

Family violence and youth justice follow-up workshop held

(Supreme Court Press Release) On September 9 through September 11, 2014 the Judiciary and the Pacific Judicial Development Program held a follow-up workshop on Family Violence and Youth Justice at the Koror State Assembly Hall. Participants were mainly the stakeholder agencies involved in the implementation of the Family Protection Act such as the Bureau of Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General, Judiciary, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs. Other participants included senators, members of the Palau Bar Association, Ministry of Education officials, PCC/Talent Search Program representatives, and various non-governmental organizations and interested citizens including First Lady Debbie M. Remengesau.

The purpose of the workshop was to study the Family Protection Act, review protocols established by some of the partner agencies to ensure the implementation of the Act; and to discuss the progress made since the last Family Violence and Youth Justice Workshop held in 2012 also sponsored by the Judiciary and PJDP.

Some of the topics presented included a presentation of the scheme of the Act, from police responsibilities to the various crimes under the Act and the process for obtaining a civil domestic abuse restraining order. There was also a presentation of the on the specialist services available at the Behavioral Health Division, including those for domestic abuse cases. Participants walked away with a deeper understanding of the procedures in place such as police officers' ability to issue a 24 hour stay away order when an incident is reported. Clar-

ification was also made between the filing of criminal charges of abuse of family/household member by the Attorney General's Office and a victim's right to pursue a civil restraining order, by filing a petition at the Clerk of Courts Office. After hour procedures have also been established should a victim need to file for a temporary restraining order during non-working hours.

Judge Peter Boshier, a former Principal Family Court Judge and current Law Commissioner with the New Zealand Law Commission not only assisted in facilitating the workshop but also did a presentation on the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment, a tool designed to assess the likelihood that a person who has assaulted will do so again.

Agreed outcomes of the workshop included the need for a shelter, allocation of fines to support victims' services, better data collection and information sharing, legislation specifically for elderly abuse, etc., Many thanks to Mr. Lorenze Metzner, International Programmes Manager of the Pacific Judicial Development Programme and his staff whose invaluable assistance ensured the successful outcome of the workshop. The Judiciary would also like to thank the Pacific Judicial Development Programme for its generous assistance not only for this workshop but for the many capacity-building and judicial development courses throughout the years to address the needs of local courts. The Pacific Judicial Development Programme is implemented by the Federal Court of Australia with funding support from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.