

# Dept women's team start public servants netball competition



L-R: Belinda Masi, Theresa Dhim, Vili Lesa, Ravu Tau, Rachael Arava and Theresa Gau. Photo courtesy of Caroline Leka

The Department women's netball team has started the 2023 Public Servants Netball Competition with two draws and one forfeit. On the first weekend of this month, the team went up against the Department of Personnel Management and drew six all in

Game one. In Game two, the team played won by forfeit against the Department of Finance and in game three, the team drew with Customs, nine all. The competition is run by the Public Servants Netball Association, which was established in 1989.

The competition provided an avenue for Public Servants to keep up their fitness levels and to build up stamina for their roles in the work place. The added benefit of playing was the building of networks between line agencies for smooth transferring of information.

## DEPARTMENT VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

OUR VISION IS TO PROVIDE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT OF PNG IN THE DEVELOPMENT, COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOUND POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE THAT WORKS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE.

OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE COHERENT, HIGH QUALITY AND TIMELY ADVISE AND SUPPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER, THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT.



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# STATEMENT

BY PRIME MINISTER, JAMES MARAPE, MP  
ON THE OCCASION OF PRIME MINISTER'S

# BACK TO BUSINESS Breakfast

HILTON HOTEL, FEBRUARY 01

It is indeed a pleasure to speak to all of you again at this annual Back to Business Breakfast meeting.

This as an important feature of my calendar early in any New Year, to help businesses understand how our government would like to do its job of supporting the growth of the private sector and businesses as we work for our country.

Government recognises the importance of the private sector in our economy and from upfront, let me say thank you to all of you for your support to Papua New Guinea.

### Ladies and Gentlemen

The job of government is to create a conducive socio-economic environment for businesses to grow, that I must admit.

Government must build and maintain the infrastructure and the security environment that provides the comfort for people to live and do business;

Government must build and support a conducive regulatory environment;

Government must build trade and investment relationships including linking producers to markets both domestically and internationally; Government must ensure that our Papua New Guinean labour supply is educated and healthy and available;

Government must stimulate and encourage small businesses to link up with large businesses and provide new business opportunities;

Government must ensure fair and equitable free market environment to ensure business thrive and grow with returns of profits to shareholders and tax and employment to PNG.

Ladies and Gentlemen, all these and much

more to help businesses we recognise; thus, I want to assure you all in the business community that you are in the heart and soul of my Government.

My Government has been given a very big mandate to continue led our country following the 2022 National General Elections.

We are not a new government; we went to the elections with distinct messages and an anchor message was that of economic independence.

That was the rationale of the change of government in 2019, that was the reason why my people voted my Pangu government back into office.

Our people heard us, the call of this generation of leaders to match political independence with economic strength and self-sufficiency, what we label as economic independence as the country travels past 50 years on nationhood.

This 11th Parliament is a significant one as it straddles the year 2025 when our people will celebrate 50 years of independence. The last 47 years were not easy years but our democracy and our economy has survived the test of time.

From an economy under K5 billion in 1975 to an economy of around K80 billion when I took over Government in 2019, today we have surpassed K110 billion.

This statistic shows that amidst the many problems that is amplified real time in contemporary PNG, we have grown the last 47 years from a very low place in as far as the size of our Gross Domestic Product.

### Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will ask me why am I mentioning this upfront and my answer is simple.

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# Message from the Chief Secretary

Welcome everyone to the second 2023 edition of the Inside Sir Manasupe Haus fortnightly newsletter.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge everyone's contribution towards the smooth operations of the Department last year and your continued dedication to the call to serve the people of Papua New Guinea.

Everyone of us must continue to work together to continue to deliver quality basic services to our people right across the country, and enable them to become economically viable leading to economic

independence.

Do not forget to adopt Christian values in your work ethics and your workplaces as well. Let us all work together with honesty, respect and tolerance to take back PNG.

In this second edition for 2023 of the Inside Sir Manasupe Haus Newsletter, on page 1, 2 & 3, We bring to you the Prime Minister James Marape's address to the business community during the Prime Minister's Back-Business Breakfast.

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Happy Reading!

Ivan Pomaleu OBE  
Chief Secretary

... from front page

Be optimistic, you in a growth country, our economy will continue to grow into the future and as we stick to the path, we placed PNG on after we took it back from the ugly hands of corruption and personal interests.

I promised PNG in my maiden 'richest black Christian nation' speech on 30th of May 2019 that by 2029 we will be a K200 billion economy. And with budget and economic repair and reconstruction as key part of my Government's priorities led by Treasurer Hon Ian Ling Stucky and my economic ministers team, we are on our way there.

My records speak for itself. Last three years have been amongst the toughest of our young nation's history yet we protected and grew our economy with responsible fiscal policies.

Least we forget that our economy in 2018 was on Intensive Care Unit with high unsustainable expensive government debt, rampant corruption and a government that was not paying its creditors.

From that place we sailed

straight into the COVID-19 and Ukraine Russian conflict induced economic turbulences but we preserved the functionality of our economy and grew it with responsible use of deficit budgets the last 4 years.

The sum of Government spending in our economy the last 4 fiscal years surpassed K70 billion in all of government expenditures. That played a major role in keeping our economy afloat and growing. Let me at this juncture, step back to give some context to the fiscal path we took since taking office in 2019, as we embarked on the task of repair and reconstruction.

In 2019, we quickly secured cheap concessional financing to cover the K2.3 billion budget deficit blowout, that was exposed through the IMF led Due Diligence process, and at the same time, delivered a decisive but responsible expenditure cut of nearly a billion Kina to the budget, while allowing the concessional loan projects to proceed.

In 2020, after COVID-19 reduced government revenue by K2.5 billion, the governments expenditure was held to the initial budget

forecast – meant no severe expenditure cuts. This was despite absorbing K508 million in COVID-19 direct expense – possibly the only country in the world to exercise such fiscal discipline.

In 2021, the fiscal deficit of K6.27 billion was considerably below the K6.613 billion forecast at budget time, further demonstrating a record fiscal repair.

For 2022, the budget was delivered within the budget deficit forecast of K5,984.7 million. Additional windfall revenue from high commodity prices, due to Ukraine-Russian war were directed at protecting household like the uplift of income tax free threshold to K20,000.00 and paying of student project fees to name a few.

The Government in 2022, introduced its 13-year Fiscal Plan, as part of its long-term strategy for budget repair and reconstruction, against the backdrop of economic shocks, caused by the COVID-19 and Russian-Ukraine war.

This is crucial to maintain fiscal support for economic recovery efforts. It is a path towards

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# PM Marape welcomes the outcomes of Australia-PNG Ministerial Forum

Prime Minister James Marape has welcomed the successful outcomes of the 29th Australia-Papua New Guinea Ministerial Forum, which was held in Canberra on February 17.

"I welcome the outcomes of the very-successful Forum which follows on from my meeting with Australian Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, last month," he said.

"One of the most-significant is our Ministers undertaking to ensure efficient and speedy Australian visa-issuing arrangements to help underpin labour, business and broader people-to-people connections.

"This means that at least 75 percent of completed visitor visa applications will be processed within 14 days, with in-country visa processing in PNG.

"This expands opportunities for Papua New Guineans to enter the Australian labour market, including increasing training and skilled labour under the new Australian Pacific Engagement Visa.

"I thank our PNG team led by Foreign Affairs Minister Hon. Justin Tkatchenko for a very-successful meeting which will be mutually-beneficial for both countries."

The Forum was co-chaired for Australia by Senator Hon. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs and for PNG by Minister Tkatchenko. Participating Ministers for PNG were Hon. John Rosso, Deputy Prime Minister, in his capacity as Minister for Immigration and Labour plus other Ministers whose attendance was necessitated by the agenda of the Forum.

This was the first Ministerial Forum following elections in both countries in 2022. It was also the first in-person Forum held since 2019, due to border closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The last Ministerial Forum was held virtually on September 2, 2021.

The major outcomes are:

- ★ Ministers renewed their commitment to the Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership (CSEP), to guide the modern partnership between PNG and Australia. They undertook to implement this partnership through coordinated, deeper sectoral engagement led by Ministers from each side, and to take forward the outcomes and commitments arising from the 2023 Annual Leaders Dialogue;
- ★ Ministers reflected on the deep historical and familial connections which have brought the nations together in a unique partnership, and committed to ensuring that this partnership of equal and sovereign neighbours grows to reflect contemporary opportunities and challenges;
- ★ Ministers undertook to further accelerate the integration of the two economies, including through the Australia-PNG Economic Partnership. They noted the importance of expanding opportunities for Papua New Guineans to enter the Australian labour market, including increasing training and skilled labour under the new Australian Pacific Engagement Visa. They acknowledged that efficient and speedy visa issuing arrangements would help underpin labour, business and broader people-to-people connections and announced separately a range of steps that



Family Photograph of Ministers and Official who attended the 29th PNG-Australia Ministerial Forum in Australia. PIC Courtesy of DFAT

would be taken to improve their respective systems. Ministers agreed to aim to process at least 75 percent of completed visitor visas applications within 14 days. Ministers agreed to open in-country visa processing in PNG. They agreed to establish a joint ministerial working group to oversee this work, including Deputy Prime Minister Marles, Foreign Minister Wong, Minister for International Development Prime Ministerent and the Pacific Conroy, and on the PNG side, Deputy Prime Minister Rosso and Foreign Minister Tkatchenko with Internal Security Minister Tsiamalili – to oversee deepening cooperation in these areas;

★ Ministers noted the two countries' commitment to supporting regional peace, security, economic resilience and Pacific unity as the most populous members of the Pacific family and recommitted to a Pacific-family first approach to regional security needs as endorsed by PIF leaders and as we work together to implement the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific;

★ PNG welcomed Australia's renewed focus on climate change and Ministers agreed that Australia partnering with the Pacific to co-host the 31st UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP31) in 2026 would allow us to combine forces and secure ambitious climate change outcomes and help place Pacific voices at the centre of international climate discussions. Ministers recognised PNG's interest in securing a greater share of international climate finance and welcomed PNG's participation in the Indo-Pacific Carbon Offset Scheme (IPCOS). Ministers committed to sign the IPCOS Joint Action Plan as early as possible this year; and

★ Ministers welcomed conclusion in 2022 of the first annual CSEP Action Plan and looked forward to progress under the 2023 CSEP Action Plan, as a tool to help take forward Prime Ministerial and Ministerial priorities. The six CSEP pillars are:

- Strong Democracies for a Stable Future;
- Close Friends, Enduring Ties;
- Economic Partnership for Prosperity;
- Strategic Cooperation for Security and Stability;
- Social and Human Development Prime Ministerent; and
- Near Neighbours, Global Partners.

# All districts to empower women in business - PM Marape

**Prime Minister and Tari-Pori MP, James Marape has called on all 96 districts in the country to empower women to get into Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).**

He made the call in Port Moresby on February 16 when signing a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Women's Micro Bank Ltd (Mama Bank) to bring about financial inclusion and a revolving credit scheme for women involved in MSMEs in Tari-Pori.

The Prime Minister also announced that the Government was looking to extend the scope of its SME lending, apart from Bank South Pacific and National Development Prime Minister Bank, to involve other financial agencies like Women's Micro Bank

Prime Minister Marape was accompanied by wife Rachael, a certified accountant who has been passionately involved with women in business in Tari-Pori; Tari-Pori District Development Prime Minister Authority (DDA) CEO Willie Kara; and Tari-Pori DDA women's representative Theresa Punga.

Women's Micro Bank was represented by Chairman Noel Norigku and CEO Gunanidhi Dasi

Prime Minister Marape said Tari-Pori DDA last year spent K1 million on women MSMEs in the district and this year would spend another K1 million.

He said if Tari-Pori could do so, there was

no reason why other districts could not do so, when all had the same amount of district funds allocated to them.

"Lead all our mothers into the MSME sector.

"Leading a mother into this sector is anchoring the welfare of the family, and when the family is okay, society is okay, country is okay.

"All districts have an envelope of K10 million for district development programs. Of this, 10 percent or K1 million is for the economic sector.

"This is to be used to support growth of the SME sector and other businesses.

"When you (districts) partner with this sort of programme (Women's Micro Bank), genuine people out there are engaged, and it incubates them and gets them going for the next mile in as far as businesses are concerned.

"I commend the other nine districts who are partnering Women's Micro Bank and encourage all other districts out there to get involved," he said.

Prime Minister Marape said if illiterate women in villages could be self-sustaining, through small business, there was no reason why others could not do so.

"Our country is full of opportunities. It's the lazy ones who miss out," he said.



Prime Minister Marape speaking at the event

fiscal consolidation, that is consistent with the principles of increasing revenue, reducing deficits, bringing interest costs under control and working towards a budget surplus by 2027, and in doing so, lift economic growth and employment opportunities and ultimately, the option of a debt free sovereign State by 2034.

The plan provides a disciplined framework for bringing development Prime Minister aspirations within the reality of limited revenues – unlike those in the past, which have been more aspirational in nature, promising much, but without the budget to support implementation.

Within this fiscal consolidation, the Government also continues with its major structural reforms. The most prominent of these, is the shift in the share of budget resources going to capital expenditure, especially towards the GoPNG Public Investment Program. The capital budget rises to K9,795.9 million in 2023, of which K6,6150 million is our GoPNG Public Investment Program (PIP).

PIP has grown by 224.0 percent under our Government, climbing from just K2,040.7 million in 2018. We are the infrastructure government. Ask Works Secretary and all works contractors who were contracted to work during O'Neill Government and they will show you records of my Government paying over K2 billion of O'Neill Government contracts including loan components of highways, airports, ports, hospitals and schools!

Our PNG economy is expected to exceed K113.0 billion in 2023. Real non-resource sector growth (which excludes extractive sectors) is forecast at 4.6 percent, continuing the recent growth record of 4.8 percent in 2021 and 4.5 percent in 2022 – the only second time PNG's post-independence history, to record 3 years of real growth of over 4 percent. Inflation is forecast to fall from 6.6 percent in 2022 to 5.7 percent in 2023. Mind you our running average on inflation is 7 percent.

These are a small snapshot of how we have come the last 4 fiscal years completed under Marape Pangu Government. We knew the road would be tough but we also knew we can overcome if we remain committed and disciplined.

Committed and disciplined we are, **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

We are starting the walk on the road to 50 years of Independence and beyond.

Our Government aspires to build a stable and transparent government, which is effective in implementing our programs, and that it is strong in its adherence to law and policy.

Our Government wants to build a strong economy which will ensure that our families live healthy and prosperous lives.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

In response to the Governor General's opening statement to Parliament on 30 August 2022, I committed this Government to strengthening the democratic process, building a resilient economy, developing

economic sustaining infrastructures, addressing fair and equitable natural resources harvest, addressing business and investment confidence, addressing law and order, deliver better education and health and strengthening the institutions of State.

All these commitments are to ensure that our country builds a strong enabling socio-economic environment that allows businesses to thrive and succeed.

It will allow systems and processes to be anchored in the rule of law, and is handled by a healthy and educated people. This is the outcome we want to see for our country.

For 2023 we are investing big in education, health, law and order and infrastructure. These are the key enablers for economic development Prime Minister. Because when the economy is developed then the country will develop.

And this will happen when existing businesses and new investments grow. Thus, through stable government and stable policies we will work with the private sector to grow our economy. We need to have growing and stable large businesses. Large growing businesses ensure that small local businesses are incubated and supported.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me speak on other Government initiatives to improve ease of doing businesses like;

- ★ Having a one stop international trade and investment ministry and department,
- ★ Tidying local reserve businesses list,
- ★ Amendments to our renewable and non-renewable resources sector laws to enable fair and equitable return to all PNG parties and our investors,
- ★ Have embarked on improving entry requirements for businesses and their personnel. Both the Investment Promotion Authority and the Immigration and Citizenship Office have worked hard to streamline regulations and processes so as to seek alignment with the overall government intentions which is to create efficiencies and effectiveness in our processes and systems,
- ★ Put policy-based funds like SME lending support, freight subsidies, price support, land acquisition and state equity fund,
- ★ Special economic zone incentives especially in key government focus areas of downstream processing, ramping up export and import replacement business,
- ★ Setting up Independent Commission Against Corruption as an economic security measure,
- ★ Reform central bank for monetary policy to complement fiscal policy to develop the country,
- ★ Central bank will be the custodian of our Sovereign Wealth Fund to stabilise

our foreign reserves, by the way we have the highest foreign reserves in our nation's history at present over K13 billion,

- ★ Enabling infrastructures be developed to carry our economy, and
- ★ Our international relationships at both bilateral and multi laterals will be harnessed for markets of our national produces.

PNG is set to experience exciting times ahead in terms of its economic growth as we head into our 50th year of Independence, with major economic projects coming on stream in the renewable and non-renewable sectors. We are investing in the creation of an operating environment that is open, rules based, safe and stacked with healthy and educated citizens who can find their space in the business of developing our country. The extractive sector is high on our agenda.

Our Government continues to advocate that we give more to our PNG Stakeholder but with cognition to investors making fair and equitable return on investments. In the recently held Sydney mining and petroleum conference, I see spoke of the PPPW projects my Government will progress substantially in 2023. These projects are Papua, Pnyang and Pasca LNGs and Porgera and Wafi Golpu mines.

In the first half of this year, we will deliver substantial progress to these projects like no other government's done before.

Porgera is in the final stages of finalising the operator ship agreement, the mining development Prime Minister contract, and aligning licensing issues, so as to secure the commencement of the mine.

The State and the Joint Venture partners of Wafi Golpu are also in the process of finalising the agreed terms before the Project Agreement is signed.

Papua LNG is undergoing FEED, and Pnyang is to be constructed after Papua LNG so the country will see LNG construction sector running from 2024 to 2032.

Talks have stalled with respect to Pasca A but we are confident that it will proceed to its final conclusion.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am more optimistic than ever for PNG and all of your business who call PNG home. Let us all work together for all our shared interest.

On a final note, I understand this is the last breakfast that is being conducted by your president, Ms Nuni Kulu. I would like to thank her for her hard work in advocating for the private sector at each opportunity we have had in interacting in these breakfast events and other related events. I would also like to commend the team at the Business Council of PNG for a job well done in organising this important event.

I look forward to closer collaboration with Government as we go forward.

Thank you all and God bless you all.

# PM Marape in Fiji for bilateral talks with Fiji PM Rabuka

**Prime Minister James Marape travels to Fiji, on February 20 to attend a bilateral meeting with Fiji President His Excellency Ratu Wiliame Katonivere and Prime Minister Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka.**

Following the meeting on February 21, he returns to Papua New Guinea on February 22, for another commitment.

Prime Minister Marape will also meet Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Chair Henry Puna ahead of the PIF Special Leaders' Retreat, which has been called by Fiji Prime Minister and PIF Chair Rabuka, which is a milestone event in regionalism.

Foreign Affairs Minister Hon. Justin Tkatchenko will represent PNG at the Retreat and present the Country Statement.

"I will only be able to hold a bilateral with Fiji, due to my tight schedule, and will return to the country on Wednesday," Prime Minister Marape said.

"Fiji and PNG are big, in our Pacific Islands' family of nations, and play a leading role in many issues affecting our region.

"It is important, in that context, to establish strong government-to-government, business-to-business and people-to-people relationships with Fiji and other Pacific nations."

Meanwhile, continuing the theme of 'Reflection, Renewal, Celebration', the Special Leaders' Retreat to be attended by Minister Tkatchenko will be held from February 23 to February 24, in Denarau,

Nadim, and will focus on Forum solidarity.

The meeting will also see the transition of the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum from Fiji to the Cook Islands. Hon. Mark Brown, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, will look to host the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Ahead of the Leaders' Retreat, there will be a meeting of the Forum Officials Committee on February 22.

The meeting will also consider and finalise the operationalisation of the Suva Agreement that was endorsed by Forum Leaders at their meeting in Suva in July 2022.

## Tari-Pori DDA holds first meeting for 2023

Prime Minister and Tari-Port District Development Authority (DDA) Chairman James Marape presided over his district's first DDA meeting for 2023.

The meeting was held at Pangale Haus in Tari, which is the Tari-Pori DDA office on February 2.

At the meeting, Prime Minister Marape announced that each district in PNG had been allocated K10 million in District Services Improvement Programme (DSIP) with an additional K5 million for priority infrastructure. He urged his DDA Members to work on Tari-Pori District priorities.

"We have a K15 million envelope so the DDA must approve clear priorities to be driven by Local Level Government (LLG) and District leadership in support to our Provincial Government and National Government focus areas.

"I have tasked the district administration to finalise the 2022 financial report and also update on all work, which happened last year.

"I have also asked all LLGs to put all their development aspirations for 2023 together.

"The focus areas for Tari-Pori District in 2023 are Education, Health, Law-and-Order, SMEs and infrastructure development. This is consistent with the focus of the National Government.

"Churches, women and youth will play key roles because they will be engaged as development partners," Prime Minister Marape said.

Hela Governor Hon. Philip Undialu was also in attendance to give Provincial Government support to Tari-Pori DDA.

"I commend Tari-Pori DDA for always being transparent in your development focus."

"The Hela Provincial Government stands ready to support you in all your development aspirations," Governor Undialu said.

Also at the meeting, Tari Town Mayor, Andaija 'AJ' Jeli, was reappointed as Deputy Chairman of Tari-Pori DDA to Chairman Marape.

## Government to mobilise youth in education, SME and labour mobility

The National Government will roll out a youth mobilization programme aimed at engaging the youth of Papua New Guinea to address uneasiness and formal employment issues in the country.

Prime Minister James Marape said this on February 5 adding that the PNG Defence Force and the National Volunteer Service are being engaged in this intervention programme, and will be advertising this month for young unemployed people out of schools and colleges to link them back into continuing their education, and employment and/or self-employment in agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries, tourism and SMEs.

The Prime Minister said this while urging Papua New Guineans flocking into urban centres in search of jobs to return their focus on their own land and start planning small businesses in agriculture, poultry, fisheries and tourism.

"We will be working with provincial governments and districts for this youth mobilisation programmes so I encourage all youth to go back to your respective district or province of origin," Prime Minister Marape said.

"There aren't enough jobs in towns. Since 1975, we have not created a sufficient employment generating foundation for the benefit of our people. Our largest employer is the Public Service with a maximum capacity of up to 200,000.

"Even if we open 10 mines, oil and gas fields, the number of jobs they will create is still not enough to absorb our present population of youth and those coming out of schools, which numbers anything between 100,000 and 200,000 a year.

"That is the main reason why I keep repeating our government's strong stance on developing the renewable sectors of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Tourism.

"Our biggest available opportunities for productive engagement in business and employment that will successfully engage our people is in the agriculture, in livestock, poultry, forestry, fisheries and tourism.

"These sectors, when harnessed, will create thousands of sustaining jobs and businesses, and grow our economy."

Giving a demonstration of the kind of revenue Papua New Guineans can make on the land, Prime Minister Marape said one hectare of land is able to yield over K20,000 a year from cash crops, food crops, and livestock cultivation.

"On one hectare of land you can generate over K20,000 a year from coffee, cocoa,

vanilla, oil palm, copra, rubber, rice, and vegetables. Raising over 5000 chickens a year, you can raise over K20,000 a year. Breeding over 10 cows or pigs a year will earn you over K20,000 a year. Fishing over 100kg of fish and marine products can earn you over K20,000 a year. Creating a good law and order in your community and receiving over 1000 tourists into your guest house can earn you over K20,000 a year," said the Prime Minister

"Why am I using the K20,000 figure? Because that's the higher bracket average for a young Papua New Guinean starting employment in PNG.

"The K20,000 earning ability is much higher than someone who will be paid as a kitchen hand or a cleaner at Stanley Hotel, for instance. Papua New Guineans can earn much more money in the primary resource sector.

"Every one of you out there looking for jobs has a family, tribal land, water or sea space here in this country. You are not poor; you, by your Constitutional right, own and have access to your land, water, and sea in this country. Why do you want to flock to a city that has limited employment opportunities for you?"

The Prime Minister once more reminded Papua New Guineans of the support programmes already in place such as the Price Support and Freight Subsidy programmes in Agriculture, and the K100 million-per-year funding for SMEs since 2020, which should become good incentives for Papua New Guineans to return home to work their natural resources.

Prime Minister Marape said rural-based economic activities abound demonstrating the successes of working the land or operating small businesses - such as MSME owners who have successfully borrowed from the government-supported SME facility since 2020, the artisan fish-buying depot in Manus, the crab exporting business in Central Province, the big engagement of villagers in cocoa cultivation and production in East Sepik, Morobe and Bougainville.

"There is no shortage of examples of Papua New Guineans who are successfully engaging with their land or making a comfortable living from MSMEs. As the Government continues to open up our rural areas through the Connect PNG Programme and connect our people to markets, there is every reason for our people to stop migrating into towns for average-paid jobs and settle down on their land to make good money for themselves and in turn support the economy," said the Prime Minister.

## Dept to have Anti-Fraud and Whistle Blower Policy



Sir Manasupe Haus (File photo)

The Department of Prime Minister & National Executive Council has taken the Government's move to protect whistle blowers down to the department level.

The Department has drafted a Anti-Fraud and Whistle Blower Policy that will be launched next month.

Principal Advisor, Internal Audit Barry Egu said this will be the first of its kind for the Bureaucracy in Papua New Guinea and it is hoped that all other Government Agencies will do the same.

Mr Egu said the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council's Anti-Fraud and Whistle-Blower Policy is an extension of the Whistle-Blowers Act and aims to protect whistle-blowers from within the Department when they come forward with evidence substantiated report of corruption and fraudulent actions within the Department.

He said it will also prevent Managers who have been reported to be allegedly involved in fraudulent acts from taking punitive action against whistle-blowers, like not promoting them or cutting their salaries or giving them more work than they should do.

Mr Egu also warned staff that there is no Statute of Limitation for the investigation of Fraud cases and perpetrators will still be caught years later.

## PM Marape to take outcomes of first Pacific Regional ICT Dialogue to PIF



New Caledonia Minister for ICT Vaimua Muliava presenting gifts from New Caledonia to Prime Minister James Marape

Prime Minister James Marape officially closed the inaugural Pacific Information Communication and Technology Dialogue hosted by the Papua New Guinea Government through the Ministry for Information, Communication and Technology in Kokopo on February 13.

The Theme of the meeting was "Smart Pacific, One Voice" and was attended in person by ICT Agency Heads from New Caledonia, led by their Minister for ICT Hon. Vaimua Guy Lolohea Muliava, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa and a representative from the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise.

Heads of Agencies from Tonga, Kiribati, New Zealand, Cook Islands and a representative for the Pacific Islands Forum CROP Agency all attended via zoom.

The Prime Minister raised his hand for Papua New Guinea to be the sponsor to take the outcomes of the meeting which will be presented to the Pacific ICT Ministers meeting to be held next month, to the next PIF.

The Prime Minister said technology is changing the way people live and do business therefore the Pacific must find ways to use ICT to bring the Pacific

together, working together in addressing issues such as climate change, emergency preparedness, e-economy, regional security and cyber security.

He said the Pacific Community is a small community compared to larger economies and aftershocks from outside, like the conflict in Ukraine has a much bigger impact on all our economies than it has on larger economies.

The Prime Minister said moving into the ICT space together can help everyone to find other ways to support our economies during times of crisis such as the Ukraine conflict.

Prime Minister Marape added that there is also the issue of the security skirmishes between the West and the East that is largely centred in the Pacific and all small Pacific Island States must work together to become stronger in the ICT space to protect each of us our national interest and security.

The Prime Minister also announced that Papua New Guinea stands ready to mobilize our private sector and the government sector to support the work that the Pacific Information, Communication and Technology Secretariat would like to roll out not only in Papua New Guinea but also in the Pacific.

# PM Marape opens new home for US Embassy



Prime Minister Marape speaking with US Under Secretary of State for Management H.E John Bass

Last year, Prime Minister James Marape officially opened the new home of the Embassy of the United States of America for Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu with the US Under Secretary of State for Management Ambassador John Bass, in Port Moresby.

Prime Minister Marape said the opening of a new environmentally and bigger embassy in the capital means both countries are forging a new beginning of entrenching relations between both countries and sends a positive message that the US wants to engage more constructively and meaningfully with Papua New Guinea.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Prime Minister Marape spoke about the 505 Agreement, the Ship Riders Agreement, and the Defense Corporation Agreement among some that both countries are working on and hopes the Agreements are completed at the earliest so that this specific aspect of the relations with the United States becomes bigger and better going forward.

In terms of conversations about the Indo-Pacific, Prime Minister Marape said those conversations must also involve contributions for Papua New Guinea because of our strategic location, bridging Asia and the Pacific.

The Prime Minister said America cannot go East to the West and vice versa or

South to the North and vice versa without passing by Papua New Guinea that is why we must be involved in all Indo-Pacific conversations.

He said the opening of a bigger Embassy is timely as his Government continues to talk about Papua New Guinea opening markets for PNG products and helping the country come away from forever being labelled as a fragile state.

“My Government’s contemporary conversation is about business to business as I am looking for businesses for the abundance of resources we have here. My tuna and other fisheries resources must be processed in this country.

“Sustainable use of land and forest must be done in this country and of course all the other natural resources that we have must be processed in this country and through the Embassy, the resources could find a way into the US Markets.”

The Prime Minister went on to thank the people and Government of the United States for coming from thousands of miles away to Papua New Guinea, forging a relationship that started with people to people exchanges over 100 years ago in the likes of visits by Anthropologist Margaret Mead and American Missionaries who contributed a lot to human capital development.

Prime Minister Marape also thanked the many volunteers and US public servants who have also come to Papua New Guinea to work and contribute to our development agenda.

“Papua New Guinea has always had warm and friendly relations with the United States,” he said.

Prime Minister Marape said Papua New Guinea’s relations with the US is an important one among the many relations with bilateral partners across the world and that both countries share a deep history and philosophical viewpoints and many commonalities and differences are few.

He said that relations between both countries were principled as well as shared in terms of our history therefore the opening of the new Embassy building is a privilege of the highest Order and we are happy that you have decided to make a permanent base here.

The Prime Minister added that when he met President Joe Biden in Washington and Vice President Kamala Harris in New York, during the United Nations General Assembly, and the Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the margins of APEC in Thailand, all discussion were done as equal friends and not as representatives of a super power speaking to a representative of a lesser power nation.

## UPNG not turning away students - PM Marape

Prime Minister James Marape assures Roselyn Alog and all students, either national or international who received acceptance letters to study at the University of Papua New Guinea that they (UPNG) are not in the business of turning away students and will not be turning away students this year.

Prime Minister Marape says the University of Papua New Guinea will honour the acceptance letter that was sent to Roselyn and they will also assist her and her family to come up with a plan to meet her tuition requirements.

He said in fact, the registration team at the University did not turn Roselyn away even after they found out that she has decided to honour her Filipina heritage by choosing to hold a passport for the Republic of Philippines.

Prime Minister Marape said because the student’s family is not here in country at the moment, the University has put aside the issue of full payment of her tuition fee and have assisted her secure lodging and she will be able to formally register today for classes.

He said, however, as Roselyn holds a Philippines passport, that makes her a Philippines citizen despite being born and raised in Papua New Guinea. Therefore, as per the university’s guidelines on national and international students, she now falls under the category of International Student and will have to pay the tuition fee of an international student.

Prime Minister Marape says he knows that the erroneous headline and story on the front page of the Post Courier of the 2nd of February 2023 has caused so much distress for all students who are registering at the University of Papua New Guinea and assures them that all students, including Roselyn, who have received an acceptance letter from the University will be registered and where possible, assistance will be given to find other ways to pay off your tuition fees.

He emphasised that Roselyn was never turned away nor was she discriminated against. All citizens of all nationalities who meet our institutions entry requirements are welcome to come and study in Papua New Guinea.

## Three independent experts to review the tax dispute



Prime Minister James Marape (file photo)

The National Executive Council has appointed a panel of three independent experts to review the tax dispute between the Internal Revenue Commission and Barrick Niugini Limited. NEC noted the progress of the activities required to reopen the Porgera Gold Mine and was concerned that the tax matter was prolonged.

While it continues to observe the independence of the internal revenue commission, it availed itself of the opportunity to be advised independently of the issues surrounding the taxation dispute.

In its meeting of February 01, the NEC appointed, David Sode, former IRC Commissioner General, David Castiglione a specialist in Resource taxation, and Ron Webb QC who will work with a legal firm review the legal analysis of the IRC’s position.

These are reputable individuals who have the skills and experiences to review independently what the IRC has done with this assessment.

Prime Minister Marape said that while the independence of the IRC remains paramount in his views, there was a need for an independent assessment to assure the Government that the assessment is correct in terms of its legal and technical basis, and that the government is

positioned carefully to take its position in the dispute that stands in between the way of reopening Porgera gold mine.

“The National Government notes differing reading of the same tax law by both IRC and Barrick and instead of allowing the deployment of tax tribunal as allowed by law for tax dispute resolutions, cabinet felt responsible to set up this review to ascertain law as it is so solutions can be found sooner rather than later as is the case with tribunals and arbitrations.

“This independent review panel is not the tax tribunal that is provided for in the Income Tax Act, but it allows the State to independently look at the stand-off between IRC and Barrick in as far as the reading of presently law is concerned to tax considerations IRC has made in respect to stripping definitions and others.

I consider that the independent review panel is within our powers to establish independently, and to review the issues and advise the government in return.”

The panel has two weeks from the date of receiving the NEC decision to complete and file its report back to the National Executive Council.

The Prime Minister also acknowledged the leadership of the Minister for State Enterprises, Hon. William Duma and Mining, Hon. Sir Ano Pala, who worked hard to bring this matter to the NEC.

## PM Marape congratulates Miss Pacific Islands



Miss PNG, Josie Nicholas crowned as Miss Pacific Islands. Photo courtesy of Vanu Studios

**Prime Minister James Marape has congratulated Miss Papua New Guinea Josie Nicholas on being crowned as Miss Pacific Islands.**

The 24-year-old was crowned Miss Pacific Islands at the pageant in Samoa on February 3 under the theme, 'Strength in Unity'.

Ms Nicholas was supported by the PNG Government through the National Gaming Control Board.

She is the third Papua New Guinean to be crowned Miss Pacific Islands since PNG joined the Samoan Government-owned Pacific Islands Pageant franchise in 2011.

Ms Nicholas also won Best Talent with a dance and drama performance, and People's Choice Award for the highest number of 13, 000 likes on Vodafone Samoa's Facebook page.

"I congratulate our very own Miss Papua New Guinea Josie Nicholas on being crowned as Miss Pacific Islands," Prime Minister Marape said.

"I also thank her for being an excellent ambassador for PNG at this regional pageant of Pacific Island countries.

"I note that she spoke passionately about the importance of education to the young people of PNG – which is one of the main focuses of my Government.

"Ms Nicholas is an inspiration to the young women and men of PNG to aim high in whatever aspirations they have in life, and to be good ambassadors for our country."

## New Cancer Institute is a priority for Health Sector



Chief Secretary to Government, Ivan Pomaleu OBE (file photo)

**Cancer has become another big killer in Papua New Guinea and cervical cancer is one which sees about 6 women die every day from the disease.**

The Government has taken a keen interest in ensuring health services including infrastructure is addressed to improve the health and wellbeing of Papua New Guineans and the New Cancer Institute at the Port Moresby General Hospital is a key priority project of the government.

Chief Secretary Ivan Pomaleu acknowledged that it had taken a long time to address cancer in the country and the issue was brought into the light when the cobalt radiation therapy machine at the Angau Hospital broke down and the Government was unable to buy a new one due to new international regulations on the importation and use of radioactive equiPrime Ministerent and materials.

The Chief Secretary said in 2019, in coordination with the National Department of Health and the National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology, the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council contributed in drafting the National Institute of Industrial Standards and Technology (Amendment) Act 2019 and the Radiation Safety and Control Act 2019.

"The passing of the Acts in Parliament in 2019 ensured that we meet the International Atomic Energy Agencies (IAEA) regulatory requirements to import new cobalt machines or any radioactive

technology or material into the country however, we needed to upgrade the current facilities we have in Lae and build a more cancer facility in Port Moresby at the Port Moresby General Hospital," he said.

"The new Cancer Institute facility at the Port Moresby General hospital is being funded by the National Government while work on the facility in Lae is being funded through the Australian Government assistance."

Chief Secretary Pomaleu said the National Government had allocated about K78 million in the budget to the building of the facility.

He said an inspection of the facility by the Minister for Health was carried out by the Minister for Health Dr. Lino Tom in October last year and will be opened in September 2023. The facility will have research laboratories and a concrete bunker built to IAEA standard for the use of cobalt for Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy.

The Chief Secretary said once the institute becomes operational, it will bring cancer diagnosis and treatment services closer to our people, implementing the government's goal to bring services closer to the people and help to cut down cost to our people.

Chief Secretary Pomaleu also thanked the Port Moresby General Hospital's Chief Executive Officer Dr. Paki Molumi for starting training of specialist staff who will take charge of the facilities even before the facilities are actually put in place.

## Chief Secretary Pomaleu urges staff to pull their weight in work



Chief Secretary Ivan Pomaleu, looking through notes during the Department's Annual Planning & Budget workshop

**Chief Secretary Ivan Pomaleu has urged all staff of the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council to pull their weight in their work.**

The Chief Secretary urged the staff in his speech to open the Department's 2023 Annual Planning and Budget Workshop last year at Hideaway Hotel. This is a workshop that is held annually at the end of the year to review what has been done for the year and plan for the next year.

Mr Pomaleu said the Department carries the Government's overall expectation in ensuring policy objectives are implemented.

He said work has already been done and he still has a draft copy of the Key Result Areas (KRAs) for each of the agencies that come under the Department. The expectation is that the Department will carry the full load of making sure those KRAs are achieved.

"You will realise that in the Prime Minister's public policy speeches, that he would continuously come back to these ideas of KRAs that he has allocated to his Ministers.

"In fact, what he is expecting is that the KRAs would define what each agencies are expected to do in the next five years. The expectation is that we would ensure the KRAs are implemented.

Chief Secretary Pomaleu said the Department staff responsible for each line agencies, in consultation with line agencies, must identify and put together a set of KRAs that is agreed upon, so that the Department can understand how the agencies would like to implement their KRAs.

He said this agreed upon KRAs will then be taken by the Prime Minister to the National Executive Council for endorsement so that we can help in the monitoring for the implementation of the KRAs, so that they are held accountable and we are also held accountable.

Chief Secretary Pomaleu said we are working with a Prime Minister that wants to get things done and we must pull our weight in our roles.

The Chief Secretary also urged staff to attend to National Executive Council (NEC) submissions that come before them

for comment in at minimum one day or at maximum two days.

He said sometimes, he has to wait for a response for more than two days and that must change.

"I have had two years of knowing each of you your capabilities and I have a pretty good idea of who turn around things quickly," Chief Secretary Pomaleu said.

"My job is not to tell you off but to encourage you to do as much as you can in the context of what are the key expectations are for us, from me which is a reflective of the expectations of the Government."

Chief Secretary Pomaleu added that this is why, the Planning and Budgeting Plan plays a critical role in ensuring that the Department's role is carried out.

"The Annual Planning and Budget workshop is an important workshop where we set the targets for the incoming year and that is where we set the stage in terms of planning and financing. We should know by now what is in the budget for us so we can set a strategic framework to take us forward."