



NEWSLETTER

Hi and welcome to another issue of the Ombudsman quarterly newsletter. The month of April through to June has been hectic but we are thankful for by his grace we endure.

In May, the CEO and Deputy Secretary engaged discussion with the Acting CEO of the Ministry of Justice to further discuss our shortage of suitable investigation officers with legal background. The Acting CEO of Justice shared her thoughts on how they may be able to help with their law background employees that studied in China. We look forward to further development of this discussion as we seek to build an investigation team that possess the legal skills and knowledge that would be of benefit to our work.

During this quarter the office was very please to invite the Police Commissioner Steve Caldwell to be our guest speaker. He visited our office with a message of cooperation and support as he shared the similarities in purpose and objectives of the Office of the Ombudsman and the Police. Both Offices work towards a common goal of peace and harmony within the Kingdom.

The topic of Performance Management System (PMS) was the focus on a meeting led by the Deputy Secretary of Corporate Division, Mrs. Melelua Langi, and two officers from the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Presentation of OMB Quarterly Report for March

– The Ombudsman presented his Quarterly Report for January – March, 2019, to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Lord Fakafanua, on Thursday, 18th April. The Ombudsman was accompanied by the CEO, Mrs. Linda Folaumoetu'i.



"Honoured to serve Tonga by advocating Integrity"

OMB Promotional Video – One can either see or hear the Ombudsman promotional video being played over Radio and TV Tonga every night and especially the peak hours during the Super Rugby commercials. This has been an effective method of reaching out to the people even in the remotest areas of the Tonga Group – to inform and enlighten them about the kind of service they could receive from the Office of the Ombudsman. The content of the video clip consists of the core services of the Office, contact numbers and methods of contacting the Office, how to reach the office with a complaint and even a testimony from a happy complainant after his case has been resolved. The video clip can also be viewed on YouTube, Twitter and our FB page - Office of the Ombudsman.



Mandarin version of the OMB Brochure - It was a milestone to actually give out the OMB brochures in Mandarin to members of the Chinese Community in the Kingdom. Mandarin is the language commonly used and understood by the Chinese people. The translation of the brochures into Mandarin was made by a returning scholar from China, Mr. Vao, a staff of the Retirement Fund Board. Thank you Mr. Vao. Distribution of the brochures to the Chinese people on Tongatapu began in June during the Royal Agricultural, Fishery, Forestry and Trade Show 2019.

Outreach Programs (OPs) – The CMD carried out a total of 37 OPs in various genres during the quarter. Nine (9) of them were held for the people at villages of ‘Eua – thanks to the sponsorship of the UNDP under its REACH Pilot Project. The two (2) officers of the CMD traveled to ‘Eua on 1-5th April together with officers of four (4) MDAs. They included the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, Ministry of Justice’s Family Legal Aid Division and the National ID Division of the Palace Office. Vil-

lages covered were Kolomaile, Petani, Tongama’o, Mu’a, Fata’ulua, Sapa’ata, Mata’aho, Futu and Houma.

Public Service Day – To promote more public accessibility to government services, the PSC again staged a Public Service Day with participation from ministries, departments and public enterprises. They showcased their respective services and also used the platform to inform and educate the people, including youth and students, about what they do and services for the public. The OMB Office received hundreds of people, students, youth and children, who filed past and viewed our information booth, asked questions and clarifications, or simply just waved and said hello. The Guest of Honour, the Minister of Agriculture, Fishery, Forests and Food, Hon. Losaline Ma’asi, and the Minister of Fishery, Hon. Semisi Fakahau, visited the OMB Booth, as well as the Minister of Justice, Hon. Vuna Fa’otusia. Tevita Kava and Mosese Uili’s dance challenge attracted many youth, children and even members of the civil service who danced to the song they picked. As the saying goes – *No guts no glory!* And those who had the guts to dance, received prizes of an OMB mug, flash-pen, polo-shirt, umbrella or a school bag. Malo ‘aupito.



News conference – The Ombudsman announced his findings of his Own Motion Investigation on various allegations against the Public Enterprises to members of the media, on Monday, 24th June. It was also attended by the former CEO, Mrs. Linda Folaumoetu’i, who is now Tonga’s Attorney General, as well as Mr. Finau Moa, Contact Person from the Ministry of Public Enterprises.



Brisbane-Tongan Community Inc. (BTC)

In order to hone further collaboration, the Ombudsman, Mr. 'Aisea Taumoepeau, SC., again met with key members of BTC who had helped facilitate earlier outreach programs for the Tongans living in Brisbane, Queensland. It was also an opportunity to thank Mr. Sulieni Layt, Mrs. Mele Manu NGaumo and Mrs. Maile Molitika for their invaluable assistance towards the awareness program. Both parties agreed to further cooperate to ensure Tongans living in Australia are more aware of the services of the OMB Office.



SPECIAL TRIBUTE – Farewelling the CEO, Mrs. Linda Folaumoetu'i

The Ombudsman Family – staff and friends – farewelled the CEO at a special program held at the Davina House, Ma'ufanga. It was attended by the family of the CEO including her husband, Mr. Samuela Folaumoetu'i and two (2) of their children as well as her mother, Mrs. 'Otusia Simiki, and friends. The Ombudsman and some of the staff paid tribute to the CEO for all her commitment and dedication to her job as well as helping the staff. Moreover, her effort in developing and advancing the ombudsman's work of the Office and assisting the Ombudsman was specially recognized and appreciated. Shown below are some of the photos taken from the farewell program as well as the presentation of gifts by the Ombudsman, Mr. 'Aisea Taumoepeau, SC.



The office has received 32 Complaints from 'Eua with group of 9 complaints relating to water service, 7 Complaints relating to road problem, 6 complaints relating to waste management and 7 complaints various Government Ministries and organizations.

In April a complaint was referred from the Privy Council regarding petitions. This was investigated in accordance with due process, and a final report made.

During the period April – June 2019, the Ombudsman receives 66 new Complainants which is an increase of 19 cases from the last Quarter. This was due to the complaints receive from outreach that was concluded by the Communication team in 'Eua at the beginning of April. Up to the end of June 2019, 99 were closed comparing to 30 cases were closed from the last Quarter. Among of the 99 closures, were complaints that the Office received in 2017, number of complainants that were received in 2018 and various complaints that were received from January to June 2019. The Office also closes a case that was referred by the PM and several cases that were out of the Ombudsman jurisdiction (OOJ). *Refer to table 11*

A comparison of the June 2019 quarter with the March 2019 quarter shows an increase of 19 new complaints. This may be a result of the REACH program to 'Eua. There was a corresponding increase of 12 visit, increase of 14 calls from outer Island. This trend and increase of 66 closed cases may have been due to the number of group complaints. There was a group complaint from Masilamea against the Town Officer. Group complaints from 'Eua related to waste management.

The radio talkback shows and outreach program, like reach lead by our communications and media division, has raised awareness and may have been responsible for the increase of 18 pending closures and the increase of 37 current cases.

The following bar graph focus on the number of new cases and the number of cases closed in that quarter. In the months of April and May cases which closed exceed the new cases received. However, the next two showed new cases exceeding closed cases.

The number of new cases has decreased compared to the same quarter in 2018. The pending cases to be closed and closed cases for quarter of 2019 has decreased in comparison to the same quarter in 2018. There were 44 closed cases and 4 of those cases were final reports on the second Quarter 2018. On the second Quarter 2019 there were 99 closed cases and out of the 99 were 2 final reports.

The majority of complainants were men, which is consistent with the June Quarter of 2018 which is the same as the June Quarter 2019. The number of women complainants decreased in the June 2019 quarter as compared to the same period in 2018.

Table 11

April – June 2019

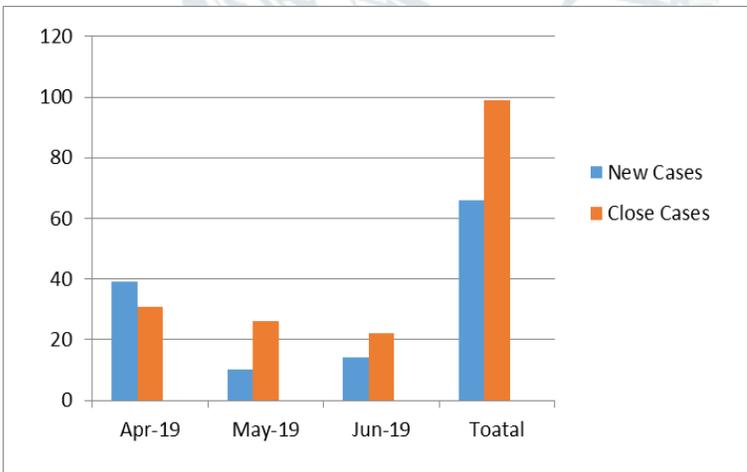
Type of Cases	April, 2019	May, 2019	June, 2019	Total
New Cases	39	10	14	66
Visit	32	16	19	67
Call	26	29	24	79
Close Cases	31	26	22	99
Pending Closure	68	31	28	127
Current Cases	107	93	82+2	284
Final Report	1	-	1	2
Male	30	9	12	51
Female	9	4	2	15

The Director of Investigations post was still vacant, as was the Senior Investigation Officer and Investigation Officer posts. The CEO continued to work with the team until she resigned in April. During the last month of the quarter, the Ombudsman took on full responsibility of the Investigation Division to ensure work continued and that there would be no significant disruption in the investigation and management of cases.

The team continued regular dialogue with the Ministry of Lands, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Tonga Police, as the organizations which have been most popular with public complaints. Professionalism and efficiency remains the key goals for investigation officers as they engage in investigation and resolution of public complaints. They are also an integral part of the outreach programs, led by the communications and media team.

Environmental complaints from Vava'u required the engagement of an environment expert to assist the investigation of these environment impact cases. A team travelled to Vava'u to investigate and make site visits to view impact of climate crisis and provide an environmental impact report to assist in resolving the complaints.

GRAPH II



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