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## VISION

A responsible, transparent & accountable leadership and governmental bodies who are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people of Papua New Guinea.

## MISSION

Working in partnership with all leaders and governmental bodies to implement Section 218 of the Constitution:

- Ensure all governmental bodies are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the People;
- Help in the improvement of the work of governmental bodies to eliminate unfairness and discriminatory practices; and
- Help in the elimination of unfair and defective legislations and practices affecting or administered by the governmental bodies;
- Supervise the enforcement of Division III.2 – the (Leadership Code).

## VALUES

- ◇ Unity
- ◇ Impartiality
- ◇ Integrity
- ◇ Confidentiality
- ◇ Transparency
- ◇ Independence
- ◇ Professionalism



Outgoing Media Officer Joycelyn Wasas with the Media Unit and Secretary Joseph Molita during her farewell in January 2021. See Story Page 3.

# Chief calls for unity in oversight of public funds

Chief Ombudsman Richard Pagen called on the Department of Finance to ensure that the Non-Tax Revenue Administration Bill (NTRA Bill) provides oversight over all government agencies that use public funds.

Mr Pagen said this during the Consultative Workshop on the NTRA Bill conducted by the Department of Finance in March 2021. The Ombudsman Commission had written to the Secretary for Finance expressing its views on the *Non-Tax Revenue Administration Bill* in light of the ruling by the five men

Supreme Court on 27 May 2020 which nullified the *Public Money Management Regularization Act, 2017* (PMMR Act) after the Ombudsman Commission challenged the constitutionality of the PMMR Act through a Section 19 Reference.

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## Elementary school teacher get final pay after OC complaint

An Elementary School teacher in the National Capital District was paid his final entitlement of K8391.24 after the Ombudsman Commission intervened in his case. The teacher lodged his complaint with the Ombudsman Commission after waiting for nearly a year for his final entitlements which were unreasonably delayed by the Department of Education and the Teaching Services Commission. The Teacher retired in 2019 on medical grounds as recommended by his doctors. His letter to the NCD Education Services was supported by rele-

vant documents including the medical reports as required before his final entitlements could be paid. Although the teacher was assisted by the Teaching Services Commission, his final entitlements were unreasonably delayed until the Commission intervened.

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## Chief Ombudsman calls for a more inclusive fiscal policy



Chief Ombudsman Richard Pagen

The Commission called for greater participation through meaningful consultation under Section 255 of the *Constitution* that, consultation in the development of laws must be meaningful by allowing for a genuine interchange and consideration of views.

The Commission's main concern on the NTRA Bill is that the Non-Tax Revenue Administration Committee

is created contrary to Section 209 of the *Constitution*.

Only Parliament can decide how public funds are appropriated, to have a statutory committee determining the use of public funds is against the spirit of the *Constitution*.

Mr Pagen, thanked the Government for its efforts in ensuring there is better oversight into the use of public funds by government agencies through the NTRA Bill and assures its participation in the consultation

## editorial

Greater accountability for public funds is a must in Papua New Guinea.

The ongoing misuse and misapplication of funds in many levels of governance is a concern.

A more concerted effort by all government agencies is needed to maintain accountability and transparency over the use of public funds.

Any moves by the current government to increase oversight of public funds especially in areas where public monies are used in government investments should be supported.

At the same time new laws that seemingly target some agencies unfairly but give a 'free pass' to others should not be entertained.

All laws should be in harmony with the other existing laws and most importantly the *Constitution*.

When drafting such over-arching laws to oversee public funds, questions that come to mind should include:

- Whether statutory bodies that make their own revenue should be treated the same as those who are basically spenders.
- Whether emergency agencies like NAQIA and Customs should maintain and control certain portions of funds to use as and when required.
- Whether SOEs should be accountable for the allocated government funding.

Another question that needs to be asked is whether we need a new law or whether we should amend existing laws to cater for current needs. One of the existing laws is the Public Finances Management Act.

Another consideration would be to amend the existing laws governing each government agency to bring greater accountability over the use of public funds.

These are issues that needs to be carefully considered by the Department of Finance during consultations in drafting such laws.

All-in-all the introduction of the Non-tax Revenue Administration Bill is welcomed and the questions raised by agencies concerned must be taken into consideration for drafting the bills to ensure fairness and justice for all government agencies and the people of Papua New Guinea.



# New officer joins policy and planning team

**T**he Commission welcomed Ninipe Gurumo to its Policy and Planning Unit in January 2021.

Ninipe joined the Commission after having previously worked for the Constitutional Law Reform Commission.

Ninipe is a graduate of the University of Papua New Guinea, with a Bachelor in Business and Management majoring in Strategic Management.

Ninipe worked with CLRC for five years after graduating from university. Ninipe, from Morobe Province, also has a Diploma in Economic and Public Policy from National Research Institute and brings to the Commission a wealth of experience in the field of policy and strategic management.



**Ninipe holds the Bible to declare the Oath of Secrecy.**

## Departing Media Officer thanks OC

**T**he Ombudsman Commission released Joycelyn Wasas, who served as the Commission's Publication Officer in its Media Unit for 10 years

Joycelyn joined the Commission with a Diploma in Communications Arts from the Divine Word University.

During the course of her employment she completed her degree in Communication Arts at the same university.

In her parting remarks Joycelyn said it has been 10 memorable years working with the Commission.

"I would be forever grateful to the Ombudsman Commission for the experience and for contributing in one way or the other to the person that I am today – thank you."

She said she hopes that her contribution as a Media Officer has had impact on the work of the organization and the people of Papua New Guinea.



**Four officers were given their Deeds of Release from the Commission in February and March; clockwise from the top; Daphney Awono, Arlette Bola, Rodney Aroso and Ricky Nelson. The Commission wishes them all the best in their future endeavors.**



# A letter of gratitude to OCPNG

A female student who is currently doing Grade 11 at a secondary school wrote a heartfelt hand-written letter to the Chief Ombudsman to express her gratitude for the assistance she received from the Commission to retain her placing in that secondary school after she was unfairly denied her space by the education authorities for three years.

The student was in Grade 9 at the same school when she withdrew due to serious illness.

The school agreed that she would continue the following year to finish her Grade 9 when she recovered.

However, that was not the case when she tried to re-enroll. She was told she no longer had a space at the school.

In her letter, she told of the ordeal she and her parent had to go through to try to get her back to school having to contend with "corrupt officers" within the Education Department.

This forced her out of school for three years until 2019 when she decided to seek the Commission's help.

The Commission took up the matter on her behalf and successfully got her placing at the school.

The student has since successfully completed her Grade 10 and is now doing Grade 11.

In the letter she thanked the Ombudsman Commission for being the "watchful eyes of the nation, and for fighting for the rights of every citizens."

THE OMBUDSMAN COMMISSION  
P.O. Box 1831  
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NCD

Date: 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021

ATTENTION: THE CHIEF OMBUDSMAN

DEAR SIR/MADAM

SUBJECT: APPRECIATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTER

THE ABOVE IS FORWARDED TO YOUR HIGH OFFICE FOR YOUR FILE AND REFERENCE.

I AM A STUDENT HERE AT [REDACTED] AND WRITING TO YOUR OFFICE TO EXPRESS MY HEARTFUL APPRECIATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO THE COMMISSION AS WHOLE FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE AND ASSISTED ME THROUGH MY FIGHT FOR EDUCATION. SIR; I WAS WITHDRAWN FROM SCHOOL EARLY FIRST TERM OF 2016, BECAUSE OF ILLNESS [REDACTED] FROM THAT YEAR AFTER I WAS GIVEN OK BY THE DOCTORS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL. I STRUGGLED WITH MY DAD ENQUIRING AND SUBMITTING ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS NEEDED BY THE SCHOOL [REDACTED] AND NCD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO GET ME REEINSTATED BUT I WAS UNSUCCESSFUL AND IGNORED BY CORRUPT OFFICERS (BRIBERY) FOR 3 YEARS UNTIL 2019 I LODGED A COMPLAINT WITH YOUR OFFICE, THAT'S WHERE I WAS REPRESENTED BY YOUR OFFICE AND FOUGHT FOR MY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND WAS REEINSTATED BACK TO SCHOOL IN 2019.

RE: BECAUSE YOU ARE THE WATCHFUL EYES OF THE NATION, HONESTY AND COMMITMENT IN FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF EVERY CITIZENS, I AM NOW ADVANCING FURTHER, I SALUTE YOU, OMBUDSMAN COMMISSION.

TO CONCLUDE I HUMBLY THANK YOU WITH ALL MY HEART IN ASSISTING ME IN MY STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION AND REEINSTATING ME BACK TO CONTINUE MY SCHOOLING AND DONE IT THIS YEAR 2021 TO CONTINUE "I GRADE 11 (ELEVEN)

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