



OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

PUBLIC REPORT

**ON THE ESTABLISHMENT AND
MANAGEMENT OF THE MEMBERS
EDUCATION SUPPORT SCHEME
(MESS) BY VNPF BOARD AND THE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & TRAINING**

Date: 23 September 2021



REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

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1. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of the Investigation is to determine whether the “Member Education Support Scheme” hereafter referred to as “MESS” was established in accordance with relevant laws.

2. SCOPE

2. The scope of this Investigation is to determine–

(a) whether the formulation of the policy to enter into the Memorandum of Understanding between the then, Minister of Education, Honourable Jean-Pierre Nirua Minister and the Board of the Vanuatu National Provident Fund, hereafter referred to as the “MOU” met the development policy requirements under the Government Act (CAP 243) and the Constitution of Vanuatu; and

(b) whether proper consultations were carried out with relevant stake holders; and

(c) whether good administrative rules or guidelines were introduced by the parties to the MOU and MESS is being administered in accordance with such rules or guidelines to ensure that students who are recipient of scholarships under MESS are properly looked after and provided for.

3. This Investigation firstly, looked into the conduct of the Minister of Education hereafter referred to as “Minister” in the process of developing the initiative culminating in the signing of the MOU with VNPF.
4. Secondly, the Investigation looked into the conduct of the General Manager of VNPF in supporting the initiative and the process he utilized to carry out consultations and sought the approval of the VNPF Board.
5. Thirdly, the Investigation looked into the process utilized by the Minister to determine whether the policy was approved by the Council of Ministers as the initiative stems from the National Sustainable Development Goals (NSDG) Society Pillar 2 on “(increasing) higher education opportunities” to students coming out of high schools.
6. Fourth, the Investigation looked into the conduct of both parties to the MOU when after executing the MOU and agreed to commence MESS whether they agreed internal guidelines, polices, processes and systems to help them administer and implement MESS in a smooth and professional manner.
7. Finally, this Investigation is concerned mainly with issues of maladministration. The issues relating to the leadership code is for another day.