
Press Release

Ombudsman and Human Rights Advisory Council Strengthen Collaboration to Advance Human Rights in Samoa

Apia, Samoa – 08 September 2026

Samoa Office of the Ombudsman Hosts Inaugural Human Rights Advisory Council Meeting for Financial Year 2026/2027 Under New Leadership.

The Office of the Ombudsman convened its first Human Rights Advisory Council Meeting for the 2026/2027 Financial Year. The meeting marks a significant milestone as the first held since the appointment of Ombudsman Afioga Vui Clarence Nelson in July 2026. Established under section 39 of the Ombudsman (Komesina) Sulufaiga Act 2013, the Human Rights Advisory Council plays a vital role in supporting the Office's human rights mandate.

The Council comprises eight members, each bringing working knowledge of the different human rights concerns affecting communities within Samoan society. The members have advisory roles covering Children and Youth, represented by Rev. Dr Siaosi Salesulu and Audrey Natasha Lee Hang; Women, represented by Tavu'i Anne Eves Laumea; Anti-Discrimination, represented by Nanai Leiataualesa Mulipola Pologa Ioane; Diversity, represented by Ioimataopunialavaa Vaito'a Toelupe; Community and Faith-Based, represented by Tafilelea Fifita Leota; Equal Opportunity, represented by Maiava Iosefa Afele Maiava; and Persons with Disabilities, represented by Mataafa Faatino Utumapu.

The meeting provided an important platform for the Ombudsman to officially meet Council members, share experiences, and discuss the specific advocacy environments of each advisory role. During the proceedings, the Human Rights Unit (HRU) led a discussion on the core roles and functions of the Council, and how it can strengthen and support execution of the Office's human rights mandate. Additionally, the HRU delivered a briefing on completed and forthcoming work activities for the current financial year.

Today's meeting sets a promising path forward for the Office of the Ombudsman and its Human Rights Advisory Council. Moving forward, both entities will work hand in hand to ensure the perspectives and concerns of all sectors of Samoan society are addressed in the Office's human rights work.

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