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Court presidents and clerks told to perform professionally

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Chief Justice Sir Albert Palmer has acknowledged the vitality of a workshop held for presidents and clerks of the local courts.

The workshop 'Decision-Making & Judgment Writing' workshop was held at the Honiara Hotel on Monday last week and ended last Friday.

Speaking during the workshop's opening, Sir Albert said it is important for the participants to understand where they fit in the National Judiciary and the structure of courts.

The workshop was funded through the Pacific Judicial Development Program (PJDP) by the New Zealand Government and administered by the Federal Court of Australia.

Speaking to the participants who came from the provinces, the chief justice said it is important from the outset to understand where they fit, in the big picture; where their position or location is, in the National Judiciary and the structure of the courts.

"You carry a heavy responsibility and burden on your shoulders as presidents and clerks of the Local Court."

He encourage them to ensure court proceedings are conducted fairly without fear or favour to any one party, that rules of natural justice, evidence and due process are taken into account.

"You must deliver a decision that is appropriate to the issues before you.

"The decision that you make can have direct and long term impact and effects not only on the parties but on matters touching tribal lands, tribes or communities within the vicinity or region, families and individuals for generations."

He told the participants that they will appreciate that in some cases; they lack the necessary knowledge to do the job competently and well, to a satisfactory standard.

"It is important that you understand what your duties, roles and obligations are so that you are able to turn to discharge them competently, fairly, impartially and timely.

"Part of our role and duty is to ensure that you are able to do so, that you are equipped and empowered to do that and this is achieved through training workshops such as these."

By **ASSUMPTA BUCHANAN**

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