

**NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGY (NACS)**  
**(DRAFT MEDIA RELEASE)**

The first draft National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) for the Cook Islands has now been released for public comment.

Announcing the release, Mr Garth Henderson, Financial Secretary and Chair of the Government's Anti-Corruption Committee (ACC) recalled that since the ACC was established in 2011 there has been close and very useful collaboration among Government's key enforcement agencies to address corruption and to implement the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in the Cook Islands.

Government had requested the ACC several years ago to begin work on an anti-corruption strategy as called for in UNCAC. That proved impossible until recently because of resource constraints within the key agencies to develop the strategy and the additional pressures brought on by the Covid 19 pandemic. However, the situation changed earlier this year after discussions between the ACC and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Fiji. *"I am pleased to advise that, with the financial assistance of New Zealand, the UNODC has recruited the services of Dr Jim Gosselin in late May to assist the ACC to draft the NACS and the initial results have been released today for public comment"* explained Mr Henderson.

Besides the Financial Secretary, the ACC comprises the Public Service Commission, the Solicitor General, the Commissioner of Police, the Ombudsman, the Chief of Staff of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Director of the Public Expenditure and Review Committee and Audit (PERCA), the Auditor, and the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit.

Given the importance of public participation in preventing and fighting against corruption, public comments are being sought on the Strategy from individuals and groups both on Rarotonga and in the Pa Enea. The draft will be revised taking into account comments received and will be submitted to the Government to take office after 1 August for its consideration.

The public is requested to bear in mind that the draft NACS is an important step in the ongoing process of addressing corruption in the Cook Islands. It had to be kept as brief as possible and not too detailed given the wide scope of corruption matters covered in the UNCAC. The focus in the draft is on identifying the priority issues to be addressed over the coming few years and how best to tackle them.

The ACC is particularly interested to hear from the public on what should be the corruption priorities to be addressed and how should we go about doing so.

The NACS does not address any allegations of past or current corruption, those matters to be referred to the appropriate agency.

Electronic copies of the NACS are available on the MFEM website – Media Release ([NACS Draft](#))

The public is invited to submit comments on the draft NACS to Dr Jim Gosselin (jimgosselinpifs@yahoo.com) by 23 July 2022.