



Samoa Law & Justice Sector News

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1



April 2013

Inside This Issue

- 1 Message from Chair of the Samoa Law and Justice Sector Steering Committee
- 1 Welcome to new volunteers
- 3 Project Profile: SVSG Court Officer
- 4 Projects Update: Correctional Housing
- 6 Sector contact details
- 6 Upcoming Events

Our vision:

Justice for a safe and stable Samoa

Our mission:

Services to the community to promote, provide and protect access to justice for a safe and stable Samoa



Message from the Chair of the Samoa Law and Justice Sector Steering Committee

Welcome to the Samoa Law and Justice Sector quarterly newsletter!

The newsletter has been created in response to the findings in the Review Report on the Samoa Law and Justice Sector Plan 2008–2012 that the Sector should direct attention towards strengthening sector-wide ownership of projects and communicating Sector successes and performances.

This newsletter is part of the Sector's first Communication Strategy and Policy, aimed at improving communications between sector agencies and with the community and increasing public awareness of services provided by the Sector.

Each quarter the newsletter will provide an update on Sector projects and activities. It will be distributed to the Sector's agencies and affiliated organisations, and to any other organisations and individuals who have subscribed to this free publication.

Overall, by developing the communications capacity of the Sector we will strengthen the governance of the Sector and the Secretariat.

Ming C. Leung Wai

Attorney General and Chair of the Sector Steering Committee

New Aussie Volunteers in the Sector

Have you noticed some new faces in the Sector lately?

The Sector is pleased to welcome four new volunteers from Australia, who arrived in March as part of the Australian Volunteers for International Development program, an Australian Government, AusAID initiative.

Jessica Hyne is undertaking a 12-month assignment in Apia as an Office Management Advisor with the Samoa Law Society. In her role, Ms Hyne will support staff and build the capacity of the Samoa Law Society by developing office management systems, implementing communications strategies and providing ongoing mentoring for staff.

'I'm looking forward to having the opportunity to be engaged with an organisation that is interested in reforming and improving the way in which local citizens are able to seek justice, and strengthening community-level governance processes,' Ms Hyne said as she commenced her assignment.

Ms Hyne chose the role because it not only aligned with her professional

(continued on page 2)



The four Australians are volunteering as Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYADs). The AYAD Program is the youth stream of the Australian Volunteers for International Development program.

and academic experience, but also provides an avenue through which she believes that political, economic and societal inequalities might be redressed. **Kate Bradney** is spending 12 months working as an Information Management Trainer for the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development. Based within the division for Women, Ms Bradney will train staff in data collection and analysis, assist with report writing and program monitoring, and evaluate the division's existing databases and information management techniques.

She will be working towards developing a centralised database within DevInfo (the UN's database program) to monitor the division's key indicators of development and to improve the availability and validity of research data. Ms Bradney has previously worked for the Australian Government conducting socio-economic research throughout vulnerable regions of Australia.

Riza Dela Cruz and **Julia Maurus** are both working at the Samoa Law and Justice Sector Secretariat.

Ms Dela Cruz will be working closely with the Sector's Information and Communication Technology Committee to analyse current record keeping and information systems on Sector statistics. She will then design and develop a Centralised Statistics Database for the Sector before preparing a manual and providing training for staff.

Aside from her role as Information Technology Officer, Ms Dela Cruz helped out in April by leading the jazz exercise session, which is held twice a week for the staff of the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration.

As Communications Officer, Ms Maurus will assist the Sector to improve communications between the Sector agencies and with the community. Ms Maurus will develop a communication strategy and policy for the Sector, update website content, develop communications products (such as this newsletter), and train staff in these developments. She will also be working to increase awareness of the integration between customary and formal justice systems in Samoa.

The Sector is glad to have these four new volunteers to help us towards achieving the goals in the Sector Plan 2012–2016.



**Pictured: New volunteers (left to right)
Jessica Hyne, Julia Maurus, Kate
Bradney and Riza Dela Cruz.**



Project Profile: Personalised Support for Victims at Court

A Court Officer has been recruited to provide support and assistance to victims in the court system.

On 28 March 2013, the Attorney General on behalf of the Samoa Law and Justice Sector signed off on the appointment of a Samoa Victims Support Group (SVSG) Court Officer for 12 months. The Court Officer is now based at the Courts complex at Mulinu'u.

SVSG submitted the proposal for this project through SUNGO, the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Government Organisations Inc., which is represented on the Sector Steering Committee.

Following the approval of the project proposal in July 2012, the Office of the Attorney General drafted a contract for the Court Officer position. SVSG then worked to recruit the Court Officer, who will be available as a support person to victims of crime during the court process.

A non-government organisation, SVSG works to ensure that the victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse are well-supported, safe and in control of restoring their lives.

A portion of the Sector's funding is available to support initiatives of non-government organisations. Community groups can apply for project funding through SUNGO.

Pictured: The Attorney General, Ming C. Leung Wai, and the President of SVSG, Lina Chang, sign the 12-month contract for the appointment of a Samoa Victims Support Group Court Officer.





Projects Update: Steering Committee Site Visit to Olomanu Juvenile Centre, Mulifanua, and Tafaigata Women's Correctional Facility

Samoa's correctional facilities are underpinned by traditional justice systems in that detainees' families recognise the importance of rehabilitation

On 22 March 2013, the Steering Committee inspected progress on the construction of a new women's prison building at Tafaigata Women's Correctional Facility, and two new buildings at Olomanu Juvenile Centre.

The Olomanu Rehabilitation Centre Housing Project involves building two houses and repairing fences, while at Tafaigata buildings for female inmates are being constructed and include office space for prison staff as well as facilities for pregnant inmates who give birth while serving their sentences.

The Samoa Law and Justice Sector Steering Committee and Projects Sub Committee have monitored the progress of both Ministry of Police and Prisons housing projects through site visits, contract tenders, reporting and budget reviews. The projects are nearing completion.

Pictured: Steering Committee members and Sector staff at Olomanu Juvenile Centre.





Detainees participate in gardening, harvesting, and building and renovation projects. State-of-the-art prison security systems are not considered necessary in this environment. Indeed, Samoa's correctional facilities are underpinned by traditional justice systems in that detainees' families and communities recognise the importance of rehabilitation: families place a responsibility on detainees to serve their sentences before reintegrating.

As set out in the Sector Plan 2012–2016, the National Human Rights Institute is due to be established by 2014 and will form part of the Office of the Ombudsman. The National Human Rights Institute's mandate will include monitoring places of detention and confinement and making recommendations based on best practices with the aim of creating a safer society.

In this way, Samoa will continue to develop its justice systems into the future.



Pictured: Site inspections at Tafaigata Women's Correctional Facility (above) and Olomanu Juvenile Centre (below).



