



ODPP MEDIA UPDATE

Disappointing Comments by RM Puamau in Freesoul Matter

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) is disappointed with the comments made by Resident Magistrate Seini Puamau at the Freesoul sentencing hearing yesterday (14.9.21) when it was reported in Fiji Village that she stated that there is a history of miscommunication issues with the DPP's office.

On 25.8.21 the ODPP State Counsel in carriage of this matter was informed via mobile phone from a Suva Magistrates' Court registry clerk that the Freesoul matter would be called for sentence hearing via skype. The officer was also informed by the clerk that the Magistrates' Court Registry would contact him again to confirm the date of the sentence hearing but this never happened. There was no official notification of this matter to the ODPP Registry. We also note that this matter was not listed in the weekly cause list for the Suva Magistrates' Court.

The ODPP Registry was only informed yesterday (14.9.21) after 2 pm that the Freesoul matter would be called for sentence hearing at 2.30pm in Magistrates' Court 3. The ODPP was not informed that there would not be any skype hearing.

The DPP, Christopher Pryde, said "ODPP State Counsel are diligent in noting and attending all court matters when properly advised by the courts. It is unfortunate and regrettable that the resident magistrate chose to speak as she did without being in possession of all the facts."

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