

## Battle against corruption not just for leaders

ALL SECTORS of society need to take responsibility for corrupt practices hampering the future of the Cook Islands.

That was the message from Members of Parliament who were vocal in the second day of a two-day workshop, aiming to inform our national leaders on the requirements and good practices of anti-corruption and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

The Cook Islands, along with 11 other Pacific nations is a party to UNCAC as well as a member of the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC).

Yesterday MPs discussed the role of GOPAC, and the need to look at corruption not only by parliamentarians, but other sectors of society.

Chair of GOPAC international and one of the workshop facilitators John Hyde said what they had gathered from talks across the region was the need to address all forms of corruption.

From faith-based organisations, to traditional and sport groups as well as the private

sector, it seemed no sector of society was immune to corrupt practices.

The MPs also spoke about the need to bring more women to the decision-making table.

Speaker of Parliament Nikiki Rattle said she and veteran Democratic Party MP Ngau-mau Munokoa planned to sit down with representatives of all the political parties and the prime minister to revisit the issue.

Hyde also said there was room to incorporate young people into GOPAC's work.

Most Pacific countries were concerned about their young people leaving to go overseas.

"We need to send the message that they can be valued and that their opinions matter."

Members of Parliament will worked to re-establish the GOPAC committee and elect a chair yesterday afternoon, as well as establish a code of conduct.

GOPAC Cook Islands is currently chaired by Minister of Health Nandi Glassie.

The workshop wrapped up yesterday afternoon.

■ **Phillipa Webb**



Members of Parliament during the second day of the anti-corruption workshop.



Cook Islands Party MP for Vaipae-Tautu Mona Ioane takes notes during the anti-corruption workshop.