



**OCTOBER  
2014**

This Infosheet is the sixth in a series produced by the OCLA to explain the work of the Legislative Assembly of Samoa

Other Infosheets in the 2014 series include

7. Parliamentary Documents
8. System of Government
9. Opening of a New Parliament
10. Parliamentary Publications
11. The Chamber
12. Privilege

Infosheets on a range of topics will be added to this series in the future

Available online at [www.parliament.gov.ws](http://www.parliament.gov.ws)



## 6. PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

### THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK



The Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (OCLA) Staff 2014

#### VISION

“The Office of the Clerk will be a model service provider in the Pacific through the delivery of excellent services to Parliament and Stakeholders”

#### MISSION

“To engage and sustain Parliamentarians and the Community with professional Parliamentary advice and support services”

The Office of the Clerk (OCLA) is Parliament’s Secretariat and is mandated in both the Constitution and the Standing Orders of Parliament. It offers support services to Members of Parliament through the provision of procedural advice and administrative support. It includes the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and officials who work together to ensure that Parliamentarians are given effective support so that they may properly fulfil their parliamentary responsibilities. This Infosheet describes the services the OCLA provides to both parliamentarians and the public.

### SERVICES

OCLA consists of various divisions all of which have diverse but interconnecting functions and responsibilities. The official launching of the OCLA Corporate Plan 2013 – 2015 ushered in a reshuffling of the existing organisational structure to ensure the office achieves its vision and mission. There are now three main branches of the OCLA as will be detailed below.

## **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES GROUP**

The procedures group focuses on supporting Parliamentary sittings and Select Committee hearings and is headed by the Clerk. It consists of three Offices; Chamber and Procedure, Parliamentary Committees and Legal and Research. Together, these they provide administrative support and procedural advice during Parliamentary and Committee sittings in various ways.

### ***Chamber and Procedure Office***

The CPO provides the necessary administrative and secretarial support to members before, during and after sittings. They are responsible for preparing all parliamentary papers received by the OCLA for tabling such as bills, committee reports, government responses and Ministry and Corporation documents. Other functions of the office include the scrutiny and review of member questions, petitions, motions, divisions, instructions and rulings, chamber support and the sale of Acts. The Bills & Acts section is a sub-branch of the CPO and is responsible for the final editing of bills and regulations before their introduction into the House.

### ***Parliamentary Committees Office***

Parliamentary Select Committees perform an integral role in the overall scheme of parliament whereby they scrutinize proposed legislation and tabled reports and make recommendations to the Assembly. The PCO provide advisory and secretariat services to these Committees. The office is also responsible for coordinating Committee visits, hearings, and the management of submissions and preparation of Committee reports to Parliament.

### ***Legal and Research Office***

A relatively new Office, the LRO was established to provide support to members and the OCLA in the form of legal and research services. At present it is focused on providing research briefs to Committees and the Clerk to support their scrutiny of bills and annual reports. As the office gains momentum it will gradually extend its research services and begin its legal services which are to include independent legal advice to the Speaker and the Clerk as well as the drafting of bills.

## **PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT GROUP**

As with any organisation, its success depends greatly on the effectiveness of its resources. The Parliamentary support group oversee the internal components of the OCLA mainly in terms of its human and financial resources. This group is headed by the Clerk.

### ***Institutional Strengthening Division***

The focus of the IS division is on efficient management of the offices' human resource in terms of recruitment and capacity development. It is responsible for setting office policies and strategies and coordinates appropriate training programmes for both staff and members to address existing skills gaps. IS also publish reports on the offices' overall performance.

## ***Finance and Administration Support Services & Facilities Management***

FAS oversee the financial side of the office. It ensures all divisions are allocated sufficient funds for resources and activities. It also manages finances for member allowances and parliamentary activities coordinated by the office. Facilities Management ensure that office buildings, including the Maota and parliamentary grounds are secure and properly maintained.

## **PARLIAMENTARY INFORMATION GROUP**

As the group's name suggests, these divisions are responsible for the provision of information which circulate within the OCLA, amongst members and to the public. This also includes information technology systems and support. It performs an integral role in parliament and is headed by the Deputy Clerk.

### ***Community Relations Office***

The CRO are responsible for educational and awareness programmes for the public. Their aim is to enhance public awareness of the roles of both parliament and its secretariat. This is achieved through educational programmes such as Open Days, Youth programmes, information pamphlets and media promotion of the work of parliament.

### ***Information Management Services Division***

IMS are the technological backbone of parliament and its secretariat. They are responsible for the installation and maintenance of all information technology systems used within the office and oversees the parliament website. They also offer technical advice and support to address any technological issues raised by members and secretariat staff. IMS also manage the Parliamentary Archives and Library.

### ***Reporting and Printing***

Parliamentary debates are recorded and transcribed for archival purposes. The reporting and printing division are responsible for recording, editing and publishing parliamentary publications such as the Hansard and parliamentary Journals. They are also responsible for publishing parliamentary papers, publications and secretariat documents such as Acts and Samoa Regulations, bills and parliamentary reports.

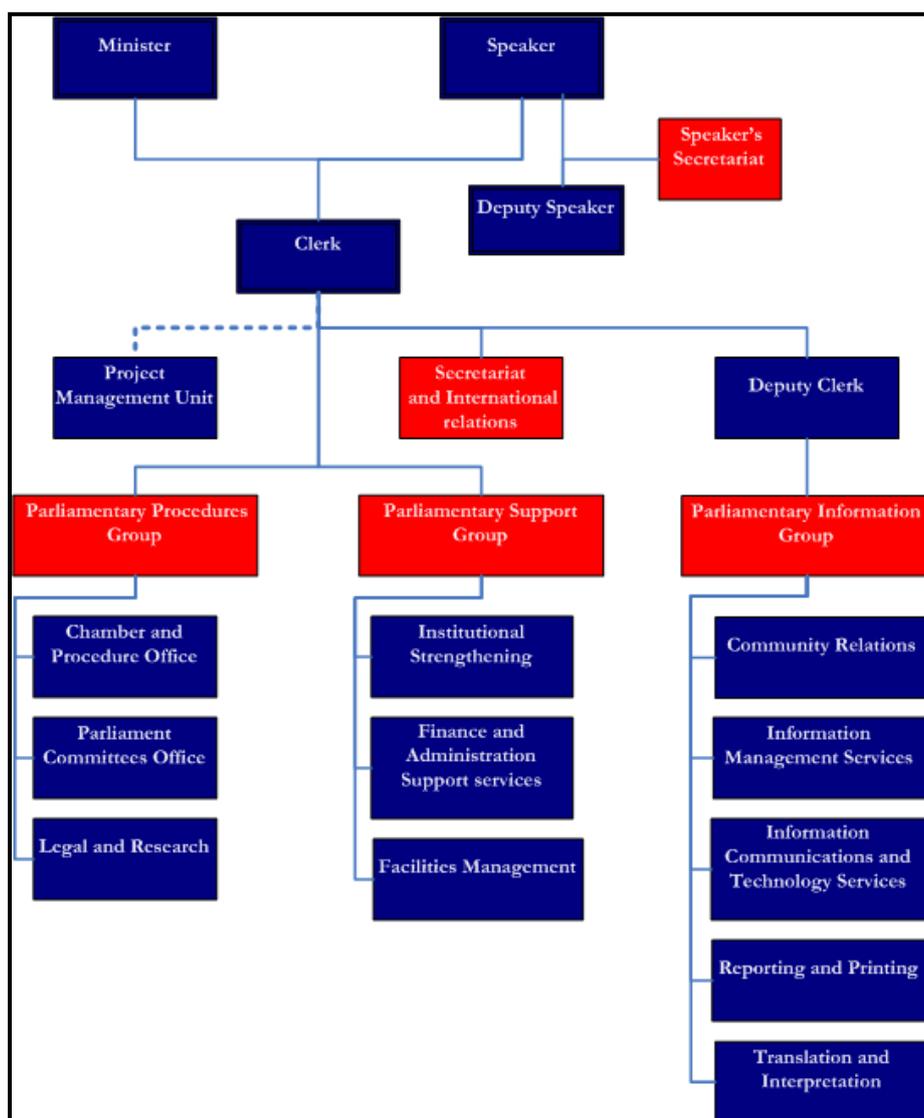
### ***Translation and Interpretation***

The official language of the Parliament is Samoan; however, almost all information recorded and published is also available in English. The Translation and Interpretation division is responsible for the translation of bills and other executive documents from English to Samoan. They are also tasked with the translation of OCLA documents for members, staff and the public. During parliamentary sittings, interpreters simultaneously translate proceedings into English inside the Chamber.

## PERMANENT OFFICERS

At the core of the OCLA are two permanent officers of the Legislative Assembly who hold senior non-political roles, namely the Clerk and Deputy Clerk. Their roles are integral to the ongoing functioning of the Legislative Assembly and Parliament. They are responsible for the coordination and management of the OCLA in its administrative and secretarial services to the Speaker and Parliament. Aside from the main branches of the office that they are responsible for, they also oversee the Secretariat and International Relations offices. The Secretariat office provides direct administrative support to both the Clerk and Deputy Clerk whereas the International Relations office liaises with overseas parliaments. They also strive to ensure that all work of the OCLA is carried out in alignment with the guiding values of *impartiality, parliamentary expertise, integrity, accuracy and efficiency, respect.*

OCLA ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



### MORE INFORMATION:

The Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa

The Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Samoa, 2010  
Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Samoa Corporate Plan 2013 -2015  
Infosheet No.1, 'The Legislative Assembly of Samoa', OCLA 2013  
Legislative Assembly of Samoa website: [www.parliament.gov.ws](http://www.parliament.gov.ws)