

**DISCLAIMER**

This Report provides a brief of the Proceedings of Parliament on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019. While all efforts have been made to provide an informative brief, this information must not be relied upon as an alternative to the official Hansard record of proceedings of Parliament. If you have any specific questions about the Proceedings of Parliament on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

**DAY 5: Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**9:10am**

**I. PRESENTATION OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A total of three reports were tabled; 1 report from the Economic Sector Committee, and 2 reports from the Infrastructure Sector Committee

**II. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2018/2019 and APPROPRIATION BILL 2019/2020 - Debate on second reading (cont.)**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (cont.):**

**I. Afioga Hon SILI Epa Tuioti, Minister of Finance**

The Hon Minister addressed Parliament and began his response by acknowledging the efforts of the Ministry and all in public servants in preparation of the budget.

He noted that quite often he would attend different meetings and forums for foreign financial banks, such as the World Bank (WB), Asia Development Bank (ADB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and was pleased to note the feedback from these Foreign Banks and reserves, that Samoa stands at a high platform when dealing with financial reporting (budget preparation, planning and forecasting).

The Hon Minister also acknowledged the efforts of various people from the public service whom worked diligently to ensure the revenues generated and monies circulated in the economy of Samoa can sustain the different projects for the development of Samoa.

The Hon Minister elaborated on the total debt of Samoa SAT\$1.04billion which is approximately 41.2% of the GDP – and asserted that the Ministry continues to keep the debt below the 50% GDP ratio. The Hon Minister of Finance elaborated on the reasons for loaning/borrowing; the Hon Minister stated that it is Government's belief to acquire loans to implement the necessary

developments needed at the current cost it is today, than to wait for the next 10 years when the cost will be tripled. Furthermore, he mentioned the annual visits by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) whereby consultations are carried out on the progress of different projects and the financial stability of Samoa. The Hon Minister then touched upon Samoa's initiative to develop a long term plan for the next 20years titled 'Samoa 2040'

**i. Tofa OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East**

The Member queried the differences in figures provided by the Minister of Finance and those from the report of the IMF.

**Afioga Hon SILI Epa Tuiofi, Minister of Finance**

The Hon Minister informed the Member that the figures provided by the Ministry of Finance have been updated to better reflect Samoa's progress since March 2019. The Hon Minister addressed the appropriation for the Ministry of Education, to source Government's initiative for families with low income, to step-in and provide assistance in funding school fees to ensure the opportunity to gain quality education and to attain a tertiary education. Furthermore, the Minister spoke on on-going consultations between Samoa and the World Bank to secure funding for the Ministry of Health on issues of prevention and combating Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD's).

**Hon Prime Minister – Interjection**

The Hon Prime Minister interjected to clarify the issue raised by the Member of Salega East in regard to the differences of figures and explained that foreign Banks and reserves, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) visit Samoa for meetings and consultation on the various developments implemented in Samoa, and it is the Ministry of Finance together with heads of financial agencies in Samoa who provide the status quo 'update' on the figures and progress of Samoa's developments and financial stability; therefore the most accurate figures are those provided from the Ministry of Finance with the task to accurately update the figures for Samoa's overall debt, GDP, expenditure and revenues.

**Afioga Hon SILI Epa Tuiofi, Minister of Finance**

The Hon Minister continued his response with the issue of Samoa's contribution to regional projects, and stated that in terms of governance and political leadership in the region; Samoa contributes through the Pacific Islands Forum by continuous collaboration and consultation amongst pacific leaders to ensure a consensus is achieved and that development for the region is achieved. The Hon Minister also spoke on another strategy taken by Government to cut costs in purchasing Government vehicles – as it was noted that only by way of placing a bulk-order can the Government receive a discount from the car dealer/company. Therefore the Government has now set a stipulated timeframe (bi-annual) for the purchase of vehicles for all its Ministries/Offices and Agencies.

The Hon Minister also encouraged Government Ministries and Offices to use their respective websites for advertisements, notices and especially when calling for bids/tenders to ensure hefty costs spent on advertisement with TV, radio, newspaper, and other media outlets are reduced.

**Tofa OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East**

The Member noted the costs of using internet, and queried the status of Samoa's National Broadband as this would have been another effective mode to cut costs/spending if the administration and operation of the Broadband was effectively carried out.

**Afioga Hon SILI Epa Tuioti, Minister of Finance**

The Hon Minister acknowledged the Member's query and responded on behalf of the Minister for Communication and Information Technology who was away on a conference. The Hon Minister for Finance informed the Member for Salega East that the operations and monitoring of the Broadband was privatised to the Computer Services Limited Company, however there were certain unresolved issues which has led the broadband to be administered by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.

The Hon Minister continued by conveying thanks to the Members who expressed support for the 5-storey building project planned to be built in Savalalo. Hon SILI noted the importance of the private sector in the development of the nation and commended the contribution of the local Public Trading Bodies (SNPF, UTOS and SLAC) who will provide funds to source the construction of this 5-storey building. The Hon Minister also emphasised the importance of providing opportunities for our local construction companies to be part of this project.

The Minister touched upon the issue of road developments requested by various Members and stressed that funds are placed on the prioritised developments, such as the roads which lead to public hospitals/clinics or schools to ensure safe transportation of patients and students to and fro. The Minister stated that inspections are usually conducted to determine the priority level of the development requested.

**II. Afioga Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Seigafolava Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Revenue**

The Hon Minister noted that for the current financial year 2018/2019, the Ministry was expected to collect revenues amounting to \$539 million. He then mentioned the developments within the Ministry and stated that the Ministry for Revenue is currently awaiting a new x-ray machine to cater for the Fagalii Airport, as well as a high-tech scan for the Ministry's border control to ensure packages, boxes, and containers brought into Samoa are easily scanned to identify whether the contents are legible in the country.

The Hon Minister also commented on the status of the new Prisons at Tanumalala, and informed the House that the project will be completed by the end of the month.

### III. Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA Kika Iemaima Stowers, Minister of Health

The Hon Minister greeted the members of Parliament and respective Ministries for their work, she also acknowledged the Clerk and his staff for their commitment. She then greeted O Le Ao o le Malo and Council of Deputies and concluded with her constituency in their honorific salutation and commended on their continuous support and endless prayers.

The Hon Minister commended the former Minister of Health (Hon TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama) for his efforts and contribution to the Ministry, as well as the Associate Minister. She then extended appreciation towards the Doctors Society for their support.

The Hon Minister explained that in her inspections and visits to the clinics and health centres around Samoa, she and the Ministry have noted countless needs in terms of proper resourcing of the clinics with necessary equipment and medications for basic treatment. She further identified the need for general upgrade and improvements on the facilities as well as the storage rooms required for the safe keeping of medication and vaccines. There was also a need for a CT scan at the Tuasivi Hospital.

She then touched upon the importance of strengthening prevention projects in the communities and to increase awareness for healthy living for the general public. Furthermore the Hon Minister explained the efforts of the Ministry to prioritise Health Centres 'Komiti Tumama' in the communities.

The Hon Minister also addressed the issues raised by Members regarding the shortage of doctors in rural clinics, and asserted that the Ministry continues to distribute doctors for each clinic to avoid lengthy travels for patients, and sought their patience and prayers while the Ministry seeks funding and assistance from donor nations to ensure the requests and necessary improvements and developments can be implemented. The Hon Minister concluded by informing the House that the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are currently in consultation with the Government of Samoa for funding to upgrade the Hospitals in our country.

**Proceedings were set aside at 10:40am**  
**Proceedings reconvened at 11:35am**

**IV. Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE Niko Lee Hang, Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Hon Minister acknowledged the budget compiled by the Ministry of Finance and commended the work carried out by the Finance and Expenditure Committee for their committee report on the tabled budget. He explained that an inspection was conducted on the Manono Tai wharf and identified the poor condition of the Manono Uta wharf.

The Hon Minister addressed the issues raised and requests made by respective Members and noted that the majority of requests were for road repairs/maintenance, road reconstruction, installation of light posts, the connection of water supply, and the need for the development of a wharf for Savaii. He also emphasised to the Members that all requests should be put forward to the Ministry to ensure it is included in the list of scheduled inspections.

The Minister informed the House on the developments of the Ministry such as:

- reconstruction of the roads for Aleisa;
- Cabinet established task force to report on the feasibility of the merge between the Maritime studies of National University of Samoa and the Samoa Shipping Corporation;
- The Japanese Government through JICA has donated USD\$23million to fund a replacement vessel for Lady Naomi which caters for the route to American Samoa;
- Currently consultations are on-going by the Samoa Ports Authority (SPA) on the Asau Wharf on the best avenue to take on the development of the Asau wharf;
- the re-shuffle of duties between LTA and the Ministry of Police (the Prime Minister has responded and clarified on the matter, and therefore the issue need not be readdressed);
- the Vaisigano Bridge costs \$43million from the Japanese Government and this project will be complete in the year 2020;
- 850,000 also donated from the Australian Government for development of roads;
- SAT\$8.6million from the World Bank for the Maliolio bridge in Savaii;
- Phase 2 of the road reconstruction project will continue from Malua to Faleolo (negotiations will be conducted in December 2019 for the implementation of this phase)

**i. Tofa LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Associate Minister of Communication and Information Telecommunication**

The Member reminded the Minister on the need for road repairs and reconstruction for the access roads in Falelauniu; and queried the Minister on the frequency of power outage – what was causing this?

**ii. Afioga LEANA Ronnie Posini, Member for Safata West**

The Member raised the issue of water bills for schools; noting that the schools are currently on the same rate as businesses - the member therefore queried whether schools should be on a lesser rate to lessen costs on village schools.

**Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE Niko Lee Hang, Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Hon Minister asserted that the reconstruction of roads for Aleisa is currently in the list of reconstruction works in the next financial year. The Hon Minister assured the Member for Safata West that the issue will be taken into consideration as schools should be on a separate rate from businesses.

**iii. Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tuivilili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East**

The Member raised the need for seawalls in his constituency.

**Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE Niko Lee Hang, Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Hon Minister informed the Member that the Ministry of Works deals with seawalls near the public roads, while the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment deal with seawalls required for the safety of families and the constituency in general. He then asserted that the Ministry will look into the request to determine who the responsible Ministry to deal with it.

The Hon Minister addressed the road decorations by the Communities and advised the Village Fono to monitor these decorations so as to avoid the troublesome youths from damaging Government's initiative.

**V. Afioga Hon SALA Fata Pinati, Minister of Tourism**

The Hon Minister acknowledged the efforts of the Hon Prime Minister in bringing the signing of the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) - Samoa Pathway to Samoa. He then touched upon the total number of visitors into Samoa last year – a total of 172,496. The Hon Minister also acknowledged the funding from the Governments of New Zealand and Australia for the Waterfront project near completion.

**VI. Afioga Hon TUITAMA Talalelei TUITAMA, Minister of Women, Community and Social Development**

The Hon Minister greeted the members and acknowledged the Office of the Clerk and Government Ministries. He then acknowledged his constituency for their continuous support.

The Hon Minister addressed the three members who raised concerns and put forward matters regarding his Ministry, and asserted the Ministry has taken note of these issues. He then explained the legislations which mandate the Ministry in performing its services and roles, such as the Ministry of Women Affairs Act 1990; the Ministerial and Departmental Arrangement Act 2003; the Village Fono Act 2007; and others.

The Hon Minister also informed the House on the development projects and initiatives which the Ministry was promoting; such as the weaving of traditional '*measina*' for Samoa that is, our ie-Samoa. He elaborated on the different methods used by the women of the 'falelalaga group' when weaving Samoa's fine mats (using the needle – or the wings of the rhinoceros beetle).

**VII. Afioga Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour;  
Public Enterprise; Samoa Land Corporation.**

The Hon Minister addressed the House and all of Samoa. He acknowledged the Members who raised issues regarding the Ministries in his portfolio and asserted that the issues have been noted. The Hon Minister then spoke on the minimum wage and informed the House that a consultant will commence work in July 2019 to look into the feasibility of lifting the minimum wage from \$2.30

The Hon Speaker interjected to inform the Hon Minister that proceedings will be set aside until the next sitting day.

**Proceedings adjourned at 1:00pm; and  
reconvene at 9:00am on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019**