



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **For year ended 30 June 2021**

**Presented to**

**THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS**  
**Under section 98(3) of the Constitution**

# **VISION AND MISSION**

## **Vision Statement**

Our vision is to promote fair, transparent and accountable public administration that benefits all people of the Solomon Islands.

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to protect the interests of the Solomon Islands community to:

- Assist people in resolving complaints about government bodies
- Independently investigate and report on the actions and practices of government bodies
- Foster accountable, lawful, and transparent and responsive administration

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## ***Foreword***

It is with humility and gratitude that I submit my fifth Annual Report to Parliament. This report covers 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. It ends my five years' tenure as the Ombudsman of Solomon Islands starting from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2017.

Let me first of all expressed here that the last five years of my leadership has had its share of opportunities and challenges. When I first came into the office there is huge backlog of cases going years back. With few investigation officers to carry out the work we have to find ways to deal with those backlogs. A thorough review of cases was taken to determine the substance of these backlogged cases and to identify what necessary steps to be taken in order to address them. Eventually we have managed to sort out these cases and ensure that the office deal with them in an efficient manner. Five years on the office has now in a better position to deal with cases on efficient manner and this in itself is commendable.

Furthermore, the office is now working under its new Act, the Ombudsman Act 2017. This Act repealed the Ombudsman (Further Provision) Act 1981. I want to thank Members of Parliament (MPs) for their foresight in seeing the importance of this new Act which addresses gaps in the previous Act. The office has been operating under this new Act since 2018. We did a nationwide awareness on this Act through visit to respective Ministries, Provincial centres and on radio programs. The office may consider further amendments to the Act but that is something that may require thoughtful deliberation.

As early as 2020 the covid-19 pandemic has swift across the world posing socio-economic threats to human lives and families. The Solomon Islands Government (SIG) has in response joined other countries in the world to implement Covid-19 preventive measures as of early 2020 to prevent covid-19 from entering Solomon Islands and to avoid its spread into the communities. These preventive measures include but not limited to realigning of government budget priorities, temporary leave for public officers and so forth. My office has also experience budget cut affecting our work plans. These disruptions have negatively impacted the work of my office. For instance, throughout 2020 to 2021 there is huge budget cut resulting in us having to improvise or reducing our work to bare minimum in terms of implementing our services to the people. Not only that, the temporary standing down of officers also means that my office has to remain idle throughout the better half of 2020. These among others are some of the major challenges faced by the office in the last five years.

However, my office has continued to achieve some of its key strategic objectives and function to deliver its services to the people. The office has developed its website and is now up and

running to serve the public. The website becomes an important portal for advocacy and visibility regarding the roles and functions of the Ombudsman. The website since its launching has a recorded around eighty (80) to ninety (90) visitors monthly. The figures are poised to increase in the coming years. The website eases people having to travel from the provinces to register their complaints or having to make a phone call which is also expensive. Selective tours to the provinces continues under tight budget to ensure the office continue to deliver its services.

As mentioned earlier this is my fifth Annual Report to Parliament and covers the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. This year the office has received and deliberated on a total of two-hundred and twelve (212) cases. This is an increase of twenty-seven (27) cases dealt with in the previous year. The office will continue to strive for the better through dedication, commitment and impartiality in our duty to promote fair and accountable public administration throughout the public bodies.

To conclude, I, together with colleagues of this office wishes to share our gratitude to the Solomon Islands government, donor partners, colleague Ombudsman within and beyond the region, State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), and other stakeholders who have supported our work over the years. Thank you for the invaluable support rendered to our office in our quest to serve the community. Thank you.



**Fredrick Leve Fakarii**

Ombudsman

## *Table of Acronyms*

| <b>Acronym</b> | <b>Definition</b>   |
|----------------|---|
| CBI            | Complaint-Based Investigation                                     |
| CMS            | Complaint Management System                                       |
| HCC            | Honiara City Council  |
| ICETS          | Information, Compliance, and Enforcement Training                 |
| LCC            | Leadership Code Commission  |
| LDSB           | Long and Dedicated Service Benefits                               |
| MPA            | Members of the Provincial Assembly                                |
| MFR            | Ministry of Forestry and Research                                 |
| MPS            | Ministry of Public Service  |
| MCILI          | Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour & Immigration              |
| MEHRD          | Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development             |
| MPNSCS         | Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services.  |
| MHMS           | Ministry of Health and Medical Services                           |
| MPS            | Ministry of Public Services                                       |
| MJLA           | Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs                             |
| MID            | Ministry of Infrastructure Development                            |
| MLHS           | Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey                             |
| MoFT           | Ministry of Finance and Treasury                                  |
| MFR            | Ministry of Forestry and Research                                 |
| MPGIS          | Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening |
| MRD            | Ministry of Rural Development                                     |
| MHA            | Ministry of Home Affairs  |

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| MCT     | Ministry of Culture and Tourism  |
| MCA     | Ministry of Communication and Aviation                                 |
| NPO     | National Parliament Office   |
| NPF     | National Provident Fund  |
| OPMC    | Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet                               |
| OMI     | Own-Motion Investigation   |
| OOSI    | Office of the Ombudsman of Solomon Islands                             |
| SIBC    | Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation                               |
| SOE     | State-Owned Enterprises  |
| SIG-ICT | Solomon Islands Government Information and<br>Communication Technology |



# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Executive Summary**

This Annual Report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 — 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. It is also the final report of my five years' tenure Ombudsman of Solomon Islands. As such I wish to convey my sincere gratitude to my officers who have worked tirelessly over the last five years to ensure that Ombudsman services is provided to the community.

Since taking office, there are a number of key milestone achievements that are registered. First, the new Ombudsman Act 2017 successfully tabled and passed by Parliament. The office is now in operation under the new Act. Second, the office has increased its services and visibility to the public through its radio and on-site advocacy programs. Third, the Office has launched its website in 2020. The website development makes it easier for the Ombudsman related information to be accessed across a broad section of our societies. It enables the office to better respond to the people across the country and beyond. Thus, this is a very important milestone the office has achieved in recent years.

The office has over the last five years enjoyed a cordial working relationship with other Ombudsman institutions in the region and beyond and has benefited a lot from this well-established working relationship. Among many of its benefits are professional development for officers made possible through participating in various capacity building trainings provided for local officers under respective agreements. These trainings equipped our officers with relevant competitive skills to effectively perform their duties. In brief, the last five years are reflectively very successful as far as our working relationship with other Ombudsman colleagues are concern.

In addition, with the assistance of relevant stakeholders the office has completed the *Good Decision-Making Manual*. The Manual explicitly elaborated on good decision-making procedures within the public sector. The office anticipates wider consultation with public bodies for possible usage as part of the training tool for public officers through the Public Service IPAM trainings. This is a comprehensive document that aimed as a means to assist in addressing bad decisions made by government officials that is costing huge financial resources annually. This project is part of the major undertaking by the Ombudsman's office to improve service delivery within the public services as well as to the general public. These are part of the constitutional mandate of the Ombudsman explicitly stated in section 97 of the Constitution.

This year the impact of covid-19 continues to disrupt most of the communities in the Solomon Islands. Preventive measures taken by the government has continued to have impact of the Ombudsman services. However, the office continues to deliver its services despite of these challenges. Ombudsman radio program continue to be aired, investigation work to the provinces and visits to schools continues at a minimal rate. Therefore, the office continues to conduct its mandated duties.

Another major challenge the office is dealing with is in terms of having its office restructuring program implemented. Despite of approval from the Ministry of Public Services (MPS) the implementation of the program is still far from realization. The Ombudsman Act 2017 has clearly make mention of providing additional officers to the Ombudsman's office. The office has over the recent years struggled to have this important milestone come into fruition.

The office also has to deal with internal challenges that hinders the work of the Ombudsman. It has experience substantive budget cut since 2018 when the office starts to work under its own separate budget head. This is a serious matter that continues to directly affect the service of the Ombudsman.

Another serious challenge relates to the office staff establishment. It has come to our understanding that some of our active officers were not included in the office staff establishment and this means that they are drawing their salary from elsewhere. This is a matter that responsible authorities such the Ministry of Public Service (MPS) must address. When such officers moved elsewhere the office not only lost an officer but the position as well. As if this is not enough important positions within the Office of the Ombudsman were also removed even without consulting the Ombudsman. For example, established positions like that of the Director of Investigation and the Director of Research and Communication units. These are important positions within our office hierarchy. These were positions which officers have been acting on for sometimes over a year and half, others for over six months and submissions have already been made to have these officers substantively filled them. However, after all those numerous attempts to substantively appoint these officers to fill them, MPS decided to remove them instead. This is pure injustice. These positions must be reinstated. While the Office of the Ombudsman is fully aware of the current difficult economic environment, the responsible ministry must ensure these posts are reinstated when the situation improves. Thus, it is important to remind respective authorities to be always cautious when making decisions that would directly impact the work of Integrity Institutions.

Despite of these challenges, the office has managed to fulfil its role in dealing with complaints (although timeliness remains an issue for want of required manpower). A lot of public bodies has respond positively to the Ombudsman through the implementations of his investigation report and recommendations. The invaluable support of all our stakeholders is also crucial to the Office in being robust and successful in serving the community.

## **1.2 Looking Ahead**

This year the office has to again face up with the global impacts of the covid-19 pandemic. It brings with it lots of uncertainties for the work of the Ombudsman. However, the government has made known its policy outlook to open the border in the near future. This could mean a return to normalcy, a new normal as commonly said. The Ombudsman office also look forward to that.

The office anticipates having to develop a *toll-free* line to the general public to ensure that the office is more connected with the people in terms of having to answer people's queries on a number of important issues. As a matter of fact, many citizens across the country have very little or no financial capacity to access the services of lawyers and courts and other such dispute resolution bodies. The office of the Ombudsman plays a fundamental role in dealing with administrative grievances free of charge for those concern and having a toll-free line to serve those concern is very important. Also, we have only one office base in Honiara and the challenges brought in by covid-19 demands for such initiative to be taken. This initiative anticipates helping so many citizens who are marginalized and treated unfairly by public institutions to effectively and efficiently access our services regardless of where they are through the provinces and islands.

Additionally, the office aims to recruit more officers in the near future to carry-out the important role of the Ombudsman in the country. The Ombudsman Act 2017 provides for this and the Ministry of Public Service (MPS) has already provided its approval. The office hope in the near future recruitment will be made to increase the number of people working for this noble office.

The OOSI has already completed work on *Good Decision-Making Manual* and approval has already been sought from respective institutions to have the Manual used across public bodies. This office looks forward to a broad consultation across public bodies on the Manual and is hopeful that it will be used broadly to help promote good decision making practices across the

public sector. Another additional project that the office is anticipating is the development of ***Complaint-Handling Manual*** for public bodies. Consultation has already been undertaken and the office will work on the next phase of the project sooner. These two documents are complementary to each other and aim to assist in overcoming bad decision-making within the public bodies.

The Office also anticipates renewing its partnership program with other integrity institutions in the region and abroad, like the Commonwealth Ombudsman of Australia, the New Zealand Ombudsman and the Australasian-Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR). Sustaining these important working relationships is vital to our work in areas of mutual interests concerning good administration and governance.

### ***1.3 Report Overview***

The Ombudsman, by virtue of section 98(3) of Chapter IX of the Solomon Islands Constitution, is required to submit an Annual Report to Parliament. Section 98(3) provides:

*(3) The Ombudsman shall make an annual report and may make such additional reports to Parliament as he deems appropriate concerning the discharge of his functions, and may draw attention to any defects which appear to him to exist in the administration or any law.*

The current report formally starts with “highlights” in section two (2), which briefly lays out several remarkable milestone achievements of the Office between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. It also highlighted key figures for the year.

Section three (3) relates to the Ombudsman’s supervisory role, in brief. It outlines the legal framework through which the Office discharges its duties. This includes the constitutional statutes pertaining to the establishment of the Ombudsman’s Office and associated implementing provisions under the Ombudsman Act 2017.

The fourth section (4) deals with the performance of OOSI in executing its duties to promote good administration within public bodies. It started off with the constitutional bases for the function of the Ombudsman and a number of activities that the office engaged in fulfilling its constitutional mandated duties. This section also provides an overview of the different types of complaints received by the office and how the office deliberated on these complaints. Finally, the section captures capacity development trainings participated by officers throughout the year.

The fifth section (5) is an audit of complaints for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. It provides detailed tabulation of the complaints that the Office registered, and expounds on the number of cases it received, how complaints were dealt with and the general distribution of complaints within public bodies. It captures details of the distribution of cases, substances of cases and its frequency of occurrence within public bodies. This is an important section for those wishing to understand the nature and distribution of complaints.

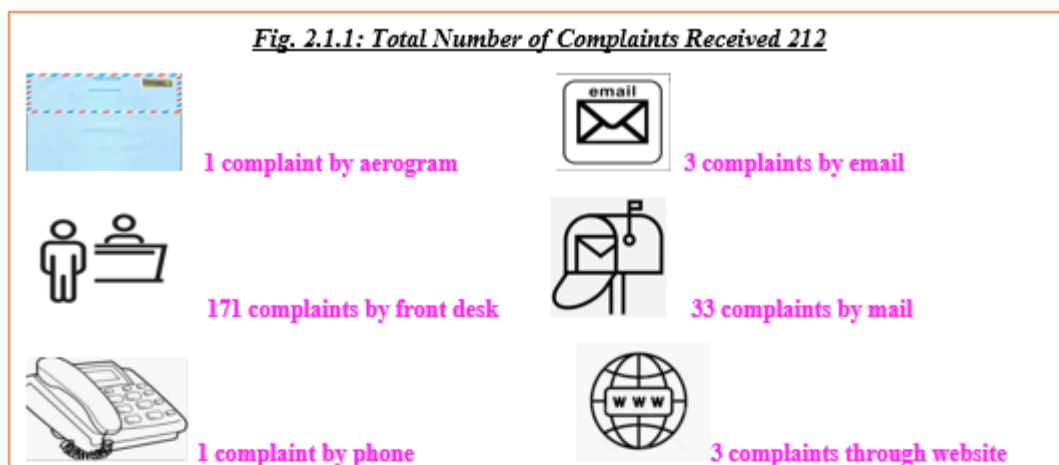
The sixth section (6) puts complaints into perspective. The distribution of complaints across public bodies is explicitly documented. It also compiles the different types of complaints and the regularity of occurrence across these public bodies. In short, it illuminates different types of complaints that is commonly reported to the Ombudsman.

Section seven (7) focuses on on-going issues and systematic challenges faced within the government sectors. At an outset most of the complaints registered and expounded are either employment-related complaints or non-employment complaints. It provides a detailed narrative of these complaints in quantifiable figures. This section is to bring before parliament serious issues of bad administrative practices within public bodies for deliberation and consideration.

The eighth section (8) centres on the administration of the OOSI and the functions of its various departments.

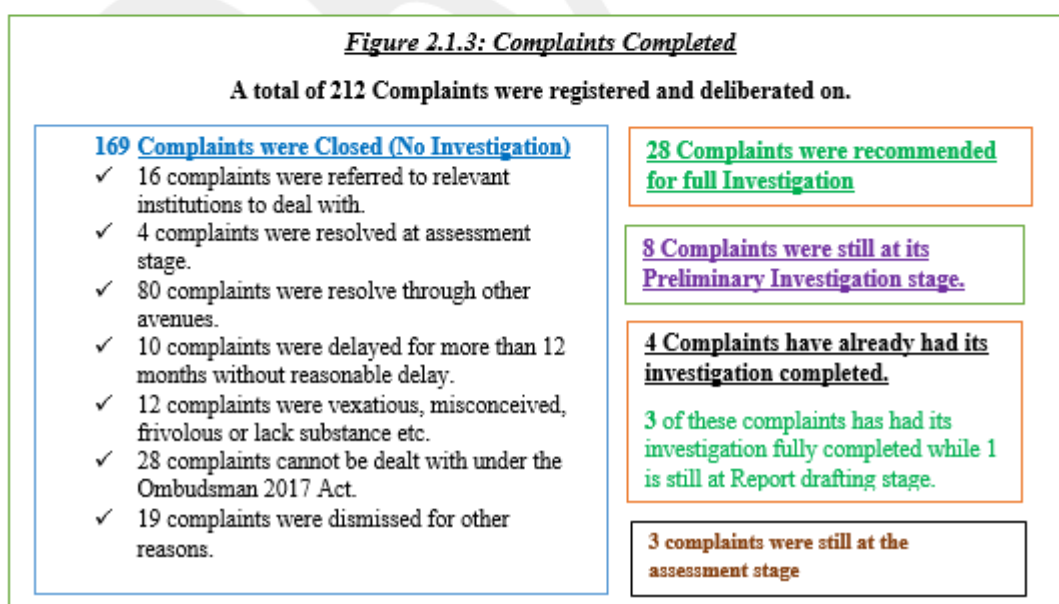
Section nine (9) consists of appendices and case studies on issues of maladministration and unfairness within the public bodies.

## 2. Key Figures July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020—June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021



**Fig. 2.1.2: Complaints Under and not Under Jurisdiction**

| Complaint under and not under Jurisdiction July 1 <sup>st</sup> to Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> 2020     | Count of Case File Number |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>2020</b>  |                           |
| • No Jurisdiction  | 24                        |
| • Under Jurisdiction   | 85                        |
| <b>Complaint under and not under Jurisdiction Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b> |                           |
| <b>2021</b>  |                           |
| • No Jurisdiction  | 35                        |
| • Under Jurisdiction   | 68                        |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   | <b>212</b>                |



This year the office of the Ombudsman continues to conduct its regular duties despite the many challenges posed by covid-19. Officers continues to conduct travel to the provinces for work related matters. These include advocacy visits to schools as well as following up on

investigation cases. However, travelling are made under tight restriction and budget as a result of the government initiated budget cuts across much of the government ministries and departments.

In addition, the office managed to register increased number of cases this year compared to the previous year. The office managed to register and deliberated on two hundred and twelve (212) cases compared to one hundred eighty-five (185) cases received last year. This is an increase of almost thirteen percent (13%). The office with its committed officers continue to provide services to the people despite of external challenges posed by the global impacts of covid-19.

## **2.1 Strengthening Ties with Regional Integrity Institutions**

The Ombudsman has continued to maintain good working relationships with other Ombudsman and integrity institutions in other jurisdictions. The Office continues to receive support from these relationships in various technical areas. The Commonwealth Ombudsman of Australia, for example, has continued to provide financial support in specialized investigation training to our officers. The New Zealand Ombudsman is also stepping up its support for our officers in the same areas. Such support is poised to continue in the coming years based on mutual understandings and close working relationships.

### **3. The Ombudsman's Supervisory System in Brief**

The Solomon Islands Ombudsman's oversight role has been conferred by two legal authorities: The Solomon Islands Constitution and the Ombudsman Act 2017.

#### **i. The Constitution**

The Constitution establishes the Ombudsman's Office as an independent body with the following functions:

- (a) To enquire into the conduct and abuses of office or authority by members of the public service, the Police Force, the Prisons Service, the government of Honiara city, provincial governments, and such other offices, commissions, corporate bodies or public agencies as may be prescribed by Parliament;
- (b) To assist in the improvement of practices and procedures of public bodies; and (c) To ensure the elimination of decisions made on an arbitrary and unfair basis.

The authorities who are exempted from the above powers and functions of the Ombudsman are:

- (a) the Governor General and his personal staff;
- (b) the Director of Public Prosecutions or any person acting on his instructions; and
- (c) the Judges, Magistrates, and Registrars of Courts in their "judicial functions" or court decisions, rulings or judgements.

The Ombudsman is prohibited by section 98(2) of the Constitution from investigating matters prejudicial to the security of Solomon Islands if the Prime Minister notifies him of such matters.

The Ombudsman is required to submit Annual Reports to Parliament and may make any additional reports as he sees fit regarding his work. In doing so, he ensures that public administrators comply with the legal frameworks governing their administrative functions. Apart from such legal concerns, the Ombudsman is authorised to take further step of pinpointing any defects in the application of any law (as may be identified during investigations) and consequently make recommendations for necessary changes to rectify the legal or administrative defect so that the ultimate effect will be one of fairness and justice.

#### **ii. The Ombudsman Act 2017**

The Ombudsman Act 2017 complements the role of the Ombudsman as stipulated in the Constitution. Among other things, this Act provides for the Ombudsman to enter into an



agreement with other government organizations, make referrals to other government institutions when complaints are outside the jurisdiction of his office, and further authorizes the Ombudsman to investigate government contractors and agents.

The OOSI is always independent and impartial when carrying out its duties. It provides its services free of charge.

## **4      *Our Performance***

Section 97 of the Constitution clearly defines the functions of the Ombudsman:

- (a) Investigate maladministration (bad management practices) of prescribed bodies<sup>1</sup>;
- (b) Assist in the improvement of practices and procedures of public bodies;
- (c) Ensure the elimination of arbitrary and unfair decisions.

The functions of the Ombudsman as spelled out in the Constitution provide the basis on which the Office perform its “watchdog” role on issues relating to administration in the public bodies. This is to ensure that good governance is promoted and maintained in the ways that services are delivered to the people. In so doing, the Office engages in different activities to fulfil its mandated responsibilities. These activities include but are not limited to: Dealing with complaints on grievances issues related to maladministration

### **1. Complaint bases:**

- Receiving complaints from members of the public who come to the Ombudsman’s Office to register their complaints.
- Receiving complaints sent through office emails.
- Receiving complaints sent through Aerograms.
- Receiving complaints made through phone calls.
- Receiving complaints from third parties.

### **2. Own-Initiative Investigations.**

#### **Awareness and Advocacy Activities**

- Presenting awareness talks on the roles and responsibilities of the Ombudsman to public officers through programs organized by other government institutions like the Institute of Public Administration and Management Learning (IPAM).
- Conducting awareness visits to Provincial Government Centres, schools and the local communities.

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<sup>1</sup> “Public bodies”, as used in relevant Section 97 of the National Constitution and the Ombudsman Act 2017, refers to government ministries, departments and agencies that can be investigated by the Ombudsman.

- Collaborating with other relevant institutions of the government like the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS) to raise awareness for newly elected Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs).
- Presenting a weekly radio program on Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC).
- Participation in public events such as the International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD).
- Distributing brochures and pamphlets to members of public, many of whom collected these materials at the Office front desk.
- Newsletter publication through local and regional media platforms and so forth.

#### **4.1 Handling of Complaints**

This year the Ombudsman has dealt with two hundred and twelve (212) complaints. Dealing with complaints, particularly complaints on maladministration grievances within the public sectors is a key responsibility of the Ombudsman's mandate. Complaint handling by the Ombudsman is fundamental to providing checks and balance on the conduct of public offices regarding administrative matters. In doing so the Ombudsman provides a much needed support to assist members of the public. This important function of the Ombudsman provides a symbiotic collaboration of the Ombudsman and the public to promote good public administration in public offices. In so doing the role of the Ombudsman as a 'watch dog' on public administration is fully realized. Thus, the Ombudsman role in complaint handling promotes and efficiency and good administration within the public sector.

All complaints received by the Ombudsman are dealt with accordingly. A good number of complaints have been investigated whilst those that are outside of the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman have either been dismissed without investigation or referred to other relevant government institutions to deal with. Other complaints were deliberated on and resolved at the preliminary assessment stage. For instance, the Ombudsman or any of his officer(s) acting on his delegated powers do advice respective public offices to make amend on certain matters relating to the complaint. If the office in question agrees that it had made an error, then the matter can be resolved early.

Other complaints exceed 12 months' limitation without reasonable justification for delay while some complaints were vexatious and frivolous.<sup>2</sup>

The Ombudsman also carries out Own-Initiative Investigations on issues of national interests. These are issues that have the potential to effect citizens broadly.

**Figure 4.1a— Total number of complaints from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

| Status of cases from July 1 <sup>st</sup> 2020 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2020      | Count of Case File Number |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>2020</b>  |                           |
| ☐ Jul  | 18                        |
| ☐ Aug  | 18                        |
| ☐ Sep  | 20                        |
| ☐ Oct  | 21                        |
| ☐ Nov  | 19                        |
| ☐ Dec  | 13                        |
| <b>Status of cases from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b> |                           |
| <b>2021</b>  |                           |
| ☐ Jan  | 17                        |
| ☐ Feb  | 22                        |
| ☐ Mar  | 23                        |
| ☐ Apr  | 9                         |
| ☐ May  | 17                        |
| ☐ Jun  | 15                        |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   | <b>212</b>                |

**Fig. 4.1b— Types of complaints received from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021**

| Types of complaint receive from July 1 <sup>st</sup> to Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> 2020     | Count of Case File Number |
|---|---------------------------|
| <b>2020</b>   |                           |
| ☐ Aerogram  | 1                         |
| ☐ Email   | 1                         |
| ☐ Front desk  | 84                        |
| ☐ Mail  | 21                        |
| ☐ Phone   | 1                         |
| ☐ Website   | 1                         |
|   |                           |
| <b>Types of complaint receive from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b> |                           |

<sup>2</sup> Refer back to figure 2.1.3 for details to see details on how complaints were being dealt with through various means.

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| <b>2021</b>         |            |
| □ <b>Email</b>      | 2          |
| □ <b>Front desk</b> | 87         |
| □ <b>Mail</b>       | 12         |
| □ <b>Website</b>    | 2          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>212</b> |

## 4.2 Training

This reporting year the office has seen a resurgence of officers involved in various capacity building training. These trainings were identified to build certain aspect of officers' capacity to efficiently carry out certain tasks within the office hierarchy. These training either involved the whole office or certain selected officers.

The Ombudsman office was invited to participate in the Honiara Youth Council Anti-Corruption Dialogue held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2020.

Additionally, Mr. Billy Kerepiniano, Mr. Aaron Kodo, Mr. Nelson Dhita and Mr. Nick Osifelo have successfully completed a certificate in English grammar program offered by Island Bible Ministries during this reporting period. Mr. Aaron Kodo and Mr. Patteson Tomu also attended Zoom Call Training organized by Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

A number of officers also participated in the *Train the Trainer Course*, an Online Training facilitated by PDT, Australia. It is a two months' capacity training program facilitated under the Solomon Islands and Commonwealth of Australia Ombudsman. Officers involved in this training were Mr. Nelson Dhita, Ms. Talei Mali, Mr. Rex Akomae and Mr. Patteson Tomu. Mr. John Maelalia and Mr. Fred Topia continued on with the Diploma Program in Government Investigation facilitated by Investigation, Compliance, and Enforcement Training (ICET) training program. These two officers have completed their Certificate in Government Investigation the previous year. These trainings are provided under the working agreement between Solomon Islands Ombudsman and the Commonwealth Ombudsman of Australia.

Other officers involved in trainings were Mrs. Susan Saelea who have participated in Cleaning Knowledge and Skills from 30<sup>th</sup> March—1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 organized by IPAM and Solomon Islands National University (SINU). Finally, Mr. Sammy Sui attended Essential Computer Basics from 19<sup>th</sup> — 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021 organized by IPAM.

## **5 Audits of Registered Complaints from Year Ending 30th June 2021**

This year a total of two hundred and twelve (212) complaints were dealt with by the Ombudsman. This is an increase of 27 complaints from last year. Also, a total of 59 cases falls outside of the Ombudsman mandate or jurisdiction while a further one hundred and fifty-three (153) falls within his jurisdiction and are resolved by various means.

In addition, complaints on employment related issues accounts for one hundred and nineteen (119) complaints. A further ninety-three (93) complaints were on non-employment issues.

Complaints relating to employment issues covers wide range of areas. These include but not limited to salary issues, allowances, appointment, probation and confirmation, suspension, termination, disciplinary processes, complaint handling, retirements, work safety and compensation. These complaints accounted for more than fifty-six percent (56 %) of the total complaints received in the material year. Non-employment related complaints on the other hand refers to complaints like diversion of funds, fraud, corruption, claims of withdrawal, refund, outstanding payments, unfair/unprocedural conduct relating visas, passport, permits, licenses, approvals, land-rights and unfairness related to scholarship. Others include registration of information, titles and record-keeping, unfairness relating to award of scholarships, grades, college admission and poor customer services.<sup>3</sup> These kind of complaints accounts for forty-four percent (44 %) of the total complaints lodged with the Ombudsman.

Additionally, government ministries and departments accounted for one hundred and six (106) complaints. A further fifty-seven (57) complaints were made against Provincial governments and Honiara City Council (HCC) while eleven (11) complaints were made against State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Also, six (6) complaints were made against MPs, Ministers and other leaders' personal conduct while thirty-two (32) complaints were made against others, including unions and private individuals. (See figure 5.1—).

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<sup>3</sup> A detailed compilation of employment and non-employment complaints is tabulated in figures 5.2 & 5.3.

### 5.1. Number of Cases by Agencies from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021

| Cases by Agencies from Jul 1 <sup>st</sup> to Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> 2020      | Count of Case File Number |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>2020</b>  |                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Govt Ministries and departments                     | 59                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MPs, Ministers and other leaders' personal conduct  | 3                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other / union / private                             | 12                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prov Govt / HCC                                     | 28                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOE   | 7                         |
| <b>Cases by Agencies from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b> |                           |
| <b>2021</b>  |                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Govt Ministries and Departments                     | 47                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MPs, Ministers and other leaders' personal conduct  | 3                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other / union / private                             | 20                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prov Govt / HCC                                     | 29                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOE   | 4                         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   | <b>212</b>                |

### 5.2 Employment-related complaints registered from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021

| Employment-related complaints for Jul 1 <sup>st</sup> to Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> 2020      | Count of Case File Number |
|---|---------------------------|
| <b>2020 Employment issues</b>   |                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> salary   | 22                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> allowances   | 8                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> appointment, probation, confirmation                           | 1                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> suspension   | 2                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> termination  | 3                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> disciplinary process / complaint handling                      | 2                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> redundancy, retirement, pensions, LDSB                         | 9                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NPF  | 3                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> work safety, compensation                                      | 1                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other  | 3                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> holidays, leave  | 4                         |
| <b>Employment-related complaints for Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b> |                           |
| <b>2021 Employment issues</b>   |                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> salary   | 21                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> allowances   | 4                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> transfer, postings   | 6                         |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> appointment, probation, confirmation      | 4          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> suspension                                | 1          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> termination                               | 5          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> promotion / demotion                      | 1          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> housing                                   | 1          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> disciplinary process / complaint handling | 4          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> redundancy, retirement, pensions, LDSB    | 4          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> work safety, compensation                 | 1          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other                                     | 5          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> holidays, leave                           | 4          |
|  |            |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   | <b>119</b> |

### 5.3 Non-Employment related complaints registered from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021

| <b>Non-Employment-related complaints for Jul 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2020</b>  | <b>Count of Case File Number</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>2020 Non-employment issues</b>  |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> diversion of funds, fraud, corruption   | 4                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc   | 17                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unfair/Unprocedural conduct relating to visas, passports, permits, licenses, approvals, land-rights, etc (exc corruption and delay) | 3                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> registration of information, titles, record keeping, etc  | 1                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unfairness relating to award of scholarships, grades, college admissions, etc   | 1                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)   | 21                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> private matter / other  | 4                                |
| <b>Non-Employment-related complaints for Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>  |                                  |
| <b>2021 Non-employment issues</b>  |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> diversion of funds, fraud, corruption   | 1                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> non-payment or termination of benefits, entitlements, scholarships etc  | 1                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc   | 8                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unprofessional conduct / misconduct by internal party, failure to investigate, punish, etc (inc MPS, PSC, TSO, TSC, etc)            | 3                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wrongful/illegal conduct by external party, failure to investigate, put to court, punish, etc (police, LCC, Pub Sol)                | 1                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unfair/Unprocedural conduct relating to visas, passports, permits, licenses, approvals, land-rights, etc (exc corruption and delay) | 2                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> registration of information, titles, record keeping, etc  | 2                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unfairness relating to award of scholarships, grades, college admissions, etc   | 2                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)   | 14                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> withholding letters, certificates, endorsement etc (exc employment)   | 1                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wrongful arrest, detention, brutality, etc  | 2                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unfair judicial decision, award, etc  | 1                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> private matter / other  | 4                                |



|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>93</b> |
|--------------------|-----------|

#### 5.4 Complaints against State-Owned Enterprises from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021

| <b>Complaints against SOEs from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2020</b> | <b>Count of Case File Number</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>2020</b>  |                                  |
| □ SI National Provident Fund   | 2                                |
| □ SI National University   | 2                                |
| □ Solomon Airlines   | 1                                |
| □ Solomon Power  | 2                                |
| <b>Complaints against SOEs from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b> |                                  |
| <b>2021</b>  |                                  |
| □ SINPF  | 2                                |
| □ SI National University   | 1                                |
| □ Solomon Island Ports Authority   | 1                                |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   | <b>11</b>                        |

#### 5.5 Complaints according to Government ministries and departments from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2020

| <b>Complaints according to Government ministries and departments from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b> | <b>Count of Case File Number</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| □ Min Agriculture & Livestock Dev  | 3                                |
| □ Min Comm, Industry, Labour & Migration   | 18                               |
| □ Min Culture and Tourism  | 1                                |
| □ Min Education and Human Resources  | 17                               |
| □ Min Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteo   | 2                                |
| □ Min Finance and Treasury   | 10                               |
| □ Min Fisheries and Marine Resources   | 1                                |
| □ Min Forestry and Research  | 4                                |
| □ Min Health and Med Services  | 12                               |
| □ Min Infrastructure Dev   | 1                                |
| □ Min Justice & Legal Affairs  | 3                                |
| □ Min Lands, Housing & Survey  | 7                                |
| □ Min Police, Nat Sec and Correctional Services  | 14                               |
| □ Min Public Service   | 11                               |
| □ OPM&C (exc integrity agencies)   | 1                                |
| □ Min Communication and Aviation   | 1                                |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   | <b>106</b>                       |

### 5.6. Cases distribution by Provinces from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021

| <b>Cases distribution by Provinces from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b> |  | <b>Count of Case File Number</b> |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central   |  | 6                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choiseul  |  | 6                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guadalcanal   |  | 14                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honiara   |  | 132                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Isabel  |  | 2                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Makira  |  | 9                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malaita   |  | 23                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renbel  |  | 3                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temotu  |  | 4                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Western   |  | 13                               |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   |  | <b>212</b>                       |

### 5.7. Complaints made against Provincial Governments/ Authorities and HCC from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021

| <b>Complaints made against Provincial Governments/ Authorities and HCC from Jul 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2021</b> | <b>Count of Case File Number</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Provincial Govt/ Authority  | 2                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choiseul Provincial Govt/ Authority   | 5                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guadalcanal Provincial Govt/ Authority  | 6                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HCC   | 10                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Isabel Provincial Govt/ Authority   | 1                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Makira Ulawa Provincial Govt/ Authority   | 5                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malaita Provincial Govt/ Authority  | 16                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renbel Provincial Govt/ Authority   | 3                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temotu Provincial Govt/ Authority   | 4                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Western Provincial Govt/ Authority  | 5                                |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   | <b>57</b>                        |

## 6 Putting Complaints into Context

This sections sums up complaints registered into perspective. It organizes complaints registered according to respective government ministries and departments, provincial government/HCC and SOE's. This is important to understanding the distribution of complaints against public bodies. In short, this section sheds light on the different types of cases that have continued to undermine public offices over the years.

### 6.1 Complaints Made against Government Ministries

| Complaints made against Govt ministries/departments from July 1 <sup>st</sup> to Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> 2020                                   | Count of Case File Number |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>2020</b>  |                           |
| <b>Min Agriculture &amp; Livestock Dev</b>   | <b>1</b>                  |
| □ <i>termination</i>   | 1                         |
| <b>Min Comm, Industry, Labour &amp; Migration</b>  | <b>12</b>                 |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 9                         |
| □ <i>allowances</i>  | 1                         |
| □ <i>holidays, leave</i>   | 2                         |
| <b>Min Culture and Tourism</b>   | <b>1</b>                  |
| □ <i>disciplinary process / complaint handling</i>   | 1                         |
| <b>Min Education and Human Resources</b>   | <b>8</b>                  |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>   | 1                         |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 1                         |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 4                         |
| □ <i>redundancy, retirement, pensions, LDSB</i>  | 2                         |
| <b>Min Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteo</b>  | <b>2</b>                  |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>   | 1                         |
| □ <i>unfair/Unprocedural conduct relating to visas, passports, permits, licenses, approvals, land-rights, etc (exc corruption and delay)</i> | 1                         |
| <b>Min Finance and Treasury</b>  | <b>6</b>                  |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>   | 4                         |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 1                         |
| □ <i>termination</i>   | 1                         |
| <b>Min Fisheries and Marine Resources</b>  | <b>1</b>                  |
| □ <i>private matter / other</i>  | 1                         |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Min Forestry and Research</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 1        |
| □ <i>private matter / other</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>suspension</i>  | 1        |
| <b>Min Health and Med Services</b>   | <b>6</b> |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>   | 2        |
| □ <i>unfair/Unprocedural conduct relating to visas, passports, permits, licenses, approvals, land-rights, etc (exc corruption and delay)</i> | 1        |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 2        |
| □ <i>allowances</i>  | 1        |
| <b>Min Infrastructure Dev</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>   | 1        |
| <b>Min Justice &amp; Legal Affairs</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 2        |
| <b>Min Lands, Housing &amp; Survey</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| □ <i>unfair/Unprocedural conduct relating to visas, passports, permits, licenses, approvals, land-rights, etc (exc corruption and delay)</i> | 1        |
| □ <i>registration of information, titles, record keeping, etc</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 1        |
| <b>Min Police, Nat Sec and Correctional Services</b>   | <b>6</b> |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>   | 1        |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>allowances</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>disciplinary process / complaint handling</i>   | 1        |
| □ <i>other</i>   | 2        |
| <b>Min Public Service</b>  | <b>6</b> |
| □ <i>unfairness relating to award of scholarships, grades, college admissions, etc</i>   | 1        |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 2        |
| □ <i>redundancy, retirement, pensions, LDSB</i>  | 3        |
| <b>OPM&amp;C (exc integrity agencies)</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>   | 1        |
| <b>Complaints made against Govt ministries/departments from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>                               |          |
| <b>2021</b>  |          |
| <b>Min Agriculture &amp; Livestock Dev</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| □ <i>redundancy, retirement, pensions, LDSB</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>other</i>   | 1        |
| <b>Min Comm, Industry, Labour &amp; Migration</b>  | <b>6</b> |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| □ <i>non-payment or termination of benefits, entitlements, scholarships etc</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 4        |
| □ <i>disciplinary process / complaint handling</i>   | 1        |
| <b>Min Communication and Aviation</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>   | 1        |
| <b>Min Education and Human Resources</b>   | <b>9</b> |
| □ <i>unprofessional conduct / misconduct by internal party, failure to investigate, punish, etc (inc MPS, PSC, TSO, TSC, etc)</i>            | 1        |
| □ <i>unfairness relating to award of scholarships, grades, college admissions, etc</i>   | 2        |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 3        |
| □ <i>transfer, postings</i>  | 2        |
| □ <i>appointment, probation, confirmation</i>  | 1        |
| <b>Min Finance and Treasury</b>  | <b>4</b> |
| □ <i>diversion of funds, fraud, corruption</i>   | 1        |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>   | 1        |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>allowances</i>  | 1        |
| <b>Min Forestry and Research</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| □ <i>suspension</i>  | 1        |
| <b>Min Health and Med Services</b>   | <b>6</b> |
| □ <i>private matter / other</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>allowances</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>appointment, probation, confirmation</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>promotion / demotion</i>  | 1        |
| □ <i>disciplinary process / complaint handling</i>   | 1        |
| □ <i>holidays, leave</i>   | 1        |
| <b>Min Justice &amp; Legal Affairs</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| □ <i>unfair judicial decision, award, etc</i>  | 1        |
| <b>Min Lands, Housing &amp; Survey</b>   | <b>4</b> |
| □ <i>unfair/Unprocedural conduct relating to visas, passports, permits, licenses, approvals, land-rights, etc (exc corruption and delay)</i> | 1        |
| □ <i>registration of information, titles, record keeping, etc</i>  | 2        |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 1        |
| <b>Min Police, Nat Sec and Correctional Services</b>   | <b>8</b> |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 1        |
| □ <i>wrongful arrest, detention, brutality, etc</i>  | 2        |
| □ <i>termination</i>   | 2        |
| □ <i>disciplinary process / complaint handling</i>   | 2        |
| □ <i>other</i>   | 1        |
| <b>Min Public Service</b>  | <b>5</b> |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 1        |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| □ <i>appointment, probation, confirmation</i>   | 1          |
| □ <i>housing</i>                                | 1          |
| □ <i>redundancy, retirement, pensions, LDSB</i> | 2          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                              | <b>106</b> |

## 6.2 Complaints made against Provincial Governments and HCC

| <b>Complaint made against Provincial Govt/Authorities from July 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2020</b> | <b>Count of Case File Number</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>2020</b>  |                                  |
| <b>Central Provincial Govt/ Authority</b>  | <b>2</b>                         |
| □ <i>allowances</i>  | 2                                |
| <b>Choiseul Provincial Govt/Authorities</b>  | <b>1</b>                         |
| □ <i>allowances</i>  | 1                                |
| <b>Guadalcanal Provincial Govt/ Authorities</b>  | <b>2</b>                         |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 2                                |
| <b>HCC</b>   | <b>7</b>                         |
| □ <i>claim for withdrawal, refund, outstanding payment, compensation, damages, etc</i>                         | 1                                |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>                               | 1                                |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 4                                |
| □ <i>holidays, leave</i>   | 1                                |
| <b>Isabel Provincial Govt/ Authorities</b>   | <b>1</b>                         |
| □ <i>appointment, probation, confirmation</i>  | 1                                |
| <b>Makira Ulawa Provincial Assembly</b>  | <b>1</b>                         |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 1                                |
| <b>Malaita Provincial Govt/ Authorities</b>  | <b>9</b>                         |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>                               | 1                                |
| □ <i>redundancy, retirement, pensions, LDSB</i>  | 1                                |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 4                                |
| □ <i>termination</i>   | 1                                |
| □ <i>redundancy, retirement, pensions, LDSB</i>  | 2                                |
| <b>Renbel Provincial Govt/ Authorities</b>   | <b>2</b>                         |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 1                                |
| □ <i>suspension</i>  | 1                                |
| <b>Temotu Provincial Govt/ Authorities</b>   | <b>1</b>                         |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 1                                |
| <b>Western Provincial Govt/ Authorities</b>  | <b>2</b>                         |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 2                                |
| <b>Complaint made against Provincial Govt/Authorities from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>  |                                  |
| <b>2021</b>  |                                  |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Choiseul Provincial Govt/Authority</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 1         |
| □ <i>allowances</i>  | 1         |
| □ <i>holidays, leave</i>   | 2         |
| <b>Guadalcanal Provincial Govt/Authority</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 1         |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 2         |
| □ <i>transfer, postings</i>  | 1         |
| <b>HCC</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 2         |
| □ <i>private matter / other</i>  | 1         |
| <b>Makira Ulawa Provincial Govt/Authorities</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 2         |
| □ <i>transfer, postings</i>  | 1         |
| □ <i>appointment, probation, confirmation</i>  | 1         |
| <b>Malaita Provincial Govt/Authorities</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| □ <i>unfair/Unprocedural conduct relating to visas, passports, permits, licenses, approvals, land-rights, etc (exc corruption and delay)</i> | 1         |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>   | 1         |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 4         |
| □ <i>work safety, compensation</i>   | 1         |
| <b>Renbel Provincial Govt/ Authority</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 1         |
| <b>Temotu Provincial Govt/ Authorities</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 3         |
| <b>Western Provincial Govt/ Authorities</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| □ <i>withholding letters, certificates, endorsement etc (exc employment)</i>   | 1         |
| □ <i>salary</i>  | 1         |
| □ <i>termination</i>   | 1         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   | <b>57</b> |

### 6.3 Complaints made against State-Owned Enterprises

| <b>Complaints made against State-Owned Enterprises from July 1<sup>st</sup> to December 30<sup>th</sup> 2020</b> | <b>Count of Case File Number</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>2020</b>  |                                  |
| <b>SI National Provident Fund</b>  | <b>2</b>                         |
| □ <i>Delay to process NPF withdrawal</i>   | 2                                |
| <b>SI National University</b>  | <b>2</b>                         |
| □ <i>allowances</i>  | 2                                |
| <b>Solomon Airlines</b>  | <b>1</b>                         |
| □ <i>work safety, compensation</i>   | 1                                |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Solomon Power   | 2         |
| □ <i>private matter / other</i>   | 2         |
| <b>Complaints made against State-Owned Enterprises from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Jun 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>                    |           |
| <b>2021</b>   |           |
| <b>SI National Provident Fund</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| □ <i>wrongful/illegal conduct by external party, failure to investigate, put to court, punish, etc (police, LCC, Pub Sol)</i> | 1         |
| □ <i>poor customer service, complaint handling, service delivery (inc delay)</i>  | 1         |
| <b>SI National University</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| □ <i>other</i>  | 1         |
| <b>Solomon Island Ports Authority</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| □ <i>redundancy, retirement, pensions, LDSB</i>   | 1         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>11</b> |



## **7 On-Going Issues—Systematic and Recurring Challenges**

This section provides analysis on the nature of complaints that the Ombudsman dealt with throughout the year. These complaints continue to pledge public services and the way in which services are delivered to the people. It is important that such matters are brought to the attention of the parliament.

### **7.1 Non-Employment-Related Complaints**

It is important to note complaints made against public bodies are either classified as non-employment related or employment related complaints. Non-employment related complaints covers a broad section of grievances affecting public bodies and range from issues like diversion of funds, fraud, corruption, compensation and so forth. These types of complaints account for 44% of the total complaints dealt with throughout the year. Below are some of the common types of non-employment complaints that continue to impede public service delivery.

#### **(i) Claims for Withdrawals, Refunds, Outstanding Payments, Compensation Damages and so Forth.**

Twenty-Five (25) complaints were registered against public bodies relating to these issues. These complaints made up for twenty-seven (27%) of non-employment related complaints received. Their prevalence among public bodies means that there is still ongoing public dissatisfaction with how public sectors deal with the wider public on matters relating to facilitating payments to individuals and service providers. This is an ongoing challenge that shows either reluctance of public officers to honestly deal with people or as deliberate act with intention. It is important to remind public officers to take necessary steps to ensure that whatever services provided to the people must be to satisfactory standard. Turning blind eyes to these issues can be seen as negligence of entrusted duties on public offices.

#### **(ii) Poor Customer Service and Complaint Handling.**

These complaints made up for majority of complaints received in the year. A total of thirty-five (35) complaints. This makes up for thirty-eight percent (38%) of the non-employment related complaints received. These complaints include poor customer service, poor complaint handing, poor record keeping, and poor service delivery. These grievances issues continue to plunder government services over the years and it is important to highlight that serving the needs of the public should be a paramount task

for public officers. To do otherwise will continue to hamper public service delivery and breed mistrust among the people.

**(iii) Fraud and Corruption**

Issues relating to diversion of funds, fraud and corruption falls outside of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. However, such complaints have continued to be registered with the Ombudsman. This year has seen a slight increase of such complaints from last year. A total of five (5) fraud and corruption related cases are registered. These cases were outside of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction and are referred to relevant institutions to deal with. The Ombudsman plays a very important role in strengthening public institutions to reduce the sporadic spreading of these types of complaints.

**(iv) Unfairness Relating to Awards of Scholarships, Grades, College Admission etc.**

It is a common trend that there is unfairness relating to awarding of scholarships, grades, college admissions and so forth. This year the Ombudsman received three (3) cases of this nature. Although this is minimal it is important to note that pursuing better education is crucial for development of Solomon Islands. As such, there is a vital duty of assisting the public with fairness and justice. Public officers manning institutions that look after the education aspirations and wellbeing of our people must be vigilant and ensure that they perform their duties with diligence.

**(iv) Issues relating to Visas, Passports, License etc.**

Five (5) related cases were registered this year. These cases involved unfair/Unprocedural ..... conducts relating to visas, passports, permits, licenses, approvals and land rights. The persistence of these issues points to the continuous challenges faced by those working in respective institutions that is responsible for delivering services to the public. These kinds of shortcomings continue to nurture grievances and public mistrust of government institutions.

**7.2 Employment-Related Complaints**

Complaints relating to employment grievances are registered the highest this year. A total of one hundred and nineteen (119) is registered. This is fifty-six percent (56%) of the total

complaints received. This is a slight decrease from one hundred and twenty-four (124) employment related cases registered last year.

Employment related complaints capture several important issues relating to the welfare of employees. These include salaries, allowances, transfers, postings, appointments, probations and confirmations, suspensions, terminations, redundancies and disciplinary processes, to list a few. Below is a summary of the different types of employment-related complaints registered.

**(i) Salary**

Salary-related grievances record the highest number of employment related complaints. A total of forty-three (43) complaints are registered. Salaries of employees working for public bodies is essential to their daily survival and the prevalence of such complaints borders on negligence as well as challenges in the way public bodies dispense salaries of public officers. It is important to remind public officers to improve the way they deal with salary issues.

**(ii) Redundancy, Retirements, Pensions and LDSBs**

This year thirteen (13) complaints were registered on grievances relating to redundancy, retirements, pensions and Long and Dedicated Service Benefits (LDSB). These complaints were commonly raised by retirees who have already done their service and are leaving. Among these complaints are those relating to lost files and no proper records keeping in the public sector. These has become common over the years and demands for vigilance and efficiency in dealing with records of serving officers. Another employment related complaints that persist in the reporting year relates to redundancy, retirement, pension and Long and Dedicated Service Benefits (LDSBs). It is also important that officers who have dedicated their time and service for over a long period of time should be rewarded accordingly rather than they have to come and raise complaints about their payments.

**(iii) Terminations**

Grievances relating to claims of unfair termination are registered almost every year.

This year a total of eight (8) termination related complaints are registered.

It is important that disciplinary issues relating to public officers be dealt with in accordance with relevant guiding rules and regulations. It is also important to ensure that ‘natural justice’ is served before making decisions that will harm not only the

officers involved but also their families. To not do so is bad administration, pure and simple. It is important that due diligence be taken when making such hefty decisions that can destroy people's socio-economic well-being.

**(iv) Other Employment-Related Complaints**

Employment-related complaints vary in substance and depth. While salary- and termination-related complaints are highlighted above, there are others, related to allowances, transfers and postings, suspensions, appointments, probations, confirmations, and work safety and compensation that are also prevalent. Others include, holidays and leaves, housing, complaint-handling, promotions and demotions. The nature and substance of these different types of complaints vary across public officers, but their persistence in the public sectors speaks volumes, and public officers must be consistent and diligent when dealing with such issues in the government sectors.

## **8 Our Administration**

### **8.1 Operations**

The Office of the Ombudsman is headed by the Ombudsman. It is divided into five working units. See Appendix 1 for details of the OOSI organisational structure. The five working units are: Secretarial Services, Corporate Services, Research & Communication, Legal, and Investigations.

The Secretarial Services Unit provides executive support to the Ombudsman via the Executive Personal Secretary, and mans the front desk through the receptionist.

The Corporate Services Unit provides administrative support to the Ombudsman's Office. It is headed by the Chief Administration Officer (CAO) assisted by the Principal Administration Officer (PAO) and a Senior Accountant. This unit also looks after the office driver and the security staffs.

The Research & Communication Unit is headed by a Director, who is supported by a Principal Research Officer and a Senior Training and Public Relations Officer (STPRO). At the moment the position of Director is still vacant. The unit is responsible for matters relating to awareness and advocacy, drafting office reports, outreach programs, training and public relations matters. The unit also manages and monitors the CMS database and provides monthly and other report updates.

The Legal Services Unit provides legal advice and assistance to the Office. It consists of the Director and the Legal Officer.

The Investigations Unit is divided into three teams. One deals with the complaint based investigation, another focuses on Own-Motion Investigation issues, and providing action recommendations. Each team is made up of three Senior Investigation Officers (SIOs) and is managed by a Principal Investigation Officer (PIO), except that the Receipt and Assessment team has only one SIO. PIOs report to the Ombudsman via the Director of Investigations (DOI).

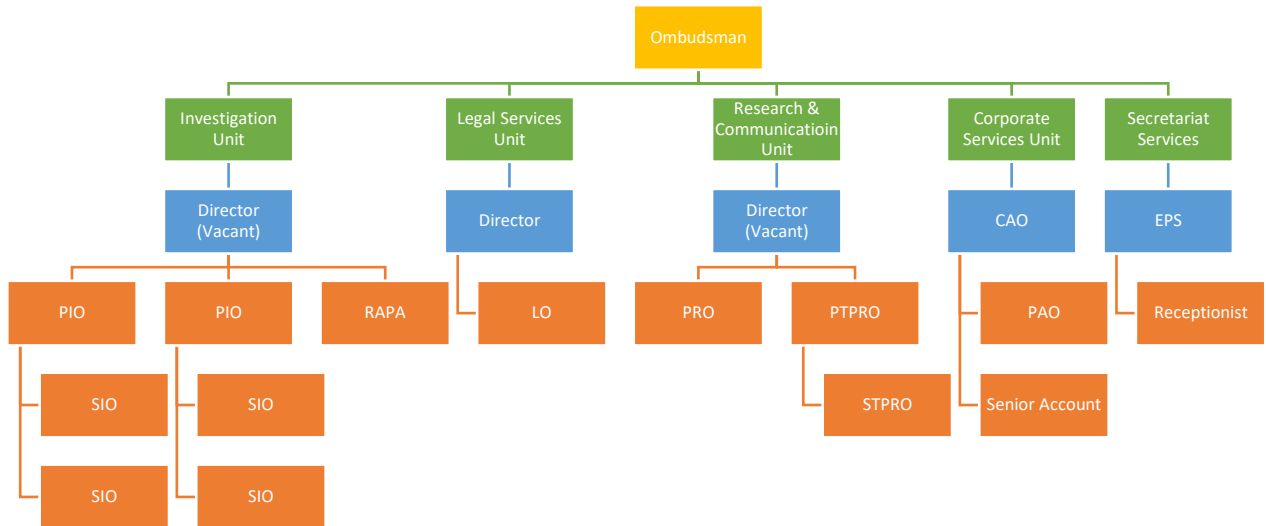
## **8.2 Decision-Making**

The Ombudsman is the ultimate decision-maker regarding the exercise of his powers and performance of his functions under Chapter IX of the Constitution, the Ombudsman Act 2017 and any other Act. However, his powers of authorisation and delegation under the Ombudsman Act enable his authorised staff, and he can delegate decisions in certain matters so that the work of the Office can move forward in a timely manner. To further enhance the OOSI's work, particularly regarding important administrative and welfare decisions, the Ombudsman has decided to operate through an Executive Team comprised of all the unit heads. The Ombudsman believes in teamwork and collective decisions and wants to see that senior management level personnel are part of crucial decisions that the Ombudsman's Office makes.

Below the Executive team sits the rest of the OOSI staff. Decisions made are often conveyed to the rest of the staff through the Office's general staff meetings. Where it is determined that it is urgent to convey information relating to some matter, it can be communicated via the SIG email network, or by way of written records or circulars.

## 9 Appendices

### 9.1 Appendix 1: The Current OOSI Organizational Structure



PIO—Principal Investigation Officer

SIO—Senior Investigation Officer

LO—Legal Officer

PRO—Principal Research Officer

PTPRO—Principal Training and Public Relations Officer

CAO—Chief Administration Officer

PAO—Principal Administration Officer

EPS—Executive Personal Secretary

(v)—Vacant position

**9.2 Appendix 2: Record of OOSI Officers Attending Training, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020—30<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

| No. | Name  | Types of Training   | Date   | Venue                              |
|-----|---|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 1   | Mr. Billy Kerepiniano, Mr. Nelson Dhita, Mr. Aaron Kodo and Mr. Nick Osifelo. | Certificate in English Grammar.   | September 2020                                     | Islands Bible Ministry             |
| 2   | Mr. Patteson Tomu and Mr. Aaron Kodo  | Zoom Call Training  | March 8 <sup>th</sup> 2021                         | IPAM                               |
| 3   | Mr. Nelson Dhita, Ms. Talei Mali, Mr. Rex Akomae, Mr. Patteson Tomu.          | Train the Trainer Course ( <i>Online Training facilitated by PDT, Australia</i> ).                  | 04/03 — 08/04/2021                                 | Isaac Qoloni House Conference Room |
| 4   | Mr. Fred Sean Topia and Mr. John Maelalia                                     | Diploma in Government Investigation training ( <i>provided online due to Covid-19 restriction</i> ) | 2021   | Isaac Qoloni House                 |
| 5   | Mrs. Susan Saelea   | Cleaning Knowledge and Skills   | 30 <sup>th</sup> March— 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021 | IPAM & SINU                        |
| 6   | Mr. Sammy Sui   | Essential Computer Basics   | 19 <sup>th</sup> — 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2021     | IPAM                               |



### **9.3 Appendix 3: Case Study of Common Systematic Issues.**

#### **9.3.1A Non-refund of Funds—SINU**

A complaint was lodged by a fourth year student who studying and residing at Solomon Islands National University (SINU) in 2020. The complainant was a government-funded student represented here as person Y. Y alleged that as a result of Covid-19 pandemic she was advised to live off-campus.

Y alleged that the decision was made to live off campus, she enquired with Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) about the meal and accommodation allowances in which she was advised by the MEHRD that those allowances should be paid to students, however, her allowances were already paid to SINU account.

Y on few occasions approached responsible officers within SINU finance section division about her allowance but continued to delay the payment. In August 2020 the complainant Y raised the issue with the Ombudsman and in November 2020 formally lodged her complainant for non-refund of meal and accommodation allowances.

The complainant was recommended for investigation in January 2021. In the same month the complainant has confirmed that SINU has already reimburse her allowances in early January 2021, hence satisfied with the outcome.

- SINU had responded to the issue raised and has resolved the matter. The complainant has been paid her dues after the SINU finance has cleared what was due to the SINU for the periods Y lived on campus.
- Y is paid her allowances, matter is closed.

#### **9.3.1B Delay in Processing NPF withdrawal**

A complainant referred as Z lodged a complaint on regarding undue delay in processing his National Provident Fund (NPF) withdrawal. His complaint was registered on 01/09/20. Mr. Z resigned from work 10<sup>th</sup>/05/19 due to medical condition that caused him unfit to be on the job. Mr. Z submitted his NPF withdrawal application to the National Provident Fund early 2019 to no avail.

He later wrote to the General Manager NPF on 12/08/2020 about his concern but nothing was forthcoming.

On 28/10/20 the case was allocated to an Investigation Officer. A preliminary investigation was made forthwith.

An email regarding the status of the matter was sent to responsible officer at NPF and a response was made immediately.

On 23/11/20 another email from OOSI was again sent to SINPF stated the grounds that the applicant should have qualified for withdrawal under medical grounds with all necessary documents provided.

Respective officer(s) from SINPF responded the same day advising the complainant to resubmit his application as his first application has gone misplaced due to the huge number of applicants received by SINPF.

Mr. Z resubmitted his application and on 29<sup>th</sup>/03/21 a responsible officer from SINPF confirm that NPF payment to complainant Z has already been made on the 9<sup>th</sup>/03/21.

The matter is resolved and closed.