



MO LE SILAFIA QUARTERLY



APRIL - JUNE 2025 ISSUE 11

Komesina o Sulufaiga

DUTY TRAVEL - EFFECTIVE INVESTIGATOR NADI, FIJI ISLANDS



(L - R) Samoa Investigators: Manino E Tui, Nepa P. Saua, Leota T Leota and Murphy Siupolu

The investigation arm of our Office was among other Ombudsman Offices from the Pacific region, participating in a workshop to learn and share their respective investigative knowledge, technique and work experiences.

The Ombudsman is an independent officer of Parliament, hence one essential core function of the Ombudsman is to investigate claims of maladministration against public ministries and agencies. The authority to investigate can bring to light accountability against allegations of government maladministration that would otherwise pass unnoticed.

Generally, the Ombudsman 'scrutinizes otherwise dark places, even over the resistance of those who would attempt to draw the blinds'. If scrutiny and reservations are well founded, corrective measures can be taken in due democratic process, if not no harm can be done in looking at that which is good, to paraphrase Milvain C.J., Supreme Court, Canada.

The two-day workshop sessions include on Day 1 revisiting: Administrative law principles in investigations; Information gathering & Evidence analysis; and Report writing. On Day 2 involves: the essentials of interviewing complainants with disabilities; as well as at the welfare of investigators.

Fa'afetai tele to the New Zealand coordinators Grace Taylor and Renee Vaoleti as we appreciate the wealth of knowledge and expertise shared with our fellow counterparts from Vanuatu, Tonga, Cook Islands, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and New Zealand. We look forward to more invaluable engagements in the future!



AFIGA MAUALAIVAO PEPE SEIULI

Talofa & Welcome to our MLS Newsletter.

It has been an honour to share messages with you through our MLS. This platform serves as a reminder of the vital work we carry out together raising awareness, fostering accountability, and building trust in Samoa.

This issue highlights the wide range of our responsibilities: from enhancing investigative skills in Fiji, to capacity-building with our partners in New Zealand, and our ongoing work to prevent torture, provide training, and make it easy for everyone to raise complaints. From *O Lau Palota o Lou Leo* to school programs and media outreach, our community engagements reflect this Office's unwavering commitment to serve with integrity and humility.

I share this as my final message for *Mo le Silafia*. Still, my commitment to good governance, human rights and justice for all, continues. Fa'afetai tele & God Bless.

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OMB-TEAM ENGAGEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCES DAY MAY 20, 2025



Group Photo Time for the Participants of Human Resources Day 2025

International Human Resources Day for the first time, brought together HR practitioners and advisors from across the public service to connect, share experiences, and learn under the themes of Leading HR Together, Leading in a New Way, and Leading in a Digital World.

The event featured a powerful panel discussion with PSC Chairman Afioga Nonu Lemauga Saleimoa Vaai, Commissioner Ulualoifaiga Talamaivao Fonoti Perelini, and Secretary Aotumua Kolone Tikeri, who highlighted the shift of HR from an administrative function to a strategic driver of leadership development, performance and ethics, and good governance across the public sector. It was a valuable opportunity to acknowledge the dedication, guidance, and behind-the-scenes efforts of HR professionals who keep our organizations empowered and well-supported.

We thank all HR specialists and practitioners for their passion and expertise, and we acknowledge the Samoa Governance for Economic Growth (Tautai) Program for supporting this initiative. CSU Director Muliaga Loau Davina Rasch Salanoa of the Office of the Ombudsman, attended representing the Office on this inaugural occasion.



(L-R) CSU Director Muliagatele Davina Rasch - Salanoa with participating colleagues during discussions and sharing experiences.

THE KEY
ATTRIBUTES OF
GOOD
GOVERNANCE
ARE:

RESPONSIVENESS
(TO THE NEEDS
OF THE PEOPLE)

PARTICIPATION

RESPONSIBILITY

TRANSPARENCY

ACCOUNTABILITY

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OMB-TEAM ENGAGEMENTS

USP: STRENGTHENING SKILLS, EMPOWERING STAFF – MAY 21, 2025



Participants of USP Campus Industry Engagement 2025 held at Tanoa Hotel Conference Room on May 21, 2025

On May 21, 2025 the Office recently participated in a consultation coordinated by senior staff of the USP Campus and facilitated by Campus Director, Afioga Tootoooleaava Dr. Fanaafi Aiono-Le Tagalao. Principal HR Officer Rosuweti Galuvao and Director Tupuola Toetu Tuiā represented the Ombudsman Office. The twofold purpose involves:

- i. to identify training needs within both public and private sectors, and
- ii. to highlight relevant services offered by USP.

A key outcome revealed a mismatch between student career aspirations and their current course enrolments highlighting the need for better alignment and targeted training pathways. Importantly, the consultation emphasized the ongoing need for short-term, flexible training options to support capacity building and professional development, particularly in areas such as Human Resource Management.

As a way forward, the Office aims to assess internal training needs that will empower staff, improve qualifications, enhance service delivery, and ultimately contribute to better outcomes for the public sector and the community.



Ombudsman Office representative Ms. Rosuweti Galuvao (middle) during a group discussion session



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Asia Pacific Forum

**“No one shall be subjected to
torture or to cruel, inhuman
or degrading treatment
or punishment”**

Article 5, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Source: Asia Pacific Forum <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1022047923358674&set=pb.100066604272838.-2207520000>

The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) joined 60 other National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) in the Asia Pacific Region to strengthen capacity on torture prevention.

Torture has no place in our societies and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) play a key role in preventing it. More than 60 representatives from across the Asia Pacific region took part in the regional course on torture prevention, which was jointly delivered with the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT).

Held from 7 April to 9 May, the course espoused to equip participants with practical tools to strengthen their efforts to prevent torture and ill-treatment from monitoring detention facilities to raising public awareness.

Delivered via a mix of self-paced modules and weekly live Zoom sessions, the training draws on the APF-APT guide 'Preventing Torture: An Operational Guide for NHRIs' and covers international legal frameworks, monitoring techniques, investigative skills and community engagement.

Facilitated by APT with the support of APF representatives, the course is reported to promote peer learning through the APF Community forum. The course according to APF Project Officer Ms Nayela Akter ...

“NHRIs have a unique and powerful role in preventing torture,” said Ms Akter. “This course provides them with the tools to undertake this work more effectively - whether through monitoring places of detention, advocating for legal reforms, or raising public awareness ... “The course is part of the APF’s ongoing support to help member institutions implement effective, gender-responsive torture prevention strategies in line with international human rights standards.”

The Director of Special Investigation Unit Ms. Lagafuaina Tavita reflected that: *“It was also an invaluable resource and platform to learn from our NHRI colleagues on how they carry out their detention inspections and torture prevention work”.*

The Office through the SIU and NHRI sincerely acknowledges the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) for this opportunity to strengthen our knowledge and skill sets.

Preventing Torture: An Operational Guide for NHRIs - See the following link for more information:

<https://www.asiapacificforum.net/resources/preventing-torture-operational-guide-national-human-rights-institutions>

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KNOWLEDGE SHARING: NZ OMBUDSMAN VISIT

MAY 6 – 8, 2025

The Office of the Ombudsman Samoa had the pleasure of welcoming Grace Taylor and Rene Violeti from the New Zealand Office of the Ombudsman (NZOO). The visit focused on engaging with the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), Good Governance Unit (GGU), and Corporate Services. This visit provided an opportunity for meaningful discussions, knowledge sharing, and strengthening collaboration across key areas of the Office's work, further reinforcing regional ties and shared commitments to accountability and transparency.



Meeting with Grace Taylor and Rene Violeti of NZOO



Exchanging gifts of appreciation with Maualaivao Pepe Seiuli



(L-R) Grace Taylor and Rene Violeti of NZOO with OMB Directors: Lagafuaina Tavita and Fuimaono Vaiao Eteuati



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TRAINING OF CORRECTION OFFICERS RECRUIT TANUMALALA PRISON JUNE 10, 2025



OMB Team with Correction Officers (seating) with the Correction Recruit Officers Class 1, 2025 (standing)

The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) by invitation was facilitating a training session at Tanumalala Prison for the new Corrections Officer Recruits on June 10, 2025. The key objectives of the Training include:

- Awareness of the Ombudsman's mandate, functions, and processes
- Understanding of the relevance and link of the Ombudsman's work to the Corrections Officers' role
- Education on human rights
- Education on integrity and torture

As frontline officers maintaining discipline and order, Correction Officers also play a vital role in encouraging rehabilitation, promoting self-respect, and helping inmates rebuild positive values and habits of good citizenship. Faafetai tele to Deputy Commissioner Leiataua Samuelu Afamasaga and Training Coordinator Maria for extending this invitation to our office.

We wish the Recruits the very best as they complete their final weeks of Training and more-so to the journey ahead as Corrections Officers.



Senior SIU Investigator Murphy Siupolu facilitating a presentation and discussions with the Recruits



Senior GGU Investigator Manino E Tui sharing ideas and guiding an interactive group discussion

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OMB-TEAM ENGAGEMENTS

CHIEF ACCOUNTANTS' FORUM - TATTE BUILDING

June 4, 2025



(L-R) Accountants representing different ministries. (Photos by MOF)

The British High Commission in Apia supports the Office of the Ombudsman in Samoa through financial assistance to enable Ms. Rosa Toese Siaosi, Director Human Rights Unit, to participate in the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Annual meeting 10-12 March and the Annual meeting of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights (CFNHRI) from 13-14 March.

Deputy High Commissioner, Daniel Garlick, wished her well on her journey and a very successful meeting.

Source: UK in Samoa

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Good Governance Unit



Purpose of the Good Governance Unit

1

The Good Governance Unit aims to ensure that public institutions effectively deliver their mandates while satisfying public expectations. It focuses on promoting principles such as transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in governance.



Core Attributes of Good Governance

2

Key attributes of good governance include transparency in actions, accountability to the public, responsible management of resources, active participation of citizens, and responsiveness to the people's needs. These elements are fundamental in fostering trust and integrity in governmental functions.



Limitations of Investigation

3

The Good Governance Unit does not have jurisdiction over private individuals, court decisions, or statutory tribunal outcomes. Additionally, it may refuse to investigate complaints based on criteria such as the existence of another remedy, the age of the complaint, and lack of public interest.



OMB - TEAM ENGAGEMENTS

PUBLIC SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL 2025 STAKEHOLDER REVIEW CONSULTATION - JUNE 26 2025

The Public Service Commission hosted a consultation on the Public Service Act 2004 Amendment Bill at TATTE Convention Centre on 26 June 2025. The session gathered ACEOs and representatives from Ministries, SOEs, and Constitutional Offices to review 36 proposed amendments. The Ombudsman's Office, represented by our Corporate Service Team, contributed perspectives on retirement age flexibility and commended PSC's integration of a human rights-based approach, including the repeal of s.48Ab, reinforcing institutional knowledge and succession planning.

CONSULTATION ON DISASTER & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ACT - MAY 30 2025

The Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI, represented by SIU Director Lagafuaina Tavita, attended the Private Sector Consultation on the review of the Disaster & Emergency Management Act 2007. The meeting gathered key stakeholders including the Samoa Chamber of Commerce, NPF, and Caritas Samoa.

Key issues discussed included qualifications for the National Controller, new offences under the Act, and emergency health and safety measures for different sectors. From a human rights perspective, the Office highlighted:

- Timely public information during emergencies to prevent misinformation, with mandatory press conferences.
- Integrating a human rights-based approach in disaster response, covering reporting, data, and coordination of relief.
- Establishing a complaints-handling mechanism for disasters and emergencies.
- Setting clear qualifications for the National Controller role.

Way Forward: The Office will explore developing a Disaster Management Plan to guide its operations and ensure human rights are safeguarded during crises.

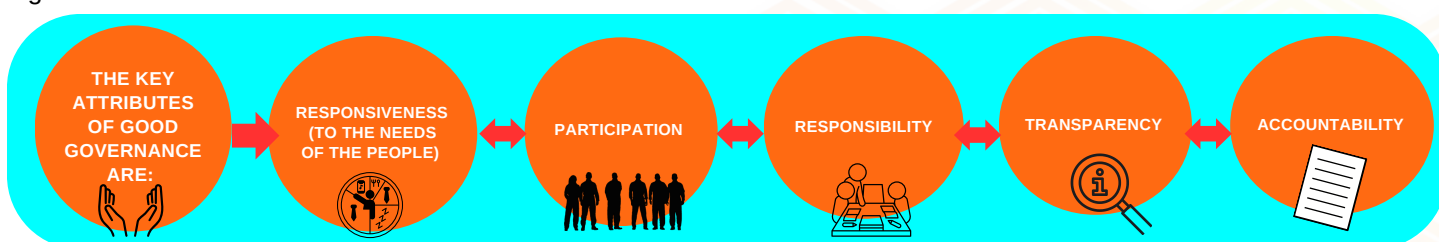
USP CONSULTATION ON WORKFORCE TRAINING NEEDS - MAY 21 2025

The Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI participated in the first 2025 consultation hosted by USP Alafua Campus, coordinated by senior staff and facilitated by Campus Director Afioga Tootoooleaava Dr. Fanaafi Aiono-Le Tagaloa. The consultation aimed to identify the training needs of employees in both the public and private sectors and to share USP's relevant training programs.

Dr. Fanaafi highlighted gaps between students' chosen courses and their career aspirations, showing the need for better alignment between studies and workforce requirements. Participants emphasized short-term, practical training, with Human Resource Management identified as a key priority.

Representing our Office at the consultation, Rosuweti Galuvao and Tupuola Toetu Tuia gained valuable insights into capacity-building opportunities that can support professional development, career growth, and improved service delivery. Staff are encouraged to explore USP 2025 courses here: USP Handbook & Calendar 2025.

We extend our gratitude to USP Alafua Campus Management for recognizing the Office of the Ombudsman in this inaugural consultation.



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A LEGACY OF SERVICE: AFIOGA MAUALAIVAO PEPE SEIULI HONORING 34 YEARS OF DEDICATION

Maualaivao Pepe Seiuli, has officially tendered his resignation from public office after 35 years of dedicated service to Office of the Ombudsman, altogether 50 years of service to the public and Samoa.

With a distinguished career spanning decades, Maualaivao is widely respected across government and community circles for his unwavering commitment to public service, his integrity, and his deep understanding of Samoa's social, political, and cultural landscape.

Professional Journey

Maualaivao's professional journey began in 1975 where he held various senior positions within key Government Ministries. They include:

- 1975-1978 Post Office Radio/Broadcasting – Clerk
- 1979-1984 Public Service Commission – Inspector
- 1984-1985 Inland Revenue Department – Senior Executive Officer & Chairman CATA
- 1986-1988 Public Service Commission – Chief management Advisory Officer
- 1989-1990 Prime Minister Department – Deputy Secretary
- 1990-2025 Deputy Ombudsman/Acting Ombudsman and Chairman of CFNHRI until 2026.



Staff Plaque of Appreciation presented by SIU Director Lagafuaina Tavita

His exemplary leadership and administrative skills saw him rise through the ranks, taking on critical responsibilities that supported the development and reform of Samoa's public sector. Over the years, he has contributed to national strategies in areas ranging from community development, governance, and compliance, to capacity building, good governance, and institutional strengthening. He is currently the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) where he is instrumental in leading CFNHRI policy initiatives aimed at promoting transparency, public accountability, and the promotion and protection of human rights in Samoa and the world.

Chiefly Journey Beyond his public service roles, Maualaivao holds two esteemed paramount chief titles of: Faualo in Apia and Maualaivao in Malie. His traditional chief roles and leadership have always been integral to his life, and he continues to be actively involved in the affairs of his villages and the broader Samoan community.

He has remained steadfast in his role as a paramount matai, actively upholding the responsibilities and traditional leadership duties tied to his chiefly village duties for Apia and Malie. His cultural grounding and commitment to the Samoan culture have reinforced his leadership style balancing traditional values with the evolving needs of a modern Samoa.

After much prayer, consultation, and reflection, Maualaivao decided to resign to contest as a candidate in the August 2025 General Election. This decision marks a transition from a civil servant to a political servant motivated by the undeniable need to represent his constituency and to contribute meaningfully if successful, to national development through Parliament.

"I have always believed in serving our people with humility, courage, and vision," said Maualaivao. "As I step away from public office, I do so with gratitude and step forward with renewed purpose. I am ready to serve Samoa from a new platform, with the same heart."

Sincerely, with heavy hearts we extend our best wishes to afioga Maualaivao for his new journey and ongoing service to Samoa.

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(L-R) NHRI Director Ulugia Rosa Toese with TV3 Presenter: Seugamaivasa Tauta Maole Lemana

In collaboration with TV3 and WTMedia, the Office continues to facilitate the “O lau Palota o Lou Leo” program aiming at informing the public on the essentials of a fair and credible democratic election. Therefore the six (6) programs conducted in the Samoan language covers selected topics like Integrity in its various forms and application.

Take for instance the need for integrity in registration involves accuracy; security; transparency; accessibility; prevention of fraud; and regular updates. Voting integrity on the other hand includes voter eligibility; ballot security; transparency; election security; accurate counting; and fair election practices.

Integrity in elections underpins the legitimacy of the Government and political leaders against a backdrop of respect for human rights norms. Without electoral integrity, leaders and officials lack accountability to the public, confidence in the election results is weak and the government lacks necessary legitimacy. Electoral integrity allows for peaceful resolution of conflict, open dialogue, debate and information sharing amongst leaders and the public.



Episode 7 presenter: ECU Senior officer Gagau Jerry Ah-Kee



Episode 8 presenter: GGU Principal officer Nepa C Papalii

Human rights issues in Samoa, such as gender equality, access to justice, freedom of expression, and the protection of indigenous cultures, are often central to the electoral discourse. By registering to vote, you contribute to the election of leaders who are committed to addressing these issues in a meaningful way.

In Samoa, where traditional customs and modern governance intersect, electing the right leaders is key to balancing these influences and ensuring the fair treatment of all citizens, particularly vulnerable groups.

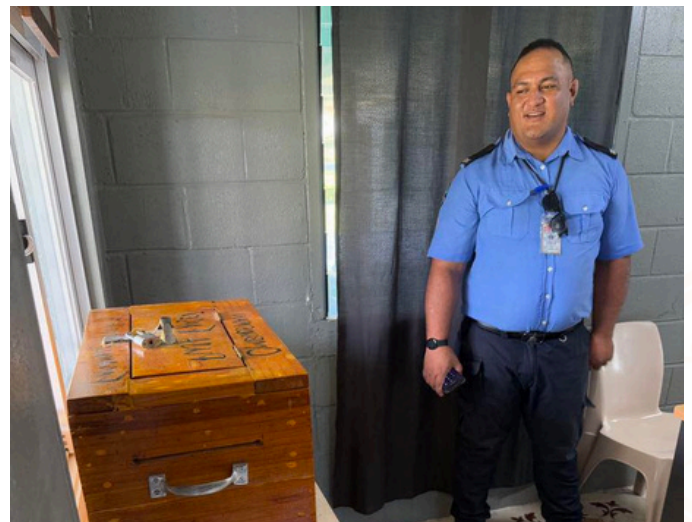
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COMPLAINT BOXES & NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION



(L-R) Team OMB inspecting Complaint Boxes across Savaii led by Prin. Leota Ta'alo Leota and Sr. Murphy Siupolu



(L-R) SIU Complaint Handling Posters in Samoan & English with a Complaint Box at Fagamalo Police Post.



(L-R) Our Mo Le Silafia (MLS) Newsletters distribution to Tuasivi Hospital and the Tuasivi Police Station

The OMB Team took to the road around Savaii to inspect the SIU Complaint Boxes at all Police Posts across Savaii, as well as distributing our quarterly MLS Newsletter to government offices in Tuasivi. These essentially are some of the planned tasks for the OMB Savaii Team to connect and mutually share information with our counterparts, stakeholders and the general public around Savaii.

COMMUNITY BOOTH AND AWARENESS SAVAII



The Office Awareness Team Savaii getting ready to meet the public at Salelologa Market as planned for June 27 - 28 2025

The fact that we do not have an Office in Savaii this initiative on the ground is to gauge and strengthen public awareness of the Office of the Ombudsman's role, services, and complaint mechanisms while engaging with communities in Savai'i. The Savaii assignment was geared to make direct engagement with the public at Salelologa Market; Salelologa Wharf; and across the Tuasivi compound. This particular visit include the distribution of our quarterly Newsletter namely Mo le Silafia (MLS) to enhance visibility to our residents in Savaii.

The Team provides a direct and accessible avenue for members of the public to lodge complaints regarding government services, police conduct, and prison conditions. The Savaii visit also strengthen institutional engagements with government agencies, police stations, and correctional facilities to reinforce working relationships. Further, to encourage collaboration with local authorities to improve service delivery and governance. Furthermore, to contribute to the Office's mandate ensuring the people of Savai'i are informed, and empowered to formally exercise their rights through the appropriate channels.



The Savaii Team before splitting to [1] Salelologa Market and [2] Uplifting Complaints from Vaiaata and Police Posts around Savaii.

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OMB team with host Tafilipepe of Radio 2AP

The ECU Team, led by Gagau Jerry Ah-Kee, hosted a talk show on Radio 2AP and TV9 to inform the public about the upcoming community outreach and booth visits in Savaii. ECU was joined by Murphy (SIU) and Nepa Papalii (GGU) to provide updates on the locations of Community Booths and the collection of complaints via police and prison complaint boxes, encouraging residents to engage with the Office and raise any concerns. The broadcast served as a public awareness initiative, ensuring transparency, accessibility, and participation of the community.



Gagau Jerry Ah Kee - Senior Engagement Officer/ Engagement & Communication Unit (ECU)



Nepa Camilla Papalii - Principal Investigations Officer/ Good Governance Unit (GGU)



Murphy Siupolu - Senior Investigation Officer/ Special Investigations Unit (SIU)

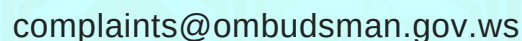


NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE CLEAN UP



Among the many public servants this morning, we took part in the National Clean-Up Day, ahead of the upcoming Independence Day celebrations! Together with Office of the Attorney General, Audit Office, we were delegated to clean the area from Seana Nite Club - Seawall area (facing the Origin Gas Depot) in front of the EFKS Hall in Mulinuu

OMB Team getting together for a group photo with their wonderful smiles and a well deserved rest. Malo lava Team!!



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OFFICE ACTIVITY: MOTHER'S DAY LUNCH - 9 MAY 2025



President of the Social Committee afioga Leota T. Leota during his opening remarks in celebrating Mothers' Day 2025.



(Left) SIU Director Lagafuaina Tavita extending a vote of thanks to the Social Committee for making time to prepare the special Mothers' Day Luncheon 2025. **(Right)** Mothers and Investigators Nepa Papali'i and Manino Tui contemplating the formalities!

The Office of the Ombudsman came together to celebrate the wonderful mothers within our Office. The celebration was filled with warmth, love, and gratitude as staff acknowledged the invaluable role that mothers play in their families, communities, and workplace.

The short program was officially opened by the President the Social Committee afioga Leota Taalo Leota and followed by an uplifting opening prayer by Director of the Good Governance Unit Fuimaono Vaiao Eteuati. Then Mauaiaivao Pepe Seiuli shared his appreciation and heartfelt remarks, paying tribute to the strength, dedication, and love of all mothers and the inspiration they bring to the Office.

The event was not only an opportunity to specially say thank you to all the Office Mothers but also a moment of reflection about the spirit of motherhood in a joyful and meaningful way.



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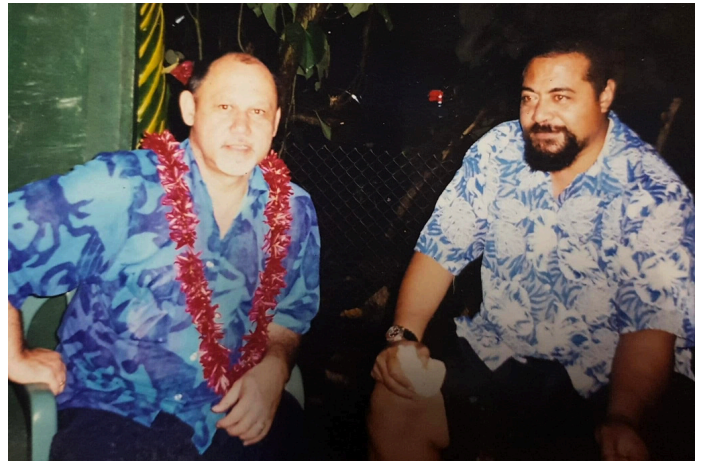
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IN-HOUSE MATTERS

STAFF MOVEMENT - RECRUITMENT & OUTGOING STAFF FAREWELL MAUALAIVAO P SEIULI



(L-R) Maulaivao with George Latu and Tuimaleali'ifano Sualauvi II



(L-R) Tuala Tagaloa Sale Kerslake with Maulaivao



(L-R) Maulaivao as a panelist and participant in the 2024 International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) World Conference



The phrase: 'one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day' comes to mind when seeing the short photographic narrative above about the outgoing Acting Ombudsman afioga Maulaivao Pepe Seiuli. The Office of the Ombudsman had the honor of working under his trailblazing leadership and we certainly miss his presence more-so his insistence that the Office must uphold its legislated role without fear or favor. Fa'afetai tele.



WELCOME MR. SAUFO'I MAMOE

We are very pleased to welcome Mr. Saufo'i Mamoe, who joined the Office on May 19, 2025 as our new Receptionist and Driver. Saufo'i brings with him valuable experience from his previous occupation and role at the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC).

Further, he was prompted to the fact that unlike MEC, OMB in terms of staff numbers is a small office and multitasking is part of our daily routine. We look forward to his contributions and warmly welcome him to the team.

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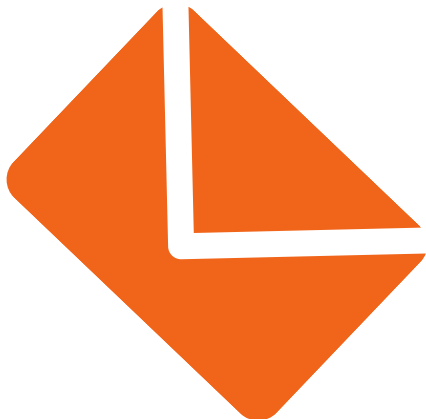
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