



MO LE SILAFIA



OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2023 | ISSUE 2 | VOLUME 8

Komesina o Sulufaiga

AUSTRALASIAN AND PACIFIC OMBUDSMAN REGION 2023 CONFERENCE



Participants at Australasian Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR) Conference in Melbourne

The Australasian Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR) held a conference on 31 October and its 35th annual Members' meeting on 1 November 2023 in Melbourne, Australia.

The conference, themed *Through The Ombudsman Looking Glass: Now And Into The Future* was hosted by Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass OBE as Regional President.

Among other topics the conference explored the role of an Ombudsman in a crisis, noting the Ombudsman has a vital role to play in ensuring balance – understanding that governments may need to act decisively and swiftly, but must always be proportionate and responsible and have due consideration to maintaining human rights.

It coincided with celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the Ombudsman in Victoria. APOR members noted the significant contribution of the Victorian Ombudsman to the Victorian community over this period and commended their demonstrated integrity and independence.

APOR Members reflected on and reaffirmed their commitment to the Principles on the Protection and Promotion of the Ombudsman Institution adopted by the Venice Commission on 15 March 2019, and the Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 2020, in particular noting:

- The importance of independent and autonomous Ombudsman institutions to improving public administration and ensuring fairness
- The role of the Ombudsman in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law.

Noting the mandate for the promotion and protection of human rights, APOR Members also acknowledge the importance of supporting the rights of First Nations and Indigenous people. Ombudsman throughout the region have an important role to play in empowering those aggrieved by the actions of government agencies and supporting their human rights.

Source: <https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au>

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AFIGOA MAUALAIVAO PEPE SEIULI

A warm TALOFA to all and it is my pleasure to welcome everyone to this final edition of our 'Mo le Silafia' (MLS) quarterly for the October - December 2023.

Accordingly, the Office successfully attended to duty travels abroad, with the Australasian Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR) conference as one significant highlight of these commitments.

Further, our support to local initiatives such as Mental Health Day commemoration; Family violence prevention; Human Rights capacity building workshops & visitation; culminating in the 2023 Human Rights Day celebration.

Overall, it is fitting to dedicate this final 2023 MLS by reiterating the words of the Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass whilst as Regional President hosting the recent 2023 APOR conference that:

"Being an Ombudsman is a lonely job still I'm feeling very reflective and hopeful that we maintain our reputation for fairness; for integrity; and for independence".

God Bless & Fa'afetai Tele.

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 - Human Rights Community-Led Capacity Building Workshop
 - Launch of Human Rights Community-Led - Workshop, A'ana No. 1
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 - Human Rights Awareness on the Right to Education.
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OMB - TEAM ENGAGEMENTS

MENTAL HEALTH DAY COMMEMORATION 13 OCTOBER 2023



(L - R) Folasaitu I Seiuli, Salamasina Sanele and Ropati Sitivi of the Ombudsman Office

Extending our sincere appreciation to the The Samoa Salvation Army; and the Goshen Trust Mental Health Services, for their successful coordination of this momentous annual event.

Our Staff wore green to support and celebrate the annual Mental Health Day 2023. Rightfully the theme for 2023 is "Our Minds, Our Rights," emphasizing that 'mental health is a universal human right' and as reiterated by the World Health Organisation (WHO): *Mental Health is a Basic Human Right for All People.*

VILLAGE FAMILY SAFETY COMMITTEE



(L - R) Vaelei A. Ioasa, Maualaivao P Seiuli, & UNDP Regional Director, Kanni Wignaraja with UNDP Delegates.

One of the success story in the fight to end violence against women is reported in the village of Vaie'e, Safata. Effectively, Vaie'e had established a Village Family Safety Committee to co-ordinate; and implement family violence prevention initiatives. Once more UNDP worked in partnership with the Office of the Ombudsman / National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) with other partners under the Samoa Spotlight Initiative to assist the village of Vaie'e with this timely initiative.

Hence it was very fitting that the UNDP Regional Director, Kanni Wignaraja, visited Vaie'e and heard firsthand about their experience and progress in the area. She was also extended the traditional welcome with the ava ceremony and enjoying Samoan entertainment staged by the Vaie'e village.



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Happy smiles from the Acting Ombudsman (middle) and Staff showing their support for the 2023 PINKTOBER Campaign

The Office continues to support the annual PINKTOBER Campaign as the color pink and October being the selected month in advocacy work, and raising awareness about the emerging challenges of breast cancer. It is a symbol of support and working together as the theme of PINKTOBER 2023 'Together we can make a difference' 'la tasi i suiga manuia' It is again a call for all to look out for the well-being of women in our lives.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY-LED CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP - Phase 2 A'ANA No. 1



Vaelei A. Ioasa of NHRI Team in discussions with A'ana No. 1 Committee members during the Workshop

The Workshop, facilitated by the NHRI Team on October 31, 2024 preparing the A'ana No. 1 Committee and Fonofa'avae Office bearers with their first Community-Led Pilot Project scheduled before the end of November 2023. Participants were introduced to the legislated functions of the Ombudsman Office; Human Rights principles; and particularly on these premises are compatible with the Fa'a-Samoa and Christian values.

Learnings from the workshop would build the capacity of the District Committee members on how to conduct their first ever Community-led project. The Human Rights Community-Led Development (HRCLD) project for Samoa, Cook Island and Fiji is funded by the Asia Pacific Forum. In effect and as for Samoa, the A'ana #1 Pilot Project is in Phase 2-Capacity focusing on building capacity for the District Committee, before implementing the main Human Rights Community-led engagement which is Phase 3.



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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY-LED WORKSHOP PROJECT FONOFA'AVAE A'ANA NO. 1

This pioneering Community-Led Workshop Project for A'ana No. 1 has been in the pipeline with the NHRI Team spearheading the development of the Community-Led Pilot Project from Phase 1 to Phase 3. In effect Phase 3 is the actual implementation of lessons learnt from a relative pre-training workshop on Human Rights as conducted entirely by the A'ana No. 1 Committee with the Office as observer.

A brief traditional welcome was extended to the Office by representatives of A'ana No. 1 and the Fono Mua Fonofa'avae Office. The Ombudsman Office in reciprocation acknowledged the leadership of the A'ana No. 1 particularly the Fono Mua District Office for taking the lead towards examining specific Human Rights challenges faced by the people of the District.

The two-day Community-led Workshop in a word allows the local facilitators to lead the entire program whilst the participants to raise relevant discussions on human rights matters that are at least observable across the A'ana No. 1 district. Also participants being the people of the district were seen as very familiar with the facilitators making their interactive participation more lively and meaningful. once more we sincerely acknowledge and congratulate the Fono Mua District Office of A'ana No. 1 for your remarkable support and the successful partnership with the NHRI & Office of the Ombudsman. Manuia lo outou alofaiva.

Selected Images of the Community-Led Workshop at A'ana No. 1

Source: Fono Mua Office A'ana No. 1. See <https://www.facebook.com/100086021093021/videos/pcb.321668697377164/360986973146943>



Acting Ombudsman Maualaivao Pepe Seiuli and MP of A'ana Alofi No.1 afioga Fesola'i Apulu Tuigamala during their special remarks during the Community-Led Workshop



FOLLOW-UP VISIT BY THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC84)

A Senior Supreme Court Judge Vui Clarence Nelson has promptly stressed that: ... *violence isn't discipline, its abuse* . Further, the Judge pointed out that the prevalent practice of: *using violence to discipline children is abuse*. Justice Vui Clarence Nelson attended a conference, as part of a follow-up visit by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC84). The conference was held for three days at the Taumeasina Island Resort Conference Room.

In a media interview, Justice Vui stressed that with the many cases going before the courts on a daily basis, he was disheartened by the rise in cases of violence against children. *"There are obviously many challenges in our communities and heaps of violence (cases) in families which is not decreasing especially with our knowledge from the side of the Court,"* remarked the Senior Supreme Court Judge. *"Many cases involve children and it keeps going up and it's really disheartening. When will the violence stop against our children in terms of sexual violence and sexual abuse, especially within our families? I am really sad with how this is still happening."*

One of the many cases that remains heart-wrenching for Justice Vui is the number of cases involving young girls being sexually abused within their own homes which he stressed is also on the rise. *"As I said, the numbers keep growing on such cases and it's really sad to keep seeing this being reported to the courts,"* he added.

The Senior Supreme Court Judge was the first Pacific Islands Judge to be appointed to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2014. In 2018 he was re-elected for another four-year term on the UN Committee and served as its Vice Chairperson and the Coordinator of the Working Group on the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure before his second term ended last year in 2022.



Senior Judge Vui Clarence Nelson at the UN Conference with Maualaivao P Seili



Discussions at the Rights of the Child's at the follow-up UN visitation and meeting

HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION.



UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Themba Kalua elaborating on this special day.



MESC CEO afioga A'eau Chris Hazelman with another inspiring address on the day

In celebration of the lead up to the annual Human Rights Day on December 10 2023, the Office in collaboration with the United Nations Office carried out a program mainly to revitalise human rights awareness with a focus on the Right to Education in Samoa. Opening remarks by the Acting Ombudsman, Maualaivao Pepe Seili touched on the mandate of the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) which was housed under the Ombudsman's Office since 2013 and how it aims to promote and protect the human rights of all people in Samoa.

Further, the United Nations Resident Coordinator Mr. Themba Kalua spoke on the importance of this event in creating awareness for our people and also in celebrating the 75th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year. He addressed the role of his office in supporting the NHRI and other partners in ensuring that education is accessible for all.

Furthermore, MESC CEO afioga A'eau Chris Hazelman remarked that in days like today we are to be reminded that education is not a privilege but a human right. He further expressed that our people must also understand that education does not firstly happen in schools and universities, but rather, that it begins within our homes and families.



HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION.

continued from pg. 5 ...

Finally, afioga A'eau elaborated on the idea that: "An intelligent person with an excellent educational background means nothing if s/he lacks ethics and values. *"With respect as in my own view, Samoa does not need more academic education but more basic values,"* A'eau reaffirmed.

A rather moving short film titled CHANGEMAKERS was shown, and this highlighted the life of a deaf young woman, Maselina Iuta and her extraordinary journey towards acquiring access education. Reflections by the panel members and also the participants were exchanged in respect of the same. The second half of the event was the prize giving for a nationwide Poem and Tik Tok competition launched by the Office earlier in the month which focused on the Right to Education.

We congratulate all the winners of these competitions and also thank those who have contributed and participated in our activities to celebrate Human Rights Day 2023.



Some of the Prize Winners and Participants at the Human Rights Awareness Event on the Right to Education

ROLLING AWARENESS FOR TIK TOK & POEM COMPETITIONS PRIOR TO THE ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2023



Thank you TV1 Samoa for having us with the host Tapuali'i Epati on Good Morning Samoa as we count down to the annual celebration of the Human Rights Day, 2023 with the Theme *'The Right to Education'*.



(L-R) Tapuali'i Epati, Host of the TV1 Good Morning Samoa and Michael Tamanikaiyaroi of the ECU Team

CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE ON SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2023



Hopeful and Happy Smiles from the participants at the Candle Light Service celebrating the Human Rights Day 2023

On December 10, 2023 Sunday morning around 7am, a special Candle Light Service (the Service) was held at the Prayer House on the heights of Palisi to celebrate 75 years since the official declaration by the United Nation of the United Nation Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Subsequently, the 10th of December in every year was earmarked to be the date for this Human Rights Day commemoration.

In anticipation and support were dignitaries from the UN Samoa Office Resident Coordinator Themba Kalua & ; US Embassy Apia Samoa Chargé d'affaires Noriko Horiuchi; Rev. Elder Utufua Naseri & Taiaopo Naseri; friends and families of the Office. Leading the Service with spiritual encouragement was delivered by Reverend Elder Utufua Naseri, all to be followed by a keynote address by Themba Kalua. Light refreshments were shared at the end before everybody eventually departed for their respective homes and other Sunday commitments. The office thank you sincerely for showing your support by joining us.



As quite well known that lighting a candle is a symbol of seeking guidance and understanding



L-R: Mrs. Kalua; Noriko Horiuchi; Themba Kalua; Maualaivava Seiuli; Rev. Utufua Naseri & Mrs. Taiaopo Naseri;



Rev. Elder Utufua Naseri celebrating Human Rights Day 2023



Afioga Leota Ta'alo Leota (second from right) with Family and Michael Tamanikaiyaroi of the Ombudsman Office



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PHOTO ALBUM OF OMB END OF 2023 EVENTS ...



Social Committee End of the Year Function



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-  Level 2, SNPF Plaza, Savalalo
-  PO BOX 3036, APIA, Samoa
-  (+685) 25394 & 23317
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SERVICES.**

The majority of complaints received by SIU have been through the Ombudsman Complaint Boxes; and Walk in.

-  **Walk in 15**
-  **By Phone 4**
-  **By Writing 4**
-  **OMB-Prison Box 12**

PHOTO ALBUM OF OMB EVENTS & PARTICIPATION ...



October 4, 2023 Samoa Cyber Smart Week Official Launch



October 20, 2023 Letter Collection during a Tanumalala Prison Visit & Inspection by Ropati Sitivi of OMB Office



Inspection at Tanumalala by Senior Officials (L-R) Nepa Papalii of SIU and Manino Eveni of Good Governance Unit (GG)



October 24, UN Day Celebration commemorates the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



October 26, 2023 NHRI Advisory Council Meeting



OMB OFFICE FACEBOOK VISIBILITY & STATS UPDATE

	PUBLIC NOTICE The Public is advised that the Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI will be temporarily closed on Thursday 7th December 2023 from 9am - 2pm for an office event. For urgent matters, please contact Loau Davina Rasch Salanoa on 25394 or 7626121 or email: info@ombudsman.gov.ws or davinarsalanoa@ombudsman.gov.ws Than... Dec 6, 2023	Post reach 553	Engagement 17
	-- Dec 5, 2023	Post reach 109	Engagement 14
	Talofa to all our Competitors. EXTENSION EXTENSION EXTENSION The Tik Tok and Poem Competition has been extended to the 6th of December 2023 . Please email your entries to michael.tam@ombudsman.gov.ws or vaelei.iosa@ombudsman.gov.ws before 10:00am, Wednesday the 6th of December . Faafetai lava Dec 4, 2023	Post reach 1,279	Engagement 157
	Thank you TV1 Samoa for having us with our host Tapualii Epati on Good Morning Samoa as we count down to the celebration of Human Rights Day, on the 10th December 2023. #HumanRightsDay2023 Nov 30, 2023	Post reach 711	Engagement 80
	Every year Samoa joins the world to commemorate Human Rights Day on the 10th of December. This Year we celebrate the World Human Rights Day with the Theme on THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION . To celebrate this Human Right Day in Samoa, the Office of Ombudsman/NHRI hosts a TIK TOK COMPETITION (Refer flyer for Details). ENTER... Nov 21, 2023	Post reach 1,526	Engagement 170
	Every year Samoa joins the world to commemorate Human Rights Day on the 10th of December. This Year we celebrate the World Human Rights Day with the Theme on THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION . To celebrate this Human Right Day in Samoa, the Office of Ombudsman/NHRI hosts a POEM COMPETITION (Refer flyer for Details). ENTER... Nov 21, 2023	Post reach 591	Engagement 58
	A three day conference on a follow-up visit by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC84) at the Taumeasina Island Resort. Nov 21, 2023	Post reach 113	Engagement 5

Content

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	https://talamua.com/2023/12/09/samoa-does-not-need-more-academic-education-but-basic-ethics-values/ Dec 11, 2023	Post reach 121	Engagement 6
	On early Sunday morning the 10th December 2023, a Candle Light Service was held at the Prayer House at Palisi to commemorate Human Rights Day 2023. Those present were from UN Samoa, US Embassy Apia, Samoa Chargé d'affaires - Noriko and families of the Office. A Word of encouragement was shared by Reverend Elder Utufua Naseri... Dec 10, 2023	Post reach 1,247	Engagement 220
	Your Video Dec 10, 2023	Post reach 212	Engagement 23
	Sunday 10th December 2023 Candle Light Service Dec 10, 2023	Post reach 1,295	Engagement --
	Good morning Samoa, The Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI Samoa will be hosting a Candle Light Service on Sunday 10th December 2023 at the Prayer House at Palisi, to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on this Human Rights Day in Samoa and across the world. The public is welcome to join us as we... Dec 8, 2023	Post reach 375	Engagement 17
	In celebration of the lead up to Human Rights Day 2023, the Office in collaboration with the United Nations Office carried out an event today that revitalises human rights awareness with a focus on the right to education in Samoa. Opening remarks by the Acting Ombudsman, Maualaivao Pepe Seiuli touched on the mandate of the National Huma... Dec 7, 2023	Post reach 1,803	Engagement 187
	A big fa'afetai lava to Talamua Media for celebrating with our Office as we celebrate Human Rights Day on the 10th of December. #HumanRights75 #humanrights75pacificvoices Dec 7, 2023	Post reach 98	Engagement 8
	Stop by today at Lava Hotel and celebrate Human Rights Day with us. Test your knowledge on your right to education with plenty of spot cash prizes to be won. See you soon! #righttoeducation #humanrightsdays Dec 7, 2023	Post reach 119	Engagement 7



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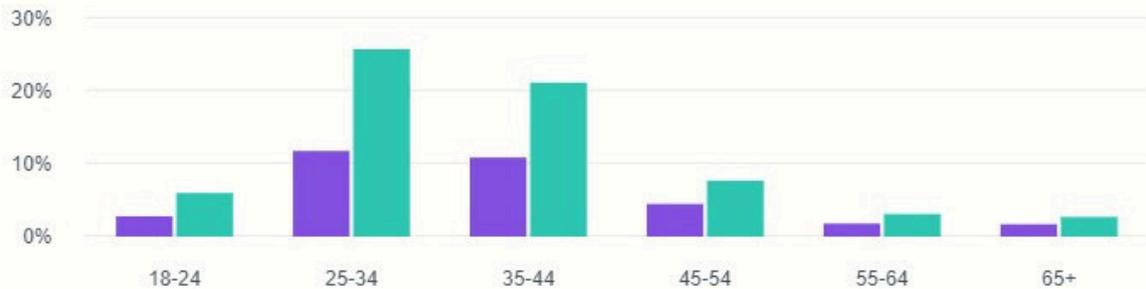
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