and sharing experiences. Key topics included how individuals can lodge complaints and the processes involved in receiving and investigating such complaints.

These radio talkbacks clarify the role and responsibilities of the Office, and also strengthened public trust. The positive feedback and active public participation reflect a growing public interest in ensuring transparency and integrity within the public service.

The first radio outreach program for 2025 was Thursday, 30th January 2025, from 2:05 PM to 3:10 PM on 87.5 FM Radio Nuku'alofa. This was the sixth session under the 2024/2025 financial year.

The program was led by Mr. 'Etivoni Pifeleti, Investigating Officer and Mr. Mosese Uili, Senior Investigating Officer, with Ms. 'Akanesi Fa'otusia and Ms. Hengihengi Koula Fifita as observers.

The first part focused on the role, jurisdiction, and complaint procedures of the Ombudsman's Office. The second part was public interaction. A total of twelve calls were received: nine questions and two comments, from seven male and one female caller. Two male callers called twice, and one called three times.



The second radio talkback for 2025 was held on Thursday, 27th February 2025, from 2:00 PM to 3:03 PM on TBC AM Radio Nuku'alofa. This was the seventh outreach session under the 2024/2025 financial year. The program was facilitated by Mr. Siosaia Tu'ionetoa, Investigating Officer and Mr. Mosese Uili, Senior Investigating Officer, with Ms. Hengihengi Koula Fifita as observer. Mr. Uili opened the program, followed by Mr. Tu'ionetoa, who began with a message on good governance principles.

While it was intended to dedicate time to explain the role and functions of the Ombudsman's Office, the high volume of calls received prevented this segment from being delivered.

A total of nine calls were received six from male callers (one called three times and another twice) and one from a female caller. The majority of callers expressed concern about delays in the investigation process, with some noting that complainants had sadly passed away before their matters were resolved. In response, Mr. Tu'ionetoa issued a sincere apology to the public for the delays and acknowledged the seriousness of the concern. He assured listeners that the Ombudsman's Office is committed to improving the timeliness of its investigations and that such delays will be addressed to ensure this does not happen again.

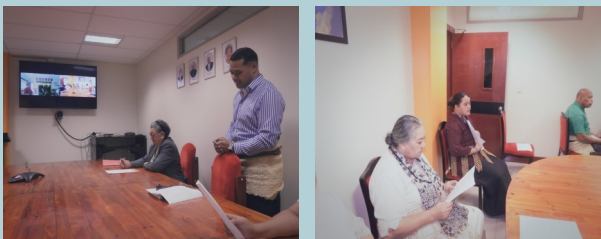


6) Monthly Devotion

Each new month begins with faith, reflection, and a renewed sense of purpose. Gather together and dedicate the month ahead to the Lord, asking for His guidance, wisdom, and protection in all that we do.

January

This month's devotion was led by our CEO, Mr. Roman Lemisio Vaihu, alongside Ms. Mele Vao. Together, they delivered a strong and inspiring message to kick off the month, setting a positive and purposeful tone for the weeks ahead. Their words reminded us of the strength found in unity, faith, and commitment both in our personal journeys and in our shared mission at the Ombudsman's



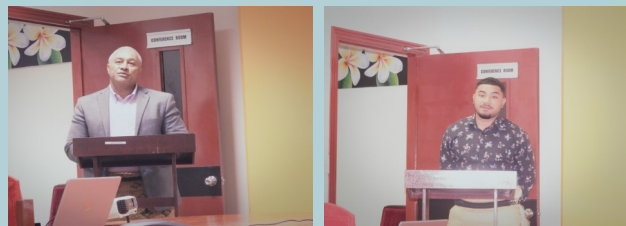
February

The February devotion was led by our Deputy CEO, Mr. Sateki 'Ahio, and Legal Officer, Mr. Sione Hamani Topui. Together, they shared a heartfelt message reflecting on the goodness of God in our lives and the importance of living according to His teachings. They reminded us of the value of patience and the need to trust in God's perfect timing, especially when the road ahead feels unclear. Their encouraging words served as a timely reminder to stay faithful, grounded, and hopeful as we journey through the month with renewed purpose and grace.



March

The March devotion was led by our Principal Investigator, Mr. Pilimisolo Tamo'ua, alongside our newly appointed driver. Together, they set a powerful and moving tone for the month, reminding us of the strength and dedication required for the important work ahead.



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