

## **DISCLAIMER**

This Report provides a brief of the Proceedings of Parliament on **Wednesday 24 January 2024**. 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 **Wednesday 24 January 2024**, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

**Day 2  
9:30am**

### **I. ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

Mr Speaker greeted Parliament and reminded Members of the Standing Order provisions, specifically on points of interjection and that all Members should firstly seek the Speaker's approval before they interject.

### **II. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS**

The Clerk read out a total of 11 Parliamentary Papers presented to the Legislative Assembly;

2 – Government Responses

7 – Annual Reports

1 – By-Election Report

1 – Notice of Commencement on the ACC Amendment Act 2023

### **III. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills**

#### **1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 – debate of second reading (cont.) Day 2**

##### **1. Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tofa Tile, Member for Falelatai & Samatau.**

The Member greeted Samoa in all her honorific salutations, his fellow Parliamentarians and all who were present in Chamber. He also extended greetings to Samoa listening in and to his constituency then addressed specific Ministries in his address:

- Ministry of Finance

The member commended the Minister of Finance as well as all ministries that contributed in the preparation of the Supplementary Budget.

- Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure:

The Member requested for road repairs in his constituency especially during continuous rainfall where access roads, bridges and main roads have been hugely impacted.

- Minister of Health:

The Member reminded the Minister of his request for a hospital in his constituency to cater for his constituents.

- Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries:

Called for the responsible Minister that his constituency wishes to participate in the Talomua initiative but was not given a chance. The Member also noted that it has been 2 years since they have not participated in the Talomua project hence why they would like to be included in the next Talomua.

- **Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries – Interjection**

The Minister clarified to the Member that the Ministry does not decide when the Constituency will have its ‘first harvest’ as that is left to the constituency. The Hon Minister clarified that it is required to state the date, the year to grant their constituency and a project for Talomua. Further stated that there was no letter of request for their constituency and asserted that the \$5,000 funding has already been allocated for this.

**Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tofa Tile , Member for Falelatai & Samatau (cont.)**

- Minister of Women, Community and Social Development:

The member noted that one of villages in his constituency, (Matautu) has 2 pulenuu and 1 sui tamaitai, then a request was made for a second women representative (sui tamaitai). The Member also stated that since the beginning of this parliamentary term, they have not been able to employ and utilize their other women representative; and he asked if the Minister can look into this matter as there is work to be done in their constituency that requires her service.

- Minister of Finance:

The Member mentioned that the amount in foreign reserves for this budget (\$1.4 billion) is insufficient to fund the current budget and asserted that the execution of allocated funds and activities of the year does not reflect the value of the budget. He further noted that the inflation is high and it has impacted the cost of living. He emphasized on the utilization of unspent funds for respective ministries and government offices as he perceived that there were few ministries that recorded unspent funds from their budget and therefore encouraged all the ministries to use all

the funds allocated to them through the budget as it cannot be reserved once the Financial Year is finished. He expressed his bewilderment when discovering that the practice “rollover” existed.

- **Minister for Customs and Revenue:**

The Member requested to remove duty tax and VAGST on food products imported as the country heavily relies on these essential products for daily living, further noting that this would greatly assist our people considering the rising cost of living.

- **Electric Power Corporation:**

The Member commended the re-election of the CEO and raised concerns with the current financial position of the Corporation highlighting that it is broke. Further noted that the Corporation is paying a huge sum to the Government for their operations although they are also experiencing a huge loss; he then urged the Government for possible assistance to solve this issue and assist the Corporation.

- **Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister of MWTI - Interruption:**

The Minister clarified that the current price of electricity is from 2 years ago where the Government initiated a stimulus package of 20% to assist the country. After the 2 years, the Government decided to lift the 20% reduction off businesses, while families continued to enjoy this price reduction to make living more affordable. In addition, the Minister reminded the member for Falelatai and Samatau that the Corporation has long been broke and it is not a new issue.

Furthermore, the Hon Minister mentioned that approximately 75% power of EPC was bought from the solar company, then sold to the public for .63cents. He further elaborated that the Corporation was not fully prepared years back to counter the situations that we have now, and he mentioned that the corporation is still using hired generators for their operations, and this is such a huge expense for the corporation. The Minister then noted that we have 4 generators, on land, one in Savaii and 3 for Upolu, this can lessen other expenses of the Corporation.

- **Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Pierre Laufo – Deputy Opposition Leader - Interruption:**

The Member queried the Member for Falelatai and Samatau who was the former CEO of the EPC whether there was an accumulated profit earned by the Corporation before he resigned from his post as CEO, noting that he heard there was \$60 million in savings for EPC and also wanted to clarify whether this amount was accurate.

**Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tofa Tile , Member for Falelatai & Samatau (cont.).**

The member noted that before he left the position as CEO for EPC, there was approximately 60million accumulated profits however, now the Corporation has none.

- **Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister of MWTI - Interruption:**

The Hon Minister explained the term self-insurance and clarified that when the new government of the day took over there was about \$35 million under accumulated profit and further emphasized that this was during Covid19 and the government at the time has yet paid the tax returns for the Office. The Minister noted that the reason why there was so much accumulated savings before, it's because the former Government did not pay any tax returns in the past however, now the Corporation has just began paying for it. The member state, that in the past 20 years when the Government was under the previous Government's authority, The Government did not return the tax return of EPC, which is \$23 million that is now at EPC for their operation work.

**Mr. Speaker – Point of Order**

Mr. Speaker reminded the Members that once the Government (Ministers) responds, that is the final response, and the matter should not be deliberated again.

**Leader of the Opposition**

The Member asserted to the Speaker that the question made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was towards the Member of Falelatai & Samatau not the Minister.

**Mr. Speaker – Point of Order**

She asserted Members should heed the provisions of the Standing Orders that guide the proceedings advising the Members to refrain from interjecting without the approval of the Speaker.

**Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tofa Tile, Member for Falelatai & Samatau (cont.)**

The Member noted that in the Annual Report for EPC 21/22 recorded a deficit of 22million but still awaiting the Annual Report 22/23 for their figures.

- **Tofa Hon. OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister for MWTI – Interruption:**

The Hon Minister clarified that the 21/22 is due to the Stimulus Package that the government offered which has never been done before.

- **Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Tafito Selesele -Minister of MOH – Interruption.**

The Minister wanted clarification whether the question of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should be considered an interjection or not.

- **Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo – Deputy Opposition Leader.**

The Member clarified that he stood on a point of clarification and emphasized that it is clearly provided for in the Standing Orders that Members may stand to interject on two grounds; either to interrupt on a point of order or point of clarification.

**2. Afioga NIUAVA Eti Malolo, Member for Vaisigano 1**

The Member greeted all members in the Chamber, acknowledged government heads present, and the support from the Ao o le Malo and Council of Deputies as well as Samoa listening in and those tuning in from overseas. He then pursued to outline his constituency's requests from the Supplementary Bill.

- **Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture & Minister for Communication and Information Technology**

The Member raised the concerning issue of students having open-access to illegal websites due to the wifi available at schools. He demanded urgent action to address this issue as it poses alarming impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of students. The Member believes there is no teacher shortage in Samoa, however the Ministry must identify the underlying cause of teachers leaving for other employment, specifically the cause of the "drainage" (brain-drain) in the education sector. Afioga NIUAVA emphasized that the shortage of teachers is due to higher salaries offered elsewhere, attracting teachers to leave their teaching profession. He added on that the backbone of any country is having well educated youths and its people, and this should be our priority. Therefore, urging that salaries packages for teachers be increased to retain teachers and ensure our children's education and learning are in capable hands. He also suggested to utilize the WIFI and Internet in schools effectively by conducting virtual lessons to ensure we effectively use the infrastructure available in schools. For instance, if the science teacher at Samoa College can teach the lesson and have all other schools without science teachers connect to ensure students continue to learn and do not miss out or experience any delay in learning.

- **Hon Minister of Communication and Information Technology – Interjection**

The Hon Minister clarified that the school connectivity program has blocked all illegal sites to prevent students from accessing them, however the problem lies with other telecommunication service providers.

**Afioga NIUAVA Eti Malolo, Member for Vaisigano 1 (cont.)**

The Member further requested the Minister for MCIT to consider the issue of telecommunication coverage, as there is poor connection for certain areas in Savaii; noting its importance especially in hospitals.

- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

The member expressed gratitude to the Ministry for additional cows for their herds and acknowledged the refrigerator at the Asau Office for the fishermen to assist with keeping their catch safe and avoid being stale.

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

The Member reinforced the planting of trees on the side of the roads and rivers to act as barricades from landslides during torrential rainfall noting the impacts of deforestation. Furthermore, the Member reminded the country to refrain from dumping rubbish alongside the roads and concluded by wishing the Miss Samoa all the best as she prepares for the Miss South Pacific competition as she is from his Constituency.

The Member again echoed his concern regarding the language used on social media especially FB as it has affected leaders of this country, families and children. He then suggested banning these sites in our country. His main concern is protecting our children, the future generation of our country, as well as creating harmony and peace in our families and nation. He informed his constituency that the audit report for their fono faavae has been submitted to the relevant ministry, then sought their patience in waiting for the 1million fund from the Government.

### **3. Tofa MANULELEUA Paletasala Tovale, Member for Faleata 1**

The Member greeted the House and expressed his appreciation and support for the Supplementary budget, he then raised the following issues with specific ministers.

- Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture

The Member expressed concern with the limited space for classrooms in village schools for his constituency, noting that there are about 30 – 40 students in a class but not enough space in the classrooms. He therefore requested for more school buildings in his constituency to solve this issue as he noted the private schools are too expensive for parents, noting that the majority of parents choose Government schools for their children as it is affordable for parents.

- Ministry of Police

The Member touched on noise pollution which is still occurring especially with vehicles blasting their speakers around the town area. He asserted that it mostly occurs in the town areas where these people come and show off which affects the people in his constituency. He also raised the inconvenience caused when the police conduct their checkpoints during rush hour, causing unnecessary long queues on the roads. He emphasized that he is not trying to undermine the importance of the work carried out by the police, however there are appropriate times that these checkpoints can be conducted.

**Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were set aside at 10.50am;  
and resumed at 11:22am**

**Tofa MANULELEUA Paletasala Tovale, Member for Faleata 1 (cont.).**

The Member raised the issue of drugs, most especially the delay of the scanner for MCR. The Member also acknowledged the clarification provided by the Ministry but emphasized the issue was that most of the drugs found during the raid are produced in the country which he advice to look into.

He then conveyed his gratitude to the Ministry for monitoring these drug dealers and suggested for the Ministry of Health to monitor the pharmaceuticals to see whether some of the drugs are smuggled in through the pharmacy supplies.

- Minister of Natural Resources and Environment:

Advised the Ministry to ensure that the responsible rubbish collectors are prompt with their schedule as some rubbish on shelves has yet been cleared for the past 2-3 weeks. In this regard, he urged them to collect rubbish on a daily basis especially during the holidays.

- RSE Scheme:

Sought a response on when the transferal of the selection process to respective constituencies will take effect as raised by another member.

- Ministry of Works, Transportation and Infrastructure:

The Member requested to address the constant issue of flooding at Moamoa due to the stream in the village which mainly affects the people residing near it and neighboring villages.

- **Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai – Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure – Interruption.**

The Hon Minister clarified that the Gasegase River at Moamoa has been inspected and have dredged it to address the issue of flooding when the river burst. He further asserted that drainages have been constructed in Fugalei.

**Tofa MANULELEUA Paletasala Tovale, Member for Faleata 1 (cont.).**

The Member acknowledged the Minister’s clarification and further asserted that following requests and opinions:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries:

Commended the Hon Minister for ensuring the exportation of our local crops overseas which has contributed to generating our revenue for our country. He then reminded the Hon Minister on the traps used by the farmers.

- **Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries – Interruption.**

The Hon Minister clarified that there are 20 traps: 10 for Savaii and 10 for Upolu. He further asserted that there were 2 traps tested for both Savaii and Upolu. He further urged respective constituencies to submit a letter of request, especially those who are affected by it and to

utilize their 1 million allocations to purchase more traps. Furthermore, he asserted that the Ministry intends to distribute 51 traps to each constituency and emphasized that such traps have been upgraded with installed cameras and can capture large animals such as wild boars.

- **Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1 – interruption.**

The Member sought clarification from the Member for Faleata 1 on where the traps are placed as he believes that there is no land for cultivation within his constituency and it is also dangerous to civilians.

- **Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries – Interruption.**

The Hon Minister emphasized that the 20 traps mentioned earlier have already been paid for by the Government; however, each constituency are responsible to purchase their own traps through the 1 million project.

**Tofa MANULELEUA Paletasala Tovale, Member for Faleata 1 (cont.).**

In reference to the query put forth by the Member for Vaimauga 1, he clarified that there's a total of 200 acre of land at Laloanea given by Samoa Land Corporation (SLC) to be used for their cultivation. He then commended the Hon Minister for the traps distributed for his Constituency to protect their lands from the wild animals.

- **Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries – Interruption.**

Made emphasis on the 20 traps funded by the Government will be released to Constituencies that need it and those who put forth their request first.

**4. Afioga AUUAPAAU Mulipola Aloitafua Mulipola, Member for Aiga ile Tai.**

The Member for Aiga i le Tai presented his requests and opinions to the following ministries:

- Ministry of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure:

The Member reminded the Minister for his request to repair access roads in his Constiteuncy and acknowledged the project of the SWA in his Constituency and asserted that they were recommended to relocate the poles for the streetlights due to such development. For safety reasons, he proposed whether its best to remove them instead of rearranging the poles and to remember his request to LTA.

The Member then touched on a project designed mainly for the two small islands (Manono and Apolima) namely, the scoping study in 2021 with an allocation of \$500k which he believes has been transferred to a Special Purpose Account. Given that this project was ceased, he requested

for this project to be activated and for the allocation to be transferred back to the main budget so it can be utilized as his Constituency has already signed and agreed to make use of this project.

- Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development:

In reference to having a Sui o Nuu, Sui o le Malo and Sui o Tamaitai in each Constituency; he requested for another Sui Tamaitai and Sui o Nuu specifically for Manono Uta as he believes that there are more people residing in Upolu than the main Island of Manono. He further requested whether its possible to assign respective Sui ole Nuu and Sui Tamaitai by two villages such as Apai with Salua and Faleu with Lepuiai.

The Member also commented on the payment of salaries for workers of the fono faavae, stating that the responsibility should provide a clear procedure for this, as Women Representatives and Village Mayors are paid under the relevant Ministry whilst the employees of the fono faavae are paid by the 1million development fund.

- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

The Member commended the Minister and his ministry on all developments and acknowledged the traps that his constituency has received.

- Minister of Justice and Courts Administration

He raised the need for appropriate amendments to Sections 43&44 of the Land & Titles Amendment Act to factor current practices in our country.

- **Afioga MASINALUPE Makesi Masinalupe, Member for Lefaga and Faleaseela – Interjection**

The Member reminded the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries that he was the first member to request for traps to deal with wild boars in his constituency, then asked to please prioritize those who made the request first.

- **Hon. LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries**

The Hon Minister clarified that the member for Lefaga and Faleaseela has been speaking on this matter since 2 years ago, however the Ministry has yet to receive a request letter for traps to be used in his constituency.

#### **5. Afioga TAGALOATELE Pasi Poloa, Member for Sagaga 4**

The Member greeted all members in Chamber, the Head of State, Council of Deputies, Judiciary, and clergies acknowledging their continuous support and prayers for the country. He greeted Samoa and his constituency in all their honorific salutations. He then pursued to outline his constituency's demands on the supplementary:

- Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure

The Member commended repairs and developments on the cross-island road as well as the Aleisa Road which are now used by some people residing in Falealili. Then raised the need for widening the bridge at Aleisa as it is too narrow and is prone to accidents.

- Minister of Women, Community and Social Development

The Member commended the Minister on the 1million district development project that has benefitted their constituency in numerous ways, including receiving lawnmower and equipment. He then requested for a Village mayor for the sub-village at Alamutu.

- Samoa Tourism Authority

The Member touched on important legends from his constituency that should be made known and accessible to the public, thus seeking the Authority for relevant funds to assist in bringing these legendary sites to life.

- Minister of Sports

The member noted the importance of rewarding our people who return home after successfully representing Samoa in various sports competitions especially when they receive gold medal from the Pacific Games as it shows our appreciation for their efforts in representing our country and to further motivate them to do well.

#### **6. Afioga Hon. LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio, Member for Sagaga 1**

The Member greeted the Speaker, Hon Prime Minister, Cabinet, and all members present in Chamber. He also acknowledged all heads of government ministries and corporations present in the House. He then addressed specific ministers:

- Minister of Education and Minister of Communications and Information Technology

The Member highlighted the importance of academic learning and internet connection as raised by previous members. He stressed that although certain Members have commented on the negative impacts of the internet, he reminded Members not to disregard the positive effects that the internet and technology has assisted with learning and making communication easier and convenient. He then mentioned the cables available for our internet usage and urged that we utilize the telecommunication infrastructure wisely as there is sufficient cable available for our people.

- **Tofa Hon. OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister of MWTI – Interjection**

The Hon Minister commended the Member for raising this issue and confirmed that after his visitations he noticed that there were villages that were not mowing and cleaning the side of the roads, and he will handle this matter with responsible contractors. Furthermore, the Minister clarified that they have collaborated with the Ministry of Women to develop a policy and guidelines so that this responsibility will be given to the Fono Faavae to deal with under the 1million project

#### **Afioga Hon. LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio, Member for Sagaga 1 (cont.)**

The Hon member acknowledged the Minister's response and clarification as the matter is important to ensure our country is kept clean. He then touched on the importance of the Community Service Obligation in providing assistance to families with low income and sought clarification from the relevant Minister on the progress of CSO's. There was also mention of the effects of the cost of living on households whereby the Member queried whether there were any revenues received from PFL as he heard shareholders are receiving dividends.

**Tofa. Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister for MWTI – Interjection**

The Hon Minister clarified that the PFL Samoa and PFL Group collaborated under the government of HRPP from the year 2015 to date have not recorded any dividend.

**Susuga Hon TUILAEPa Lupesoliai Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi – Opposition Leader**

The Hon Member clarified that in 2015 PFL was auctioned out as it was bankrupt, the monies earned from the sale of shares assisted the Government with the payment of numerous loans.

**Afioga Hon. LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio, Member for Sagaga 1 (cont.)**

The Hon member addressed the Minister of Finance responsible for the Airline, and suggested the possibility of bringing back our national carrier to help with soaring airfare prices.

**7.Afioga Hon. LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea**

The member greeted the House and Samoa, he wished everyone a happy and blessed new year. He then expressed his support for the Supplementary Bill and commended the Minister of Finance and his Ministry for preparing the budget. He acknowledged the Minister of Communication for responding to his previous requests regarding the poor internet connection in his area, which has now been addressed.

- Minister of Communication and Information Technology

The Member commended the construction of a telephone post at Aleisa as it has greatly improved the coverage and connection in this area. He also noted his support for the use of technology in schools as we are in the ‘digital era’ thus, we have to adapt to the changes in time. He also cautioned schools, teachers and parents that we must utilize technology wisely.

- Minister of Natural Resources and Environment

The Member commended the \$450,000 fund allocated for seawalls and reminded the Minister of their constituency’s request for a seawall. He then mentioned the COP28 meeting and commended Samoa’s representation where we declined the resolutions that were not in our favour. Furthermore, the Member requested for rubbish dump trucks to be consistent with the collection of rubbish to ensure the cleanliness of our country.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 1:04pm  
until Thursday 25, 2024 at 9:30am