

# BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE &  
ATTORNEY GENERAL



January - February, 2024  
Issue No. 1



Justice Minister & Attorney General handing over the dummy court house key to Chief Justice, Sir Gibbs Salika during the official opening of the new court house in Imbonggu District, Southern Highlands Province.

## 2024 Legal Year Opening

As we step into the new year, we are delighted to announce the official commencement of the 2024 Legal Year, marked by momentous ceremonies; the opening of legal year and a court house.

Our dedicated lawyers from the Office of the Solicitor General and State Solicitor have taken their oaths, signaling the initiation of their roles as the representatives of the State and custodians of the law.

Continued on Page 3.

Welcome  
to Issue  
#1!



DJAG Lawyers posing for a group photo with Solicitor General Mr. Tauvasa Tanuvasa during the 2024 Legal Year Opening.

## Acknowledgements

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## Secretary's Desk



**Dr. Eric Kwa, PhD**

Dear readers,

I am delighted to present to you the first edition of our department's bi-monthly Newsletter for the year 2024. I trust you will find it both informative and engaging as it brings you the latest updates from our department.

As we embark on this new year, I extend a warm welcome to all of you and eagerly anticipate our continued collaboration and dedication in the months ahead.

Let us all be mindful of our commitment to serving the State and the People of Papua New Guinea. Regardless of our respective roles, whether as lawyers or support staff, we are united under a singular mission and vision: to deliver Quality, Reliable, Timely, and Accessible Legal and Justice Services to our nation, fostering a Safe, Secure, and Peaceful Society.

I encourage you to reflect on the insightful remarks made by Prime Minister Hon. James Marape during the Public Servants dedication service. It is imperative that we heed his words and strive for improvements in this new year of 2024.

May God Bless Papua New Guinea.

*Thank you!*

**Dr. Eric Kwa, PhD**  
Secretary



# Dr. Kwa extends warm welcome to staff members



**Justice Secretary**  
**Dr. Eric Kwa**

*"Foster Respect For Everyone!"*



**Prime Minister**  
**Hon. James Marape**

Secretary for Justice Dr. Eric Kwa, has officially welcome all department staff back to work this year 2024.

"Happy New Year (2024) and very warm welcome to you all. I am confident that each one of us will serve with diligence in our respective roles as public servants and contribute positively towards a safe, secure and peaceful society for all."

"The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Hon. James Marape, has urged every citizen to foster respect in 2024. The PM stated that, the people must foster respect for one another to contribute to the betterment of the country by having respect for each other, starting in our homes with husbands and respecting wives, wives respecting husbands and children respecting parents."

The Prime Minister encourage citizens to be engaged in lawful and productive activities and show respect and tolerance towards each other."

"The Minister for Justice, Hon. Pila Niningi in his address to the media on corruption, stated that as a key priority, we must effectively combat corruption at all levels and on a sustained basis. Minister Niningi reaffirmed PNG's resolve and seriousness to fighting corruption. He stated that the country's security, stability and prosperous development and future cannot be held by corruption."

As I welcome you back to work, I urge each one of us to seriously consider the words of our Prime Minister and the Attorney General and Minister for Justice, to respect each other at all levels and also ensure we seriously fight corruption in the Department.

Thank you for your support, commitment and dedication in serving our people and our country.

**Dr. Eric Kwa, PhD**  
Secretary





# Legal Year Opening: Custodians of Law



PICTURE: The Chief Justice, judges, magistrates, and lawyers pose for a group photo after the inaugural opening.



PICTURE: Solicitor General Mr. Tauvasa Tanuvasa engage in a friendly conversation with colleagues after the opening.



PICTURE: Minister for Justice & Attorney General (center) posing with Judges during the 2024 Legal Year Opening in Imbonggu District.



PICTURE: DJAG Lawyer posing for a group photo during the 2024 Legal Year Opening.



PICTURE: Minister Hon. Pila Niningi addressing the opening of the Legal Year and inaugurating the new courthouse in the Imbonggu District of Southern Highlands Province.



PICTURE: DJAG Lawyers at the Legal Year Opening gathered for a group photo.

The 2024 Legal Year commenced with an inaugural ceremony on February 5th in Port Moresby, followed by a similar event on February 20th in the Imbonggu district of the Southern Highlands.

These ceremonies coincided with the official opening of a new courthouse in Imbonggu. During these events, Minister for Justice, Hon. Pila Niningi and Chief Justice, Sir Gibbs Salika emphasized their crucial roles as custodians of the law in the country.





# 10 New Magistrates take the Bench



ABOVE: Newly Sworn In Magistrates posing (standing at the background) with the Minister for Justice & Attorney General, Hon. Pila Niningi (seated 4th from left) and other Law & Justice Sector Agency Heads.

Ten new magistrates were sworn-in by the acting Chief Justice Ambeng Kandakasi at the Waigani National Courts's Centre for Judicial Excellence recently, in January.

The occasion was witnessed by the Attorney General and Justice Minister, Hoin Pila Niningi, the Chief Magistrate, Mark Pupaka and other heads of the law and justice sector agencies.

Minister Ninigni's keynote address stressed that the government has been supportive towards the magisterial services, the judiciary and the justice system of the country as a whole.

The 10 probationary magistrates will serve for a period of 12 months in Hela, Jiwaka, Eastern Highlands, East New Britain, New Ireland, Port Moresby and Morobe provinces.



# Dr. Kwa applauds Justice Minister for successful Bills



PICTURE: Minister for Justice & Attorney General, Hon Pila Niningi presenting the two Constitutional Amendments to the floor of Parliament recently.

Department Secretary, Dr Eric Kwa, PhD has congratulated the Minister for Justice & Attorney General, Honourable Pila Niningi, MP for presenting two of the department's Constitutional Amendments that got overwhelming support from the Parliament recently.

The Amendments are Declare PNG a Christian Country and High Courts Restructure to create an Appeal's Court.

Dr Kwa said these were very significant milestone amendments that will provide strong foundation for the country's democracy.

“ Thank you Minister and also to our team at DJAG, particularly the Legal Policy & Governance Branch, the Office of the State Solicitor; and the Social and Law & Order Sector (SLOS) Secretariat for progressing these reforms,” Dr Kwa said.





# Dr. Kwa clarifies disputed statements on Bill



PICTURES: Dr. Eric Kwa clarifying the passing of the bill on Constitutional Amendments regarding the Declaration of PNG as a Christian Country at the WNB Haus, Waigani, in Port Moresby.

In a recent press conference held on Friday, February 16th, Secretary for Justice and Attorney General (DJAG) Dr. Eric Kwa has clarified disputed statements made in parliament regarding the tabling of the bill to declare Papua New Guinea (PNG) as a Christian country.

The bill was officially tabled in Parliament on Thursday, February 15th, by Minister Hon. Pila Niningi and received support from 80 members of Parliament, against 10 from the Opposition.

In responding to the disputed statements from the Opposition, Dr. Kwa reiterated that it is important to note that this Constitutional Amendment does not affect an individual's right to Freedom of Religion in Section 45 of the Constitution. This qualified right of an individual remains intact. This also means that this Constitutional Amendment does not affect the presence of other religions in PNG.

The Constitutional Amendment basically relates to the character of PNG as a State. With this Constitutional Amendment, PNG will be deemed a Christian Country. This proposal is not uncommon in the global community. There are certain countries in the world which are characterized by their religion or faith. Also PNG is not the only country in the region to declare itself as a Christian Country – Samoa has already amended its Constitution to declare it as a Christian country.

This constitutional declaration will not affect foreign investments. In fact, it might boost foreign investments because investors will be encouraged by the fact that because PNG upholds Judeo-Christian values, their assets will be protected," Dr. Kwa said.



# SLOS shifts focus to regional Law & Order Issues

## First NCM Meeting of 2024 Sets Agenda for Regional Law & Order Strategy



PICTURE: The National Coordinating Mechanism (NCM) members engaged in critical discussions to tackle targeted law & order challenges impacting the country recently at the Lamana Hotel, Port Moresby.

In the first National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) Meeting of 2024, Dr. Eric Kwa, Chairman of NCM and Secretary for Justice & Attorney General (DJAG), proposed a focused approach for the Law & Justice Sector to address regional law and order issues.

"I propose that our sector's focus be directed towards administering justice services to tackle key regional law and order issues," Dr. Kwa emphasized. "We must devise a holistic approach or strategy to address the diverse law and order issues affecting our country."

Each province within the four regions has its unique set of law and order issues. It's imperative that we develop a holistic approach to mobilize resources effectively to tackle these targeted issues."

Dr. Kwa underscored the urgency for the Justice Sector to take lead and to take proactive measures, particularly in addressing tribal conflicts prevalent in the Highlands region.





# ICAC presents Law Books to DJAG Library

The Commissioner for the PNG Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), Mr Andrew Forbes on Tuesday (27th February 2024) presented two legal resource books to the department's legal library.

The books titled 'Justice in Tribunals' and 'Evidence Law in Queensland' were presented to the Executive Manager for Library & Records, Mrs Wilma Marakan during a brief meet at the WNB Haus.

During the presentation Mr Forbes said the books are basically about running a tribunal and the laws in Queensland and will be very useful to the lawyers in PNG as most of the laws in the country are based on Australian Laws; hence these books will be very resourceful.

Surprisingly, Mr Forbes happens to be the son of the Author of the books, namely JRS Forbes.

"My father is an academic and he has written a lot of legal books over the years. Every lawyer in Queensland has a copy of his books," he said.

Meanwhile, a pleased Department Secretary, Dr Eric Kwa, PhD thanked Mr Forbes saying how fortunate and significant it was for the son of the author; who is also the ICAC Commissioner to deliver the books to the department.

Dr Kwa thanked the Forbes family for giving this very useful material for the department's use especially the lawyers.

"DJAG has one of the best legal libraries in the country and this addition is another bonus to a whole range of resource books



ABOVE: At the brief presentation, Commissioner for the PNG Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), Mr Andrew Forbes (centre), Department Secretary, Dr Eric Kwa, PhD (left) and Executive Manager for Library & Records, Mrs Wilma Marakan (right).

for our lawyers as it will be placed in our legal library. Our legal library is also used by lawyers around the country," he said.



# Australian Scholarship Information Session: Unlocking opportunities for education abroad

**Australia Awards**  
in Papua New Guinea



ABOVE: Scholarship information session kicked off with over 20 DJAG staff in attendance.



ABOVE: DJAG officers paying attention to details of the presentation.



ABOVE: Australian Scholarship Team representative (second from left) alongside the DJAG HRM team and officers after the information session.

The Department of Justice & Attorney General (DJAG) was delighted to host a representative from the Australian Awards Scholarship program for an informative session on Friday 09th Feb, 2024.

The Information Session on the Australian Awards Scholarship concluded successfully, with over 20 DJAG staff members expressing keen interest in attendance.

During the session, DJAG staff with over five years of service were encouraged to apply for the scholarship. The session provided essential insights into the scholarship application process.

The Scholarship representative commended DJAG, noting that among numerous government agencies, DJAG stood out for its strong adherence to scholarship requirements.

We invite you to join us to gain further insights into the application process and procedures for this scholarship program.

Interested applicants or nominees must fulfill all eligibility criteria outlined in the Australian Awards Scholarship Policy Handbook, available at:

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/aus-awards-scholarship-policy-handbook.pdf>.



# Quarterly Review Concludes on a Positive Note

Mr. Stanley Raka emphasized the necessity of establishing a Communication Strategy for the Department during the fourth-quarter review at Gateway Hotel on Thursday, January 18th of this year.

"It is crucial to have a well-defined Communication

Strategy to avoid operating on an ad hoc basis or in isolation," he asserted. Mr. Raka highlighted the importance of ensuring that departmental information materials are prepared effectively, following a proper process before dissemination.



Deputy Secretary NPCCP Mr. Stanley Raka making a point during the quarterly review.



Director Law & Justice Sector (LJSS) Mr. Joe Saferius doing his presentation during the quarterly review.

## DJAG's new 5-year Corporate Plan underway

The new Five (5) year Corporate Plan for the Department of Justice & Attorney General (DJAG) is currently being worked on by the Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E) Branch alongside with all other branches of the department.

DJAG Secretary, Dr Eric Kwa, PhD has called on respective branches to make sure all information

required by the PME Branch to populate the new DJAG Corporate Plan (2024 -2028).

While making this call, Dr Kwa said the last DJAG Corporate Plan (2019 – 2023) has now come to its conclusion and we all must now put efforts into completing the new Plan.





# DJAG joins other Public Servants for the 8th dedication service



ABOVE: Prime Minister James Marape addressing the Public Servants at the Dedication Service.



ABOVE: Sir John Guineas Stadium's Indoor Complex, filled with Public Servants who attended the 8th Dedication Service.

The 8th Public Service Dedication Gathering under the theme “Building the Nation in Unity Through Public Service Delivery,” took place at the Sir John Guise Stadium on the 7th of January 2024.

Staff from the Department of Justice & Attorney General joined other Public Servants all around the Nation's Capital who took the morning off from work to attend the Dedication Service.

Speaking at the dedication service, Prime Minister, James Marape, challenged all public servants to do the best and to work together as they have been given the privilege to make a difference for the nation.

“Our forefathers made a difference for us with limited opportunities unlike the numerous opportunities we have today. Now we are placed with the challenge of placing our nation at a better position for the future generation; and a better society for us to retire into when it comes to our retirement as public servants,” he said.

Meanwhile DJAG's A/Secretary Mrs Lillian Woruba, thanked the staff and management of the department who attended the gathering.





# Progressive work at Wewak Boys Town



PICTURE: Students undergoing on-the-job training from Wirui Vocational School and Bernard Narokobi (Yawasoro) Vocational School.



PICTURE: Building in progress.



PICTURE: Building in progress.

Progressive development at Wewak Boys Town: Illustrated in the accompanying photographs, students undergoing on-the-job training from Wirui Vocational School and Bernard Narokobi (Yawasoro) Vocational School are making significant strides in the construction of four buildings. These buildings include the Recreational Hall, dormitory, multi-grade primary school classroom, and TVET Workshop.

To monitor the project's advancement over the 16-week duration, regular inspections will be conducted to ensure adherence to timelines and quality standards.

This update and visual documentation were provided by Mr. Collin Sakap, Director of Juvenile Justice Services.



# Public Notices

## Prohibition of smoking cigarette and chewing betel nuts in Government offices



Public Service General Order No. 15;

**15.59** Smoking is strictly forbidden in all Government offices. Any officers found to be smoking is to be charged with a serious disciplinary offence.

**15.60** Betel nut chewing is strictly forbidden in all Government offices. Any offices found chewing betel nut is to be charged with a serious disciplinary offence.

## Condolence Messages



**Late Mr. Vali Hobart**  
07th February, 1979 – 24th  
December, 2023

The office of the Secretary and the Staff of the department of Justice & Attorney General deeply mourn the unfortunate passing of our esteemed colleague, Mr Vali Hobart.

The late Mr. Hobart passed peacefully on the eve of Christmas 24th December, 2023 at the Port Moresby General Hospital around 10:00pm.

He joined the Department in 2009 and has served for 14 years till his untimely death after being diagnosed with his right kidney been not functioning well and is survived by his two children and his wife.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his immediate family members, relatives, and friends. May the good Lord provide solace and strength to all those affected by this profound loss. May Mr. Hobart rest in eternal peace.

“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone  
O Lord, make me dwell in safety.” Psalms 4:8





## Workplace Sexual Harassment is a serious offence

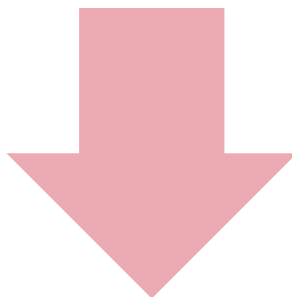
Workplace Sexual Harassment is a serious offence that is not tolerated in the Department of Justice & Attorney General (DJAG). The Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Unit and the Human Resource Management Branch ensures that any reported case is dealt with accordingly.

Sexual Harassment is an unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated.

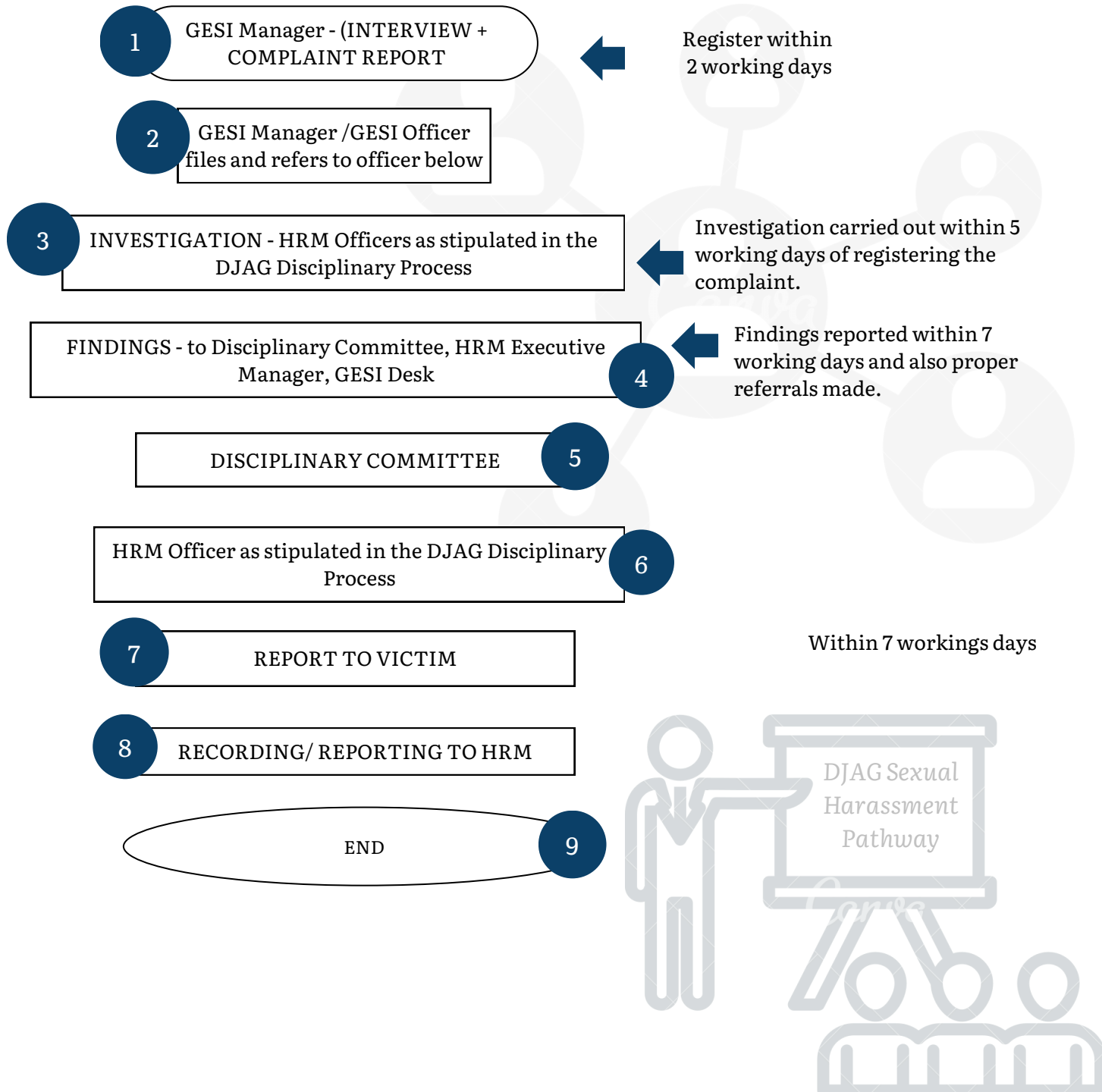
Sexual Harassment can take various forms and involves conduct such as:

- Suggestive comments or jokes;
- Insults or taunts of a sexual nature;
- Inappropriate advances on social networking sites;
- Sexually explicit pictures, posters, screen savers, emails, tweets, social networking posts, SMS or instant messages;
- Intrusive contact or conduct or a suggestive nature via phone, text, email, social media, or in-person outside of working hours;
- Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing;
- Staring and leering;
- Unwanted invitations for sex or persistent requests to go out on dates;
- Intrusive questions about another person's private life or body;
- Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against someone;
- Accessing sexually explicit internet sites; and
- Behavior which would also be an offence under the criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

**Refer to DJAG Workplace Sexual Harassment “REFERRAL PATHWAY DIAGRAMS” on the next pages.**

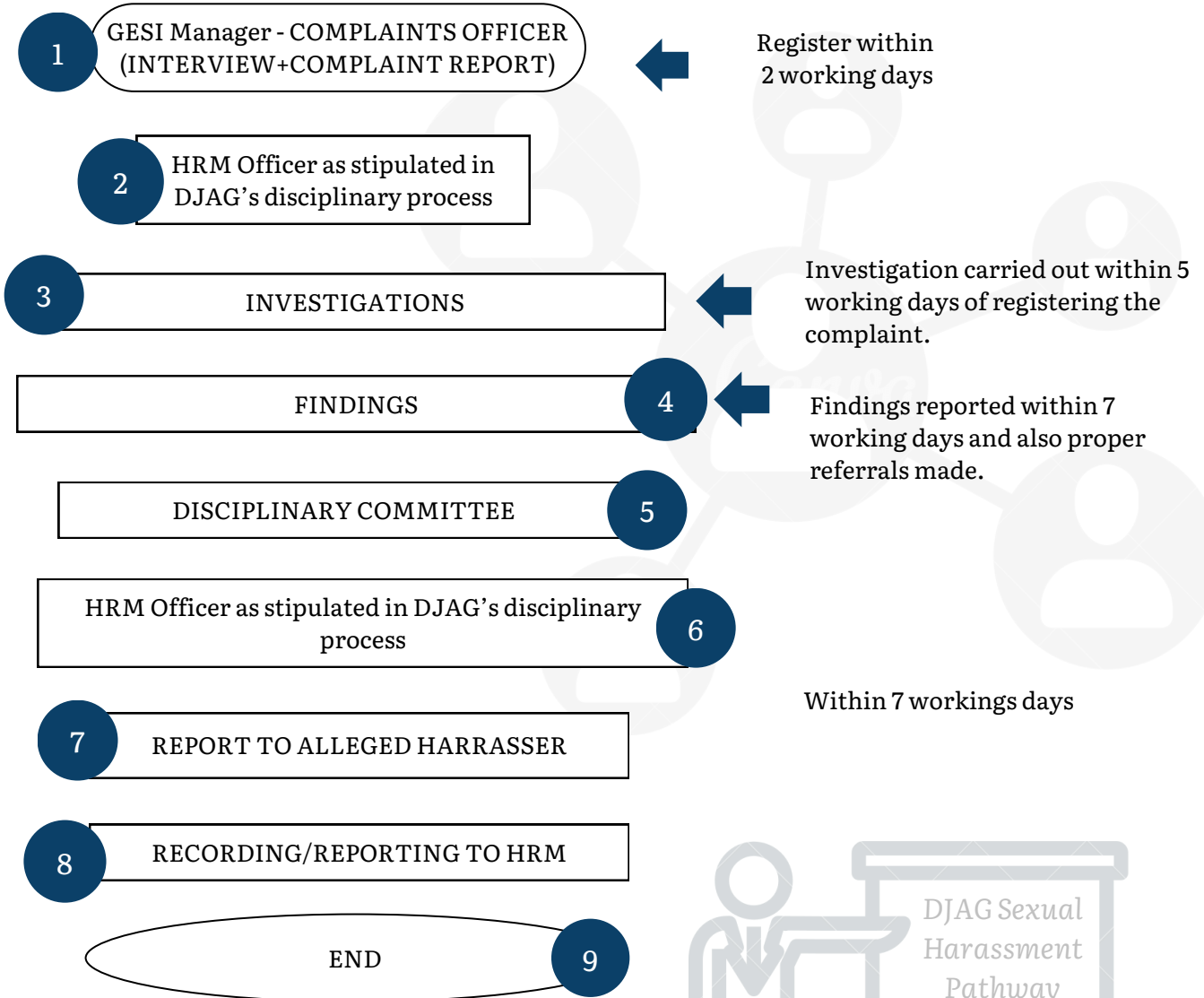


## PROCESS FOR COMPLAINANT



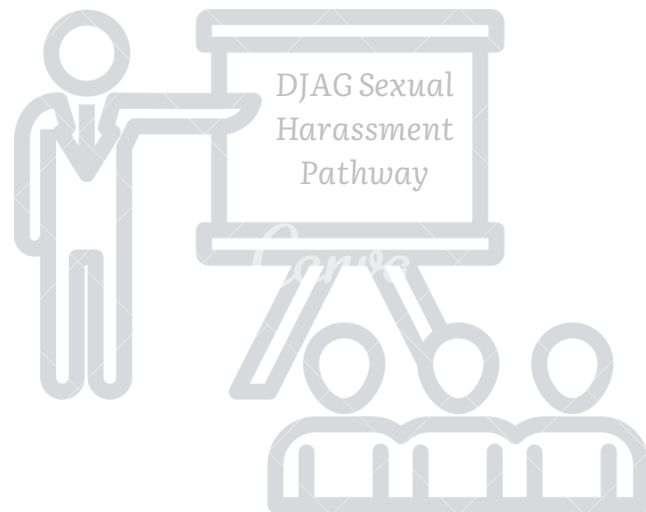


## PROCESS FOR ALLEGED HARASSER



**Contact:**  
**GESI Helpdesk**

Phone: 3012981  
Email: [Gesi.Heldesdesk@justice.gov.pg](mailto:Gesi.Heldesdesk@justice.gov.pg)





## Department of Justice & Attorney General

*"A safe, Secure & Peaceful Society for all"*

To Provide Quality, Reliable, Timely and Accessible Legal & Justice Service to the State and the People of Papua New Guinea.

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### **Values**

#### **Rule of Law**

- We strive to instill corporate confidence by respecting, promoting and ensuring that the Rule of Law is maintained at all times.

#### **Equality and Fairness**

- All persons and corporate bodies are equal before the law and must be accorded every opportunity to contribute to nation building. We exercise our duties and responsibilities without fear or favor.

#### **Custom-Founded Justice System**

- We acknowledge the worthy outcome and traditional wisdom of our people as the underlying consideration of our justice system

#### **Transparency and Accountability**

- We promote transparency, accountability and good governance where all decisions are made in the national interest. We are accountable for our decisions and actions.

#### **Corporate Integrity**

- We uphold core values and principles of our organization and contribute for our decisions and actions.

#### **Excellence**

- Each employee is respected as having worth to the organization with aspiration that the Department endeavor to match in its policies and opportunities.

*A Safe, Secure & Peaceful Society for All*