

[View this email in your browser](#)

# WAKATANGATA

APOR E-NEWS

---

**News and views from integrity organisations in the Pacific and Australasia**  
**ISSUE 1 : MAY 2018**

---



**Ngā mihi nui kia koutou katoa, warm greetings to you all.**  
**And welcome to the first edition of Waka Tangata.**

---

In Māori, waka tangata means the people's canoe. Developed in the late 20th century, they are simple canoes built for educational purposes. They are free from the religious restrictions that many iwi link with waka, and can be used by everyone.

Waka also represent the journey of Pacific peoples to Aotearoa/New Zealand and the ongoing links between Pacific nations.

Integrity organisations serve the people (tangata), and as this newsletter is aimed at educating and informing readers, we thought the title appropriate.

Above all, it is for, and about, our people and our work. I am thrilled that my office in Aotearoa/New Zealand is heavily engaged with the nations of the Pacific. It gives me great satisfaction that we have been able to grow our relationships with our Pacific neighbours, and that their commitment to transparency, accountability and their people is so real.

There is an old Māori proverb: He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata - What is the most important thing in the world? It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.

I believe that is the essence of our roles working in offices of Ombudsmen.

Ngā mihi, kind regards

Peter Boshier  
Chief Ombudsman, Aotearoa/New Zealand  
Fairness for all/Te tika mo te katoa

---

---

## Samoa

### Inquiry into family violence

The National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) of Samoa has completed its first national public inquiry.

The inquiry into family violence involved NGOs, government ministries, international partners, community bodies and the public including survivors, perpetrators, village representatives, specialists, academics and church leaders.

Maiava Iulai Toma, Ombudsman and Chair of the Inquiry, commented “This exercise again highlighted that family violence in Samoan homes is real and spiralling out of control. The Commissioners heard an overwhelming consensus for action to be taken by families, matai (chiefs), village councils and churches in conjunction with the central and crucial role that the Government must continue to play in combating family violence.”

Views expressed show how normalised family violence has become in Samoan attitudes and mindsets.

“This national conversation reaffirmed that we are very proud of our Christianity and our culture, but we have failed ourselves in both and have allowed ourselves to become bankrupt in both, as far as this issue concerned.”

The Commission noted that the submissions from Alii and Faipule (village mayors) often giving opinions that everything was rosy in their villages: “Our village is very peaceful, we hardly have any issues such as violence in our village.” However, the Inquiry found countless cases of family violence occurring in homes amidst a culture of silence and ignorance.

The Ombudsman stressed that Samoa had very good laws to combat violence, and had the structures and institutions to drive practical measures, but what was needed, and what was lacking as a community, was the willpower to go along with a willingness to change. He further added, “I encourage individuals, government ministries and organisations who are fighting this social issue to keep at it, do not be discouraged with the state things are in now because change does not come overnight.”

The first draft of the report has been submitted to all stakeholders for comments, with the final report and recommendations to be submitted to Parliament in June 2018.

A more detailed discussion of the inquiry is available from [Waka Tangata](#)

---

**Spotlight on:**

## Cook Islands



*Standing: SIO Elizabeth Nootai, SIO Maybelline Bullen. Sitting: Assistant Ombudsman Jeannine Daniel, Ombudsman Tearoa John Tini (BEM), Finance & Administration Officer Ethel Pokia.*

## Te Mato Akamoeau, Office of The Ombudsman

The Ombudsman team recently welcomed Senior Investigations Officer (SIO) Elizabeth (Liz) Nootai to the team. Liz is a returning Cook Islander from Perth, Australia where she worked within the electricity industry gaining management experience in billing, service quality and complaints. Liz's strong background in complaints saw her take on cases within days of her starting her new role!

There's plenty more information on recent work in the Cook Islands which is available from [Waka Tangata](#). This includes the Office's new strategic plan, the impact of the upcoming snap election, its public awareness campaign (Promoting Fairness for All), and its engagement with the Ministry of Internal Affairs over social welfare complaints.

---

### Profile



## Mele'ofa Mohenoa

Mele'ofa Mohenoa is a Senior Investigation Officer in the Investigations Division of the Office of the Ombudsman, Tonga.

Mrs Mohenoa is a recipient of a short-term scholarship funded by the New Zealand Government, and will spend a one-month attachment in the New Zealand Ombudsman's Office.

### What are you working on at the moment?

I am currently drafting three provisional reports, six land cases, six police cases and some other cases as well.

### What are the biggest challenges for your office?

Training opportunities in specialised areas.

It was referred from my superior to apply for the scholarship.

**What are you hoping to learn while in Wellington?**

I would like to learn more about the Ombudsman office in New Zealand and how they manage complaints as I know that Tonga is a small place when comparing the number of complainants that the New Zealand office has.

**The temperature in Tonga rarely gets below 20 degrees ... in Wellington, the maximum in winter is about 11 degrees ...how will you cope?**

Keep myself warm!

**What will you miss most during your month in Wellington?**

My family.

---

**Profile**

## New NSW Ombudsman appointed

Michael Barnes commenced as New South Wales Ombudsman in December 2017 following a term as NSW State Coroner and the inaugural Queensland State Coroner. As Coroner, Michael presided over high profile and contentious inquests including the deaths arising from the sinking in the Torres Strait of the Department of Immigration vessel the *Malu Sara*, the deaths connected with the Pink Batts programme, and the Lindt Café siege.

Before becoming a chief coroner, Michael was Head of the School of Justice Studies at Queensland University of Technology, a post he took up after nine years as the chief officer of the complaints section at the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission.

Michael began his legal career in 1980 in a small suburban law firm in Brisbane. He was a partner in that firm for five years until he moved to the Aboriginal Legal Service.

He became interested in coronial work when appearing for the relatives of people whose deaths were investigated by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which highlighted the inadequacies of the coronial processes of that time. He has since specialised in criminal and administrative law, and undertakes research and teaching in criminal justice, health law, and corruption and organised crime investigations.

He is an adjunct professor of the Faculty of Law at the Queensland University of Technology and of the Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention at Griffith University.

ANZOA's biennial conference is an important source of continuing professional development for Ombudsmen and their staff.

The [programme](#) includes a keynote address by Rebecca Kitteridge, Director-General of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service. Other speakers include Hon. David Parker, the New Zealand Attorney-General, and Judge Andrew Becroft, the New Zealand Children's Commissioner. Registration details can be found [here](#).

28-30 November | Auckland

## APOR – Holding Governments to Account in a Changing Climate

New Zealand is delighted to be hosting the 30<sup>th</sup> APOR conference. A highlight will be a discussion on day two on 'Impact of Climate Change on Ombudsmen, Impact of Ombudsmen on Climate Change'. We will keep you posted on details as they develop and look forward to meeting some of you at the conference!

NSW

## New South Wales Ombudsman training programme

The NSW Ombudsman offers a range of quality, affordable training workshops based on our experience in assisting government agencies and non-government organisations to improve their administrative conduct, decision-making and standards of service delivery.

The training calendar and course outlines are available [here](#).

---

### Decisions of interest



## PNG Ombudsman Commission reports to Parliament

The Ombudsman Commission has recently presented two of its reports to the Speaker of Parliament. The first relates to non-compliance of the public tender requirements, while the second is an Own Initiative investigation into the improper and unlawful issuance of Entry Permits.

institutions.”

The public tender report can be read [here](#), while the citizenship report can be found [here](#). There is also a summary available by emailing [Waka Tangata](#).

---

## Investigating Members of Parliament

The Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass recently released her report following a referral from Parliament’s Legislative Council into allegations that Labor Members of Parliament misused their staff budget entitlement before the 2014 state election, which it narrowly won.

The investigation found that \$388,000 of Parliamentary funds had been paid to people employed as electorate officers who were involved in election campaigning.

The media release, report and more can be found [here](#). This was just the fourth referral from Parliament in 45 years ...although another one has just arrived!

---



## Safety investigation in Hong Kong

On 17 April, Hong Kong Ombudsman, Ms Connie Lau, released a full investigation report regarding a complaint by about inadequate safety measures for lifting operations on a Government infrastructure project.

The report found a serious lack of communication, and vastly different views on the adequacy of safety measures between the two agencies involved, the Highways Department (accountable for the safety of its construction sites), and Labour Department which enforces the laws relating to occupational safety and health.

The Office also released the results of two direct investigations on water mains and risk management, and on Government Departments’ handling of the problem of air-conditioners dripping. Summaries of all three documents, and the media release, can be found [here](#).

---

## New Zealand prison inspections

---

Ombudsman has recently released reports of unannounced visits to two women's prisons.

There are approximately 40 percent more women in prison than there were two years ago, which has stretched resources.

Notable concerns were around inadequate cell sizes, which were being used for double-bunking, and strong concerns about the use of cameras in the cell toilet areas, and the lack of privacy screens in those areas.

You can read the reports on Arohata Upper and Christchurch Women's Prisons [here](#).

---

## Recent reports from the New South Wales Ombudsman's Office

- [Childhood injury prevention - strategic directions for coordination in NSW](#) (November 2017)
- [Investigation into water compliance and enforcement 2007-17](#) (November 2017)
- [Operation Prospect - Second report on developments](#) (December 2017)
- [Correcting the record: Investigation into water compliance and enforcement 2007-17](#)
- [Spatial analysis of child deaths in New South Wales](#) (April 2018)

If you have trouble uploading these reports, please contact [Waka Tangata](#).

---

### In short

On 14 March 2018, the Head of State signed an instrument of appointment appointing Mr Alain Wai Molgos as the Acting Ombudsman of the **Republic of Vanuatu**. His appointment came three months after Mr Kalkot Mataskelekele's term came to an end on 18 December 2017.

---

After the ANZOA conference in May, leaders from seven Pacific countries will convene to focus on integrity practices and the future of the **Pacific Integrity Network (PIN)**. A working group will present to the leaders on the future of the network, and the strategies required to grow and strengthen the network across the Pacific once the formal programme support ceases in June 2018. At its meeting in Brisbane in February, the group identified that information and social media platforms were vital to connect Pacific integrity agencies as the network grows. PINs [website can be found here](#), and its [facebook page here](#).

---

New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) continues to work with Government of **Tonga** on cyclone recovery work. After the initial response and early recovery phase, efforts have moved to the long-term recovery and implementation of the recovery framework. No homes of the staff of Ófisi ó e Ómipatimēni were totally damaged, and staff were quickly back to work, grateful that their Office had electricity and running, unlike their homes and other Government ministries. MFAT's Bilateral Programme is ALSO working on a recovery package to assist **Samoa's** recovery from cyclone Gita.

---

An official from the **Timor-Leste** Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice will be visiting the New Zealand Ombudsman's Office in May to get an overview of what happens in the New Zealand context and what good governance looks like. This is an MFAT initiative supported by Deryn Hardieboys, Victoria University of Wellington, which aims to build capacity in the government sector in developing South-East Asian nations.

---

In **New Zealand**, the Chief Ombudsman has commenced four self-initiated investigations into the official information practices of the public sector. The investigations aim to establish whether the agencies have good Official Information Act practices. Reports on all four agencies are expected to be published in August.

---

In February, the **Commonwealth Ombudsman**, Michael Manthorpe, visited Port Moresby to meet with his counterparts at the Ombudsman Commission of **Papua New Guinea** (OCPNG). Discussions centred on the **Australian**-funded twinning programme which facilitates the exchange of best practice, and supports projects which strengthen oversight and build complaint-handling capability in the PNG public sector. Michael and OCPNG Chief Ombudsman, Michael Dick, led strategic partnership talks and identified opportunities to improve and enhance the impact of working together, affirming the value of the programme. In April, the two Offices held a two-day workshop, and discussed best practice with officers from the Vanuatu Ombudsman and Solomon Islands Leadership Code Commission.

---

In **Queensland**, the Office of the Ombudsman recently concluded an analysis on the sustainability of its complaints assessment and investigation business model. It found that even for a simple complaint, at least six staff handled the matter. This led to the development of an Early Merits Assessment model to reduce the resources required for declining/discontinuing complaints which were assessed as not having sufficient merit. The summary of the report, and the full report, are available by emailing [WakaTangata](mailto:WakaTangata).

---

The Ombudsman of **Hong Kong**, Ms Connie Lau, recently met members of the Legislative Council to discuss the past year's work and what was in store for 2018/19. Key projects included reviewing and improving complaint handling procedures, and promoting mediation to handle cases involving no, or minor, maladministration. The Office also has a sponsorship scheme in place to encourage investigation officers to attend advanced mediation training courses and attain accreditation as mediators.

---

In 2015, the **New South Wales** Ombudsman's Office was part of a group that developed a whole-of-government complaint handling improvement programme

---

comprehensive suite of complaint handling resources are available [here](#).

---

More from **New South Wales** – The Ombudsman’s office has developed a Joint Protocol for disability services and police to reduce the contact of people with disability in supported accommodation with the criminal justice system. The Office has developed two short videos to help disability support workers and managers quickly understand the Joint Protocol – these are available on the Office’s [YouTube](#) channel.

---

The **Western Australian** Ombudsman Chris Field, elected Second Vice President of the [International Ombudsman Institute](#) (IOI) in 2016, gave an address to APOR on four recent IOI initiatives. The themes were: human rights; the IOI and democratisation, the rule of law and good governance; membership fees; and IOI organisational reforms. You can read his address [here](#).

---

### Opportunities

New South Wales – [Legal Officer](#) – Sydney – Closes 13 May

---

New Zealand – [Investigator](#) – Wellington – closes 4 May

---

New Zealand – [Manager \(Complaints Resolution\)](#) – Wellington – closes 7 May

---

### We welcome your feedback and contributions...

[Submit feedback](#)

**Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini**  
***My success is not my own, but from many others***

[f](#) Facebook    [🔗](#) Website

---