



Communiqué of the APOR conference and 34th Members' meeting 13 and 14 October 2022

The Australasian Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR) held a conference on 13 October 2022 and its 34th annual Members' meeting on 14 October 2022 in Wellington, New Zealand.

The conference, on *remaining relevant and getting government to listen*, was co-hosted by Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass OBE as Regional President and New Zealand Chief Ombudsman and IOI 2nd Vice President Peter Boshier.

It coincided with celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of the Ombudsman in Aotearoa, New Zealand, being the first of its kind outside Scandinavia, agreed by APOR Members to be a global leader of Ombudsmanship and *model exemplar* in the region.

The APOR Members:

1. Reaffirm the Principles on the Protection and Promotion of the Ombudsman Institution (the Venice Principles) adopted by the Venice Commission on 15 March 2019, which set out the international standards for the Ombudsman institution, including:
 - a. a mandate based on firm legal foundations at the constitutional and statutory level (Article 2);
 - b. the election of Ombudsmen according to procedures strengthening to the highest possible extent the authority, impartiality, independence and legitimacy of the institution (Article 6);
 - c. the freedom of the Ombudsman from following any instruction from any authority (Article 14); and
 - d. the need for sufficient and independent budgetary resources (Article 21).
2. Reaffirm the Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 2020, *The role of the Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law* (A/RES/75/186), that:
 - a. acknowledged the Venice Principles;
 - b. upheld the importance of the Ombudsman role; and
 - c. encouraged all United Nations member states to consider creating and strengthening independent and autonomous Ombudsman institutions (Article 2).

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3. Reiterate the importance of the role of the Ombudsman for the promotion of good public administration, protection of citizens' rights and wellbeing, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and strengthening of public services through the rule of law, transparency, accountability and fairness.
 4. Recognise the particular needs and pressures on our Pacific Ombudsmen, not least the challenges the Pacific region faces at the frontline of climate change. As a region, we stand together in solidarity to provide ongoing support.
 5. Emphasise the right of the Ombudsman institution to operate independently, without interference or external pressure or influence.
 6. Commit to ongoing cooperation and sharing of best practices with Members and the wider Ombudsman fraternity.

