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Transition Report

I. About the Organization

Publication And Law Access Unit aka PALAU Office was established by Executive Order 209 thru grant from the United States. Since the Order's issuance, the PALAU Office has moved through several different ministries until recently the Palau Code Commission took managerial control over the PALAU Office as per Executive Order 413. The PALAU Office is staffed by one full time employee, Marina I. Udui [Editor] and one part-time employee Lindsay E. Pedro [Assistant Codification Specialist]. The PALAU office salaries are funded through the Code Commission, which receives \$64,000 annually. The PALAU Office also has a separate account, mentioned below, funded through subscription fees for the Law Search CD Program and the sales of the printed copy of the Code. In a year, the PALAU Office typically makes \$20,000. The money in this account currently sits somewhere around \$100,000.

Palau National Code Commission aka Code Commission is a committee established by RPPL 1-34 which is authorized to compile, revise, codify and publish all statutes and other general and permanent laws of the Republic of Palau. RPPL 7-29 ' 3 authorized the Code Commission to produce and publish the PNCA code on a regular basis. A separate revolving fund was also established in the National Treasury to be administered by the publisher of the PNCA code. The PALAU Office in conjunction with the Code Commission is responsible for carrying out the mission of codifying and/or publishing the laws of Palau.

II. Ongoing project:

The 14th supplement to the PNCA Code which update the code thru RPPL 10-58 is completed and will be incorporated in to Google Drive tomorrow, November 20, 2020. CDs for the Law Search program will be made available next week. The PALAU Office continues to update and maintain the two systems of law search as new legislation are passed. Ongoing codification process continues as new laws becomes available.

III. Law Storage and Search Problems:

The Law Search Program (dtSearch) has not been updated since 2002 and the computer used to add content to the law search cd (when new legislation is passed) is also from 2002 and dangerously close to crashing. The lack of updates to the law search program resulted in an inaccurate system that is challenging to use and update with new content. The PALAU Office has hired a number of on islands IT to upgrade the system but they were unable to do so due to lack of expertise and/or resources. The outdated dtSearch program although still running posed a problem re compatibility, accuracy and accessibility.

IV. Improve/upgrade law search program

On July 2018, the PALAU Office thru the Code Commission hired a student consultant (Hanah Sommers) from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to help improve/solve and upgrade the law search program or recommend a new and better way that legislation is stored and searched in Palau. After consideration/discussion the Code Commission and PALAU Office ultimately settled on Google Drive as a solution to store and search Palau laws. Google Drive was created for PALAU Office, the laws of Palau were uploaded to Google Drive, and the PALAU office staff were trained to use Google Drive. Google Drive was shared with the Code Commission and a handful of other on island attorneys. The implementation of Google Drive reduced the amount of time between when law is passed and when it is made available to users/attorneys by approximately 50/60 days. It also improved the efficiency of the PALAU Office. Finally, it provided a safe depository for laws that will be accessible even if the old computer crashes. In order to put the laws of Palau to Google Drive, it was imperative that the data itself be converted from WordPefect to Microsoft Word, as WordPerfect is outdated, no longer commonly used, and has poor compatibility with Google Drive. Most importantly, Google Drive put all the data on a system that is secure. Additionally, mac users can now access the laws of Palau on their computers using Google Drive. However, due to the outdated nature of WorPerfect, many of the converted documents were not correctly formatted, which if not cleaned and reformatted, will not be sufficient for attorneys or other users to use. For this reason, Google Drive is available to Code commission members and Bar members only. It was recommended that PALAU Office go through the documents one by one to reformat and ensure accuracy. Unfortunately, the student consultant after creating Google Drive for PALAU Office did not have enough time to upgrade the dtSearch program. Now, the PALAU Office have the task of maintaining two separate systems, one that needs cleaning up and the outdated one that is near extinction.

V. Availability of Palau Laws

The Palau Office is aware that current, up to date laws of Palau are not easily accessible without purchasing access to the Law Search Program; Google Drive or the hard copy of the PNC Code through our office. The Code Commission needs to communicate with the OEK to remedy the fact that Palau=s laws are not accessible to an average citizen.

VI. Recommendations:

- dtSearch Program needs to be upgraded; if not, the Code Commission and PALAU Office need to be committed to Google Drive and all efforts must be dedicated to improving and maintaining it.
- Hire a full or part time IT person to upgrade and maintain the law search system(s). Even if the dt.Search Program is updated, it will require maintenance and future updates.
- The Code Commission needs to be active and resume participation in reviewing and approving technical changes to legislation if needed as mandated by 1PNC '1002.
- Streamline the process of managing the PALAU's Office per EO 413.
- If Palau decides to invest in an advanced system such as PacLII or Fastcase, the mandate that the PALAU Office attempt to be self-funded has to be removed.