

Message from PJSP Director Toli Sagaga



Tēnā koutou, Gudea Hi Hai, Fakatalofa atu, Fakaalofa atu, Ekamorwir Ormo, Kaselehlie, Alii, Talofa koutou Halo, Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, Kia orana, Ni sa bula Vinaka, Halo Olketa, Iqkwe, Mauri, and warm Pasefika greetings to you.

The last three months has been a rewarding time for PJSP kaimahi, assisting with the delivery of workshops, bespoke training and needs assessments in several of our partner countries, including Solomon Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, and Tokelau. PJSP also published Nauru's first [District Court Bench Book](#) and launched its new [Litigation Skills video series](#). Produced in collaboration with The Law Association and expert lawyers, six videos about key areas of litigation will be made available to Pacific practitioners over the coming months. The first video was released at the [PJSP website](#) in August, with the second video released next week. We welcome contributions or suggestions for our quarterly newsletter. Please get in touch with us at contact@pjsp.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi
Toli Sagaga

Pacific lawyers and faculty attend Litigation Skills programme

Under the Litigation Skills part of our programme, PJSP assisted six participants from Samoa and Nauru to attend the NZLS CLE Litigation Skills programme in Ōtautahi Christchurch. PJSP also supported Justice Roma (Samoa) and Senior Magistrate Loupua Pahulu-Kuli (Tonga), pictured right with PJSP kaimahi Janine Ford, to attend as faculty members delivering the programme. The training covered key litigation topics such as cross examination, evidence, opening addresses, pre-trial conferences and closing arguments. The intensive programme was designed for counsel in their first five years of practice and involved mentoring by experienced faculty on courtroom advocacy and practical activities such as simulated courtroom exercises and a mock trial on the final day.



Official network for Women in Pacific Justice agreed at PNG workshop

Sept 2024



40 women Judges, Justices of the Peace, Magistrates, and Judicial Development Officers from 13 of our 15 Pacific partner countries met in Papua New Guinea for an **Empowering Women in Justice** workshop in September. The conference was funded by the US Department of State as part of *Ina 'ilau*, a PJSP initiative promoting access to justice for women and children, as well as leadership development for women in Pacific justice sectors. PJSP kaimahi worked with the **PNG Centre for Judicial Excellence** to deliver the event in Port Moresby.

Topics covered in the workshops included wellbeing, gender competent courts, engaging with faith based or customary judicial providers, and the possibility of a formal support network for women in Pacific justice sectors. Discussions about creating a **Pacific Judicial Women's Association** had begun in 2017 when the previous programme, the Judicial Pacific Participation Fund, sent a group of Pacific judicial officers to the **International Association of Women Judges** conference in Argentina. Seven years later in Port Moresby, this conversation again gathered momentum as participants discussed the value of forming an association.

With representatives from Niue, a small island with a population of 1,600, to Papua New Guinea, home to 12 million people (with 1,680 local courts, and over 18,000 officials) workshop participants came

from diverse backgrounds, however common challenges were shared, and a united purpose emerged with the women unanimously agreeing to develop a **Pacific Judicial Women's Association**, form a steering group and begin the work of setting aims and direction.

The workshop marked an important moment for women in justice across the Pacific; bringing together women from different nations, ʻcultures, ʻand legal systems, all committed to strengthening the role of women in the justice sector and advancing access to justice for women and children in the region.

Pictured, Back row, L to R: Dr Carolyn Graydon, Sandy Tiankim (Acting Principal Magistrate), Josephine Kilage (Deputy Chief Magistrate), Hitelai Polume-Kiele (National judge), Rosie Johnson (Magistrate), Tracy Ganaii (Senior Magistrate), Nancy Warrey (Village Court), Miriam Dondo (Village Court secretariat). Front row, L to R: PJSP's Tere Silas and Holly Ewens; PNGCJE director, Stacey Levakia-Wali and PJSP's Tina Pope.



Nauru Conference on Integrity and Judicial Well-being

July 2024

Hosted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Nauru Judiciary and Nauru Department of Justice, attendees at the three-day conference in July included Chief Justices and Justices from Tonga, Palau, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Samoa, Portugal, Australia, and the UK. The regional conference aimed to:

- Enhance an understanding of judicial integrity and well-being topics such as the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct and the judiciary's relationship with the media.
- Generate actionable strategies with practical, evidence-based recommendations, to combat judicial stress.
- Endorse the *Nauru Declaration on Judicial Well-being*.

The [Nauru Declaration on Wellbeing](#) is the result of dedicated mahi by a drafting team of 19 judicial officers and members of UNODC from all over the world. The official delegation is pictured, right.

Principles of the Nauru Declaration

1. Judicial Well-being is essential and must be recognized and supported.
2. Judicial stress is not a weakness and must not be stigmatized
3. Judicial well-being is a responsibility of individual judges and judicial institutions
4. Judicial well-being is supported by an ethical and inclusive judicial culture.
5. Promoting judicial well-being requires awareness-raising, prevention, and management activities.
6. Judicial well-being initiatives must suit the unique circumstances and requirements of national jurisdictions.
7. Judicial well-being is enhanced by human rights.



Pre-PALM meeting in Japan focuses on Rule of Law

July 2024

Japan's Ministry of Justice held a Pacific justice-focused meeting in Tokyo ahead of their annual Pacific Island Leaders Meeting (PALM) in July, with representatives from 18 Pacific Islands Forum member countries attending. Hosted by the Ministry of Justice of Japan and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, the meeting brought Pacific partners together to discuss "The Rule of Law and International Cooperation in the Pacific Region."

The hui was part of Sasakawa Peace Foundation's "Pacific Island Nations Weeks", a seminar series that explores what is happening on the ground in Pacific Islands in several areas, including security, sustainable tourism, protection of traditional cultures, disaster management, public health, and the impact on Pacific islands of rising sea levels.

PJSP Director Toli Sagaga delivered a presentation on PJSP's collaborative work with our 15 Pacific partner countries promoting the rule of law. Other speakers included the Solicitor-General of Fiji Ropate Green Lomavatu, Minister of Justice Marshall Islands Hon. Wisley Zackhras, Acting Secretary for the Department of Justice of the Federated States of Micronesia Hon. Leonito Bacalando Jr. and Minister of Justice of Samoa Hon. Matamua Seumanu Vasati Sili Pulufana.

Pictured from left, Marshall Islands Police Commissioner Lanwi and Marshall Islands Minister of Justice Hon Wisely Zackhras with PJSP Director Toli Sagaga at the Pre-PALM meeting in Tokyo in July.



New Bench Book for Nauru

The first Bench Book for the Nauru District Court covers topics including The Constitution, Sources of Law, The District Court, The Family Court, Bail, Evidence, Judgment, Sentencing, Appeals, Juvenile justice, Judicial conduct, and Common Offences. While the handbook's content is not exhaustive, it provides a practical, user-friendly reference guide to the proceedings of the District Court for both newly appointed and more experienced Magistrates. [Download the Bench Book at the PJSP website.](#)

Spotlight on Solomon Islands



Background

Solomon Islands is made up of six large islands and around 900 small islands. It has Local Courts at 19 locations, where community elders apply customary law and local by-laws. Customary law is also heard at the Customary Land Appeal Court. The Magistrates Court and the High Court hear both criminal and civil matters.

Access to Justice

Due to the large, complex geography of Solomon Islands, people living in remote or rural areas often find themselves unable to access either the Local Courts, the Magistrate Court, or the High Court.

A recent needs assessment suggested access to justice in Solomon Islands could be vastly improved by using technology – i.e. phone, e-mail, and websites as initial points of contact, along with data sharing between courts and technology to support hearings from remote locations. Facilitating access to justice for women, children, and people with disabilities is a key part of PJSP’s Ina’ilau programme, which is focused on five of our partner countries: Tonga, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Palau, and Solomon Islands.



Training and Engagement June 2024

Access to Justice and Human Rights Advisor Dr Carolyn Graydon joined former Family Court Judge John Adams, Senior Advisor Holly Ewens, Services Coordinator Tere Silas, Judicial Advisor Jennifer Akers, in Solomon Islands for an intensive three weeks of training and engagement activities with Solomon Islands’ justice sector in June.

The first week began with training sessions in Honiara for Magistrates Court clerks from Malaita, Makira, Central, Guadalcanal and Western Provinces on the *Family Protection Act* and Working with People with a Disability. The training was a success, with participants (pictured with their certificates, top left) saying they felt empowered and prepared for their tasks after the workshop.



Court clerk training was followed Decision Making training for justices and clerks of the Local Courts in the remote Aruligo and Auki areas (bottom photo at left shows an animated mock trial in Aruligo), a Judgment Writing workshop for the High Court, and workshops for Magistrates and clerks on developing systems for remote applications, hearings and service of protection orders, and training for Customary Land Appeals Court staff. While in Solomon Islands delivering training in June, PJSP was pleased to support the introduction of the very first remote Family Protection order.

