



PRESS RELEASE

Apia, 6 September 2022 - *Ombudsman conducts basic complaint handling and investigations training for Ombudsman Liaison Officers.*

Nominated Ombudsman Liaison Officers (OLOs) from various government agencies participated in a basic complaint handling and investigations training this week co-facilitated by the Office of the Ombudsman of Samoa and New Zealand (NZ) Ombudsman.

The Chief [Ombudsman NZ](#), Misa Peter Boshier delivered the keynote address and acknowledged the efforts of the Office to strengthen its relationships with agencies “I am very proud to see this and you are the first Ombudsman in the Pacific to have such initiative”. In addition, he addressed the participants “your role as liaison officers is critical because it can help solve matters quickly before they escalate into formal complaints” The Chief Ombudsman gave an example from New Zealand where a member of the public lodged a complaint relating to an NZ agency and it only took a phone call to that agency to solve the situation swiftly. “We were able to address the situation at the early resolution stage of our process through relationships established in that agency to get a solution quickly”.

The Ombudsman of Samoa in her opening remarks acknowledged the support of public agencies for the work of the Ombudsman “I thank your agency for nominating you to participate. I know this is the foundation to strengthening working partnerships with public agencies in the way we respond to concerns of our citizens and effectively using those concerns to better public service delivery” Ombudsman Luamanuvao Katalaina Sapolu in her remarks.

For background information, the establishment of Ombudsman Liaison Officers is Phase 2 of the proactive Ombudsmanship Rollout, a project of the Office of the Ombudsman that proposes arrangements between the Office and Government agencies in assisting the Ombudsman with the discharging of its statutory obligations as required under the Ombudsman Act 2013.

It focuses mainly on the conventional functions of the Ombudsman and aims to raise awareness within agencies on the role of the Ombudsman as an external complaints handler, provide support and advice to agencies in establishing and strengthening their own complaints handling systems and develop working relationships through the establishment of Ombudsman Liaison Officers (OLOs) as the initial point of contact between the Ombudsman and the agencies when a relevant case or complaint arises.

OLOs are nominated by their agencies and Senior Officers who handle the agency's internal and external complaints. Since 2018 about 30 public agencies have participated and have nominated OLOs.

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