

The Ombudsman Newsletter

Luk lo Waka blo Gavman



ISSUE 4
DEC 2018

Annual Report presented to Speaker of Parliament



Solomon Islands Ombudsman Mr Fredrick Fakarii officially handed the Office of the Ombudsman Annual Report to the Speaker of Parliament Mr Ajilon Nasiu.

The Solomon Islands Ombudsman, Mr Fredrick Fakarii has officially presented the Office of the Ombudsman's Annual Report to the National Parliament through the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ajilon Jasper Nasiu. The Annual report covers the period from 2016-2017.

The Annual report contains important issues raised to the Ombudsman as complaint cases and grievances from the citizens. It also highlights systematic issues and gaps within the government system that needs to be seriously looked at by relevant government institutions. These include, the need to improve complaint handling system within the government

departments, poor record management, unfair and unreasonable decision making, human rights related issues and so forth.

Other areas highlighted in the Annual report include; the importance of reducing public expenditure and ensuring that there is more public accountability in decision making. It also makes reference to political interference in public administration, maladministration, fraud and corruption.

The Ombudsman also reiterated the importance of the Ombudsman Act 2017 as a milestone achievement, highlighting that his office is look-

ing at diversifying the role of the Ombudsman's office in the foreseeable future.

In the consequent discussion between the Om-

budsman and the Speaker of Parliament it was highlighted that without an 'established body' to monitor any implementation of recommendations in the Constitutional Offices reports to parliament, such as the Ombudsman and the Auditor General's report, the good work will just be another important records waiting to be archived.

The Speaker of Parliament thanked the Ombudsman for the Annual Report, stressing that his office will distribute the report to Members of Parliament.

Inside this issue:

Speaker receive Annual report	1
Governance Unit News	2, 3
Investigation Unit	8
General Features	9
Staff Profile:	10

Special points of interest:

- *Ombudsman hands Annual Report to the Speaker of the national Parliament.....page 1*
- *Networking by Director of Governance and Ombudsman.....see page 2*
- *Ombudsman visit Rove prison.....see page 5*
- *Complaint received and issue raised with OOSI see page 8*



Ombudsman and Director Governance attends conference

The Ombudsman and Director Governance have travelled to Auckland, New Zealand on 25 November and return on 30 November 2018 to attend the Australasian & Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR) Conference and the Pacific Integrity Network (PIN) Leaders Meeting.

The PIN Leaders meeting was held on Tuesday 27 November 2018 at the Cordis Hotel, and was co-chaired by the Secretary to the Ombudsman Commission of Papua New Guinea, Mr Joseph Molita, and the Director Governance of the Office of the Ombudsman of Solomon Islands. The PIN leaders' meeting was attended by leaders of the Ombudsmen and Leadership offices in the Pacific

region. The APOR Conference took place from Wednesday 28 - Thursday 29 November 2019, also at the Cordis Hotel in Auckland. During the two days of the conference, the Director Governance is one of the key speakers who presented on the topic "maintaining accountability in Solomon Islands" on day one of the conference. The APOR conference was attended by President and Secretary General of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), Hong Kong Ombudsman and team, Taiwan Control yen and team, different Ombudsmen from Australia and the Pacific Islands countries. The APOR conference was hosted by the New Zealand Om-

budsman Office. Further to that, during the trip, the Ombudsman, Director Governance and Chairman of the Leadership Code Commission of Solomon Islands took the opportunity to spend a day long tour to the New Zealand Ombudsman Auckland Office on Monday 26 November 2018. This was a fruitful tour which will definitely build on the close working relationship established between the three offices. The main area of interest during the tour was relating to the complaint handling and case management system that the office is looking at developing in 2019.

"the Director Governance is one of the key speakers who presented on the topic "maintaining accountability in Solomon Islands"

Commonwealth Ombudsman staff held Corporate plan training for OOSI staff



Two staff from the Commonwealth Ombudsman recently visit the office of the Ombudsman of Solomon Islands.

The visit was part of an arrangement OOSI had with Commonwealth Ombudsman of Australia (COA) to strengthen exist-

ing relationships between the two offices.

Visiting the OOSI is Ms Bianca and Mr Andrew.

During their one week visit, the two officers conducted two days training for staff of OOSI to draw up the new Ombudsman's Corporate Plan 2018-2022.

The new Corporate plan replaces the old Corporate plan which expires at the end of 2017.

The drawing up of the new Corporate plan is necessary

as this will align with changes in the new Ombudsman Act 2017. Hence the presence of the two Officers from Commonwealth Ombudsman with their expertise to devise or in cooperate planned activities into a well structured, simplified and organised Corporate plan for OOSI, is a boast the OOSI need to implement it activities.

The OOSI wish to thank the Commonwealth Ombudsman of Australia for support rendered and the two Officers for their time spend with staff of OOSI.

OOSI benefits from twinning arrangement

A twinning arrangement which will largely benefit OOSI and LCC has been successfully established between the said offices and the Commonwealth Ombudsman of Australia. The program is for one year, which runs from July 2018 to June 2019 and is funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs through the Commonwealth Ombudsman Office of Australia. The arrangement will see both the OOSI and LCC



Offices in Honiara benefiting from series of assistance that are featured through the following areas: technical assistance for the OOSI Corporate Planning, flexible funding for scoping, trainings in Investigations

and other areas, work on special projects: Compliant Handling System, supporting staff to attend the APOR meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, hosting of Pacific Integrity Network (PIN) Leaders meeting in Honiara and other areas.

So far the OOSI and LCC have already seen the benefits out of this program thus are considering renewing this arrangement following its expiry.



NZ Ombudsman visits OOSI



As part of his Pacific outreach program, the Chief Ombudsman of New Zealand, Judge Peter Boshier visited and met with the Solomon Islands Ombudsman on the 6th of November 2018. During the visit, Ombudsman, Judge Peter Boshier was able to meet with staff and as well as with the executive of OOSI. The Chief Ombudsman Judge

Peter Boshier visit to the Solomon Islands was purposely to look at ways to possibly assist Solomon Islands and to build a closer working relationship with OOSI, just as what the office currently had with the Commonwealth Ombudsman of Australia. Also the visit is part of series of visits, the Chief Ombudsman pays to other organization

both nationally and regionally to rally support towards the work OOSI had been doing in the country. In addition, the visit is to liaise with OOSI to gain the support that is needed to pursue the Pacific Integrity Network (PIN)'s interest at the Australasia Pacific Ombudsman Alliance (APOA) and IOI level. In a dinner hosted for the Chief Ombudsman, Judge Peter Boshier, the Ombudsman, Mr. Fakarii thank his counterpart for recognizing the need to work closely with OOSI and other Ombudsmen in the region, especially in recognizing the need to work together and his support to address the training needs of the OOSI staff. Judge Peter Boshier is not new to the Solomon Islands as in the past he had been here on advocacy programmes and workshop on family violence and youth justice matters.

“Chief Ombudsman Judge Peter Boshier visit to the Solomon Islands was purposely to look at ways to possibly assist Solomon Islands and to build a closer working relationship with OOSI”



Workshop on complaint handling for PSs, US & HRMs

The Office of the Ombudsman has recently conducted a workshop for all Permanent Secretaries, Under Secretaries and Human Recourse Managers at the Mendana Hotel.

The workshop was conducted on the 23rd -24th August 2018 purposely to inform the PSs, USs and HRMs about the importance of having a proper Complaint Handling system(CHS) in the Public Service. This follows the OOSI's findings from the number and nature of complaints it has received against the minis-

tries over the years which was also confirm by a survey conducted by the office.

The first day of the workshop was attended by PSs whilst the USs and HRMs attended on the second day. The views of these officials were sought regarding establishing an efficient and effective CHS in the Service.

The response, OOSI had from the workshop was positive from the two group, as many expressed their interest to have such a system in place

to deal with complaints from the public, as many Government ministries and agencies do not really have a complaint handling system in place to address complaints from the public.

All participants during the workshop agreed that OOSI should assist in spearheading the implementation of this very important initiative across all government ministries and agencies.

“as many Government ministries and agencies does not really had a complaint handling system in place to address complaints when they do arise from the public”.

OOSI staff attends ICET



Three staff from the office and one from the LCC were privileged to attend Government Investigative training in Australia.

The three OOSI officers, Julia, Fred and John left for Australia on the 27th of September 2018.

The Government Investigative training is an intensive two week program offer by the Investigation Compliance Enforcement & Training System (ICETS), and was con-

ducted at the Mercure Hotel in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

This training is accorded to the Staff Development Plan of OOSI 2013-2018, in which OOSI among other important activities has prioritized training of its investigators to enhance their proficiency in investigation skills and knowledge in government administrative investigations. The OOSI has visualized this program of Certificate IV in Government Investi-

gation Training so relevant towards the capacity development of its investigators. Hence the office intend to assist the investigators by allowing them to undertake this program and have them attend a Diploma Level training after they complete the Certificate level.

They were confident that by attaining the investigation skills and knowledge needed, investigators will subsequently become competent and knowledgeable in their jobs to offer quality services through complaint based investigations and/or specialized and major investigations. This training, which the officers attend, was made possible under the funding of Australia Commonwealth Ombudsman Office as part of the twinning Program arrangements currently in place between the two offices.

Ombudsman visits and inspects Rove Correctional Service Centre

The Ombudsman, Mr Fred Fakarii, and delegation on Wednesday 3rd October visited the Rove Correctional Headquarter and Centre.

The visit started with an inspection of



Guard of Honour accorded to the Ombudsman by the Correctional Service of Solomon Islands (CSSI) at their Headquarter in Rove.

The visit was made as part of the mandate given to the Ombudsman under Section 97 (1) & (3) of the Constitution that includes the Prison Services in Solomon Islands.

Also, the visit is conducted in accordance to Section 26 of the Correctional Services Act 2007, which highlighted that the Ombudsman and any person authorised in writing by him, may enter and inspect a Correctional Centre at any time, and may exercise any of the powers prescribed for visiting justices.

Further to that, one of the functions of the Ombudsman is to listen to grievances from citizens and this includes the prison inmates as well.

During the visit the Ombudsman highlighted in his opening remarks that the visit is very important as it

will enable his Office to fully understand the challenges faced by Correctional Services Officers in carrying out their mandated roles in looking after prison inmates. "Such challenges are numerous and daunting at times, some are urgent and needs responsible stakeholders to urgently address while others requires creativity and innovation to deal with", stated the Ombudsman.

After the day long visit, the Ombudsman was pleased with the high level of professionalism shown by the Correctional Services Officers. "This, I must commend you all including your leadership for a job well done", praises the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman went on to express his sincerity towards the management of the CSSI for providing his Office with the opportunity to meet and discuss with prison inmates that are accommodated at the Rove Centre and also pointed out

the need for more collaboration between the two government offices to deal with relevant issues relating to their work.

The visit ends with a final debrief at the Office of the Rove Correctional Centre Commandant where the Commissioner of CSSI, Mr. Francis Haisoma, in his final remarks thank the Ombudsman and delegation for the visit, highlighting that this is the first ever high level government delegation that thoroughly took their time to visit the Centre.

The Commissioner of CSSI and the Ombudsman has really appreciated the patience shown by everybody that was involved in the successful visit.

OOSI will report accordingly on its visit and inspections findings.

The Ombudsman's Office is planning to conduct similar visits to other Correctional Services Centres throughout the country in the future.

"Such challenges are numerous and daunting at times, some are urgent and needs responsible stakeholders to urgently address while others requires creativity and innovation to deal with", stated the Ombudsman.



OOSI takes part in Police Open Day program



The OOSI was privileged to be invited, to take part in a two days Police Open day program, which start on the 27th September and ends on the 28th September 2018

As one of the stakeholder of the Police, the OOSI was invited purposely to show case its role and function, and the

relationship OOSI had with the police.

The open day was first of its kind, the Police ever conducted to meet the public after the departure of RAMSI. Speaking at the

opening ceremony, Chairman of the Open Day Organising Committee, Supervising Assistant Commissioner National Capital and Crime Prevention Superintendent Solomon Simisia says, "This is the first such event we have staged after RAMSI left last year. We strongly believe in such an event because it will show to our people what we do and

that we are a transparent Force. RSIPF strongly believe in informing the people that we serve about our daily activities. That is the aim of this program."

During the two days open day, the OOSI was able to meet the public, especially Students, ordinary people, members of the Police force, Teachers and other Public Servants who wants to know more about the Role and function of the Office.

Pamphlets, brochures and other relevant information's were given out during the two days program when requested by people visiting the OOSI stall.

"The Awareness to these provinces, which will continue on into 2019, is a series of awareness program the office would engage in to target, Government Ministries and Agencies, schools, and rural communities at large in the near future"

Six Provinces covered in OOSI 2018 awareness program

By the end of 2018, six provinces were visited by the Ombudsman awareness team, leaving only four provinces yet to be visited. The six provinces visited were, Malaita, Temotu, Makira, Isabel, Choiseul and Honiara City Council. The awareness program to these provinces is to educate provincial administration and line ministries and agencies about the Role and Function of the Ombudsman office. This was in relation to the operation of the office under the new Ombudsman Act 2017, which was recently passed



and come into effect as of first January 2018. There are, a number of changes in the new Ombudsman Act 2017, which provincial government administration and line ministries need to take serious note of, hence the reason for the awareness to these provincial governments. Not only that, but it is desirable to edu-

cate each and every stakeholder their rights and obligation under the Act in connection to their daily official operation. The Awareness to these provinces, which will continue on into 2019, is a series of awareness program the office will engage in to target, Government Ministries and agencies, schools, and rural communities at large in the near future.

The office aims to reach out to the wider community so that people will become aware of the OOSI role and function, and how they can benefit from the service of this institution.

OOSI staff comment on National Security Strategy



Staff from the OOSI were given the chance to part of the consultation on the new proposed National Security Strategy carried out by the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services, on Wednesday 10th October 2018.

The consultation team headed by Mr Bernard Bataania in his introduction, informed the Ombudsman and staff about the need to have this National

Security Strategy (NSS) in place, citing, since independence, “Solomon Islands has not had a national security strategy to address the nation’s security challenges in a consistent and coordinated manner.

The absence of such a strategy makes it difficult for the country to implement effective, total government policies to address the multitude of security concerns, both internal and exter-

nal, which threaten Solomon Islands”.

Recognising that the development of a national security strategy would assist the country in addressing the complexities of the global, regional, and national security environment, the Solomon Islands Government issued a mandate for the creation of the first National Security Strategy (NSS).

In acknowledging the effort of the National Security Strategy Consultation team, the Ombudsman highlight the importance of such Strategy for the country, and pointed out the office will assist in any way possible as long as the NSS falls in line with public areas of interest, the Ombudsman can engage in a more useful and meaningful way.

OOSI invited to attend e-document management system demonstration

The OOSI with other government ministries and agencies were invited to attend an e-document management system demonstration, organised by the ICTSU. In the invitation send by ICTSU, the statement highlight the significance of the e-documents demonstration as highly relevant to help all SIG stakeholders to better fulfil records management needs by replacing the need for facilities storage with electronic

storage, increasing security of archives and by bringing an easier archive management making the records easier to find and manage. The statement highlights the paperless initiative can help trim up to 90% of our operating and storage of documents and eliminating paper files and manual process and also reduces risks with regards to loss of documents and data security. The EDMS will be a step forward in achieving the ICTSU strategic plan 2018-2022

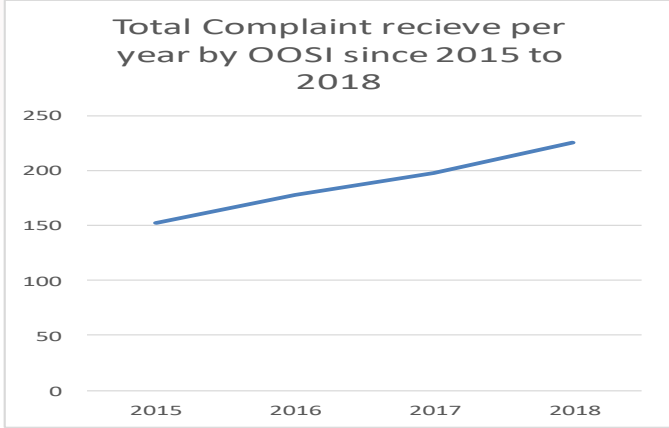
goal on e-governance framework whereby ICTSU along with relevant parties and stakeholders deliver smooth, accessible, secure and effective e-governance framework and transparency to the public and also improving efficiency on public.

The OOSI was represented during the demonstration by the Senior Training and Public relation Officer Mr Patteson Tomu.

“the Ombudsman highlight the importance of such Strategy for the country, and pointed out the office will assist in any way possible as long as the NSS falls in line with public areas of interest, the Ombudsman can engage in a more useful and meaningful way”.



Complaint registered with OOSI for 2018



record the highest number of complaints by the end of 2018. This is when you compare complaint against SIG ministries and other government agencies. The three highest nature of complaints raise against provincial government including HCC, includes salary, termination and transfer and posting. The office anticipate further increase in 2019, as the office continues to roll out its awareness program throughout the provinces about the rights and obligations of the people and the government.

Complaints registered with the Office of the Ombudsman for the year 2018 surpass those registered for the year 2016 and 2017.

increase of 12% from the previous year. From this increase, Honiara records the highest complaint followed by Guadalcanal, Malaita, Makira and Western Province.

A total of 225 complaints cases was registered with the office at the end of 2018, which represents an

Complaints against Provincial Governments, including Honiara City Council

“Remuneration is one of the most complained about. This includes but not limited to cessation of salary, failure to reinstate salary, illegal deduction of salary, non-payment of allowances, etc.”.

Employment issues tops the record of complaints registered by OOSI since 2014.

The second employment-related matter most complained about includes transfer & posting issues, appointment, probation & confirmation, and others for 2018.

administrators’ mere lack of response to the complainants’ complaints about these types of employment issues.

Interestingly, a large proportion of those complaints are from men as opposed to their female folks.

Unfair termination too is a most common type of complaint.

A good number of both female and males complained to the OOSI in 2018 about their grievances against their ministries etc.

Remuneration is one of the most complained about. This includes but not limited to cessation of salary, failure to reinstate salary, illegal deduction of salary, non-payment of allowances, etc.

Other complaints relates to redundancy, retirement, pensions and Long and Dedicated Service Benefit (LDSB).

However, comparatively speaking more males complained than females

Some complaints involves

OOSI marks Anti-Corruption day

The OOSI marks the anti-corruption day with other stakeholders, on the 10th of December 2018.

The celebration as usual starts with a parade from the HCC car parks and ends at the Auditorium.

The celebration of the anti corruption day this year is significant as it also coincided with the launching of the

commencement of the Anti-Corruption Act 2018 and Whistle-blower Act 2018, two of very important Act enacted by Parliament last year to fight against corruption in the country.

OOSI as a stakeholder in the fight against corruption particularly in the area of maladministration—considers these new pieces of legislation as very important tools and en-

courages every stake-holders to work together in fighting corruption.

The Anti-Corruption Day is a global and annual event that falls on the 9th of December (which is a Sunday in Solomon Islands this year 2018).



OOSI logistics officer resigns

One of the longest serving officers within the OOSI, Mr John Lau, has resigned (for personal reasons) after ten years of being a logistics officer or driver as some may call it.

Mr Lau first joined the Office in 2009 and leave the office at the end of 2018.

In fare -welling Mr Lau, the Ombudsman thanks Mr Lau for his dedicated service to

the office for the last nine years. His moving on would be greatly missed as John was a very dedicated officer within the office, at times also involved in the admin operation of the office.

Mr Lau in his response thanked the Ombudsman and staff for working together with him for the past several years and urge staff to continue to work

together as a team, to advance the operation of the office to new height in serving the people of the country.

The Ombudsman and Staff wish Mr John Lau all the best in his future endeavour's (Refer to the article at the end of this newsletter for further details about Mr Lau).

"the Ombudsman thanks Mr. Lau for his dedicated service to the office for the last nine years. His moving on would be greatly missed as John was a very dedicated officer within the office, at times also involved in the admin operation of the office".

OOSI held end year party for its Staff and family



The year came to its end. It is time for celebration and reflection for most people and organisation and OOSI is no exception. As Christmas farewell and token of

appreciation and recognition of the OOSI hard-working staff and the support rendered by their families, the Office hosts an end of year function for OOSI staff and their families on the 6th of December 2018.

The end year party also provides an opportunity for some OOSI officers who might not know their colleagues' family members to get to know them.

Highlights of the party includes Chief Admin officer Judith Waleanisia and Senior Investigation officer, Fred Topia, entertaining the attendees with their melodious voices through sing along songs from the karaoke music box.



ombudsman

- Will listen
- Won't take side
- Service is free
- Will give you a fair go

"Started in the Private Sector with BJS group of companies for five (5) years, then moved and joined OOSI"

Staff Profile: Mr. John Lau

Name: John Lau

Title: Logistics Officer

Province of Origin: Malaita (East Kwaraáe)

Age: 43 years old

Religion/ Denomination: South Seas Evangelical Church (S.S.E.C)

Education background: Complete form three certificate.

Training background: complete basic Computing training, basic Writing Skills, Intermediate English and basic Word Processing

Work Experience: Started in the Private Sector with BJS group of companies for five (5) years, then moved and joined OOSI at the beginning from 2009 until 2018



For more information you can contact the Office through:

PHONE: (+677) 21855/21856

FAX: (+677) 28626

WRITE TO US: OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN, P.O. BOX 535, ISAAC QOLONI HOUSE, HIBISCUS AVENUE, HONIARA

E-MAIL: ooosi@ombudsman.gov.sb

OR VISIT US AT: ISAAC QOLONI HOUSE