



THE BOUGAINVILLE BULLETIN

Our voice, Our image, Our place

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BOUGAINVILLE TO BE DECLARED WEAPONS-FREE

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Women unite

Women of Bougainville have met on the 16th anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreement to discuss unification and their leadership role in Bougainville's future.



Deputy Speaker Francesca Semoso, has brought Bougainville women together to discuss their leadership role as the region prepares for referendum. Held at Parliament House, Speaker Simon Pentanu, gave his support to the program based on the belief that women were true leaders in the peace process even before the first cease-fire occurred.

The conference aimed to:

- Establish and agree on key issues for women in Bougainville
- Understand the Peace Agreement and its three pillars, and participate in key ABG processes

- Discuss unification and solidarity to promote women's empowerment and advance their participation in political processes.

Ms Semoso said women should be educated about the roles of the parliament, leadership and referendum, and being in the parliament itself was an important part of the experience.

Representing the President, Minister for Public Service, Hon Hamal Sawa, said the government recognized the role played by women during the early part of the peace process and the overall development that has taken place since the signing of the Peace Agreement.

"In the early part of the peace process you risked your lives going into the jungles to persuade your husbands, children and relatives to put down weapons and join the peace process," Hon Hamal said.

"History will forever remember the sacrifices you've made to help bring lasting peace to Bougainville." "The government now looks forward to your vital contributions during the next three years to prepare people in the conduct of the referendum in 2019 and the period beyond."

Witnessing the significant occasion were Minister for Economic Development and



**Deputy Speaker
Francesca Semoso**

Member for Tsitalato, Hon Fidelis Semoso; Member for Tonsu, Ezekiel Massat; current and past ministers and members; women's regional representatives; UNDP; Auxiliary Police and secretaries from various departments.

AROB-PNG leaders talk referendum

The long deferred Joint Supervisory Body (JSB) meeting between the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the National Government has been scheduled for the 14-15 December.

In a special parliament convened on 22 November President Chief Dr John Momis said some of the agendas are outstanding from previous JSB meetings, while others are focused on referendum preparations.

A key issue for discussion will be the recent formation of the Bougainville Referendum Commission and the urgency to operationalize it.

"We need to appoint Commissioners, agree on an independent Chair and put in place systems, processes and procedures to govern how the Commission will work," President Momis said.

Momis further stated that all of this required the support and agreement of the National Government.

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Our voice, Our image, Our place
Editor's Desk

Hello Readers,

Welcome to Edition 11 of the Bougainville Bulletin. Since the last edition, there have been some encouraging and very positive developments happening within the government and our communities. These developments include establishing progress in growing Bougainville's economy, Community Government as well as preparing for referendum in Bougainville.

The Community Government stories will give you a preview of their plans as the second level tier of government in Bougainville, and also a brief on the upcoming Urban Community Government elections. Bougainville continues to move forward in its referendum preparations despite the many challenges faced by our government. These issues are further explained in the *Referendum Update* on pages 6-7.

We also bring to you an update on major reconciliations and declarations made by two constituencies in Bougainville. This demonstrates their readiness to actively and freely take part in the referendum by Bougainvilleans across our region.

An update from the Department of Technical Services on pages 10 -11, gives you the latest information on major infrastructure developments happening throughout the region- the most recent of which was the completion of the upgrade and sealing of the Buin Town Roads.

If you have access to the internet, please visit the ABG website www.abg.gov.pg for the latest news on development, government, referendum and more.

We trust that this edition will be informative for our readers.

The Bulletin Team



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About the Bougainville Bulletin

The *Bougainville Bulletin* is a publication of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, produced by the Directorate of Media and Communication.

We encourage stories from the public. To submit an article or letter for review, please contact us:

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The editor reserves the right to publish a story.

**Rawa Bridge
nears collapse**



The Ramazon river in the Central Region of Bougainville nearly washed out the road connected to the bridge on Thursday night, 2nd November. Half of the road was still connected to the Rawa bridge when this photo was taken by a staff from the Directorate of Media and Communication while traveling back from Arawa to Buka. The Transport Sector Support Program (TSSP) has advised that this matter has been noted and that (TSSP) has done small works to reinstate Ramazon Bridge and are working to put more permanent solutions in place.

**ABG strategic
development plan:
*A brief update***



A community group deep in discussion during the Regional Consultations in Buin, South Bougainville.

Over the past three months, the Autonomous Bougainville Government has been working hard to develop a new Strategic Development Plan.

The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework of priorities for the coming years to ensure that the public service is able to deliver critical services to enhance autonomy and support fiscal self-reliance.

Work has been led by Chief Secretary Joseph Nobetau, guided by a working group of key department heads. There have been extensive consultations with stakeholders, including the President and the BEC, Bougainville MPs in the national parliament, government agencies and community organisations.

Extensive community consultations in North, Central and South Bougainville together with non-resident Bougainvilleans in Port Moresby and members of the Bougainville Students Association at University of PNG have also taken part.

The working group has gained extensive insight and understanding into the needs of ordinary Bougainvilleans, including ex-combatants, youth and women.

A final community consultation was held in Arawa the week of 18 September, where a people's Vision Statement was prepared and priorities cross-checked to ensure they address future needs and demands.

The plan is now in its final draft and expected

to be finalised in mid to late November. Once approved by the President and the BEC, there will be a comprehensive communication process to ensure that all members of the community understand what the ABG will be doing for them in the future.

Importantly, there will also be a process of measuring and assessing whether the priorities are being addressed.

All departments will be accountable for delivering on each objective, and there will be regular updates so that the public can see what progress is being made.

The Chief Secretary said; "The Strategic Development Plan will be a significant step forward, providing a road map for long term peace, security and prosperity in Bougainville."

**Community
Governments
gets underway**

Community government accounts have now been established for all rural areas, together with a small administration grant to help governments establish themselves and begin to plan and prioritise activities.

Department of Community Government Director, Ms Donna Pearson, said most governments have already conducted more than two meetings.

"Community governments have been discussing staffing, logistics, operations, and many have begun discussions on collection of head tax, which under the *Community Government Act* they are able to collect to help fund development activities," Ms Pearson said.

"The ABG is advising community governments that guiding documents to assist their tax collection are being developed. This will make sure management of public funds is for community benefit."

"People are willing to provide their tax, but they need to see the funds being spent wisely."

"We want to do things right from the start. We don't want to lose public trust."

Ms Pearson said they were preparing to conduct a second round of training for elected members on these matters, as well as more training on the role of ward steering committees, and inclusive decision-making including the voice of traditional chiefs.

"We want a system that strengthens traditional systems and roles. We want chiefs to be working together with elected members and resources people in the communities."

Ms Pearson advised that while 2017 was about elections and the establishment of community governments, 2018 will focus on planning. This step-by-step approach will make sure 2019 onwards will bring more support to community activity implementation.

In briefings from the Department of Community Government, President Momis said that now that ABG has given power to the communities through the community government system, it is important that each community government becomes self reliant in helping to address their people's priority issues.

**New Minister of Bougainville Affairs and Central
Regional Member Simon Dumarinu makes first
appearance.**



Bougainville's new representative in the national government has met with other regional members and the ABG. Although new to his job, Mr Dumarinu is looking

forward to working with the three other regional members of the national government, as well as closely with the ABG.

Some of his priorities are to fast track the

implementation process of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and harnessing unity ahead of the Bougainville Referendum.

Community disaster management training - Buka

Staff from the Disaster Office and key stakeholders were trained in disaster management to better their knowledge in responding to disaster.

The two day training was conducted by International Care (ICare) in Buka from 22 - 23 September.

The workshop was

to provide training on disaster management to offices that are directly involved in the work of providing disaster response. This is based on the understanding that the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARoB) is prone to natural disasters.

At the beginning of this year alone, Bougainville

was included in areas receiving tsunami alerts. It was identified at the training that many people lack the knowledge of how to properly respond to natural disasters that are beyond their control. This means communities are highly vulnerable should a natural disaster occur.

A voice for the disabled

“Voice, choice and control.”

These are three things the Disability Community Rehabilitation 4 Bougainville (DCR4B) is hoping to give people living with disabilities. Disabled communities are often ignored and invisible but a new partnership is giving them an opportunity to be seen and heard.

The DCR4B is a collective of six organisations comprised of the Hako Women's Collective, Persons with Disabilities Bougainville, Para Sports, Special Olympics, PNG Red Cross, and Halia Social Rehabilitation. Together they are working with the Centre for Disability Studies (CDS), which is an affiliate of the University of Sydney, to address the significant disability needs of children and adults living in Bougainville, including the atolls.

Speaking at a disability stakeholders' meeting, Dr Tanya Richies, a researcher from CDS explained that money often goes to institutions rather than people who really need it and that,

“People with a disability want to stand up and take ownership of their lives.”

This sentiment was echoed by the Special Olympics representative, Veronica Kukute, who said the community based rehabilitation seeks ways, “to add value and make them feel important.”

Disabilities can have many dimensions and can affect a person's body, mind or social interactions.

Many people living in Bougainville during the crisis were affected both physically and psychologically and continue to feel the impacts on their lives today. Papua New Guinea is a signatory to the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that recognises people with disability as full and equal members of society, rather than as objects of charity.

However, not enough is being done to address the needs of this vulnerable section of society.

One of the initial activities DCR4B is conducting is an island wide community mapping survey to determine the number of people

living with disabilities in Bougainville.

The Department of Community Government and Department of Community Development have signed a contract with CDS to conduct the research. Additionally, DCR4B have applied for the United Nation's Volunteer Fund at the sub-national level. If successful, they intend to use the funding to establish disability services in Bougainville, as well as health, education, livelihood, social and empowerment programs.

This will provide the opportunity for those effected by disability to “speak a little louder,” Aidah Kenneth from the Red Cross explained.

Data collected so far suggests that an estimated 10,000 people are living with some form of disability in Bougainville. Yet more information is needed to form a clearer picture.

If you have questions, or would like to take part in the survey you can ask your local District Officer from the Department of Community Development or the Hako Women's Collective representative.

Chocolate farmer meets buyers

Retired pilot Martin Linnx has switched planes for cocoa beans with award winning results.

Cocoa is becoming a potential cash crop for many farmers who have invested their time and energy into cocoa production with a belief in its export potential.

Martin Linnx of Suir began exporting cocoa beans to Australia after his gold medal winning Nunu chocolate was awarded at the first Bougainville Chocolate Festival in 2016.

Martin began farming at his village in Suir, Tinputs in 2005 and only learned of the quality of his Nunu chocolate during the festival.

“It was during the festival when I got invited to try the locally home made chocolate competition,” said Mr Linnx.

“We were not at the competition. We just sent a sample and gladly received the news when we won a gold award,” Mr Linnx said.

The festival opened up opportunities for the local grower to export cocoa beans to Canberra, Australia.

Jasper + Myrtle, a Canberra based company that imports beans and produces chocolate, tasted the home made chocolate and wanted to know more, and got in touch after the festival concluded.

It was only at the second chocolate festival, that Martin, his wife and the

company met Jasper + Myrtle owners, Ms Li Peng Monroe and Peter Channells face to face. Before, we only communicated by mobile and email, he added.

Ms Monroe and Mr Channells met with the farmers of Nunu to strengthen their business partnership.

Ms Monroe said that upon purchasing the cocoa beans from Martin, she also sent a sample to a competition in London and won a gold award for the chocolate because of its 80% chocolate quantity.

“Jasper + Myrtle is very fortunate for the partnership with Nunu Chocolate and hopes to purchase more beans and produce more chocolate,” Ms Monroe said.

Farmers can now see the success that has arisen as a result of the festival. Mr Linnx has urged for cocoa farmers to follow the rules of farming in order to grow high quality products and for local buyers and to be very strict with their checks before exporting cocoa beans.

For more information about Jasper + Myrtle you can visit their official company website on www.jasperandmyrtle.com.au or contact Ms Monroe on email hello@jasperandmyrtle.com.au

Leaders meet to talk referendum/BPA

National and Bougainville governments meet to discuss Peace Agreement arrangements including the referendum.

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President Momis added that the two governments need to agree on the referendum question or questions to be put to the people, as well as the criteria that will apply to non-resident Bougainvilleans to vote.

Another key agenda for JSB will be the failure of the National Government to honour its constitutional obligations of outstanding payments of the Restoration Development Grant.

Also for discussions are the second joint

review of the autonomy arrangements, ABG peace building efforts, weapons disposal provisions in the BPA, fisheries revenue from Bougainville waters, and the draw down of powers and functions.

Under the BPA, the JSB is the forum for the National Government and the ABG to discuss issues about Bougainville's autonomy arrangement s. It is co-chaired by the ABG President and Prime Minister of PNG.

President Momis assured his people that the

Bougainville referendum will go ahead – and that the target date remains 15 June, 2019.

“My message to all Bougainvilleans is that the Peace Agreement is clear, the referendum will go ahead.

“To all those who have been working tirelessly to get rid of weapons, establish a well functioning

Autonomous Government, and are cleaning up the public service – please continue your good work.”



JSB co-chairs: Prime Minister Peter O'Neill and President John Momis

George Manu wins permanent post with OBEC



Mr George Manu reading the oath during the swearing-in ceremony.

“My office is the guardian of voter and candidate fundamental rights and freedoms so I am honored to continue to enjoy the trust and appreciation of the people of Bougainville.”

Electoral Commissioner, George Manu

selection of the new and permanent commissioner was entirely dependent on the PNG Electoral Commissioner Mr Patilias Gamato who had recently visited Buka to approve the selection.

The Minister for Public Service Hon Robert Hamal Sawa congratulated Mr Manu on his appointment as the first permanent commissioner arising from Mr Manu's wealth of experience.

Some of the successes achieved under Mr Manu's leadership included:

- *The six by-elections of Hagoghe, Peit, Rau, Kongara, Lule and Taonita Tinputz*

contituencies conducted between 2013 and 2014.

- *The 2015 ABG General Elections*

- *The successful implementation of 425 ward elections for the 43 non-urban community governments in April this year.*

- *Elections for the Panguna Landowners Association*

- *The delivery and distribution of election materials for the PNG Electoral Commission to allow voting to commence according to schedule of the 2017 National Elections.*

Other ABG by-

elections that are ready to commence are the Halia, Taonita- Teop and Kongara constituencies and the urban community government elections.

Mr Manu said, “The other milestone we have achieved together with Commissioner Patilias Gamato of the PNGEC, is the Referendum Commission Charter, which is now signed, allowing the referendum preparations to begin.”

Mr Manu acknowledged the PNGEC Commissioner Gamato and the staff of OBEC for their tireless efforts and support to OBEC and Bougainville's democratic development and good governance.



Peko Husul ceremony - Breaking of bow and arrow and handing over of the two remaining weapons.

The people of Hagogohe constituency in North Bougainville came together in a profound reconciliation ceremony to forgive the differences of the past and unite in making their constituency 'referendum-ready'.

The ceremony happened on 29 October at the Hagogohe Parish and was witnessed by the people of Hagogohe, ABG representatives and

international partners from the Australian Government and the United Nations.

The declaration stated by the Member for Hagogohe, Hon. Robert Hamal Sawa detailed the following:

- Ward unifications with no political factions existing in Hagogohe
- Constituency mass reconciliation
- Establishment

Hagogohe: weapons-free and referendum-ready

of the Community Government and Village Steering committee to strengthen efforts of good governance

- Community-based weapons disposal program

• Internal dialogue on the referendum and readiness to respect and accept the majority outcome

- Commitment to upholding the neutrality of the Referendum Commission

• Completion of BPA implementation awareness with readiness to update information as progress is made.

"I want to congratulate all the people of Hagogohe constituency in making this reconciliation

ceremony happen and through this ceremony we allow peace to prevail. The people of Hagogohe should be proud to be the first constituency in North Bougainville to declare itself weapons-free and referendum-ready", said Hon. Robert Hamal Sawa.

A commitment was also made by the people to uphold peace during and after the referendum period, with a focus on community-driven economic projects in order to be financially self-reliant at the local level.

The declaration further acknowledged the efforts of past and present leaders of the constituency and the

support provided by all key stakeholders in making the ceremony a success.

A significant highlight of the ceremony was the inclusion of a person representing people with special needs as signatory to the declaration. Other signatories included National Member for North Bougainville Hon. William Nakin and representatives from the Community Government, women, youth, former combatants, businesses and the church.

This is an important part of the referendum process to demonstrate all-inclusive participation by all members of the community.

Bolave Constituency declares referendum-ready

The people of Bolave Constituency in Bana District, South Bougainville have shown that they are ready to peacefully take part in the 2019 referendum.

This follows a ground-breaking mass reconciliation ceremony held between former warring factions at the Buleuko Catholic Parish in September.

Former members of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and the

Bougainville Resistance Faction that aligned with the PNG Army in the Bougainville conflict, came together in solidarity to demonstrate their support for strengthening and sustaining peace.

One weapon was also handed over to local police authorities as a symbol of the promise of ongoing weapons disposal before 2019. They also signed a joint commitment agreement to further advocate for solidarity and a peaceful society.

The ceremony was attended by ABG Ministers, department heads, representatives of non-government organisations, ex-combatants and community leaders.

There are 297 reconciliations involving deaths and violence caused by guns that are being solved in the district.

Speaking at the event Minister for Peace Agreement Implementation, Albert Punghau, said ABG has achieved a notable

milestone that requires ongoing commitment by all Bougainvilleans.

Some of the achievements were establishing the charter of the Bougainville Referendum Commission to manage referendum.

"I am happy with the commitments of the PNG government to agree to the terms and conditions for the Bougainville Referendum Commission. It shows maturity of the two governments to honour the BPA." Mr Punghau said.

Mr Punghau also said that issues relating to voting age, voting eligibility of non-resident Bougainvilleans and the common roll update will be discussed when the two governments meet during the Joint Supervisory Body (JSB) meeting later this year.

Mr Punghau told the people of Bana District that their commitment to peace was vital in contributing to a peaceful post-referendum Bougainville.

Referendum charter na Referendum Komisen apdeit

Gavana Generol bilong Papua Niugini Sir Bob Dadae ibin sainim referendum charter long namba 30 dei bilong mun ogus 2017. Dispela charter emi pepa we i go hetim ofis oli kolim long Bogenvil Referendum Komisen. Dispela referendum komisen bai go pas long karim aut wok referendum long yia 2019.

Palamen bilong Bogenvil emi kisim pinis ol wok updeit long referendum charter ikam bilong Elektorol Komisina bilong Bogenvil George Manu na Chief Sekretari bilong Bogenvil Joseph Nobetau.

Elektorol Komisena bilong PNG Patilias Gamato ibin witness long dispela sainim bilong referendum charter na emi mekim singaut igo long nesenol gavman na ABG long sapotim na putim moni long halivim wok bilong komisen.

"Insait long dispela charter bai gat transisenol komiti long statim wok bilong bogenvil referendum komisen. Long nex yia bai gat ol narapela bikpela samting bai kamap olsem APEC miting na emi impoten long referendum komisen imas statim wok bilong em nau", dispela em toktok bilong Patilias Gamato.

Dispela referendum charter emi kamap tru long disisen tupela gavman ibin mekim long makim wanpela independen agensi long karim aut wok referendum. Dispela proces tu emi behainim ol toktok insait long Pis Agrimen bilong Bogenvil.

Referendum komisen bai gat sevenpela memba long makim sait bilong tupela gavman na tu bai gat ol representativ bilong ol meri.

Long dispela taim nau, wanpela trensisenol komiti emi stap pinis na tupela

elektorol komisen na tupela chief sekretari igo pas long em.

Dispela trensisenol komiti bai stap inap tupela gavman i makim wanpela namel man o meri olsem siaman bilong dispela komisen.

ABG emi makim pinis ol lain long sait bilong em husait bai stap long dispela komisen. Oli wetim tasol nesenol gavman long makim ol memba long makim sait bilong ol.

Dispela namel man o meri husait bai siaman long referendum komisen em klostu taim bai oli makim long taim tupela gavman i sindaun long Joint Supervisory Body meeting behain long klostu pinis bilong yia

ABG na Nesenol Gavman tu i luksave long referendum tresisen period olsem wanpela bikpela samting we wok imas kamap long em tru long joint referendum wok plen.

Veterans re-affirm commitment

Peace-building in Bougainville has gone a step further following the Bougainville Veterans declaration of their unwavering commitment to reconcile and unite all Bougainvilleans to work towards a weapons-free Bougainville by 2018.

This strong commitment was one of the outcomes of a three week Intense Peace Building training held at Chabai in September this year.

The training brought together veterans from North, Central and South Bougainville to ensure that the voice of this important group is built up and included in referendum preparations.

In a statement the Bougainville Former Combatants have re-affirmed their commitment



Participants of the Intense Peace Building Workshop at Tangari Village, Selau Constituency.

to enhancing peacebuilding and national reconciliation to pursue greater unification for Bougainville.

They also acknowledged the peacebuilding efforts achieved under the Me'ekamui Memorandum of Understanding and the Unification Joint Commitment.

Secretary for the Department of Peace Agreement Implementation James Tanis described this achievement as a great progress for peace and referendum preparations for Bougainville.

"Peace building in

Bougainville has broken new grounds and the resolutions passed by our veterans demonstrates this", he said.

The Bougainville Veterans are important stakeholders in the implementation and success of the Peace Agreement. While acknowledging that the armed conflict caused much suffering and loss they have fully committed to working with the government to pursue reconciliation and unification in order for Bougainville to have self-sustaining peace beyond

ABG Media supports DPAI

The Directorate of Media and Communication has been working closely with its stakeholders to disseminate referendum awareness.



Acting Director for Media and Communication, Adriana Schmidt handing Referendum awareness materials to DPAI Secretary James Tanis.

The Directorate of Media and Communications has been working in close partnership with the Department of Peace Agreement Implementation (DPAI) to prepare up-to-date information packages about the Bougainville referendum.

These materials are in Tok Pisin and English and give up-to-date information about the referendum as well as clarify some of the common misconceptions held by the public.

Media and Communications Acting Director Adriana Schmidt says these information packages are a result of continuous consultation

with the Department of Peace Agreement Implementation as well as with the different audience groups in Bougainville.

She acknowledged the United Nations Development Program-Buka, for their continuous support to Bougainville's referendum process.

"The UN has been supporting some of the key work of the Bureau, which is to increase referendum awareness through a whole-of-government approach to the majority of the population", Schmidt said.

The materials can be accessed on the ABG website www.abg.gov.pg.

2019.

"The veterans have accepted the negative implications of weapons and decided to dispose their weapons of war for the common good of the people of Bougainville and declare Bougainville 'weapons-free' no later than 31 December 2017", said Dennis Kuiai, Acting Director for Veterans Affairs.

"The Bougainville Veterans have prioritized a number of reconciliations to amend past injustices, grant forgiveness and offer reparation. This includes reconciliation with

members of the Papua New Guinea Security Forces, a major milestone reached by the Veterans.

There will also be reconciliations held with former enemies, Bougainvilleans living outside of Bougainville and non-Bougainvilleans residing in Bougainville."

Mr Kuiai says the next step is getting the Weapons Disposal Plan, that was developed during the training, endorsed through an Ex-Combatants Summit, proposed to take place before the end of the year.



World Food Day

The women of Taonita Teop, Tinputs District gathered together on Wednesday 18 October to celebrate World Food Day.

An initiative of the Teop Taonita Women Peace Circle and supported by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), the two-day event gathered families in the village and ward, to hear messages about the importance of healthy living, food security and peace keeping.

Secretary of DPI, Thomas Betitis, Veteran Ishmael Toroama and Community Government, Director Ms Donna Pearson were some of the invited guests.

A very emotional Ms Pearson praised her women folks for taking the initiative.

"It's little activities like this which the Department of Community Government wants to see more of; that is promoting peace, self reliance and moving

forward at the rural area," Ms Pearson said.

The Women Peace Circle initiated this activity expected it to be a small event, but it quickly became a celebration gathering villagers and students of the entire ward.

Ms Pearson donated a solar powered lamp from the Department to the women to provide lighting for their meetings.

Support for women in community leadership

The ABG and over 400 women elected as community government representatives will receive support from UN Women to assist them undertake their new leadership roles.

At the first training conducted under the new partnership, 41 women from non-urban community governments came together to share lessons and the experience of the first time elections in June 2017.

The elected women reflected a broad range of people, from a young 25-year old woman from

South Bougainville, to retired teachers, health workers and traditional chiefs.

Secretary for the Department of Community Government, Wesley Kenneth, congratulated the women on their election and commended their passion and enthusiasm for developing Bougainville.

"As the first group of elected representatives to your community governments, you have a chance to help shape the system, to make it better and be more responsive to community needs and

aspirations," Mr Kenneth said.

"I call upon you to be inclusive in your decision-making, and ensure the ideas and resources of all community members are taken into account."

Secretary Kenneth also thanked UN Women for their generous support.

"It is timely to partner with the ABG to build the capacity of women in leadership with the implementation of our community government system. Collectively we have a large challenge ahead of us."

Department of

Community Government Director, Donna Pearson, said women's feedback from the elections was that it was a good experience; challenging, but very positive.

"As it was the first ever Community Government election, women have some good suggestions for improvement. The department and the Office of the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner will implement these ideas in the next elections in 2022," Ms Pearson said.

"The feedback from the training is that these women are really excited

and ready to move in their new roles. Women are confident and all have clear plans about what they want to do: to assist with referendum, bring development to their communities and help maintain peace, for example, there is a high demand for mediation skills."

Ms Pearson said that the women elected were people who have always played some sort of leadership role in their community – and this is one of the intentions of the community government system.

Putput band wins talent competition



Putput band was the first prize winner of the creative category under the PNG Red Cross "Young Talent Time Dance Competition" under the theme: Mobilising power of humanity, youth for change. The competition ran for three months and ended on Saturday 4 November 2017. Posing in this picture is the Putput band from Malasang village, with the PNG Red Cross Coordinator Ms Aidah Kenneth at the Oasis Club, Buka.



Torokina women's group wins grants

A women led group called the Laruma Village Assembly from Torokina District received grants to purchase 20 water tanks for armlets in their village. Funded by the Australia High Commission, they were part of the nine groups that took part in the grants signing ceremony on Friday 3 October at Arawa.

Unity Library brings communities together



1. Part of the library shelves categorised into different reading sections 2. Library volunteers receiving training in library management 3. Lily Mumia from Kokopau visits the library every week



Unity Library, Kubu, Buka

Tuesday 26 September marked an important moment for the people of Bougainville as the Unity Library opened the doors to its new location. Thanks to support from Australian Aid and Digicel the library now has a home close to Parliament House in Kubu.

Many distinguished guests attended, including Vice President Raymond

Masono and the Education Minister Thomas Pata'aku. The Australian High Commission was represented by the Second Secretary, Nicola Simpson and Pauline Tane from Digicel was also present.

The speeches emphasised the inspiration that books provide for students, forming a foundation for their future. Hon.

Thomas Pata'aku likened the library to a knowledge bank where people could come and access information from those with a story to tell and a message to share. Vice President Masono spoke of Bougainville's low literacy rate and how community institutions, such as the Unity Library, can help to improve this and build a stronger future for the region.

"In Bougainville, people often refer to the 'lost generation', who grew up during the crisis and were unable to access education," Mr Masono said.

"Today many still lack literacy skills." The Unity Library hopes to create an inclusive space that values education, learning and personal growth and creating an environment that is welcoming and safe, and respects teamwork,

diversity and equal opportunity.

The Unity Library first opened in April 2016 with support from Lady Judith Bona and Lesley Palmer. Since then the library has become a focal point for children and adults throughout Buka, a place where people can visit, relax and borrow books on a variety of different topics. It has also provided training for a group of dedicated volunteers, headed by Library Manager Deborah Mumia and Senior Library Officer Tracy Nase.

Membership to the library is free and patrons have access to a collection of both fiction and non-fiction books that caters to adults as well as children. There are plans to extend the building to include an open air reading room and an additional building that would be used for a variety of purposes. Both Vice President Masono and the Education Minister

Thomas Pata'aku said they hoped other communities throughout Bougainville could have their own libraries in the future and that more remote areas could be reached.

A group of children from the Matrix Early Learning centre stood confidently before the gathered crowd and read poems about the magic of books and the love of reading. The audience was also entertained with a performance from an energetic bamboo band. The ceremony ended with the cutting of the ribbon, declaring the library officially open and then lunch was provided to all the guests in attendance.

The Unity Library is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1-5pm. For more information you can contact the library at unitylibraryofbuka@gmail.com or find them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/unitylibrarybuka.

Major Infrastructure Projects update

There have been a lot of infrastructure development programs throughout Bougainville in the past three years which include the construction and upgrading of roads, bridges, buildings for schools, and district

health centres.

Some of the major road and bridge projects completed include the sealing of over 30 kilometres of the Buka East Coast Ring Road (John Teosin Highway), reconstruction of Suun River Bridge at Kunua

District, rehabilitation of the Upai(Boku) Bridge in Siwai District, Buka Town Roads sealing and Arawa and Buin Town Roads resealing program, funded by DFAT. Another major high impact project being undertaken is the sealing of the highway

from Kieta to Kangu, Buin which is being undertaken by Dekenai Construction and COVEC Construction, projected to take two and a half years to complete.

Many more projects have been delayed or shelved due to issues

in government cash flow experienced in Bougainville as well as the rest of PNG. If funding from the National Government to Bougainville improves, more projects will progress and be completed as planned.



SUUN BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT: RECONSTRUCTION OF THREE BRIDGES IN KUNUA DISTRICT.

This project involves the reconstruction of the Suun, Vavanue and Nagam Bridges destroyed by flood waters. The Vavanue & Nagam Bridges have been purchased from The Phillipines and stored in Arawa awaiting funds for construction. Total cost for reconstruction of the three bridges is K 10m.



PROJECT: CONSTRUCTION & SEALING OF HIGHWAY SECTION FROM KIETA (RIGU) TO TOIMANAPU.

This project is being undertaken by Dekenai Construction. The project will take over two years to complete for K146m. 6.5 km of roads up to Taboroi have been resealed to date.



PROJECT: CONSTRUCTION OF 14 IN 1 CLASSROOMS AT TONU HIGH SCHOOL

The project funds were advanced to Tonu High School which organised construction through its P & C and local contractors. The total cost of the project is over K500,000 co-funded by Hon Member for South Bougainville under his DSIP Program.



PROJECT: Reconstruction of the Upai Bridge approaches washout in Siwai District has enabled the public and motorists safe access across the river again after many years.



PROJECT: CONSTRUCTION OF STAFF HOUSES AROUND BOUGAINVILLE.

Several staff houses have been built throughout districts for department use. The project is ongoing as funds become available. The senior staff housing project at Kubu is nearing completion at a cost of K 2m.



PROJECT: CONSTRUCTION & SEALING OF HIGHWAY SECTION FROM TOIMANAPU TO KANGU, BUIN.

This project is being undertaken by Covec Construction and is making slow progress. The project will take over two years to complete at a total cost of K208m.

SUUN BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTED

The most critical bridge over the crocodile infested Suun River has been reconstructed and commissioned for use.

Development Partners Projects in Bougainville

There are several major high impact projects being undertaken in Bougainville by overseas development partners. Of note are projects funded by the Australian Government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

- Buka Airport re-development & runway extension, K45m, funded by ADB.
- Ramazon Hydro Power Project construction, K80m, funded by ADB.
- Construction of four Health Posts in South and Central Bougainville, K20m, funded by ADB.
- Re-development of Arawa Hospital, K20m, funded by Australian Government with co-funding by ABG of K4m for supply and installation of medical equipment.
- Re-sealing of Buin Town Roads, K7m, funded by Australian Government.
- Proposed Resealing of East Coast Trunk Road section from Iaun to Sivavi funded by Australian Government. Funds to be confirmed.
- Rehabilitation of economic feeder roads: one road in Tinputz, two roads in Buin, funded by World Bank for K7m.



PROJECT: ARAWA HOSPITAL RE-DEVELOPMENT



PROJECT: BUIN TOWN ROADS RE-SEALING



PROJECT: BUKA AIRPORT RE-DEVELOPMENT. PHASE 1 PERIMETER FENCE CONSTRUCTION



Buin Town has greatly transformed following the completion of 3.9 km of the roads in town and along the main highway. The township is better linked and surrounding communities can now enjoy easy access to health centres, schools, and businesses in town. The project is funded by the Australian Government through the Transport Service Sector Program (TSSP).

Bougainville to be declared weapons-free before end of 2018

The Ex-Combatants and the Me'ekamui Factions have pledged their commitment to dispose of the remaining weapons for the common good of the people of Bougainville. The commitment is to declare Bougainville weapons-free no later than 31 December, 2018.

In Bougainville the presence of small arms and light weapons are a legacy of the crisis, instilling fear in communities and hindering economic and social development, and security. Although there are no simple solutions for the disposal of weapons, veterans are determined to be weapons-free well before the referendum.

The proposed Weapons Disposal Plan consists of four phases to be endorsed at the Veterans Summit to be held before the end of 2017.

The veterans have urged the ABG and people of Bougainville to help them create an enabling environment that will fast track development, good governance and respect for human rights and the rule of law in Bougainville. The veterans are only responsible for their weapons of war but Second World War weapons and all other firearms must be also addressed.

The Directorate of Veterans Affairs has developed a Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program to complement weapons disposal, to guarantee both political and community level commitment and an inclusive, transparent and sustainable approach to the issue of weapons disposal, peace and community security.

In order to maintain progress the program promotes involvement of all relevant groups, including the most vulnerable, to learn together from past experiences and strive to achieve a culture of peace in Bougainville. The veterans will be rehabilitated and reintegrated into Bougainvillean society and youth empowered to actively participate in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

The program started with the Intensive Peacebuilding Training and the Northern Ireland - Bougainville Comparative Learning. It is expected that the success of the program will provide youth and veterans access to basic life skills and training and recruit veterans and youth as Community Security Officers.

The Secretary for Department of Peace Agreement Implementation James Tanis acknowledged the partnership of UNDP, Australian Government, British Government, the Catholic Diocese of Bougainville, the Nazarene Centre for Rehabilitation and the ex-combatants for the milestone achievements.

"The ABG's position on weapons disposal is a moral one - we do not wish to see armed factions in a post referendum Bougainville. We want to see a unified and weapons-free Bougainville leading into the referendum and beyond. This will not just satisfy the requirements for a credible outcome that is seen to be 'free and fair' but it is good for our men, women and children to move around without fear of weapons in their community," Mr Tanis said.



Ex-combatants pledge their commitment to a weapons-free Bougainville.

ABG commits to supporting UNDP

The ABG has committed itself to supporting the UNDP with the weapons disposal process and peace building in the region.

Vice President Hon Raymond Masono made the reaffirmation of ABG's commitment to the UN Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, Mr Haoliang Xu, who visited Bougainville on Monday 6 October.

Director Xu has been in Bougainville for three days experiencing all that Bougainville has to offer and viewing first-hand the impact that UNDP support is having within the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

Mr Masono said, "I very much value the support of the UN in supporting the Peace Process, particularly in relation to weapons disposal and the warm relationship that it shares with the Autonomous Bougainville Government."

Ministers acknowledged the valuable work of the UN as an active partner in the peace building process, particularly with respect to upcoming referendum support.

Ministers were also able to brief Mr Xu on the work by all elected members of the House of Representatives within their constituencies to create a weapons-free environment by the end of 2018 and suggested there would be great value in establishing a formal UN political office in Bougainville to work with the ABG as referendum preparation progresses.

Director Xu expressed the UN's full support towards the peace process and in achieving the goals of the referendum.

The UN would continue to support and fund the peace building process and activities to support all elements of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and the referendum, Mr Xu added.



Bougainville: have we met the BPA requirements?

This was the challenge issued to Bougainvilleans by the Member for Selau and chairman of the Referendum Steering Committee Hon Joseph Watawi during the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) commemorations in Suir this year.

"The biggest challenge for us Bougainvilleans is to meet the requirements of the BPA. Today we celebrate the 16 years of signing the BPA but we should look back and ask ourselves have we implemented the BPA by till now?"

He stressed that the signing of the BPA gave Bougainvilleans the peace that ended the decade long civil war, responsible for the loss of thousands of lives. Yet the question was whether we lived up to the requirements imprinted in the BPA.

The BPA was an agreement signed by the National Government of Papua New Guinea and leaders of the Bougainville on the 30 August, 2001. The agreement clearly pointed



Hon. Joseph Watawi, Member for Selau Constituency.

out three pillars that would pave the way for peace in Bougainville and eventually lead to the referendum.

These three pillars included autonomy or self government for Bougainville, which changed the former North Solomons Province into a higher status of Autonomous Region of Bougainville. Referendum and weapons disposal make up the other two pillars.

Hon Watawi also explained that fiscal self reliance, good governance and respect for the rule of law are also important aspects in Bougainville's referendum process.

The ABG House of Representatives passed a motion of parliament for all constituencies in Bougainville to be referendum ready by 31 December, 2018 and the responsibility lies with the people of Bougainville to work together to achieve that goal.

"We have less than 21 months left to meet the requirements in the BPA. Can we respect the rule of

rid of weapons and get in tune to awareness messages on peace and referendum to prepare themselves for the referendum.

Meanwhile Mr Watawi also encouraged the people of Suir to take ownership of the peace process and mediate reconciliations amongst themselves.

"Take ownership of the process as it is everyone's responsibility, let us all work together because it is time for Bougainville to become one," he stressed.

He called on all factions within Bougainville to put aside their differences and work together with ABG to achieve that one goal and purpose which was a referendum for Bougainville that could lead to independence.

"Let us all work together, whether you are with Meeka'mui or an ex-combatant or BRA let us put our differences aside, talk together and share ideas for Bougainville," Mr Watawi said.

The BPA Day celebration in Suir was broadcasted on ABG's

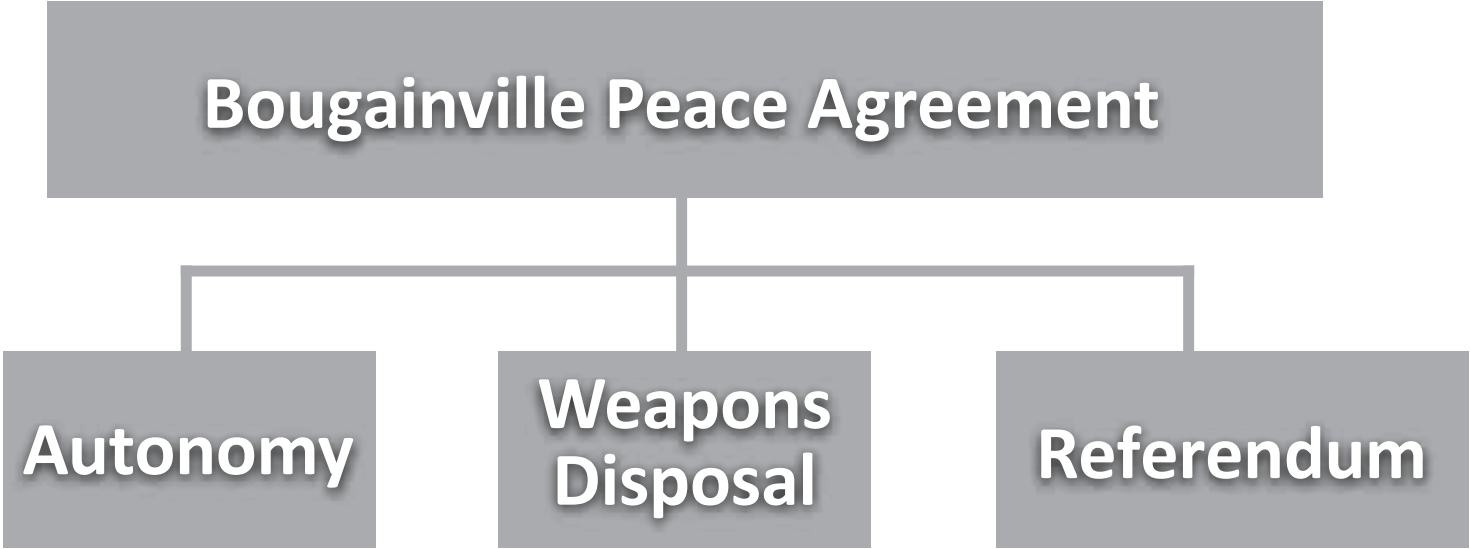
Radio Ples Lain and the event ended on a high note with a live radio discussion giving the general public an opportunity to raise questions on the referendum, the target date, ABG's position on referendum and updates on referendum preparations, weapons disposal, reconciliations and the voting age.

Hon Joseph Watawi and colleague Minister Hon Luke Karaston were part of the panellists together with leaders from the Suir Constituency.

Mr Watawi explained that negotiations were currently underway for the PNG Defence Force and Bougainville to reconcile before the referendum in 2019 and urged the people of Bougainville not to hijack the government process.

"The PNG Government and the international partners are watching us and our conduct. Our actions can affect the choice for referendum if we are not responsible citizens," he said.

The three pillars of autonomy, weapons disposal and referendum are the building blocks of the BPA.



Nine communities receive grants

A woman-led group from the Laruma Village Assembly is one of nine communities to receive a generous funding grant to purchase 20 water tanks for their village at Kegiri in the Torokina District, South Bougainville.

President Lynneth Rivitsi was overwhelmed by the offer and said that it would benefit her village very much.

Torokina is situated on a volcanic area that has been continuously affected by the ash fall which made it very difficult for her people to consume clean water, she said.

Like everyone who applied, Lynneth has a dream to improve her community and will persevere towards it.

The Laruma Village Assembly had applied for grants to fund water tanks

and was among nine other groups that signed the grants agreement on 3 November.

The nine communities come from various districts in Bougainville. The grants were supported by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) under the Australia High Commission.

Buka-based DFAT Program Manager Jeffery Kop congratulated all winners during the awards ceremony. He also reminded all that no other donor in Bougainville would have initiated this kind of grant programme that offered free training and funding based on the communities own project assessments.

The Bougainville Program coordinated the logistics, which received more than 300 applications that were screened by the Bougainville Grants

Committee.

Bougainville Committee Grants Coordinator Wilson Monori said that participants have received training on the basics of managing small projects, bookkeeping, good governance and detecting fraud. They were also given presentations about some of the policies the donor supports such as children's rights.

Participants were advised that 10 percent of funds would be paid to start work on the projects.

Mr Monori said that the nine groups were the first batch from the twenty successful groups to receive the one-week training.

The nine groups consisted of 27 participants having the president, treasurer and secretary who represented their groups. They derived from the districts of Bana,



Siwai, Torokina, Selau, Buin, Kieta and Panguna.

Many of the recipients acknowledged that the training was a new learning experience. It was an eye opener for many whom not only received funding on operations and management.

The community grants funding programme was made possible by a partnership between the Department of Community Development and DFAT.

According to the Department's Acting Secretary, Mana Kakarauts, ABG did not have the funding support to deliver plans and activities, and acknowledged DFAT's

support and interest of people applying to the grants scheme.

Kakarauts congratulated the successful applicants and challenged every participant to put into practice accountability and good project management skills.

One of the priorities of the ABG is economic development and the Department of Community Development wants to see activities carried out in alignment with the ABG's goal and that is what the grants programme wants to achieve, she added.

The Arawa Town Mayor also attended grants signing ceremony.

Summit proposes way forward for Bougainville

Real options for the government to improve its economic position and achieve fiscal self-reliance are the outcome of the historic Revenue and Tax summit hosted by the Autonomous Bougainville Government in September.

Speaking at the summit closing, Chief Secretary Joseph Nobetau acknowledged the creative and innovative presentations, and proposed the next steps for the ABG. These included:

1. **Implementing new revenue initiatives**
2. **Increasing compliance with the current tax laws**
3. **Assessing feasibility of drawing down national powers and functions, such as collecting and retaining personal income tax in Bougainville**
4. **Attaining for full revenue**

entitlements under the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

The cost-benefit of these initiatives will now be looked at in detail, including discussions with the Bougainville business community and close engagement with the national government.

ABG Vice President Hon. Raymond Masono shared the Chief Secretary's sentiments. He described the summit as a dialogue, with the

government that lays the foundations to build a strong and sustainable economic base.

"As Vice President I am responsible for whole-of-government implementation and reform. This includes examining ways that the government can more efficiently utilize revenue to deliver effective services."

"I am focused on whole-of-government economic reform, where we can transform our economy

and economic base to develop key industries and sectors. This summit has been an important part of that process, and through the lessons we have learnt I am confident that Bougainville is now in a much better position to deliver on the promises of the future," he said.

The challenge now lies with the ABG and its administration to ensure that Bougainville builds a strong and sustainable economy for the future.

Economist's observation on ABG

Satish Chand, a very respected professor at the University of New South Wales, shared his three observations of the Autonomous Bougainville Government at the Bougainville Revenue and Taxation Summit held in Buka in September.

Professor Chand congratulated the ABG for the successful summit and acknowledged that implemented one of the recommendations of the 2013 review of BPA autonomy arrangements.

Professor Chand was speaking from a background of economy and presented two papers: Transitioning to fiscal self-reliance in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville,

and Moving to fiscal self-reliance in Bougainville.

Professor Chand's second observation was based on a question raised by a participant at the summit based on the role of government and the lack of funding.

"The role of government is distinct from the private sector. It provides services that the private sector cannot," said Professor Chand.

"This includes government infrastructure, both the physical infrastructure, but more importantly, the social infrastructure, the law and order, the contracts, the enforcement of those contracts, peace and policing."

"Each time we ask," what is the government providing," we have to look at those public goods," he said.

"If we have peace, if we have the roads that are functioning, if we have courts that are delivering then they are the core functions the private sector needs but no private sector will provide."

"If the government is providing those services then the government is serving its function."

"Buka is probably the most peaceful, most well served area for the private sector," he added.

Chand's third observation was based on the ABG needing economic growth that was broad-

based and inclusive.

"We can't just rely on one industry," he said.

Chand said that broad-based inclusive growth would not happen by accident; it had to be deliberately planned and worked towards.

"It will not happen solely with the efforts of the ABG. It can be the best government in the world, doing the best thing, with the best technocrats, but it will not get inclusive broad-based economic growth."

"It will not happen without the engagement of people, private sector and the national government."

Professor Chand said that one important group missing from the summit was participation from the

national government.

"There has to be a partnership and I want to go back to the peace agreement where it was a collaborative of different parties and the National Government to achieve peace. It was founded on prosperity and the key objective of the agreement was peace."

Professor Chand said that the Peace Agreement was different from other countries and should be sustained for many years to come.

Professor Satish Chand's presentations can be downloaded on www.abg.gov.pg/government/departments/treasury-finance

Bougainville Chocolate continues

Cocoa farmers in Bougainville were given the chance to showcase their products to buyers and chocolate makers at the Bougainville Chocolate Festival in Arawa.

Minister for Primary Industries, Marine Resources and Forestry Nicholas Darku and Australia's Deputy High Commissioner Bronte Moules launched the two-day Chocolate Festival in Arawa on Thursday, 7 September.

The event brought together cocoa farmers, chocolate makers, industry representatives and government officials to meet and discuss market access, improved farming and processing techniques, and taste samples of Bougainville's finest beans.

Local bands performed contemporary rock and reggae songs, entertaining crowds with powerful messages about cocoa and chocolate. A highlight was the Offspring band that featured veteran and cocoa famer Ishmael Toroama.

Local farmers also had the opportunity to meet their business partners from overseas such as cocoa bean exporters, Jasper + Myrtle from Australia.

The Festival is an initiative of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, led by the Department of Primary Industries



in partnership with the Governments of Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand.

Minister Darku, said the festival is a culmination of efforts by the Bougainville Government and its stakeholders to revitalise the cocoa industry in Bougainville.

"The cocoa industry has significant and immediate growth potential for Bougainville. That's why it makes sense to focus on rebuilding the industry to improve livelihoods of our people and at the same time, grow the economy,"

Minister Darku said.

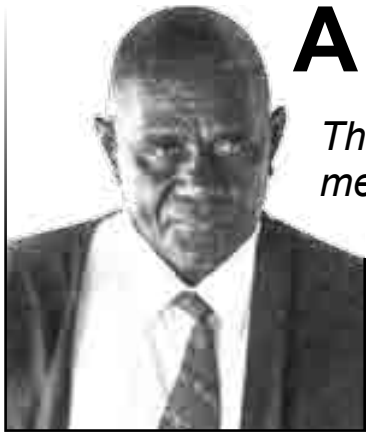
Ms Moules commended the Autonomous Bougainville Government for its proactive efforts to boost the cocoa sector in Bougainville.

"We know that money from cocoa brings better health and education and more opportunities for Bougainvilleans. That's why the Papua New Guinea-Australia Partnership, together with New Zealand, is working in Bougainville to help develop the cocoa value chain.

"Our partnership is working to improve the

business environment and market access, increase production and quality and ultimately, put more money in the pockets of Bougainvillean farmers," Ms Moules said.

The chocolate competition was a highlight at the festival. Farmers from throughout Bougainville sent samples of their cocoa to Paradise Foods' Queen Emma Chocolate Factory to be made into chocolate and a panel of local and international judges then sampled the chocolate before making a final decision on winners.



A rewarding 25 years

I've had the privilege and honour of serving many parliamentarians in our country's pre-independence House of Assembly 1969 - 1974 and the National Parliament 1975 - 1993. The time and calling was very rewarding serving elected members - including a number of Speakers - at the highest levels of leadership. It was a rewarding twenty five years.

One of the many former MPs I've had the great opportunity to know, serve, learn from, travel with and represent the country through my time with PNG's National Parliament was Sir Barry Holloway, one of the original founders of Pangu Party.

Sir Barry served the people of Eastern Highlands Province in the pre-Independence House of Assembly and in the National Parliament following Independence in 1975.

As the last Speaker of the House of Assembly, Sir Barry presided over the National Constituent Assembly meetings that adopted the PNG Constitution in August 1975. He became the first Speaker of PNG's First National Parliament at transition when the Territory of Papua and New Guinea became the Independent State of Papua New Guinea as the new nation came into being on 16 September 1975.

Foresight, dedication and commitment

To build the country

A rewarding 25 years in the parliament

The Speaker of the Bougainville House of Representatives Mr Simon Pentanu shares a memory twenty-five years of serving many parliamentarians.

we now call PNG took the foresight, dedication and commitment of a host of early leaders – from simple, selfless ordinary villagers to community leaders to traditional and tribal ‘big men’ from the Highlands who ran for office and served their people as elected leaders.

Some of them couldn't read very well but that didn't matter because they could think, see, listen, reason and talk earnestly about their roles as their peoples' mouthpieces.

Some couldn't speak fluent English but this was never a handicap because they had more than one language to pick from to express their views.

A few may not have had the writing and reading skills but this was a time when you could find out and know more about what was going on by listening to radios territory-wide and nationwide which broadcasted in Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu by dedicated broadcasters.

Foresight, dedication and commitment were qualities all members, including the early Speakers of the House like Sir John Guise, Sir Barry, Sir Kingsford Dibela, and Sevese Morea had in spades. It was a privilege to know all of them. After the early Speakers in the old Parliament downtown, it was a privilege to serve as Clerk with others Speakers in the new Parliament House at Waigani, among them Timothy Bonga, Akoka Doi, Brown Sinamoi, Dennis Young and for a very brief time, Bill Skate.

It is something I will always hold dear - that a career took hold and took shape serving among such men (though too few women). They were proud times. What an opportunity to grow up and serve the

leaders and the country!

And there is no reason why it cannot be the same today with our leaders and the country if we stop being negative, abusive and disrespectful.

There are many countries – developed, developing and under-developed, so to speak, who have far worse problems and facing far worse circumstances than PNG. We live in a relatively peaceful region of the world. PNG is a leader in the region in many respects.

My plea to our National Government

My plea to our National Government - and let's include our Autonomous Bougainville Government as well - is to improve its governance and performance.

Good governance means protecting, maintaining, improving, strengthening and respecting state institutions, particularly oversight institutions. The highest oversight and accountability institution in the land is the Parliament. It begs the question: do our parliamentarians know this? The new Government should know this, it must.

My plea to the Opposition

My plea to the Opposition is that it cooperates wherever it can see a chance to address the very real issues confronting the country. This often means resisting to take political positions when it concerns matters of common interest on which the House is required to take decisions on. This is often difficult in times of vexatious politicking but it is not impossible given our Melanesian tradition of consensus decision-making.

Role of a parliamentarian

Every parliamentarian shares a common interest in improving the lot of the people of Papua New Guinea. All parliamentarians also have a duty to ensure that the role of the Legislature to keep the Executive accountable for its decisions must be upheld. Regular parliament meetings and debates are a feature of parliaments and governments that have a good track record of maintaining respect and comity between the these two arms of government.

We all know in our hearts that things can be solved with consensus and a sensible approach to negotiation – and that must include cooperation across the political divide. Nothing beats meeting in a room and talking across the table to each other, not talking at and about each other in absentia.

The politician's worst fear should be that they might let their people and the country down. Under the leadership code it is misconduct in office if the leader is acting in ways, doing things that amount to demeaning the integrity and respect of the office of a member and of the country.

Despite the feeling of tension and doom that grips the country leading up to, during, and following elections, I will always have fond memories of many politicians and parliamentarians, past and present, who put the country first.

There is growing genuine concern that dedicated, conscientious, good politicians may be diminishing in numbers. Improving the quality and accuracy of the electoral roll and educating voters

about the democratic process could help solve this enduring issue.

Forging closer and better cooperation

The Bougainville House of Representatives looks forward towards forging closer and better cooperation and relationship between our two Parliaments, between our two Speakers with our two Clerks, between our members of our respective parliaments and, most of all, between our two governments.

It is important that both our governments and our respective Parliaments work critically and genuinely hard at forging greater cooperation. Members of both our Houses deserve to work in closer cooperation and have meaningful contacts and dialogue at political and parliamentary level. The political arrangements between the National Government and Bougainville beholds us to do this.

I look forward to do so with the Speaker of the Tenth National Parliament, the Hon. Job Pomat MP.

This can be done with respect and dignity in much the same way as some of us have done so in the past working with former PNGNP Speakers, and with the same spirit of getting the best out of our human understanding in the knowledge that we will be doing this for the benefit and greater good of our Legislatures and our elected leaders.

If we just sit down and only talk or complain, nothing will give or happen. The only way to get another person to do something - good or bad - is to make that person want to do it.

Peace and unity – important tool for referendum preparation

Advocating for peace and unity is a huge responsibility for all sectors in Bougainville as the referendum is the key agenda for the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. Government departments, NGOs, churches, youth, women's groups, and schools need to act together as one voice and advocate one message.

The Peace Ambassadors Advocacy Program, initiated by the Speaker of the Bougainville House of Representatives, Hon Simon Pentanu, is one such program that has driven this message of peace, targeting schools, youths and communities in Bougainville.

Speaking to *ABG's Radio Ples Lain*, Hon Pentanu stressed that the purpose of the outreach was to carry out awareness, interact with people in the communities and share information on Bougainville's political journey.

“The purpose of this advocacy is mostly interacting with the people, especially the youths, advocating on human and spiritual development, having role models to talk about their experiences and help encourage Bougainvilleans to change,” he said.

The outreach is led by the Speaker and his staff and has two peace ambassadors Mr Morris Hotsia and Mr Greg Lua that educate and advocate to communities on peace.

“We are targeting the youths as they are the future leaders of Bougainville and also having role models on the program encourages the youths learn to become better citizens of Bougainville,” he said.

Morris Hotsia, a former school teacher



Reconciliation at Mabiri between the Victims of Barora and Teperoi and perpetrators of Stone War. The burying of a stone is a symbol of burying of grievances.

and magistrate, said that the Peace Ambassadors Advocacy Program is timely in encouraging Bougainvilleans to prepare for the referendum.

Speaking with Radio Ples Lain at the Community Rugby Festival in Arawa, Mr Hotsia stressed that peace needed to be taught in different ways, such as through sports or music, thus the Rugby Festival was one such event where the message of peace could be spread.

“Bougainville has been in a conflict and it ended and yes we have reached some hard point in life which is good because to bring change we have to experience it and to bring peace you have to change and experience it,” he said.

Greg Lua, a fellow peace ambassador and a former combatant with the BRA who served 13 years imprisoned in Honiara for crisis related offences, revealed similar sentiments, calling on Bougainvilleans to reconcile and become peace makers.

“I am running a ministry called the Sikamone Tree,” he said. “I have begun talking to the youths to become ambassadors of peace and have been mediating with former combatants to reconcile.” He called on the people of Bougainville to remember the history that brought them out of the crisis and as the day for referendum was dawning, the people needed to reconcile and unite before the referendum date.

Hon Pentanu revealed that the Peace Ambassadors program had visited schools, in the three regions of North, Central and South and the response had been overwhelming.

Meanwhile, the Speaker also thanked the UNDP for making the program successful through funding assistance and for making it possible for UN Sports Ambassadors to visit Bougainville. The UN Sports Ambassadors were part of the UNDP Governance Program and visited Bougainville to

encourage youths and children to get involved in sports and be aware of the social issues that affect our daily lives.

UNDP Governance Program Analyst Mr Nema explained that it was the first time the UNDP partnered with the ABG and the Bougainville Rugby Union to kick start the Community Rugby Festival in Bougainville.

“UNDP has the interest to support sports activities as we believe in the positive impact that sports will bring to the youths and creates a platform for youths to participate and create friendship,” he said.

The National Sports Ambassadors Tanya Mauhuru, Chris Amini and Lua Rikis not only shared their experiences and what sports has done for them but they were also able to advocate on the UNDP's sustainable development goals (SDG)— encouraging the youths and students to learn about them, appreciate them and apply them in their daily lives.

Ms Tanya Mauhuru, a national shooting champion, who has represented PNG overseas, advocated for SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Despite participating in a male dominated sport she has excelled due to her love and commitment of the sport. She called on girls and women not to look down on themselves but take part in sports, do their best and achieve their dreams both on the field and off.

National Cricket champion Mr Chris Amini talked on SDG 6 (Quality Education) urging students to concentrate on their education as it is very important for development. “I have had experiences where some of my colleagues have difficulty reading and writing because they didn't complete their education, however, sports has taken them out of PNG to represent the country and the same can be for you,” he said. He added that sports can change lives but if you complete your education the rest will fall in line.

National Netball champion Ms Lua Rikis shared similar sentiments stressing that sports is an opportunity to develop oneself and learn characteristics to apply in daily life, such as respect for one another, discipline and the will to avoid drugs.

These three ambassadors said participation in sports keeps students occupied and away from illegal activities.

They wished Bougainvilleans well and encouraged them to maintain peace and unity through sports in preparation for the Referendum in 2019.

BEC approves urban boundaries

The Bougainville Executive Council has approved boundaries for Bougainville’s four urban community government areas: Buka, Kokopau, Arawa and Buin. The approval opens the way for urban community government elections to take place before the end of 2017.

On reviewing the boundaries, President Momis commended the Department of Community Government, and said he was pleased with the progress being made to implement Bougainville’s unique second level of government.

“The implementation of elections for all 43 non-urban and four urban community governments will be a major ABG achievement for 2017. It will mean that in less than one year the ABG has established and implemented a key platform for community owned decision-making to prioritise local development,” President Momis said.

The Department of Community Government is now working with the Office of the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner



to prepare for elections ahead of Christmas. Under the current *Community Government Act* all Community Government elections must be completed by 31 December.



New urban community government boundaries [clockwise from top]: Buka, Arawa, Buin, Kokopau



Team AROB wins National Boxing Championships

The Autonomous Region of Bougainville has won this year’s National Boxing Championships hosted in Arawa in September.

Playing under the banner of Bougainville, the host won five gold medals ahead of Mathew Aisa’s Mekeo with four and Hiri’s one to finish on top.

Defending champions the National Capital District did not attend the championships.

Tournament Director Dick Larry said eight associations attended the fight held from 5-14 September.

Associations who attended the boxing titles were hosts Bougainville, who fielded three teams — Bougainville 1, 2 and North Bougainville while others included Namatanai, Rabaul,

Mekeo, Hiri and Lae.

Larry said he was disappointed that not many associations took part — making it hard for the selectors to name a representative team.

The championship was to select a side in preparation for the Pacific Mini Games in Vanuatu in December and also for the Commonwealth Games in Australia next year.

The Bougainville Amateur Boxing Association (BABA) has already won its place in the Commonwealth North Games and earned their name in the hall of fame at the 48th SP Brewery National Champions.

BABA won seven gold, two silver and 12 bronze medals against boxers from Papua New Guinea.

In a stunning finals showdown on Friday night at the host’s home

town, BABA delivered the killer blow topping the three day tournament at Tupukas Primary School, Arawa.

BABA novice fighters contributed three gold and eight bronze to the medal tally while the senior team led by courageous captain and 49kg specialist Maxie Mangea secured four gold, two silver and four bronze medals.

Lone BABA female boxer Petronilla Nokenoke fought her heart out for one of the four gold medals beating North Bougainville Amateur Boxing Association’s (NBABA) rival Edwina Sahoto in their 57kg bout.

The other senior BABA gold medals came from workaholic Peter Tyson Soko (56kg), power puncher Dominic Narunsi (60kg) and Commonwealth silver

medalist Maxie Mangea (49kg).

In the novices, Jaysi Dansi (56kg), Lesley Roger (64kg) and Eddie Tovirika (69kg) were the recipient of gold medals as well.

Alphonse Piriri of BABA won the 81kg title.

Boxing stronghold Mekeo settled for second placing with four golds delivered by novice Gabriel Ivagai (75kg), Charlie Keama (52kg), Andrew Aisaga (69kg) and Jonathan Keama (75kg).

NBABA made up the top three with Grace Rimana collecting gold in the 64kg against Mekeo’s Joane Mapai who settled for the silver medal.

The other gold medalists for NBABA were Drunken Haddon (49kg), John Gereia (52kg) and Isaac Kungsi (60kg).

The associations that

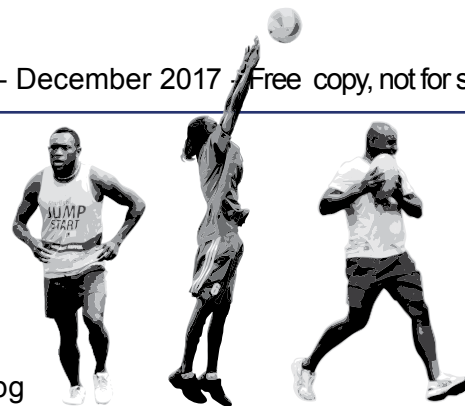
took part included Mekeo, Hiri, East New Britain, Namatanai, Misima, Kairuku, Lae, hosts BABA and sister-association NBABA.

It was a successful and wonderful three days of boxing showdown which the people of Arawa and AROB enjoyed very much.

The people of Arawa thanked PNGABU president John Avira for hosting the tournament so they can be able to witness high level fights again.

A proud Mr Avira exclaimed that Bougainville was the home ground for winning international boxers.

The minor sponsors for the tournament were Gold Dust Ltd, Panners Gold Ltd, Jomik Group of Companies, NGIP Agmark, Advance Signs and Agrotech.



Community Rugby Festival



Participants of the Rugby Festival proudly display their sponsored jerseys.

A Community Rugby Festival was staged in Arawa in July to drive awareness messages on Peace and Unity targeting youths.

“Promoting Peace and Unity through Sports” was the theme of the tournament in which 30 teams from the North and Central Regions of Bougainville participated.

“We are trying to revive rugby in Bougainville and with the Bougainville referendum not too far away, we think that such a tournament is the best avenue to encourage the youths to prepare for the referendum,” revealed Kelly Havara, President of the Bougainville Rugby Union and chairperson of the Tournament.

Mr Havara said this was the first time for such tournament to be organised to promote the message on peace and unity. The response of thirty teams to participate is very positive,” he said.

The drive to carry out awareness on Peace and Unity is an initiative jointly supported by the ABG House of Representatives,



Department of Peace Agreement Implementation and the Directorate of Media and Communication, with assistance from the United Nations Development Program.

It is with pleasure that we witness young men and women competing and encouraging peace and unity on the sporting field, amongst their peers and in their community,” said ABG Speaker Hon. Simon Pentanu.

The Honourable Speaker and his team of Peace Ambassadors were part of the Peace and Unity

advocacy to Arawa, and part of the program to encourage youths to be peace ambassadors within their own communities.

Bougainville Rugby Union in partnership with the ABG has embarked on such program to target the youths. Participating teams were presented with jerseys that had messages of Peace, Referendum, Unity and Gender printed on them.

“These messages encourage players to be part of the peace process and advocate to their fellow communities and peers for Bougainville to unite

and prepare for the Referendum in 2019,” Mr Havara said.

The weekend festival had thirty teams participating in which there were 10 male teams, 8 women teams and 12 junior teams playing in the premier, senior and junior divisions respectively. Most of the participating teams were from North Bougainville whilst new comers to the code Panguna and Arawa had one team each from Central Bougainville.

South Bougainville have yet to part take in this sport, however, Bougainville Rugby Union has plans to conduct training and awareness to youths and school age children throughout all the regions of Bougainville.

Mr Havara said they will conduct trainings on the code throughout the region and plan to organise and host more such tournaments to encourage the youths to participate and have positive attitude towards contributing to peace and unity in Bougainville.

The tournament was planned for round robin games around the Autonomous Region of Bougainville thus the games were also staged in Buin, South Bougainville in September and the final leg of the tournament was played in Buka, North Bougainville in October wrapping up the Community Rugby Festival for 2017.

The tournament had very high competitive teams performing to win, however, in every game there is always one winner thus the most outstanding teams were awarded prize monies.

There were cup winners and shield winners both as runner up and winners respectively thus this year’s first Rugby Festival had Hangan Pirates being the champions to be the masters of the code for 2017.

They were awarded prize monies and challenged to maintain that win come the next tournament to be staged in 2018.

Community Rugby Festival will continue as an annual event and the organisers are planning a bigger event come 2018.