



PRESS RELEASE

Apia, 27 July 2026 – Ombudsman Afioga Vui Clarence Nelson Appointed as Samoa's Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman proudly announces that **Afioga Vui Clarence Nelson** was formally sworn in as the fifth Ombudsman of the Independent State of Samoa today at a ceremony held at **Maota Tofilau Eti Alesana**.

The programme commenced with welcoming remarks by **Satama Leatisa Uitime Tala**, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, followed by a devotion led by **Susuga Apostle Tooouta Aloalii** of the Worship Centre Christian Church. The **Swearing-In Ceremony** was officiated by the **Honourable Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Afioga Hon. Auapaau Mulipola Aloitafua Mulipola**, and was followed by an address from the **Honourable Prime Minister, Susuga Hon. Laaulialemalietoa Leuatea Polataivao Fosi** and an address by the newly sworn in **Ombudsman**. The ceremony concluded with closing remarks and refreshments.

Following the official ceremony, the Office of the Ombudsman welcomed Afioga Vui Clarence Nelson with a traditional 'ava ceremony, demonstrating how our faasamoa is central to our role in the protection and promotion of human rights. The ceremony symbolised respect, unity, and the beginning of his leadership as Ombudsman, while reaffirming the Office's commitment to independence, integrity, accountability, and service to the people of Samoa. Afioga Vui was appointed by the Head of State on the recommendation of Parliament and assumes office for a six-year term. He brings more than 26 years of distinguished judicial service and extensive legal experience to the Office.

Vui Nelson began his judicial career as a District Court Judge in 2000 before being appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court in December 2006. In November 2021, he was appointed Senior Supreme Court Judge, a position he held until his retirement from the Judiciary in June 2026.

Beyond his national service, Vui Nelson also made significant contributions to the advancement of children's rights and international human rights. In 2014, he became the first Pacific Islander appointed to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), where he represented the Pacific region and promoted the protection and welfare of children worldwide.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to judicial reform and the advancement of children's rights, the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, conferred upon him an Honorary Degree in 2023.

As Ombudsman, he assumes leadership of the Office in promoting good governance, accountability, transparency, and the protection of human rights in Samoa. The Office investigates complaints concerning maladministration by government agencies, serves as Samoa's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), and undertakes independent oversight functions under the **Ombudsman Act 2013**.

The Office of the Ombudsman congratulates Afioga Vui Clarence Nelson on his appointment and look forward to his leadership in strengthening public trust, promoting good governance, safeguarding human rights, and advancing excellence in public administration for the benefit of all people in Samoa.

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