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

Infosheets in the 2014 series include

6. Parliamentary Services
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Infosheets on a range of topics will be added to this series in the future

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9. OPENING OF A NEW PARLIAMENT

THE FIRST MEETING OF A NEW PARLIAMENT

A single Parliamentary term is for five years to coincide with Samoa's general elections. Once elections are complete and new members of Parliament have been elected, an official ceremony is conducted to commemorate the first day of the new Parliament. The date and time of the first meeting of a new Parliament is determined by *Le Ao o le Malo* who issues a proclamation to this effect. The proclamation is read out by the Clerk to the Assembly which also informs members of *Le Ao o le Malo's* wish that a member be elected as Speaker of the House. Prior to this election, the Clerk formally announces the names of the elected members and lays this list on the table.

ELECTION OF A SPEAKER

The Speaker's primary function during Parliamentary sittings is to preside over the House by chairing debates and ensuring order and decorum are observed by both members and strangers who are in attendance. The importance of the Speaker's role as Chair of the Assembly means that the election for Speakership is the first order of business after formalities. With the Clerk presiding, members put forward their nominations with the restriction that nominees must not be a Government Minister. If a single nomination is put forward, that member will be declared Speaker elect; however, if more than one nomination is put forward, the member with the most votes will become Speaker.

Once elected, the Speaker then takes the Chair and the mace is laid on the the Table to signify that he or she will now officiate over the House. After the Speaker presents him or herself to *Le Ao o le Malo* for confirmation and having taken and subscribed to the Oath of Allegiance, the Speaker must then administer the Oath of Allegiance to each new member of the Assembly.

Election of a Deputy Speaker

Elections for a Deputy Speaker are held on the same day and in the same manner as the election of the Speaker. The role of the Deputy Speaker is to act on behalf of the Speaker in his or her absence; this includes both the Speaker's procedural and administrative roles. The rules which govern the election of both Speaker and Deputy Speaker are outlined in the Standing Orders, with the successful nominees being the two members with the majority of votes cast.



Tofa Agafili Patisela Eteuati Tolovaa, Deputy Speaker of the XVth PARLIAMENT

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

Before any member may undertake their duties as a Parliamentarian, they must first take and subscribe to the Oath of Allegiance. The Speaker first recites to the Assembly the 'Code of Parliamentary Ethics' before calling upon members to present themselves in groups at the Table to take and subscribe to the Oath and to sign the Oath form. The requirement that all members take and subscribe to the Oath of Allegiance is laid out in both the Constitution and the Standing Orders.

THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

"I,...., swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Independent State of Samoa, and that I will justly and faithfully carry out my duties as a Member of the Parliament of Samoa. So help me God."



New MP, Faimalotoa Kika Stowers-Ah Kau, being sworn in on 20th August 2014

WARRANT OF APPOINTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER



Prime Minister Hon Tuilaepa Aiono Sautia Lupesoliai
Neioti Sialele Malielegaoui has been in office since 1998

The Constitution states that *Le Ao o le Malo* shall appoint a Prime Minister to head the Government, however it must be a member who commands the confidence of the majority of Parliament. The Speaker reads out the Warrant of Appointment of the Prime Minister before the Assembly. This is followed by the Speaker's announcements upon which the Prime Minister will move a motion to adjourn proceedings.

PROCEEDINGS ON THE DAY OF STATE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

The proceedings of the second day of the meeting of a new Parliament is also prescribed for in the Standing Orders. On this day, the Prime Minister moves that proceedings be suspended; the Speaker reads a copy of *Le Ao o le Malo's* official speech for the opening of Parliament. This is a formal declaration of the calling together of the new Parliament and to acknowledge the success of the official opening ceremony. Once the speech is concluded a copy is laid on the table. Any business of the Assembly may then commence; Papers to be presented may be announced, reports may be made and bills may be first read.

MORE INFORMATION:

The Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa

The Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Samoa, 2010

Parliamentary Practice and Procedure Manual 2012, Legislative Assembly of Samoa

Infosheet No.1, *Legislative Assembly of Samoa*, OCLA 2013

Infosheet No.5, *Parliamentary Debate*, OCLA 2013

Legislative Assembly of Samoa website: www.parliament.gov.ws