

Dr Carolyn Graydon:

During the PJSP Access to Justice webinar on '**Implementing Family Protection Acts**', there was also a lot of interest regarding the Palau Court's longstanding role in working with others via the FPA MOU.

Other courts were wondering how the Palau Court was able to directly contribute to the coordination mechanisms while maintaining the balance of its actual and perceived neutrality/independence.

I said that this does not present an issue for court independence and neutrality providing that individual cases are never discussed in the coordination mechanism in the presence of a member of the court. I also shared that some courts delegate senior court staff (rather than judicial officers) to represent the court in these forums.

Further, I also said that I would seek your response to this question as to how the Palau Court is represented in the mechanism, to share with those who attended the webinar, if that is ok with you.

Justice Rudimch:

Ultimately, the judiciary only addresses what was required of us under the Act. In the beginning we realised we could create these forms and implement internal protocols but if there was no coordination with the other relevant agencies then it would not make a difference. So, we reached out to the other agencies and let them know there was this new law that affected our agencies and the services we provide and asked for their assistance.

Our meetings and discussions are always about the process and addressing any challenges. During the public outreach we participate in, we only report on the process and information that comes from our annual reports and tying them to some of the survey results in the health survey previously done. No cases are discussed and if there was ever a question to that effect, we tell them we cannot answer that question.

In the beginning we saw the importance of having a judge lead some of the work because it shows that we take the matter seriously. But as much as we can we do send out designated staff. We also check ahead of time the staff from the other agencies who will be involved and if there was any conflict, we would inform the coordinators to minimise any appearance of improprieties.