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Fourteen representatives from seven Pacific countries will undertake Ombudsman investigator training in Fiji next week.

The Office of the New Zealand Ombudsman is leading the training which will take a typical complaint through the whole investigation process from incoming communication right through to the conclusion, whether that is an agreed outcome or a formal report.

The programme is being co-sponsored by the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) of which New Zealand Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier is Australasian and Pacific Regional President. Representatives from the Victorian, Western Australian and Australian Commonwealth Ombudsman's offices will assist in presenting the material.

Speakers from the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime will present a session on anti-corruption, while the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will also speak to participants.

"The focus is on Pacific Island countries' Ombudsmen Act jurisdictions, case examples and scenarios", says Mr Boshier.

"None of the offices have exactly the same models of investigation, but the underlying principles of fairness and transparency are common to all".

Both New Zealand and Australian Ombudsman's offices (state and federal), as well as the IOI have a commitment to assisting integrity organisations in the Pacific to increase their capabilities.

"Providing training is a tangible way we can assist, and we are happy to do it. It is also very gratifying to have the support of the IOI as they have oversight of more than 190 independent Ombudsman institutions, and are keen to see Pacific Ombudsman's offices thriving."

The provision of training and support by the New Zealand and Australian Ombudsman staff will be a useful development tool through which internal capabilities and international networks will be developed.

"Our aim is to build the Ombudsman investigator officers' capacity in the Pacific region and strengthen relationships and networks to promote ongoing engagement and support.

"Training this group of investigators is a good way for them to be able to implement what they have learned and also assist others in their offices grow their skills."

Chris Field, Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute and Western Australian Ombudsman, welcomes the opportunity to contribute to training and engagement with Pacific Islands integrity institutions.

“It is a privilege to renew and build our friendships with our important Pacific Island friends and neighbours.”

The training will take place in Nadi, and representatives from Ombudsman’s offices in Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu will attend.

The programme follows on from a two-day workshop in March in Vanuatu when the Office of the New Zealand Ombudsman delivered training on prison investigations and inspections.