 Parliament of the Cook Islands

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018



ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018 - PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

© 2019 Parliament of the Cook Islands

P.O. Box 13 – Rarotonga – Cook Islands

ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITIES

Presiding Officer & Speaker of Parliament
Hon. Niki Rattle

Clerk of Parliament
Mr Tangata Vainerere

PRECINCT LOCATION

Parliament House
Nikao, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

CONTACT

Telephone: (682) 26500
Email: tangata.vainerere@cookislands.gov.ck
Web: <https://parliament.gov.ck>

CONTENTS

1. LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL	3
2. CLERKS FOREWORD	4
3. OUR PARLIAMENT	5
4. OUR MANDATE AND RESPONSIBILITY	6
5. OUR VISION	6
6. OUR MISSION	6
7. OUR VALUES.....	6
8. OUR MEMBERS	7
9. OUR STAFF.....	9
10. THE YEAR IN REVIEW – SOME HIGHLIGHTS	9
10.1 The Eighth Meeting of the 48th Session of Parliament	9
10.2 The Family Law Bill Select Committee	10
10.3 The Crimes Bill Select Committee	10
10.4 The Marine Resources Bill Select Committee	10
10.5 The Standing Orders Committee	11
10.6 Members Briefing on the Marine Resources Bill and the Maritime Zone Bill	12
10.7 The 2nd Speakers Debate	12
10.8 NZ Prime Minister Ardern pays a visit to Parliament	13
10.9 Speaker observes Fiji Parliament	15
10.10 Youth Practice Parliament	16
10.11 Dissolution of Parliament	16
10.12 The General Elections	17
10.13 Legislations Passed	17
10.14 Reports, Regulations and Orders tabled	18
11. FUTURE PRIORITIES AND DIRECTION	19
12. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND AUDIT REPORT 2017-2018	20
12.1 Appropriation 2017-2018	20
12.2 Letter of Representation	21
12.3 Audit Report 2017-2018	24

1. LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL



Office of the Clerk

P.O. Box 13, Rarotonga, Cook Islands
Tel: (682) 26509 I Fax: (682) 21260 I Mob: (682) 79396
Email: tangata.vainerere@cookislands.gov.ck
Website: www.parliament.ck

20 March 2019

Hon. Niki Rattle
Speaker of Parliament
Parliament House
NIKAO, RAROTONGA

Dear Madam Speaker

I have great pleasure in submitting to you, for presentation to the House, the Annual Report on the operations of the Parliamentary Services for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

The report addresses matters arising from the Clerk's powers, duties and functions under the Legislative Service Act 1968-69, pertaining to the operations of Parliamentary Services, the Chamber and Parliaments Select Committees.

The report also contains Parliaments Financial Performance and unmodified Audit Report for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 as required under sections 25 and 28 of the Ministry of Economic Management Act 1995-96.

I certify that this report has been prepared in accordance with the minimum requirements for Annual Reports to Parliament as prescribed under section 8.4 of the Public Service Manual 2016.

Yours respectfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tangata Vainerere".

Tangata Vainerere
CLERK OF PARLIAMENT

2. CLERKS FOREWORD



Kia orana Madam Speaker, Honourable Ministers, Honourable Members of Parliament, Parliamentary Services Staff and readers.

I am pleased to present some highlights for the fiscal year 2017-2018. Our year kicked off with a bang when Parliament sat from Monday 3rd to Wednesday 12th July 2017. Parliament sat again from Monday 27th to Thursday 30th November to bring the total number of sitting days for the six months period of July to December 2017 to twelve.

The Special Select Committee on the Crimes Bill was established during the July sitting of Parliament and immediately commenced their consultations on the new Crimes Bill 2017. The new Bill was intended to replace the Crimes Act 1969. Consultations were conducted in Rarotonga and the Southern Group islands throughout the year.

On Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th February 2018, the members were engaged in a workshop to examine some draft Bills. The objective of the workshop was to provide adequate opportunities for the members to familiarise themselves with the Bills to be tabled in the house.

The 2nd Speakers Debate was held on Thursday 8 February 2018 in which the debate focused on the question, “How is Mental Health addressed in the Cook Islands and is it effective?”

This debate was followed by a Standing Orders Committee workshop on Friday 9th February to discuss proposed revisions to the Parliament Standing Orders and further sittings of Parliament from Monday 12th to Wednesday 21st February.

A notable milestone was realized with the visit to our Parliament by the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Right Honourable Jacinda Ahern and her Delegation on International Women’s Day, Thursday 8 March 2018. An important outcome of the celebrations was the launching of the Cook Islands Parliament Women’s Caucus.

A defining moment of the year was the dissolution of Parliament called by His Excellency the Queens’ Representative on the advice of the Prime Minister on Thursday 12 April 2018.

The Cook Islands National Youth Council held their National Youth Practice Parliament in the Parliament Chamber on Thursday 17th May preceded by a two days National Conference dealing with youth leadership issues.

The flagship event of the year – the General Elections was held on Thursday 14th June 2018 resulting in the installation of a new coalition Government formed by negotiation between the Cook Islands Party Members, the One Cook Islands Member for Tupapa-Maraerenga, and the Independent Members of Parliament for Teenui Mapumai and Tongareva. The Opposition was made up of the Democratic Party Members. And so began a new chapter, in the Parliamentary life of the Cook Islands as a nation.

God bless the Cook Islands.

Respectfully,



Tangata Vainerere
CLERK OF PARLIAMENT

3. OUR PARLIAMENT



The Cook Islands has a Westminster parliamentary style of government similar to that of New Zealand and England.

The Nation is a self-governing State in free association with New Zealand. While the Constitution provides for New Zealand to be responsible for defence and some aspects of international relation, this can only be enacted upon request by the Government of the Cook

Islands. The Government through the Parliament of the Cook Islands is responsible for enacting legislation and is fully competent to enter into an international agreement and conduct its own international relation.

Parliament consists of a single chamber of 24 elected members, 10 of whom are from the main island of Rarotonga and the rest are from the outer islands.

The Head of State is Her Majesty the Queen, Elizabeth II who is represented in the Cook Islands by the Queen's Representative, His Excellency, Sir Tom J. Marsters KBE.

The Parliament of the Cook Islands is descended from the Cook Islands Legislative Council established in October 1946. Established to provide for political representation and better local government in the islands, the Legislative Council was a subordinate legislature. It was empowered to legislate for the "peace, order, and good government" of the islands, but could not pass laws repugnant to the laws of New Zealand, appropriate revenue, impose import or export duties, or impose criminal penalties in excess of one year's imprisonment or a £100 fine. The council consisted of 20 members, ten "official" members appointed by the Governor-General of New Zealand and ten "unofficial" members drawn from the Island Councils, presided over by the New Zealand Resident Commissioner. Later regulations provided for the unofficial members to be split between the various islands, 3 from Rarotonga, 6 from the outer islands and 1 representing the islands' European population. The island representatives were elected annually, while the European representative was elected to a three-year term.

The Legislative Council was reorganised in 1957 as the Legislative Assembly with 22 elected members and 4 appointed officials. Fifteen of the members were elected directly by secret ballot, and seven were elected by the Island Councils. In 1962, the Assembly was given full control of its own budget. In that year it also debated the country's political future and chose self-government in free association with New Zealand. On becoming a self-governing State in 1965 it gained full legislative power. It was renamed the Parliament of the Cook Islands in 1981.

Both the size and term of Parliament have fluctuated over the last fifty years. In 1965, it consisted of 22 members elected for a period of 3 years. The size was increased to 24 members in 1981, and again to 25 in 1991. It was reduced again to 24 members in 2003 when the overseas constituency created under the 1980–81 Constitution Amendment was abolished. The original three-year term was increased to four years in 1969, and five years in 1981. A referendum to reduce it to four years failed to gain the necessary two-thirds majority in 1999, but passed in 2004.

4. OUR MANDATE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Parliament of the Cook Islands is constituted as a sovereign Parliament mandated under Part III of the Constitution and established under Part I of the Legislative Service Act 1968-69 to make national laws, supervise the spending of public money, and scrutinise government activities.

5. OUR VISION

A modern, inclusive and transparent parliament that fulfils its constitutional duties and effectively serves the people of the Cook Islands.

6. OUR MISSION

A parliament that represents all citizens, legislates and scrutinizes the Executive in an effective, efficient and transparent manner, and enables Cooks Islanders to observe and participate in the country's governance process and development decisions.

7. OUR VALUES

Cooperation

We support others to achieve excellence
We promote teamwork and share responsibility

Encouragement

We value individual contributions
We recognise a job well done
We are recognised and rewarded for what we do

Fairness & Consistency

We make decisions in a fair and equitable way
We respect individual views

Honesty & Trust

We act ethically with transparency
We act with integrity

Professionalism

We aim to achieve excellence
We take pride in delivering our services

Respect

We respect each other
We treat people as we want to be treated

8. OUR MEMBERS

Members of Parliament as of 1 July 2017.

GOVERNMENT		
MEMBER	PARTY AFFILIATION	CONSTITUENCY
1. Mr Mark Stephen Brown	Cook Islands Party	Takuvaine-Tutakimoa
2. Mr Albert Taaviri Kaitara Nicholas	Cook Islands Party	Avatiu-Ruatonga
3. Mr Teariki Heather	Cook Islands Party	Akaoa
4. Mr Kiriau Turepu	Cook Islands Party	Matavera
5. Mr Tai Tura	Cook Islands Party	Mauke
6. Mr Toka Hagai	Cook Islands Party	Rakahanga
7. Mr Henry Tuakeu Puna	Cook Islands Party	Manihiki
8. Mr Tekii Lazaro	Cook Islands Party	Pukapuka-Nassau
9. Mr Nandi Glassie	Cook Islands Party	Tengatangi-Areora-Ngatiarua
10. Mrs Vainetutai Rose Toki-Brown	Cook Islands Party	Teenui-Mapumai
11. Mr Willie John	Cook Islands Party	Penrhyn
12. Mr Mona Ioane	Cook Islands Party	Vaipae-Tautu
13. Mr Toanui Isamaela	Cook Islands Party	Amuri-Ureia
ONE COOK ISLANDS MOVEMENT		
1. Mr George Maggie Angene	One Cook Islands Movement	Tupapa-Maraerenga
2. Mr Pumati Iseraela	One Cook Islands Movement	Arutanga-Reureu-Nikaupara
OPPOSITION		
MEMBER	PARTY AFFILIATION	CONSTITUENCY
1. Mr William Heather	Democratic Party	Ruaau
2. Mrs Ngamau Munokoa	Democratic Party	Nikao
3. Mr James Beer	Democratic Party	Murienua
4. Mrs Selina Napa	Democratic Party	Titikaveka
5. Mr Tamaiva Tuavera	Democratic Party	Ngatangia
6. Mr Wesley Kareroa	Democratic Party	Oneroa
7. Mr Jim Marurai	Democratic Party	Ivirua
8. Mrs Tetangi Matapo	Democratic Party	Tamarua
9. Mr Tangata Vavia	Democratic Party	Mitiaro

Members of Parliament as of 28 June 2018.

GOVERNMENT		
MEMBER	PARTY AFFILIATION	CONSTITUENCY
1. Mr Mark Stephen Brown	Cook Islands Party	Takuvaine-Tutakimoo
2. Mr Albert Taaviri Kaitara Nicholas	Cook Islands Party	Avatiu-Ruatonga
3. Mr Vaine Makiroa Mokoroa	Cook Islands Party	Nikao
4. Mr Patrick Akaiti Arioka	Cook Islands Party	Murienua
5. Mr Tereapii Maki-Kavana	Cook Islands Party	Arutanga-Reureu-Nikaupara
6. Mr Tai Tura	Cook Islands Party	Mauke
7. Mr Tuakeu Tangatapoto	Cook Islands Party	Mitiaro
8. Mr Toka Hagai	Cook Islands Party	Rakahanga
9. Mr Henry Tuakeu Puna	Cook Islands Party	Manihiki
10. Mr Tingika Elikana	Cook Islands Party	Pukapuka/Nassau
11. Mr George Maggie Angene	One Cook Islands Movement	Tupapa-Maraerenga
12. Mrs Vainetutai Rose Toki-Brown	Independent	Teenui-Mapumai
13. Mr Robert Taimoe Tapaitau	Independent	Penrhyn
OPPOSITION		
MEMBER	PARTY AFFILIATION	CONSTITUENCY
1. Mr William Heather	Democratic Party	Ruaau
2. Mr Nooroa o Teariki Baker	Democratic Party	Akaoa
3. Mrs Selina Napa	Democratic Party	Titikaveka
4. Mr Tamaiva Tuavera	Democratic Party	Ngatangia
5. Mr Vaitoti Tupa	Democratic Party	Matavera
6. Mr Terepai Maoate	Democratic Party	Amuri-Ureia
7. Mr Kitai Manuela Teinakore	Democratic Party	Vaipae-Tautu
8. Mr Wesley Kareroa	Democratic Party	Oneroa
9. Mr Anthony Toruariki Armstrong¹	Democratic Party	Ivirua
10. Mrs Tetangi Matapo	Democratic Party	Tamarua
11. Ms Te-Hani Rose Alexandra Brown	Democratic Party	Tengatangi-Areora-Ngatiarua

¹ Mr Armstrong passed away on 15 November 2018 and a by-election was conducted on 21 January 2019 which was won by Mrs Agnes Armstrong.

9. OUR STAFF

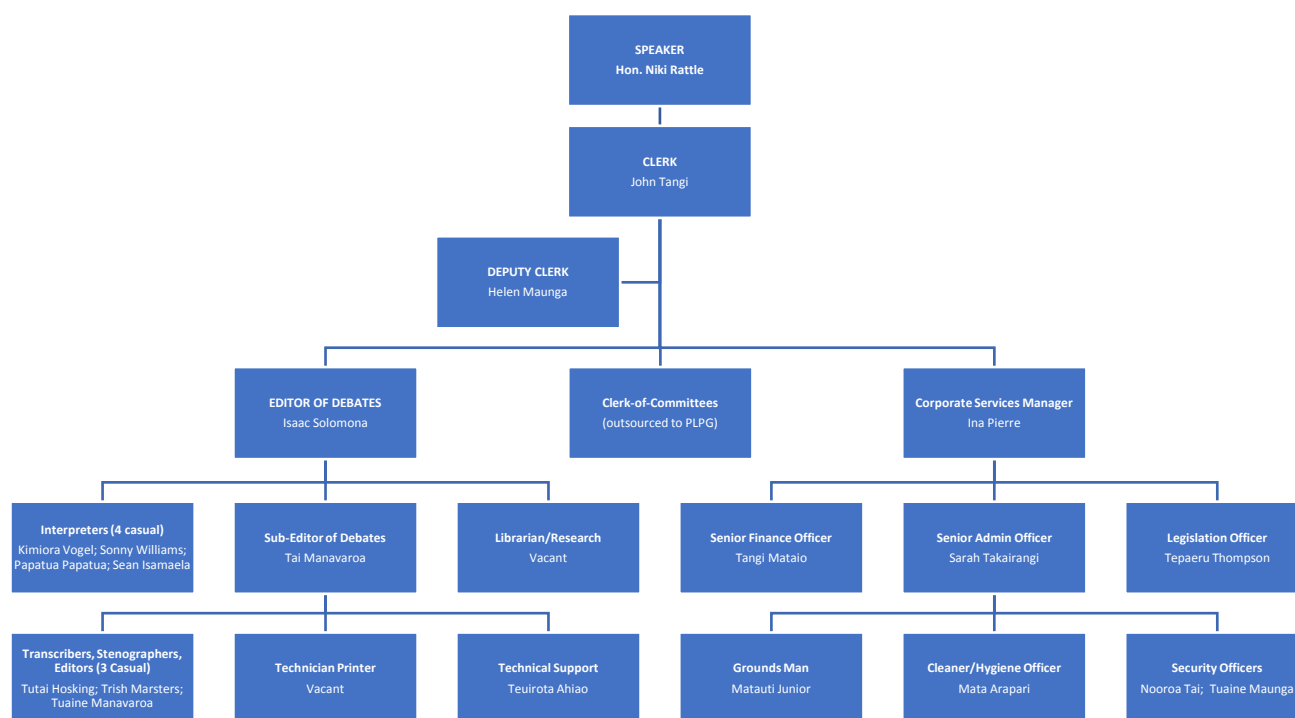


Under the leadership of Madam Speaker Hon. Niki Rattle, supported by Clerk of Parliament Mr John Tangi and Deputy Clerk Mrs Helen Maunga, we had fourteen fulltime staff and seven casual staff (as listed in the organisation chart below).

There were 3 vacant positions during the year.

The Clerk of Committees position was outsourced to the Pacific Legislatures for Population and Governance (PLPG) and held by the Executive Director of PLPG, Mr Tangata Vainerere.

PARLIAMENT ORGANISATION CHART 2017



10. THE YEAR IN REVIEW – SOME HIGHLIGHTS

10.1 The Eighth Meeting of the 48th Session of Parliament

The 8th Meeting of the 48th Session of Parliament held from 3 – 12 July 2017 brought a milestone history to the Parliament of the Cook Islands during its 52 years of self-government when the Appropriation Bill 2017-18 was debated in the Committee of Supply for 10 days.

In addition, a total of 13 Bills and Amendment Bills were tabled, debated and passed by Parliament. These included **5 new Bills** (Marae Moana; Family Law; Harassment; Justices of the Peace; Companies and Personal Property Security) and **7 Amendment Bills** (Family Protection & Support; Incorporated Societies; Currency Declaration; Financial Transactions Reporting; Personal Property Security; Arms Ordinance; and Entry, Residence & Departure).

Later in the year, a total of **10 Papers** was presented during the **9th Meeting** held from 27 – 30 November; 1 & 4 December 2017. The *Marine Resources Bill* tabled by the Prime Minister as Minister of Marine

Resources upon motion referred the Bill to a Select Committee. Meanwhile the passage of 5 Amendment Bills brought the total number of Bills passed by Parliament from July to December 2017 to 18.

10.2 The Family Law Bill Select Committee

The Family Law Bill Select Committee was originally established on 11 June 2015 to go over the Family Law Bill and inquire into how the Bill could be improved in order for its proper administration and to report its findings to Parliament.

The Committee consisted of 6 members:

Chairperson:	Hon Mona Ioane	Member for Vaipae-Tautu
Deputy Chairperson:	Hon Selina Napa OBE	Member for Titikaveka
Members:	MP George Angene	Member for Tupapa-Maraerenga
	MP Rose Brown	Member for Teenui-Mapumai
	MP Toka Hagai	Member for Rakahanga
	MP Tetangi Matapo	Member for Tamarua

As a result of the work of the Committee, the Family Law Bill was eventually renamed to become the Family Protection and Support Bill. It was finally enacted by Parliament on 12 July 2017 and received the Royal Assent on 13 July 2017.

10.3 The Crimes Bill Select Committee

The Crimes Bill Special Select Committee was established on 12 July 2017. The Committee consisted of 6 Members, comprising of 3 Members from Government and 3 from the Opposition. The members were:

Chairperson:	Hon. Mona Ioane	Member for Vaipae-Tautu
Deputy Chairperson:	Hon. James Beer	Member for Murienua
Members:	MP Toka Hagai	Member for Rakahanga
	MP Rose Brown	Member for Teenui-Mapumai
	MP Selina Napa OBE	Member for Titikaveka
	MP Tangata Vavia	Member for Mitiaro
	MP Pumati Iseraela	Member for Arutanga-Reureu-Nikaupara

The work of the Committee was to thoroughly review the current Crimes Act 1969, which has been in place for 48 years, and to report its findings back to Parliament. Government saw the great need to bring the Crimes Act 1969 in line with the current activities of the world as the nature of criminal activities and offences has significantly changed.

The Select Committee conducted 6 meetings in 2017. The 6 meetings were held between 24 July to 29 August 2017. Public consultations were also carried out on Rarotonga during the review process. Three meetings were held in the three Vaka of Teauotonga, Puaikura and Takitumu.

The Select Committee continued its work in 2018. From 23 February to 28 March 2018, 5 meetings were conducted. Three of these meetings were held in the outer islands of Nga-pu-toru – Mauke, Mitiaro and Atiu.

Before the Committee was able to carry out consultations in the Northern Group islands, the Committee ceased its work when Parliament was dissolved on 11 April 2018 and the Bill lapsed.

10.4 The Marine Resources Bill Select Committee

The Marine Resources Bill Special Select Committee was established on 12 July 2017. The Committee consisted of 7 Members, comprising of 4 Members from Government and 3 from the Opposition. The members were:

Chairperson:	Hon. Mona Ioane	Member for Vaipae-Tautu
Members:	Hon. James Beer	Member for Murienua
	MP Toka Hagai	Member for Rakahanga
	MP Rose Brown	Member for Teenui-Mapumai
	MP Selina Napa OBE	Member for Titikaveka
	MP William Heather	Member for Ruaau
	MP Tai Tura	Member for Mauke

The Committee conducted its consultations on the Bill throughout the second half of 2017 and in the first quarter of 2018 but lapsed at the dissolution of Parliament on 11 April 2018.

10.5 The Standing Orders Committee

The Standing Orders Committee established to review the Standing Orders of Parliament are as follows:

Chairperson:	Hon. Niki Rattle	Speaker
Members:	Hon. Henry Puna	Member for Manihiki
	Hon. Mark Brown	Member for Takuvaine-Tutakimoa
	Hon. Mona Ioane	Member for Vaipae-Tautu
	Hon. Nadi Glassie	Member for Tengtangi-Areora-Ngatiarua
	MP James Beer	Member for Murienua
	MP William Heather	Member for Ruaau
	MP Selina Napa	Member for Titikaveka

The Committee conducted its consultations on the Standing Orders throughout the second half of 2017 facilitated by Consultant Mrs Debra Angus, former Deputy Clerk of the New Zealand House of Representatives and supported by Clerk of Committees Mr Tangata Vainerere, Executive Director of the Pacific Legislatures for Population and Governance (PLPG).

The Standing Orders Committee workshop held in the Parliament Chamber on Friday, 9th February 2018 discussed the proposed revisions to the *draft Standing Orders* and further sittings of Parliament from 12 – 21 February 2018.

The draft version developed by UNDP Consultant and former Deputy Clerk of the NZ Parliament Debra Angus, aimed to review, test and obtain feedback on the revised procedures with efforts to identify issues and provide avenues to overcome outdated and inconsistencies in the existing 2010 Standing Orders of Parliament with clauses not aligned to the changes in the Constitution nor amendments in the Standing Orders aligned to the Constitutions or amendments. The Committee conducted consultations with Government and Opposition Members of Parliament and continued its work until the dissolution of Parliament on 11 April 2018.

The Committee's work was supported by the UNDP Pacific Office under the guidance of UNDP Expert Mr Dyfan Jones.

10.6 Members Briefing on the Marine Resources Bill and the Maritime Zone Bill



The UNDP Pacific Office in collaboration with the Parliament of the Cook Islands conducted a workshop for Members of Parliament on Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th February 2018 on the Marine Resources Bill and the Maritime Zone Bill.

This important workshop which was made possible under the UNDP Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative (PPEI) Program was conducted at the Crown Beach Hotel to brief the Members of Parliament on the two Bills before these were tabled in the House and placed on the Order Paper for the First and Second Readings in Parliament.

The majority of Members were able to attend the workshop which showed keen and high interest amongst them in learning more about the Bills before they were brought to Parliament. Key areas of the Bill that were addressed during the workshop include Port Measures, Processing & Export, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance.

The administrative penalties, structured settlements, jurisdiction, evidence, sale, release and forfeiture of retained property, were also discussed in detail.

10.7 The 2nd Speakers Debate



The 2nd Speakers Debate held at the National Auditorium on Thursday 8 February 2018 widely drew a number interested audience of over 300 in attendance from Members of Parliament, business sectors, health officials,

crown employees and NGOs. The Speakers Debate focused on the question, “How is Mental Health addressed in the Cook Islands and is it effective”?

The concept designed to encourage public discussions and debate on key development issues outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognised that Mental Health is an issue that has been neglected globally brought forth sensitive sharing’s of experiences and encounters of the effect of mental health with friends, families and colleagues.

The chosen topic on mental health is also recognised in the Cook Islands National Health Strategic Policy 2016-2020.

Chaired by the Speaker of Parliament, the panelists were, Minister of Health Hon. Nandi Glassie; Hon. William Heather; Dr Rangiau Fariu; Psychiatric Nurse Mereana Taikoko; Memory Mills and young Teuru Tiraa-Passfield. All panellist made a 5-minute introductory speech followed with questions from the audience.

With the support of UNDP through the Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiatives [PPEI] in collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Development, ‘Livestreaming’; ‘On Air’ and social media gadgets was possible with responses received from Australia, New Zealand, US and Europe.

10.8 NZ Prime Minister Ardern pays a visit to Parliament

With the visit of New Zealand Prime Minister, Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern, to our Parliament on Thursday 8 March 2018, our Speaker, the Honourable Niki Rattle, took the opportunity to officially launch the Cook Islands Women Parliamentarians Caucus. The event was well attended by women representing different organisations and also those intending to run as candidates in the next general election. Mrs Vaine Wichman and Mrs Elizabeth Koteka were guest speakers for the day.



L-R: Economist Vaine Wichman, Speaker Niki Rattle, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Local Consultant Elizabeth Wright-Koteka. Photo Credit – Cook Islands News.

Although it was an official visit to our Parliament, our Speaker saw the perfect opportunity to also welcome those who wanted to meet the Prime Minister for the very first time. Some groups presented specially made customary gifts as a token of appreciation for the visit.

The event was supported by UNDP, who was represented by Adelle Khan from the UNDP Pacific

Below is a write-up on the event by Jaimie Keay of Cook Islands News, published online on Wednesday 4th April 2018.

The Cook Islands Parliament is aiming to address the imbalance of female participation in parliament with the establishment of the Women Parliamentarians Caucus.

Launched on International Women's Day last month, the Women's Caucus is a strong call to action to press forward and make progress on the issue of gender equality.

Now called the Cook Islands Women Parliamentarians Caucus, the membership is bi-partisan in nature as it involves women MPs from both the government and opposition sides of the House.

Internationally, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has found that 81 parliaments have established some form of women's caucus.

The Speaker of the Cook Islands Parliament, Niki Rattle, is a passionate advocate for gender equality in Parliament, and says she is excited about the prospects and opportunities the Women's Parliamentary Caucus will bring.

She hopes it can help tip the balance for representation.

"While the status of women in the Cook Islands has improved, men still outnumber women in jobs with status, power and authority," said Rattle.

"The Cook Islands Women Parliamentarians Caucus is a proactive approach that advocates for equitable outcomes for all through law-making, budgeting, oversight and representation."

Through this approach, we hope to reach out to women in the Cook Islands and encourage them to stand for elections which will increase the number of women in Parliament."

"The significance of the launch was also underscored with the visit of the prime minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern - a woman holding the highest political office," said Rattle.

"I hope that women of Cook Islands will be able to see that they too, can stand and lead."

Confirmed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) studies on Equality in Politics and Gender Sensitive Parliaments, the establishment of women's parliamentary caucuses is one of the mechanisms that have enabled women to strengthen their political impact.

Across the Pacific (excluding Australia and New Zealand), the average number of women MPs is 7.2 per cent, the lowest in the world.

However, with four women MPs, the Cook Islands is better than the Pacific average, at 16.6 per cent female representation plus a woman Speaker.

The Country Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji and Head of Pacific Regional Programme and Policy, Bakhodir Burkhanov echoed the sentiments of the Speaker and congratulated the efforts of the founding members of the Cook Islands Women's Parliament Caucus.

"The achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) cannot be met if women are denied meaningful political participation," said Burkhanov.

"International agreements such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration all stress the importance of increasing the numbers of women in political and other leadership, as part of gender equality strategies."

He added, "women's caucuses can also help to bring together equality between men and women in the daily operation and work of Parliament."

The formation of the Cook Islands Women's Caucus is part of a programme of support by the Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative (PPEI) implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji with funding support from the Government of New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

The UNDP PPEI is a three-year programme implemented in collaboration with the Parliaments of Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, focusing on a number of areas including improving procedures and processes in Parliaments and building the capacity of Members of Parliament and Secretariat staff.

10.9 Speaker observes Fiji Parliament



From the 14th to the 16th March 2018, Speaker Hon. Niki Rattle visited Fiji to observe the Fijian Parliament sitting as part of efforts to review and improve our own Parliamentary Standing Orders, among other important things.

Through the South-South exchange supported by the UNDP, Hon. Speaker observed the live Parliament session from the Parliament gallery.

Hon. Rattle, in an interview, said she was very impressed with the operations of the Fijian Parliament particularly, the sitting sessions.

“We are currently reviewing our Standing Orders and as such, it is only important that I come to Fiji because its Parliament is practising what we see in most Standing Orders in other Pacific Parliaments,” Hon. Rattle said.

“This has been a worthwhile visit as I have really learnt a lot of new things from the live sessions to the secretariat support. I am indeed pleased at how things are handled here in the Fijian Parliament and I am certain that we will be able to benchmark our way forward and implement similar strategies for our own benefit back home.”

“In the Cooks, our Parliament is slowly progressing and one of the things we aim to improve on is planning and also to have a business committee. We hope to pre-plan our Parliament businesses and include it in our Standing Orders to avoid unexpected disruptions and other problems.”

Hon. Rattle added while the Cooks had a small Parliament, it was crucial for them to improve their services for the best interest of their citizens.

“We only have 24 Members of Parliament with about 13 staff but we continue to work towards achieving our goals for the purpose of improving the lives of the citizens and being here, is one way of learning and further improving our move towards progress.”

Meanwhile, Hon. Nikki Rattle met with some Fijian Members of Parliament, mainly women MPs where they exchanged ideas of national interest and development issues.

Fijian Parliament Speaker Hon. Dr Jiko Luveni welcomed Hon. Rattle's visit, saying they were happy to have her presence in Parliament throughout the three days.

10.10 Youth Practice Parliament



The National Youth Practice Parliament was held over three days from Tuesday 15th to Thursday 17th May 2018. The Youth Practice Parliament is a platform in which leaders can help the youth of the Cook Islands be more informed on government processes, especially parliament and legislation.

It also aimed on education, advocacy and raising awareness to engage youth in topics that involve decision-making at a high level and to increase awareness of the importance of Cook Islands youth voting in the election on June 14.

A two-day workshop was conducted on Tuesday 15th May and Wednesday 16th May at the Sinai Hall in Avarua which aimed at explaining the processes which occur within parliament during election time.

With Parliamentary Services working in partnership with the Cook Islands National Youth Council, the workshop delivered a range of presentations from former politicians, parliamentarians and those who have been active in encouraging youth participation in politics.

On Thursday 17th May, the Practice Parliament took place at Parliament. The participants met with Speaker of the House Niki Rattle, and took part in a debate on the Crimes Bill in the setting of a parliamentary sitting held in the Parliament Chamber.

The programme was attended by young people from the southern group islands as well as northern group islands representatives residing in Rarotonga.

10.11 Dissolution of Parliament

On Wednesday the 12th of April 2018, Parliament was dissolved whereas it was adjourned sine die, the Queen's Representative of the Cook Islands, Sir Tom Marsters dissolved Parliament forthwith and appointed Thursday 14th June 2018 as the appointed date for the next general election upon the advice of the Prime Minister Henry Puna. Given this is the year for a "General Election" and in order to accord the incoming

Government the opportunity to address the issue of a new Appropriation for the new fiscal year, the Queen's Representative accepted the advice to call for a fresh election.

The notice was gazetted (No. 24/18) and an announcement was made over the radio by the Queen's Representative himself and a copy of the notice was sent out to all Members of Parliament notifying about the dissolution of Parliament.

10.12 The General Elections

The flagship event of the year – the General Elections were held on Thursday 14th June 2018 to elect the 24 members of the 15th Cook Islands Parliament. The Democratic Party won 11 seats, the Cook Islands Party won 10 seats, the One Cook Islands Movement won one seat, with independent candidates winning two seats.

Following the elections, the Cook Islands Party joined forces with the One Cook Islands Member for Tupapa-Maraerenga, and the Independent Members of Parliament for Teenui-Mapumai and Tongareva to retain power. The three members joining the Cook Islands Party were all appointed Ministers to replace the Ministers who had lost their seats.

The Opposition was made up of the Democratic Party Members.

Six electoral petitions were filed, challenging the results in Rakahanga², Murienua, Pukapuka-Nassau, Avatiu-Ruatonga-Palmerston, Ngatangiia, and Mauke. However, all of these petitions were rejected, confirming the result of the election.

10.13 Legislations Passed

The following table highlights the key legislations enacted in the 2017/18 fiscal year.

Paper No.	Titles	Date Passed	Date Assented by QR
	2017		
9	Appropriation Act 2017	10-Jul-17	12-Jul-17
10	Marae Moana Act 2017	11-Jul-17	13-Jul-17
11	Family Protection and Support Act 2017	12-Jul-17	13-Jul-17
12	Harassment Act 2017	12-Jul-17	13-Jul-17
13	Justices of the Peace Act 2017	28-Nov-17	30-Nov-17
14	Companies Act 2017	28-Nov-17	30-Nov-17
15	Family Protection and Support Amendment Act 2017	29-Nov-17	30-Nov-17
16	Incorporated Societies Amendment Act 2017	30-Nov-17	1-Dec-17
17	Currency Declaration Amendment Act 2017	1-Dec-17	1-Dec-17
18	Financial Transactions Reporting Amendment Act 2017	1-Dec-17	1-Dec-17
19	Personal Property Securities Act 2017	4-Dec-17	8-Dec-17
20	Arms Ordinance Amendment Act 2017	4-Dec-17	8-Dec-17
21	Entry, Residence and Departure Amendment Act 2017	4-Dec-17	8-Dec-17
	2018		
1	Maritime Zones Act 2018	19-Feb-18	23-Feb-18

² On 1st November 2018, Rakahanga MP Mr Toka Hagai resigned from Parliament after allegations of treating. On 21 December 2018, Mrs Tina Browne was declared the winner of the Rakahanga seat following a Court of Appeal ruling.

2	Income Tax Amendment Act 2018	21-Feb-18	27-Feb-18
3	Value Added Tax Amendment Act 2018	21-Feb-18	27-Feb-18

10.14 Reports, Regulations and Orders tabled

The following table highlights the key reports, regulations and orders tabled in the 2017/18 fiscal year.

No.	Titles	Date Tabled	Comment
116	Ministerial Statement by the Prime Minister on the Marae Moana Bill	12-Jul-17	Report
117	Customs Tariff Amendment Order 2017, Serial No. 2017/03	27-Nov-17	Order
118	Financial Transaction Reporting Regulations 2017, Serial No. 2017/04	27-Nov-17	Regulations
119	Welfare (Child Benefit) Order 2017, Serial No. 2017/05	27-Nov-17	Order
120	Income Tax (Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Infor) Regs 2017, Serial No. 2017/06	27-Nov-17	Regulations
121	Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Order 2017, Serial No. 2017/07	27-Nov-17	Order
122	Report by the PERC on Travel Expenditure for Mr Anthony Brown	27-Nov-17	Report
123	Rarotonga Pilotage Regulations 2017, Serial No. 2017/08	27-Nov-17	Regulations
125	The Interim Report of the Crimes Bill 2017 Select Committee for period 18 July 17-24 Nov 2017	27-Nov-17	Report
126	Land Agents Registration Act Code of Ethics Regulations 2017, Serial No. 2017/09	27-Nov-17	Regulations
127	Family Protection and Support Regulations 2017, Serial No. 2017/10	27-Nov-17	Regulations
128	The Compliance Audit Report - Procurement, Infrastructure Cook Islands	30-Nov-17	Report
129	The Performance Audit Report - Environment Impact, Assessment in the Cook Islands	30-Nov-17	Report
130	The Special Review Report - Ministry of Justice, Review of Prison Services	30-Nov-17	Report
131	The 4th Quarter Report of the Audit Office for the period 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016	30-Nov-17	Report
132	Currency Declaration (Forms) Regulations 2017, Serial No. 2017/11	4-Dec-17	Regulations
133	Financial Transaction (Reporting Maritime Cook Islands) Regulations 2017, Serial No. 2017/12	4-Dec-17	Regulations
134	Countering Terrorism and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (Targeted Financial Sanctions) Regulations 2017, Serial no. 2017/13	4-Dec-17	Regulations
135	Heads of Department Selection Panel (Remuneration of Members) Order 2017, Serial No. 2017/04	5-Dec-17	Order
137	Public Expenditure Review Committee and Audit (Appointment of Director) Order 2018, Serial No. 2018/01	12-Feb-18	Order
138	The Annual Report of the Public Service Commissioner for the year ended 30 June 2017	12-Feb-18	Report
139	Ministerial Statement by the Prime Minister	14-Feb-18	Report
140	Business Trade & Investment Board (Fees) Regulations 2018	15-Feb-18	Regulations
141	Ministerial Statement by Hon. Mark Brown	20-Feb-18	Report
SUMMARY			
Reports		10	
Regulations		9	

Orders	5
TOTAL	24

11. FUTURE PRIORITIES AND DIRECTION

Some of the strategic focus areas for the 2018-2019 period and beyond, include:

- i. development of a Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2023
- ii. development of a Communications Strategy
- iii. development of a Resource Mobilization Strategy
- iv. implementation of a consolidation of laws project
- v. digitising of Parliamentary records project
- vi. improving community engagement initiatives
- vii. promoting gender mainstreaming initiatives
- viii. fostering youth and women's participation in leadership
- ix. improving and consolidating the Cook Islands' legislative framework
- x. improving parliamentary structures and processes
- xi. strengthening the work of Parliamentary Committees
- xii. promoting a more robust parliamentary contribution to Public Financial Management
- xiii. strengthening engagement with international partners.

12. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND AUDIT REPORT 2017-2018

12.1 Appropriation 2017-2018

PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES BUDGET 2017-2018

	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Top Up</u>	<u>Total Appropriation</u>	<u>Expended</u>
Parliament Services				
Personnel	\$ 487,567.00	0	\$ 487,567.00	
Operating	\$ 71,192.00	0	\$ 71,192.00	
Depreciation	\$ 24,579.00	0	\$ 24,579.00	
Parliament Services Total	\$ 583,338.00	0	\$ 583,338.00	\$ 549,408.72
Civil List - POBOC				
Personnel	\$ 2,011,461.00	0	\$ 2,011,461.00	\$ 2,033,286.13
Constituency Visits	\$ 170,200.00	0	\$ 170,200.00	\$ 87,753.43
Parliament Sitting	\$ 120,000.00	0	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 97,220.39
MP Travel & Allowances	\$ 221,850.00	\$ 180,850.00	\$ 402,700.00	\$ 291,630.16
QR Travel & Allowances	\$ 109,000.00	0	\$ 109,000.00	\$ 128,530.10
Civil List - POBOC Total	\$ 2,632,511.00	\$ 180,850.00	\$ 2,813,361.00	\$ 2,638,420.21
House of Ariki - POBOC	\$ 178,337.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 228,337.00	\$ 213,747.48
Administered Funds				
PLPG	\$ 52,000.00	0	\$ 52,000.00	\$ 52,000.00
Special Select Committee	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 62,465.00	\$ 72,465.00	\$ 51,373.39
Remuneration Tribunal	0	\$ 28,300.00	\$ 28,300.00	\$ 3,150.00
TOTALS	\$ 3,456,186.00	\$ 321,615.00	\$ 3,777,801.00	\$ 3,508,099.80

12.2 Letter of Representation



Office of the Clerk

P.O. Box 13, Rarotonga, Cook Islands
Tel: (682) 26509 I Fax: (682) 21260 I Mob: (682) 79396
Email: tangata.vainerere@cookislands.gov.ck
Website: www.parliament.ck

5 February 2019

The Director of Audit
Cook Islands Audit Office
PO Box 659
Avarua
Rarotonga

Dear Sir

LETTER OF REPRESENTATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 June 2018

This letter is furnished in connection with the audit of the financial statements of the Parliament of the Cook Islands for the year ended 30 June 2018. The purpose of this letter is to give you my assurance that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the Parliament of the Cook Islands' accounting records have been maintained and the financial statements prepared in such a manner as to properly present the financial position and performance of the Parliament of the Cook Islands. I am aware of my financial management obligations under the MFEM Act 1995/96.

I confirm that the following matters are to the best of my knowledge accurate and correct.

1. Appropriate systems and mechanisms are in place to ensure, that all applicable aspects of legislative requirements, which impact on the activities, and functions of the Parliament of the Cook Islands have been complied with. I am not aware of any actual or potential non-compliance with legislative requirements:
 - the consequences of which should be considered for inclusion in the financial statements as a liability, contingency or commitment *and*
 - which have not been disclosed to the auditor.
2. No charges, other than those that have been disclosed, are pending against the Parliament of the Cook Islands for alleged violation of any laws or regulations, and I am not aware of any such violations.
3. I am not aware of any situation or event that will adversely affect the continued operations of the Parliament of the Cook Islands for the foreseeable future.
4. The financial statements and accompanying notes are free of material errors and omissions.

5. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice, namely the International Public Sector Accounting Standards as approved by the International Federation of Accountants and in accordance with the MFEM Act 1995/96.
6. The defined accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the period and any significant change in policy has been disclosed in the financial statements.
7. Bank accounts have been properly maintained and regularly reconciled in accordance with MFEM Instructions and only operated for the purpose detailed in the Financial Secretary's delegation to operate each bank account.
8. There have been no irregularities involving management or employees that could have a material effect on the financial statements.
9. We have made available to you all books of account and supporting documentation.
10. The Parliament of the Cook Islands has satisfactory title to all assets shown in the financial statements and all security interests or other charges outstanding against the assets have been disclosed in the financial statements.
11. All property, plant and equipment disposed of during the financial period, has been removed from the financial statements of the Parliament of the Cook Islands.
12. The rate of depreciation applied to each asset is sufficient to amortise the cost of that asset over its remaining estimated useful life.
13. All current assets are expected to realise, in the ordinary course of business, at least the value at which they are recorded in the financial report.
14. All known or ascertainable material liabilities of the Parliament of the Cook Islands at balance date have been reflected in the financial statements.
15. There are no known material commitments other than those disclosed in the financial statements.
16. The Parliament of the Cook Islands has no unrecorded or contingent assets of a material amount at 30 June 2018.
17. There is no guarantee given by or on behalf of the Parliament of the Cook Islands as at 30 June 2018.
18. No loan(s) has been made to any staff member of the Parliament of the Cook Islands or any guarantees entered into or securities provided in connection with a loan made to a staff member during the year.
19. The Parliament of the Cook Islands' budgeted appropriation fairly reflects the purpose and overall objectives of the Parliament of the Cook Islands as agreed by Parliament through the Estimates process, and in the provision of goods/services through outputs.
20. No events have occurred and no facts have been discovered since 30 June 2018 that would make the financial statements materially inaccurate or misleading or which, though properly excluded from the financial statements, should be disclosed through some other medium.
21. We understand that your examination was made in accordance with International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI) and that your examinations were to the extent that you deemed appropriate for

the purpose of expressing an opinion on the financial statements and that such an examination would not necessarily disclose any or all irregularities should any exist.

22. These representations are made at your request and to supplement information obtained by you from the books and records of the Office and in compliance with ISSAI 1580.
23. We have amended our financial statements to include all of the adjustments proposed and/or errors identified by the auditors.

Yours faithfully,



Tangata Vainerere
Clerk of Parliament

Review
Management Report
for 30 June 2018

Parliament of the Cook Islands

Tangata Vainerere, Clerk of Parliament

Distribution List:

Hon Henry Puna, Prime Minister

Hon Mark Brown, Minister of Finance

Garth Henderson, Financial Secretary

Russell Thomas, Public Service Commission (PSC) Commissioner

Geoff Stoddart, Public Expenditure Review Committee (PERC) Chairperson

Heinz Matysik, PERC Member

Joe Caffrey, PERC Member

Date of Report: 13 March 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	25
2	Review Findings	25
	2.1 Property, Plant & Equipment	26
3	Conclusion	27
4	Appendix 1: Status of recommendations made in previous management reports. Error! Bookmark not defined.	
5	Definitions – Risk Rating and Review Conclusion Error! Bookmark not defined.	

1. Introduction

We have completed the review for the Parliament of the Cook Islands for the year ended 30 June 2018 in accordance with our arrangements letter dated 16 January 2019. This report presents our findings and draws attention to areas where the Parliament of the Cook Islands ("Office") is doing well or where we have made recommendations for improvement.

The review procedures we performed are summarized as follows:

- We performed a review of the financial statements of the Office, which comprises the statement of financial position, statement of comprehensive revenue and expenses, statement of changes in equity, statement of appropriations and statement of cash flows for the years ended 30 June 2018.
- We documented and performed a walk-through of processes and internal controls of the Office in respect of trading revenue, personnel costs, cash at bank, operating expenditure, property, plant and equipment, receivables, and payables.
- We undertook an examination of the Office's compliance with key legislation and regulations.

The review was conducted in accordance with the International Standard on Review Engagements (ISRE) 2400 – Engagements to Review Historical Financial Statements. The scope of a review of the financial statements is substantially less than the scope of an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI) whose objective is the expression of an opinion regarding the financial statements and accordingly, we shall express no such opinion.

We agreed to report to you any matters which come to our attention that you need to be aware of.

Review Conclusion

We have issued an unmodified conclusion on the Office's financial statements for the 30 June 2018 financial year.

2. Review Findings

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the Office's Review engagement for the 30 June 2018 year and of the issues arising out of the engagement that you should be made aware of.

Appendix 1 provides a summary of the status of prior year issues. We acknowledge the management for addressing two (2) of the three (3) issues raised in the prior year report.

The issues that follow are raised for your attention:

2.1 Property, Plant & Equipment

The following issues were identified during testing:

1. There were 94 assets listed on the PPE register that had a 'nil' net book value (NBV).
In order to appropriately maintain and update the PPE register, steps should be taken to dispose of those assets that have a nil NBV and no longer operational. Guidance on disposing of assets is provided in the *Cook Islands Government Financial Policies & Procedures Manual (CIGFPPM) Part B Section 10 – Disposal of assets*.
2. All of the items listed in the PPE register were not labelled and were not separately identifiable. This is a breach of Part B Section 2 subsection 3.3 of CIGFPPM, "*All Fixed Assets must be separately identifiable and if they are not they should have a Fixed Asset Control Number and be tagged or marked*".

It is important to note that the office is currently in the process of undertaking a stock take and by going through this exercise, they will be resolving underlying issues surrounding PPE such as the above mentioned.

Risk Level	Medium
Recommendation	<p>We recommend the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The PPE register should be adequately maintained at least on a monthly basis. Part of this responsibility entails ensuring that it is free of assets that no longer exist, are damaged/ in disrepair and no longer work. Disposal of these assets can be done in accordance with <i>CIGFPPM Part B, Section 10</i>. All future purchases of PPE above \$3,000 requires Cabinet approval. 2. Management complies with CIGFPPM, Part B, section 2, Asset Control Number, which states: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) All assets need to be uniquely identifiable. b) The asset tag shall then be recorded in the PPE Register with all of the associated details including asset description, manufacturer's serial number, transportation costs and installation costs if applicable. c) All unused fixed asset control tags shall be kept in a secure location.
Clerk of Parliament's Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reference to all future purchases of PPE above \$3,000 requiring Cabinet approval is noted. 2. In response to Audit Recommendation 1, the Clerk initiated a verification process to address compliance issues with <i>CIGFPPM Part B, Section 10</i>, in the form of an internal review of the Parliamentary Services Fixed Assets Register which was conducted jointly by the Clerk and the Finance Manager on Tuesday 19 March 2019 to ascertain the current status of the Register. The review found that there are indeed the stated number of technical equipment and furniture still listed on the Fixed Assets Register that are over ten years old and therefore have zero Net Book Value, however, they remain on the register as per <i>CIGFPPM Part B, Section 2: 3.8.2</i> for three reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Many items are located in offices that were used by staff that have left Parliament for which no replacements have been recruited yet, so such items are held in reserve for the use of the new staff to be recruited in the 2019/2020 financial year; b) A large proportion of these items are currently fully operational and still being used by incumbent Parliamentary Services staff; c) The remaining items are retained as stand-by replacement parts for similar equipment still in use.

	<p>3. In response to Audit Recommendation 2, the Clerk acknowledges that Parliamentary Services have not been active in tagging new purchases with an asset number. Therefore, in compliance with CIGFPPM, Part B, section 2, 3.9 the Clerk has introduced the following remedial measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A physical stocktake was conducted on Friday 22 March of all assets listed in the PPE Register and all items that were obsolete and/or damaged and no longer usable were disposed of in a chuck-out day exercise throughout the whole day and such items were in turn struck off the PPE Register; b) A new customised fixed asset tag system (i.e. Pre-numbered self-adhesive vinyl stickers) was devised that will be used to tag all remaining assets as well as all new purchases. <p>Sample:</p> <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; text-align: center;"> <p style="color: white; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">PROPERTY OF PARLIAMENT</p> <p style="font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold; margin: 5px 0;">0001</p> <hr style="width: 100px; margin: 0 auto;"/> <p style="font-size: 8pt; margin: 0;">PURCHASE DATE</p> </div>
--	---

Conclusion

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for the kind assistance received during the engagement.

The Audit Office is always looking for ways of improving our service and would appreciate any feedback, you and your staff may wish to make. Please ensure that you complete the client survey questionnaire upon the completion of this audit. This can be accessed by clicking on to the following link; <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JQ36TL2>.

The Public Expenditure Review Committee and Audit (PERCA) Act 1995-96, Section 32, paragraph 2, requires you to reply in writing within **14 days** to report your planned action to implement the recommendations contained in this report. Accordingly, we look forward to receiving your comments by **2 April 2019**. Forward all responses to:

The Director of Audit
PO Box 659
Avarua
Rarotonga
Fax: (682) 25 231
Email: perca@cookislands.gov.ck

Yours sincerely

Allen Parker
Director of Audit