



THE BOUGAINVILLE BULLETIN

Our voice, Our image, Our place

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MARAPE: NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO BOUGAINVILLE

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President Toroama: 'Winds of Change have arrived'

The Autonomous Region of Bougainville has a new President who will lead the aspiring region in the next five years.

Ishmael Toroama claimed the presidential seat in a victorious win in the recently concluded Bougainville General Elections.

On September 29 2020, during the Inauguration of the Bougainville House of Representatives, President Toroama delivered his maiden speech to over 5000 Bougainvilleans who gathered to witness the ceremony at the Parliament House.

"I am humbled and honored to be speaking

to you, as your new President for the next five years. This is the highest process and improving fiscal self-reliance of Bougainville."

"The people's choice in leaders has clearly shown a cry for change and my government will work hard to build trust and confidence to the people."

- Hon. Ishmael Toroama

position on our land, and I intend to serve the office with faithfulness and diligence," he said.

"Change will be the theme of my government," he said.

"I, as your mandated President am ready to take Bougainville forward, focusing on law and order, anti-corruption policies, the ratification

"Independence has been our dream since the days of our forefathers. We have fought for it, and won the war, but we have not yet won the battle! We have now translated it into a number (the 98% vote), without any significant minority throughout Bougainville."

He thanked the outgoing President Hon.

Chief Dr John Momis, and outgoing Minister for Post Referendum Albert Punghau, for the remarkable work that has been done so far that enabled the delivery of a successful, credible and peaceful referendum for Bougainville. He further announced that his government will be working in close consultation with the two leaders for their continued guidance in the post-referendum process.

President Toroama also highlighted Corruption as a key focus for his government, and urged all leaders to avoid being involved or participating in any corrupt activities that will question one's credibility.

"My government intends to keep a clear separation, between decision making (policy or law) and implementation. Leaders should make decisions and then take lead in implementing the same decisions. Leaders

may go out and monitor to ensure laws or policies are implemented as planned," he said.

President Toroama when speaking on law and order, said Bougainville can only prosper socially and economically if people recognize and respect the rule of law.

"Our dream of being masters of our destiny will amount to nothing if we cannot behave in civil ways. We have signed the Peace Agreement, we have contained weapons, we have reconciled amongst ourselves as well as with PNG, and above all we have conducted a highly successful referendum. There is now no more reason, for anyone to be carrying arms or causing violence or behaving in unruly manners," Toroama said.

He called on all other factions or groups that are still outside of the peace process, to join him and his government in Bougainville's journey.



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Editor’s Desk

Hello Readers!

Welcome to Edition 16 of the Bougainville Bulletin and the first edition also following the recent conclusion of the ABG General Elections. The Bulletin Team would like to apologize sincerely to our readers for the delay in getting this edition to you due to the prolonged flight restrictions as this paper is printed in Port Moresby.

In this edition, we have for you stories about the new leadership and its plans for Bougainville over the next five years.

Bougainville has echoed loudly its cry for change and this is clearly shown in the new composition of the Fourth Bougainville House of Representatives.

The new President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Hon. Ishmael Toroama, stated in his Inauguration Speech that this ‘change’ will be the theme of his government. You will read more about this and the President’s Six-Point Strategy on how to achieve this change for Bougainville in this edition.

Our centerspread also provides you a full run down of all the new members of the Fourth House.

We also have some key department updates for our readers including stories on important economic progress for Bougainville.

Across Bougainville, people have been affected in one way or another due to the coronavirus. In this edition, the Bulletin Team talked to some mothers about how this has affected them and how they have coped with the situation. We hope this also gives our readers some comfort knowing that you are not alone during these challenging times. You will also find some key information on page 17 of this edition on how to keep you and your families safe from COVID-19.

As we look forward to the new government and its plans for Bougainville, let us continue to work in partnership with our leaders at all levels, let us take ownership of our issues and contribute in our own ways to help our government move Bougainville forward to its aspirations.

We hope you enjoy this edition and happy reading!

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, Department of President and Bougainville Executive Council.

We encourage stories from the public, government and community organisations. To submit an article or letter for publication, please contact us:

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STOPIM CORONAVIRUS!!!

1. Stap tasol long haus bilong yu
2. Kisim save long coronavirus
3. Stap gut na stap seif

Wasim han olgeta taim
Taim yu kus, pasim maus wantaim han skrew

Stap 1.5 mita longwe long narapla oltaim
Noken sekhan wantaim ol narapla
Noken holim pes, nus o maus

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covid19.info.gov.pg



The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Hon. James Marape, says the National Government is fully committed to ensure Bougainville achieves its aspirations.

Mr Marape made this remark at the inauguration ceremony of the fourth Bougainville House of Representatives in Buka.

He said his government had made a number of commitments to Bougainville during his visits to the region including:

- *Outstanding commitments owed to Bougainville under the Peace Agreement*
- *Allocation of 10% out of the K200 million SME start-up funds for Bougainville*
- *Full functions of the public service to be transferred to Bougainville*

Chief among these commitments is ensuring that people are empowered at all levels.

He said since taking office as Prime Minister, his government has embarked on an exercise to ensure that people and all resource owners across the country are fully empowered, and he looks

- *Full transfer of BCL shares back to Bougainville*
- *Full revenue raising powers to be transferred to Bougainville*

forward to working closely with the new Bougainville Government to ensure this is done for the people of Bougainville as PM and the new Minister for Bougainville Affairs.

Mr Marape described the Bougainville people as the true definition of what resilience is all about.

“Despite the crisis, despite lack of development, despite non-government services, despite hardships, despite loss of loved ones, you remained focused on what you want for your region, what you want for your group of people,” he said.

Mr Marape also publicly acknowledged that Papua New Guinea would not be

where it is today without the great contribution of the Panguna Mine to the country’s economy.

“PNG will not be where we are today had Panguna and Bougainville not contributed to the economy. We also must in turn, contribute to the rebuilding and reconstruction of shaping the destiny of Bougainville,” he said.

The Prime Minister however said that the commitments made by his government are also to allow Bougainville to practice being independent.

“Whilst discussions on political independence will take time, we want you to practice independence,

self-governance, and economic autonomy at the very earliest. And I commit my whole-of-government approach to try as much as possible to empower you to the highest we can,” he said.

Following the inauguration of the new ABG, the two governments will enter into a series of consultations on the Bougainville Referendum result.

A Joint Supervisory Body meeting between the two governments is being discussed to be held as soon as possible for joint agreement to be reached for the next steps of the post-referendum process.

President: Public service must become ‘agents of change’

Public servants in the Bougainville Administration have been called on to be servants of the people.

This call was made by the President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Hon

Ishmael Toroama in his maiden speech to parliament during the Inauguration Ceremony

in Buka.

President Toroama outlined his six point strategy of which the third focused on building people’s trust and confidence through greater administrative control.

“We must have the right administration to facilitate economic growth and be able to

translate and implement political directions,” he said.

“The administration must change from being paper pushers to being agents of change.

“Yours is a mandate to be servants of the people. But too often you have become a self-serving organization, caring only about the

perks and privileges you can enjoy.”

He said his government will be focused on reviewing the current structure with the intention of redirecting services and resources to the district level, and called on public servants for their cooperation in this exercise.

“My presidency

intends to have a closer look at the public service in order to realign with the needs of the people and I need your cooperation in this endeavor,” he said.

He further urged all public servants to rediscover the spirit of ‘service’ that was evident in the earlier provincial days of Bougainville.

National Government supports South Bougainville



The Minister for National Planning and Member for Bulolo, Hon. Sam Basil, visited South Bougainville in July to launch a number of economic development projects. It was his first travel to the South Region.

As a token of appreciation to the people of South Bougainville, Mr Basil presented K\$50,000 to Mamareke Primary School which chiefs said will be used to build a double storey

classroom.

Mr Basil also launched the Bana Economic Zone and the South Bougainville Development Plan 2018-2022 with the Buin international market ground breaking ceremony.

He pledged to support the local member for South Bougainville and Minister for Telecommunications and ICT Hon. Timothy Masiu, by ensuring these projects are gazetted at

the National Executive Council.

Mr Basil was very pleased to see that Bougainville was truly rich in agriculture economy.

“Growing the economy of Bougainville must remain agenda number one of the government of Bougainville,” Mr Basil said. “The government must exploit different economic growth initiatives and moralities to stimulate the economy growth in the country.”

“The ‘special economic zone’ model is one of the best for encouraging economic development by giving economic incentives to business. This encourages direct foreign investments, which in turn empowers people and their micro, small and medium enterprises to flourish.”

Mr Basil said the national government is now focusing on developing similar free trade zones across PNG including the Sepik, Kikori, Manus and Nazab in the Morobe Province.

“I am now happy to stand with your member to gazette the Bana Economic Zone.”

Mr Basil said that there was a huge economic potential in Bougainville that needed to developed.

“Bougainville is an agricultural base economy and needs to be broaden in order for the economy to grow,” he said.

“Bougainville has a comparative advantage in cocoa and copra

which must be harnessed and developed into key sustainable sectors of the economy.”

Mr Basil told people that the Marape-Steven government is committed to supporting the Autonomous Bougainville Government to rebuild the economy and create a better future for the people of Bougainville.

“Our government has a number of commitments to the ABG which include K100 million every year over a ten year period. This equals to K1 billion in total, which can be used in part to support this very important initiative, the development of the Bana Special Economic Zone.”

Mr Basil was also impressed with the location of the Buin International market and said that his ministry will ensure that this significant project progresses to provide service and support to trade between Solomon Islands and South Bougainville.

Basil commends South Bougainville’s Development plan

The Hon. Minister for National Planning and Monitoring, and Member for Bulolo, Sam Basil, says his July trip to South Bougainville was an opportunity for his delegation to see the status of development in South Bougainville and its economic potential.

At the launch of the region’s Five Year Development Plan, Minister Basil said the

trip ensured his Office was better informed about the development challenges and needs for Bougainville.

He congratulated Member for South Bougainville Timothy Masiu for his strong vision, dream and drive which had led to the successful completion of the five-year development plan.

“I am pleased that the plan is aligned to the

National Development Plan so that its implementation can be fairly supported,” Mr Basil.

Minister Basil said the plan has been completed with the assistance of his Department in close collaboration and a consultative approach.

He said this demonstrates a positive response to the requirements of



Minister for National Planning and Monitoring, Hon. Sam Basil

the National Planning Department.

“This plan sets the pathway for inclusive,

sustainable development to improve the quality of the lives of the people of South Bougainville,” Minister Basil said.

JSB agrees to seek joint definition of Ratification

The ratification of the final outcome of the Bougainville referendum is a crucial step in the post-referendum process in deciding Bougainville’s future political status.

While the National Constitution talks about the consultation process that is required to happen between both governments over the results of the referendum, it however remains unclear as to the process meant by the term ‘ratification’.

Former President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville,

Grand Chief Dr. John Momis when speaking on this matter at the Joint Supervisory Body meeting in March this year, said that the ratification issue is a difficult matter and urged leaders to treat it with care.

“The BPA talks about the need for the ultimate ratification of the referendum results to be done by the National Parliament. This must be addressed properly. A consultative approach will help both governments to find an ultimate outcome, however the results of

the referendum cannot be ignored,” he said.

On this matter, the JSB resolved to direct the National Department of Justice and Attorney General and the ABG Department of Justice to convene and jointly develop an agreed definition of the term ‘ratification’ that is within the context of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

This will then be presented through a report to both governments immediately after the ABG 2020 general elections.



Dr. John Momis and Prime Minister James Marape at the recent JSB Meeting in March this year.

The JSB also acknowledged the existing arrangement between the National Parliament and the Bougainville House of Representatives under the Inter-Parliamentary Partnership Agreement of 2019, and further encouraged both Speakers of respective parliaments to continue engaging in regular dialogue on matters of the ratification.

District Peace & Security Committee Forum



ABG Attorney General and Minister for Post-Referendum, Hon. Ezekiel Masatt.

Bougainvilleans must commit to the process and strive to practice political independence.

“All individuals must make a personal commitment to the process and contribute in your own way,” he said.

Minister Masatt further stated that while Bougainville prepares for political independence, we must also work towards economic independence; however one cannot be sacrificed for the other.

He encouraged all participants to unite in Bougainville’s journey and appealed to all to put aside any differences and work together with the Constituency and Community Government leaders.

The forum was facilitated by the ABG Department of Post Referendum Consultation & Dialogue, in collaboration with the Department of

Community Government and Bougainville Partnership.

The forum agreed to a number of resolutions including calls to the new government to commit more resources into the peace and reconciliation activities that are still outstanding. The forum also raised the need to develop a War Compensation Act and Veterans Act to ensure a proper legal framework is in place to resolve these important outstanding issues.

The District Peace and Security Committee is a peace building stakeholder endorsed by the Bougainville Executive Council and based in the districts across Bougainville. The DPSC is the ABG’s leading implementer of peace mediation and reconciliation at the district levels.

Bougainville Consultation Team to be established for joint government consultations

Following the formation of the new Bougainville Government, plans are now underway to establish the Bougainville Consultation Team who will lead consultations with the National Government on Bougainville’s future political status.

ABG Minister for Post Referendum Consultations and Dialogue, Hon. Ezekiel Masatt, announced this in parliament recently.

He explained that a Bougainville Leader’s Consultation Forum will be held soon and will bring together the 56 members of the forum which consists of the BEC endorsed leaders from government and community stakeholders.

It is intended that through this Forum, 20 leaders will be appointed to form the Bougainville Consultations Team.

“The consultation process will sustain peace in Bougainville through a collaborative engagement between Bougainville and the rest of PNG, based on mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual responsibility,” explained Masatt.

Other principles will include following Melanesian culture, values and understandings, maintaining integrity and honesty, securing legitimacy by being participatory, inclusive, transparent and provide clear and accurate information and considering the livelihood of the people of Bougainville, among others.

Bougainville to explore alternate energy solutions

Bougainville will soon be exploring green energy solutions based on its natural resources in the region.

This was announced by ABG Minister for Technical Services,

Hon. Dr Joe Swuamaru in parliament.

“During my tenure as the Minister, for the energy sector, there will be a policy submission, paying attention to green energy based on

the natural resources we have,” he stated.

“For example, to avoid the shortfalls of the centralized hydro-scheme such as the proposed Ramazon project, my ministry will be proposing a Bougainville-wide decentralized electrical supply system.”

This basically will involve a single Bougainville-wide common grid to be supplied using a combination of smaller hydro-systems running

in all constituencies from North, Central and South Bougainville.

“These supplies will be aggregated and transmitted over the common grid within and between constituencies to the convenience of consumers,” Swuamaru explained.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Technical Services will also be consulting aviation authorities in PNG to discuss the possibilities of receiving

Bougainville’s portion of tax from international flights that pass through Bougainville’s airspace.

“This and other matters will be investigated and if need be the appropriate policy devices will be formulated to guide the industry going forward,” he said.

These are some of the available revenue-raising options that will contribute largely to building Bougainville’s economy.



RPL Senior Radio Producer Lynn Gegera, on air during the inauguration ceremony of the Fourth House of Representatives in Buka.

Keeping Bougainville informed

ABG’s mobile community radio station, Radio Ples Lain 89.1FM, provided continuous coverage of polling and counting periods during the fourth Bougainville general election. In a joint partnership effort with local broadcasting partner NBC Bougainville, team members in all three regional centres - Buka, Arawa and Buin - provided live coverage up to 18 hours a day.

RPL complimented the coverage of local broadcasters NBC Bougainville and New Dawn FM, with ongoing updates on its social media pages. These efforts were acknowledged by the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner, and the general public who were following the radio and social media for updates from Bougainville and afar. RPL continued its regular live parliamentary broadcast

for the inauguration ceremony of the fourth Bougainville House of Representatives together with local broadcasters NBC Bougainville and New Dawn FM, including live streaming of the content via respective social media pages.

Radio Ples Lain is supported by the governments of Australia and New Zealand through Bougainville Partnership.

Planning Secretariat to lead Bougainville’s future planning and development

A planning secretariat is set to be established to guide and progress Bougainville’s long-term future development.

ABG President Ishmael Toroama announced this at the Inauguration Ceremony, saying that this exercise will be part of his 100 days plan.

“Bougainville must have a long term blue print,” he said.

“Bougainville must establish a high powered Planning Secretariat that will help us dream big into the future, innovate and reach new heights.”

He explained that this

Planning Secretariat will be responsible for developing Bougainville’s blue-print, and will be made up of Bougainvillean intellectuals.

He said this team will ensure that Bougainville has intellectual control in terms of Bougainville’s planning and development, and will enable us to create our own destiny and experience significant development in our region.

The Planning Secretariat is set to be established upon the approval of the Bougainville Executive Council.

Momis given a true Bougainville farewell



It was an atmosphere of celebration as Bougainvilleans gathered at the Bougainville House of Representatives on Friday 9th of October 2020, to pay tribute and farewell Chief Dr John Momis.

President Ishmael Toroama, ABG Ministers, Members of the Bougainville House of Representatives, development partners, public servants and the general public were there to witness this event.

Tributes were given by Speaker of the Bougainville House of Representatives, Simon Pentanu, where he described the outgoing President as a great leader and man of value and principle who stood and fought for the people’s rights.

“You have been the icon, the leader that has

always stood out in this regard,” Pentanu said.

“You argued very eloquently, for and on behalf of Bougainville at the regional and international fora in many countries, speaking up for the desires and objectives for which we find ourselves here today.”

“You have trail blazed the idea to achieve the system of responsible government to give meaning to what political participation is really all about,” he said.

Dennis Sareke, a Chief from the Haku Constituency, who worked closely with Chief Momis in the earlier days of his political life, also paid his tribute today.

He spoke in comparison of the earlier days of Bougainville where people lived with respect for laws and authority, and

respect for fellow Bougainvilleans and their properties, whereas today, Bougainville society struggles with issues of law and order, social issues and lack of respect.

He challenged the new government to address this and called on all the people to work with all leaders in government to bring Bougainville back to its former standard.

Chief Sareke led a traditional group from Haku and Halia Constituencies, where they accorded the outgoing President with a Chieftaincy title, and presented two pigs to mark their recognition of the outgoing President’s numerous contributions to Bougainville as a whole.

Chief Dr John Momis, in his speech described his life as ‘a story of diverse transitions’.

He reminisced on his earlier political days when we was elected to the pre-independence House of Assembly as PNG was transitioning to self-governance, and many other notable positions he held over the years of his political life.

He also reflected on the peace process on Bougainville, which he described as one of the most successful in the world today.

Momis said Bougainville is now at a critical turning point in determining its future.

“The result of the referendum shows how Bougainvilleans are coming together in regard to Bougainville’s political future,” he said.

“While Bougainville has made progress since peace was agreed almost twenty years ago, there is still much work to be done. Together, with

other Bougainvilleans, I look to the recently elected government and parliament of Bougainville to honour and keep working to ensure that these important objectives are achieved.”

Momis also acknowledged President Toroama’s statement of seeking counsel from him as Bougainville moves ahead in its post-referendum journey, saying that he looks forward to receiving and giving close consideration to his further advice.

ABG President Ishmael Toroama, in response, thanked the outgoing President and called on the people of Bougainville to continue to work together with all leaders to ensure that Bougainville’s aspirations are achieved and peace is maintained on Bougainville.



ABG Women leaders given key responsibilities in new BHOR



ABG Women Members (L-R), Hon. Yolande Geraldine Paul, Hon. Therese Kaetavara, Hon. Amanda Masono and Hon. Theonila Roka Matbob.

While the role of women in Bougainville have always been an evolving issue, from being the custodians of land, to the backbone of a family unit, to being peacemakers in a war-torn island – a constant denominator remains that women have always been leaders in their own caliber. President Toroama stated in his maiden speech, “the winds of change have arrived.” This statement resonates

loudly with the four women who were recently elected into the Fourth Bougainville House of Representatives. The four women who were elected into the Bougainville House of Representatives have been appointed with key leadership roles in this new parliament.

These appointments include:

1. Hon. Therese Kaetavara appointed

as Deputy Speaker of the Bougainville House of Representatives (Member for South Bougainville Women)
2. Hon. Geraldine Paul appointed as Minister for Primary Industries and Marine Resources (Member for Central Bougainville Women)
3. Hon. Theonila Roka Matbob appointed as Minister for Education (Member for Ioro Constituency)
4. Hon. Amanda Masono Getsi appointed as

Chairlady of the Public Accounts Committee (Member for North Bougainville Women)
The Hon. Theonila Roka Matbob, the youngest of the four, said “As a member I am focused on 3 priority areas:

- 1. Good governance and economic empowerment through tax at village assembly levels,**
- 2. Service delivery based on the different levels of needs i.e. health, education etc..**

3. Legacy issues of Panguna in a way that the issue of Panguna should benefit Bougainville

“Now on the ministerial front, I am focused on 3 areas again:

1. Within the structure adult education must be accommodated to med the education backlog to ensure full implementation of Section 32 of the Bougainville Constitution
2. Development of a contextualized curriculum to meet the need of the genetically passed on psychological issues, specifically for Ioro and Torokina Constituencies
3. Ensure education at the legislative level is made accommodated for the need-based establishment of tertiary institutions

“Whilst focusing on the main areas, I will ensure education must not be seen as just a service delivery department, but rather a department for nation building and job creators,” she said.

COVID-19 response long distrik na Komuniti Gavman i kamap gut

Ol komuniti gavman long Bogenvil ikamapim gutpela COVID-19 awenes long olgeta komuniti.

Acting Secretary bilong Dipatmen bilong Komuniti Gavman, Puara Kamariki, itok olsem ABG ihamamas long givim sapot bikos dispela COVID-19 awenes i behainim constituency approach.

Dipatment bilong Komuniti Gavman i bin karim aut wanpela training workshop long wokim COVID-19 awareness long ol constituency. Dispela training i bin kamap

long June wantem ol chairman bilong ol wanwan komuniti gavman bilong ol constituency na dispela em sampela tingting na askim bilong ol.

Ol chairman bilong ol komuniti gavman i laikim olsem COVID-19 awareness i mas bihainim dispela structure:

1. Long constituency level, memba imas mit wantaim chairman bilong komuniti gavman na distrik management team (distrik codineta, OIC bilong Helt, OIC

belong polis, OIC bilong education na OIC bilong primary industries). Insait long dispela miting bai oli planim ol dispela samtin

- **Program bilong awareness igo long olgeta wods**
- **Oganaism ol team bilong karim aut awareness**
- **Lukluk long transpot na ol arapela kots**
- **Wanem ol samting long toktok long awareness**
- **Liklik training na induction bilong ol wokman meri**

2. Chairman wantaim distrik management team (DMT) bai mit wantaim olgeta wod membas long komuniti gavman senta na givim ol training, induction na final briefings.

3. Ol wod membas bai mit wantaim ol wod steering komitis bilong ol wod senta na insait long dispela mitin ol wod membas bai inductim ol yet long karim aut awareness na makim husait komiti long karim aut awareness insait long wanwan peles.

4. Ol wod komitis bai

visitim ol peles na karim aut actual awareness.

Olgeta chairman itok orait olsem dispela model structure em soim wei long karim aut future awareness long covid 19 response program.

Mr Kamiriki i tok olsem plenty pipol i wanbel long dispela awareness approach long constituency level na i askim sapos ABG i ken givim funding sapot long komuniti gavman so em yet i ken wokim awenes long wanwan wod insait long komunity gavman.

COVID-19 lock down brings backyard gardening



The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the shut down of many local businesses and the closure of all large markets. This has had an impact on many local farmers, buyers and families alike.

In Buka town, even little buai markets and street vendors were not allowed to sell anything on the streets.

Just across the passage from Buka town is Sohano Island.

Sohano is state land, where many of the houses belong to the government of Bougainville (ABG).

Gardening on the island can be difficult. House spacing is small meaning not everyone has land to do gardening. The island is also located in an area where

strong cyclonic winds frequently pass through.

As a result, most people get their vegetables from Buka and Kokopau markets, both a short boat ride away. That is until the lockdown came into effect.

Without access to fresh food, some people have moved back to their villages up in Siwai and

Buin on the mainland, or up to Haku on Buka Island. Others still stayed behind, surviving on the little food they had.

Not only did the closure of the markets affected the people at the town area but those living on the island were cut off from the food suppliers at the main market.

Here at the Sohano Island at the area called ‘Compound’, where colonial houses remain untouched by the government, the lock down has got many to tap into pot gardening or planting vegetables in old flowerpots, containers or empty rice bags.

Green leafy foods like cabbage, beans, eggplant, spring onion and the locally sold vegetables are now being grown as backyard garden plants. They are now replacing flowering plants.

This is a new practise

of gardening to most of the mothers who don’t have a garden at Sohano Island.

The good thing about backyard gardens is that they can be planted right next to cooking places, near the doors and where flowers grow.

Mary has a small cabbage garden next to her cooking kitchen. She says she started planting cabbage even before the SOE orders were announced that closed the markets.

“My garden is in the village which is very far away, so I made this cabbage garden with the help of my brother, because I like to eat cabbage!”

Women do not normally plant cabbage on the island. But now, they have become busy with their planting.

In times of crisis, sometimes there is a silver lining to be found in our own backyard.



Women and Youths heal through gardening

Cabbage gardening has become a new hobby for young farmers on Sohano Island, North Bougainville. Compound, an area known to many as the deserted area, has

come alive during the state of emergency period with youths forming a small group to begin a small cabbage gardening project in July.

The youths and

women of Sohano were devastated late last year by the killing of a young man and the burning down of houses belonging to public servants.

Pastor Jennifer of

the United Church in Compound said that the youths have been given training on basic carpentry skills and have shown great interest in the project.

“Many of the youths are children of the health workers who work at the Buka General Hospital,” Pastor Jennifer said.

“There are other projects which women will take part in as well, including sewing and life education programs to help young women and mothers in Compound.”

“With little projects like this, it’s empowering the youths and women to heal from the trauma,” Pastor Jennifer said.

Know your Government



Autonomous Bougainville Government | 4th House of Representatives

A total of 33 Constituency Seats across North, Central and South Bougainville. Three Regional Seats for Women and Three Regional Seats for Former Veterans.

There's a total of 4 women in this new House of Representatives. Three representing the women of Bougainville in their Regional Seats and one woman mandated as member-elect for the Ioro Constituency in Central Bougainville. Full list below:

PRESIDENT



HON. ISHMAEL TOROAMA
Minister for Inter-
government Affairs, BEC
and Media & Communications

NORTH BOUGAINVILLE



RAYMOND MASONO
(Atolls Constituency)
Minister for Health



CHARRY NAPTO
(Nissan Constituency)



THOMPSON J. GITOVEA
(Taonita Teop Constituency)
Minister for Community
Development



MORRIS OPETI
(Taonita Tinputz
Constituency)

NORTH BOUGAINVILLE



CHARLES KAKAPETAI
(Teua Constituency)



JOHN TABINAMAN
(Mahari Constituency)



EZEKIEL MASSAT
(Tonsu Constituency)
Attorney General, Justice &
Post Referendum



XAVIER KAREKU
(Haku Constituency)



BERNARD BOBOS
(Peit Constituency)

NORTH BOUGAINVILLE



POLYCARP SUITO
(Suir Constituency)



PAUL OTTO CHEUNG
(Selau Constituency)



PATRICK NISIRA
(Halia Constituency)
Minister for Economic Development



ROBERT HAMAL SAWA
(Hagogohe Constituency)
Minister for Lands, Physical Planning,
Environment & Conservation

NORTH BOUGAINVILLE



JOHN BOSCO RAGUI
(Tsitlatato Constituency)



AMANDA MASONO
(North Women's Regional Seat)



CALLEN T. MATUNA
(North Veterans
Regional Seat)

CENTRAL BOUGAINVILLE



JASON BARANANGKO
(Rau Constituency)



ROBIN WILSON
(Terra Constituency)

ABG 4th House of Representatives

CENTRAL BOUGAINVILLE



LAWRENCE SIRAPUI
(Eivo Torau Constituency)



THEONILA MATBOB
(Ioro Constituency)
Minister for Education



MATHIAS SALAS
(North Nasioi Constituency)
Minister for Finance & Treasury



JUSTIN BORGIA
(South Nasioi Constituency)

CENTRAL BOUGAINVILLE



ERNESTY TEDDU
(Kongara Constituency)



RODNEY OSIOKO
(Kokoda Constituency)
Minister for Mineral and
Energy Resources



YOLANDE G. PAUL
(Central Women's Regional Seat)
Minister for Primary Industries
& Marine Resources



LINUS J. DAKE
(Central Veterans Regional Seat)

SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE



FABIAN SALEU
(Torokina Constituency)



DENNIS LOKONAI
(Bolave Constituency)



MELVIN WOLOLOPA
(Lato Constituency)
Minister for Public Service



**EMMANUEL CARLOS
KAETAVARA**
(Baba Constituency)



ZACHARIAS NUNGUNG
(Motuna Huyono
Constituency)

SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE



JOSEPH KIM SWUAMARU
(Kopi Constituency)
Minister for Technical Services



THOMAS PATAAKU
(Ramu Constituency)
Minister for
Community Government



JUNIOR TUMARE
(Makis Constituency)



JACOB TOOKE
(Baubake Constituency)

SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE



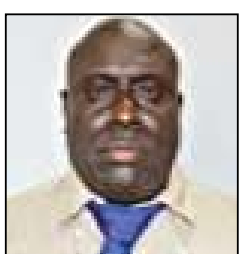
JOSEPH MONA
(Lule Constituency)



WILLIE MASIU
(Konnou Constituency)



THERESA KAETAVARA
(South Women's Regional Seat)



THOMAS TARI
(South Veterans Regional Seat)
Minister for Police

President Toroama's six-point strategy

Edition 16 - November 2020

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STRATEGY 1

POLITICAL CONTROL OF OUR DESTINY

We can only exercise political control through independence.
We must pursue independence by all peaceful means.

STRATEGY 2

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CONTROL

Political control will not lead to much improvement in our livelihood, if we are by-standers in the economy. We must also create an equal opportunity environment for businesses so that economic benefits are spread throughout a larger population.

STRATEGY 3

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL

We must have the right administration to facilitate economic growth and be able to translate and implement political directions. The administration must change from being paper-pushers to being agents of change.

STRATEGY 4

MOBILIZING PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY

It is impossible for Government to move Bougainville forward by itself. The private sector and civil society organisations must be mobilized to play a greater role.

STRATEGY 5

LONG TERM VISION AND PLANNING

Bougainville must embark on an exercise of long-term planning beyond the medium-term plans which gather dust from the offices of government. We must plan long term, say 40 years and have political commitment to such planning so that Bougainville rises into a vibrant economy where the full potential and capacity of our citizens are fully harnessed.

STRATEGY 6

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Our historical friends will continue to be our friends as ours is a long enduring relationship through good and bad times. Our doors will be opened to the international community who want to help us achieve our dreams, but in a way that is of mutual benefit to us and our friends to be.

In pictures

South and Central Bougainville 5 Year Development Plan Launching and New Buin Market Ground Breaking Ceremony



TAX
tok

Dr Alois Daton: Ol pipol i toktok long wei bilong sapotim Bogenvil long bihain taim.

Acting Secretary bilong Taxation Dipatmen, Dr Daton i laik strongim bek ol law wea i ken mekim revenue bilong Bogenvil i kamap strong.

Wanpela bilong ol dispela tax law em i sales tax law bilong beer na cigarettes.

Dr Daton laik mekim bikos planti people ino wok long baim tax long halivim revenue i kam long Bogenvil.

Dr Daton i tok olsem dispela law em i save bringim domestic revenue long Bogenvil, tasol, planti ol lain ino save payim dispela sales tax moa.

Dispela tax em i save bringim domestic revenue kam long Bogenvil.

“Mipela long taxation

ofis i lukluk tu long bung wantem ol narapela department ofis na national government long stretim ol taxation laws long Bogenvil,” Dr Daton said.

Narapela rot wea Taxation ofis i lukluk long improvim revenue em long stretim ol potential area belong import na export long ol overseas country.

“Customs i givim tok orait pinis na i bin declarim ol threepela ports wea i stap long Buka, Kieta na Kangu,” Dr Daton said.

“Dispela em narapela wei wea i ken bringim revenue i kam long Bogenvil.”

Dr Daton i tok olsem sapos i gat tax ofis hia em bai wokim easy tu long

addressim ol issue wea ol company i save kam operate insait long region tasol i no save baim tax belong ol.

Ol sampla moa wei belong mekim money em;

• Non-resident Bougainvilleans to pay salary and wages tax back to Bogenvil

Narapela wei em long askim Internal Revenue Commission (IRC) em long identifiyim ol Bougainvilleans living outside of Bogenvil, whusait i wok autsait long ol narapela province na country, imas baim liklik tax moni i kam

bek long ABG.

• Rural development incentive

Rural development incentive, em long olsem lo givim ten year tax holiday. Dispela law em belong ol nuipela company whusait i kam startim business nau tasol long Bogenvil.

• Corporate income tax holiday

Dispela em ten-year tax holiday long ol least developed districts. Ol dispela district ol i least developed area. Bifo long taim bilong Panguna Mine ol i bin developed tasol crisis i bin mekim na ples i bagarap ken.

Taxation ofis i bai wok wantem IRC long kisim approval pastem bifo long ol company i ken startim bisnis long hap.

Dispela tax em ten-year tax holiday. But ten year tax holiday em long ol corporate income tax. Companies and investors will still pay GST.

• Reduced corporate tax rate

Dispela tax em long pulim ol investors long kam na sanapim bisnis belong ol long Bogenvil.

Dr Daton i tok olsem ol dispela tax laws em ol sumpela wei belong helpim Bogenvil long improvim revenue long Bogenvil.

Toksave i kam long Department bilong Lands na Physical Planning

Registerim graun bilong yu

Ol sumting wea yu imas save pastem bifo yu registerim graun aninit long Incorporated Land Group (I.L.G) Act.

Checklist: Registerim graun blo yu

- Form ILG grup
- Grup constitution, ol meeting minits

- Land survey plan
- National ID registration, birth certificates

- Clan profile: Ol stori, na ol man husait i member bilong ILG grup
- Contact ABG Department of Lands (phone, address)

Taim yu tingting long registerim graun bilong yu aninit long ILG Act, i gat ol sampla samting wea yu imas wokim na mipela i ken registerim graun bilong yu.

Nambawan sumting taim yu laik mekim na mipela i ken registerim graun belong yu em, first thing bai yu mas formim ILG grup bilong yu. ILG grup bilong yu em i karamapim ol graun wea clan bilong yu bosim.

So taim yu tingting long registerim graun bilong yu aninit long ILG Act em, grup constitution na first thing bai yu mas

wokim em, bai yu mas wokim ol minits bilong em na yu kamap wantem ol minits bilong yu na yu redim constitution bilong yu.

Taim constitution bilong yu em i redi pinis o taim yu wok long redim constitution bilong yu kam na toksave long ol officials blo mipela na miplela bai tokim yu long ol narapela requirements.

Ol bikpela requirements yu needim long registerim graun aninit long ILG Act, em long survey plan.

Bai plan imas gat wanpela survey plan i

soim overall boundary bilong giraun em i laik registerim.

Plan or sketch plan em wanpela registered surveyor mas wokim.

Mipela bai halivim yu long ol sampla weis long yu painim wanpela masta mark, o husait i ken mekim dispela survey plan bilong yu.

Narapela samting bai yu mas needim em ol birth certificates na NID registration.

Long ol yias i go pinis, mipela i bin painim hat tru long kisim ol birth certificates, na planti lain ol bin rot ol yet igo long Moresby long

Rabaul, long kisim birth certificates.

Dispela tupela sumting em costim bikpela moni liklik.

A survey plan bai engaging surveyor i ken kamap wantem na surveyor plan i mas register wantem regional surveyor long Rabaul before, long ol i karim go long Moresby before long registerim dispela survey plan.

Na taim dispela survey plan i register pinis em nau yu kam lukim mipela na bai mipela i halivim yu long pulmapim ol forms.

Taim yu weitim survey

plans long ol narapela sait long lo sumting yu i mas mekim em sumting yu imas mekim clan profile belong yu. Yu imas toktok long ol stori, history, na ol man husait i member bilong ILG grup bilong yu.

Em dispela grup bai yu ken kam na bai mipela soim yu hau long wokim.

Planti man em husait bin kam pinis i bin bihainim same process.

So once olgeta dispela sumting i pinis em bai mipela i soim yu hau long pulapim ol application forms long registerim graun bilong yu.

Update of the Bana Free Trade project

Wok i continue long Bana free trade zone



Chairman bilong Bana Free Trade Zone, Michael Otoroa, i tok olsem wok long project i go yet.

Mr Otoroa i tok olsem Bana Free Trade Zone pilot project em i kamap bikos ol lida long community gavman i laikim dispela project long kamap.

“Wok em continue. Bana Free Trade Zone, the officials and promoters i kam toksave long government olsem ino long time department bilong lands bai go down na wokim ILG na customary checks na land registration.”

Igat planti reason long why dispela pilot project i kamap long addressim ol issues wea Bana District ofis i wok long facim.

Mr Otoroa i stori long

ol dispela issues.

“Road network system. Bifo Bana district until 1989 34 feeder roads long Bougainville long record long works, ol i gat 18 tasol, bikos they have not included the second world war roads they have not included the community gavman roads, na recently ol abandoned feeder roads.”

“Bana district i gat 32 feeder roads. Dispela em i traipela namba moa long ol narapela districts hia long Bougainville.”

“Long ol dispela 32 feeder roads, mipela inap long stretim 18 feeder roads. Ol narapela 16 pela roads i nogat yet.”

“Bana district i gat 34 elementary schools and 23 primary schools includim high schools, vocational schools ibin

approve, long taim bilong establismen bilong first ABG haus, na bikos lo nogat moni, ol dispela vocational schools mipela no inap long mekim.”

Plenti belong ol dispela infrastructures i kam long ol bush material na semi-materials.

Bana District i gat 5pela health centres na 17 aid posts.

Long ol dispela 5pela health centres, 3pela i bagarap stret na klostu i pundaun.

Long ol 17 aid posts, ninepela i closed because ol wokman i nogat house na inogat wok man tu.

“Bana District igat traipela number long gat feeder roads.”

“I nogat planti wok economy insait long Bana district, tasol cocoa

farming em main wok. Ol narapela liklik wok economy em fishing na trade store operations.”

“Ol lain i save go long Arawa town long mekim trading belong ol. Na main source belong electricity em i kam long genset na ol liklik solar kit nabaut.”

“A recently conducted survey, Bougainville em indicatim that long ol districts long Bougainville, em South Bougainville is the poorest.”

“Ol dispela samting mipela i lukim na tok, wanem samting bai yumi ken mekim bilong Bana district long halivim district abrusim ol samting we bai inap long pundaunim wok developmen?”

“Em nau mipela lukim

olgeta dispela nau na mipela kamap wantem Bana development initiative. Dispela Bana development initiative nau i lukluk long bildim wharfs Motopenakoi, airport long Koku, kasava planations, fisheries sector, tourism sector, na providim wok na ol narapela rot bilong ol manmeri bilong Bana District long wokim ol narapela wok bisnis na developmen.”

Bana Development Initiative i gat technical team ol i wok man bilong administration bilong Bana district.

Mr Otoroa i tok olsem dispela Bana Development Initiative em i wok klostu wantem Bana Free Trade pilot project long developim district.

E-learning for Bougainville health staff receives boost from Australian Government



The World Health Organization in partnership with the Australian Government through its Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), has developed an online learning platform for health workers across the country in preparation to manage COVID19. The e-learning platform is available for both clinical and administrative health staff. To make this e-learning platform easily accessible by the ABG's Health Department staff, the Australian

Government has provided internet dongles. Pictured here is DFAT's First Secretary Clayton Harrington (right) presenting the internet dongles to Buka General Hospital's Physician Dr Bradley Aumora.

Buin receives mobile health post



National Member for South Bougainville Hon. Timothy Masiu and Australian High Commissioner H.E Jon Philips at the launching of the mobile clinic in Buin.

The people of Buin in South Bougainville have received a mobile clinic to provide surge support for healthcare in the region. This was made possible through the Government of Australia as part of its ongoing support to Bougainville's health response efforts in combating COVID-19. The mobile clinic was officially launched by the Australian High Commissioner to PNG, His Excellency Jon Philips and

He said this is one of the major challenges faced by the people of South Bougainville in terms of health care services.

The ABG Department of Health has confirmed that they have plans underway to improve the current Buin Health Center to a level 4 district hospital similar to the Arawa District Hospital.

COVID-19 AWARENESS INFORMATION

What you need to know about the coronavirus (COVID-19):

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new kind of virus from the coronavirus family. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus and 'D' for disease. The COVID-19 virus is linked to the same family of some types of common cold.

What are the symptoms?

For most people, COVID-19 is similar to a cold or runny nose, fever, sore throat, cough or shortness of breath. If you have these symptoms you must stay away from people and call the Bougainville COVID-19 Hotline number on 74460830.

■ Some people with COVID-19 don't

develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell

■ Most people (4 out of every 5 people) recover without needing special treatment

■ About 1 out of every 6 people who get COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing

■ Older people and those with medical problems like high blood pressure, heart or lung problems, TB or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness

■ People with cough, fever and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention

How can I get the virus?

You can catch COVID-19 from people who have the virus. The disease spreads from person to person

through small droplets from the mouth or nose, for example, when a sick person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets are relatively heavy and do not travel far. They quickly sink to the ground. People can catch COVID-19 if:

■ They breathe in these droplets from a person infected with the coronavirus

■ These droplets can land on objects and surfaces near the person, like tables and door handles.

You can catch the virus by touching these objects or surfaces and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

COVID-19 is not spread by air, but only in close contact with an infected person or infected surface.

7 KEY MESSAGES:

1. Yu gat kus, yu skin hot o sotwin? Ringim toll free COVID19 hotlain 74460830 (Bougainville) o 1800200 (National) long kisim halivim. Stap helti na seif!

2. Bai mi kisim COVID19 osem wanem? Sapos yu stap klostu long wanpela husat igat COVID. Virus bai kalap taim ol kus na mauswara ikam long maus o nus blong yu. Yu ken kisim COVID taim yu tasim samting olsem tebol, handel blong dua we mauswara blong sikmanmeri pundaun antap long en na behain yu tasim maus/nus blong yu.

3. Mi inap dai long COVID? Planti lain (olsem 4pela namel long 5pela) i save kamap orait gen. Tasol virus i ken kamapim bikpela sik na bai yu mas go long hausik. Ol lapun o ol lain wantaim TB, kensa, hai-blad presa/hat problem/daibitis, i gat moa sans long kisim bikpla sik. Tasol yu ken kamap orait gen long sik COVID.

4. Coronavirus seif: Stap long haus, wasim han, noken tasim maus/nus/ai, stap longwei long ol grup, pasim maus taim yu kus/sniz, stap 1mita longwei long sik pipel.

5. Noken harim ol giaman tok! Save gut o kisim kliainfomesen long wanem samting yu mas mekim long stap helti. Ringim hotlain!

6. Sapos yu gat bel/susuim pikinini yet, yu tu stap long sik COVID risk olsem ol narapla. Stap long haus long halivim stopim virus: Ringim hotlain 7446 0830 (Bougainville)

7. Tenkiu ol helt woka! Yu ken helpim mipla taim yu stap tasol long haus na behainim gutpla helt prektis. Yumi mas soim pasin blong helpim and sapotim yumi yet.

The threat of COVID-19 remains in Papua Guinea and Bougainville. Protect yourself, your family and your community.



Clean your hands often. Wash with soap and water or use an alcohol-based



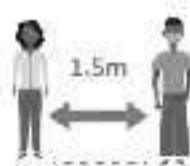
Cough or sneeze in your bent elbow - not your hands!



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth.



Limit social gatherings and time spent in crowded places.



Keep a physical distance of at least 1.5 meters between yourself and others.



Wear a face mask or face covering in all public places to protect yourself and others.



Greet each other with a smile, a nod or a simple hello – no handshakes, no fist or elbow bumps and no high-fives!



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Bougainville Technical College to benefit from Aust-funded TVET program

Bougainville Technical College is one of three selected educational institutions in the country who will be first to benefit from the new TVET (technical and vocational education training) program. This was announced by the Australian High Commissioner, H.E Jon Philp’s during his visit to the school in Tinputz, North Bougainville in October. “I’m particularly pleased to announce that Australia is expanding our partnership with Bougainville and PNG in

technical and vocational skills training through a program called the skills for subnational growth investment,” he revealed. Mr Philp said that Australia recognizes skills training as one of the keys to progressing economic growth. “We need to educate our young people particularly in skills. That development provides opportunities for higher wages in the workforce, it gives our youths who have been pushed out of the education system, the opportunity to come back into education to get skills

they can have to lead a productive and happy life and it will help with high quality industry-relevant training,” he said. He explained that earlier this year, the PNG and Australian Prime Ministers both agreed to an additional funding support of AUD\$45 million to be invested in the TVET program, and that part of this support will come to Bougainville. This program includes the upgrading of trainer qualifications and the development of a needs-based curriculum. The

program will also aim to ensure that skills-training meets local needs and also builds connections to international labor markets. The Asia Pacific Training Coalition will be the implementing partner for this program in Bougainville. Also present at the event was ABG Minister for Education, Hon. Theonila Roka Matbob, Taonita-Tinputz Member Hon. Morris Opeti and other community leaders. Minister Matbob, in her remarks thanked the Government of Australia for the recognition given

to the Bougainville Technical College for this vital program. She said this support shows the continuous support that Australia has for Bougainville and also demonstrates commitment and partnership to the region. The Education Minister explained that this new program contributes to translating the visions of her Ministry and Department and will bring a new and high quality level of skills to the young Bougainvilleans who will receive them.

Baba identifies target areas for next 100 days

Baba Constituency in South Bougainville has outlined three target areas of focus for the first 100 days. These include: 1. Completion of five-year ward development plans 2. Consultations with all principle landowners of State-owned lands in Baba Constituency re-occupied by local communities 3. Completion of scoping and costing of all feeder roads and cocoa roads existing and planned Member for Baba, Hon. Emmanuel-Carlos Kaetavara, outlined this in his maiden speech in the first sitting of the Fourth Bougainville House of Representatives. He explained that he will be taking a consultative community approach to all political and socio-economic development of his constituency. “Any development or discussion both political and socio-economic in relation to the Constituency of Baba, the political and community leadership is fully engaged and all developmental discussions and plans are aligned to the priorities of the Constituency,” he said. Within the first 100 days, the Honorable Member has tasked all 8 wards in his constituency to consult with their citizens, prioritize key areas for short term and long term periods and finalize all ward development plans. “I have instructed that consultations be



Member for Baba, Hon. Emmanuel-Carlos Kaetavara

exhaustive, to allow all citizens to have their views considered in the drafting of the plans.” “I envisage that the next stage of the development of the plan is, engagement with the relevant Departments to fully scope and cost out the plans and align them to the ABG Medium Term Development Strategy.” The second target area for Baba will be consultations with principle landowners of state-owned lands in the constituency. “My vision is to ensure that all future infrastructural development in Baba Constituency now occurs on State land. This includes, schools, health facilities, banking facilities, communication infrastructure, electrification infrastructure, police infrastructure, growth centres, airport wharves and the Baba Community Government House of Assembly,” he said. The third target area includes scoping and costing of all feeder and cocoa roads in the constituency. “My vision is to establish a well-connected secure road network that promotes economic growth within the Constituency. All feeder roads must be

interconnected and connected to cocoa roads with all wet crossings bridged,” he explained. “Such a well-connected network will have spin off impacts on the education and health sector while boosting the growth of the local economy. The development and maintenance of all roads in Baba must be of high quality. Baba will not accept contractors with records of sub-standard delivery.” The Member also called on all ABG Ministers, including the National Member for South Bougainville, the Regional Member for Bougainville and other Development Partners to support the leadership of Baba in the implementation of its 100-day endeavor.

Keeping informed and staying calm during COVID-19: One woman’s story

The Bulletin spoke with business entrepreneur Melinda Imaroto about her first week of the Bougainville state of emergency lockdown.



“My name is Melinda Imaroto and I come from Wewak in the East Sepik Province. I am a widow with two kids. My late husband is from Buin District, in Bougainville, but died in 2018 from a sickness. So it’s just me and my kids here at our house at the compound in Sohano Island. We live next to our in-laws and I own a little trade store at my house. When I first heard about the Corona Virus I was really worried about my health and how to stay away from the sickness. I was scared because I feared the virus would

kill us if we came across anyone with the virus. So I became anxious. I wanted to know more about the virus. I learnt by talking with others, especially nurses. Others found information on Facebook. They would tell stories about the latest updates, but I became more worried because I was not on Facebook - so I felt I was left in the dark. During those first weeks I felt suppressed because there was no proper way to get information about COVID-19. People then started leaving Buka and returning to their

mainland villages. This made me feel even more worried. People were actually leaving the island because the lockdown had closed the main markets to selling food. It made us worry about where to buy food. As a store-keeper, the lockdown made it more difficult for me because I had to open my store for only a few hours a day and there were no customers and I had to close early. During the third week of the lockdown things began to improve. I was a bit relieved when a good friend of mine offered her solar radio. She

said that NBC was live broadcasting COVID-19 updates across PNG with update information. I was very relieved that I could hear the updates. I would let the radio play into the night and my friends would visit and listen to the news as well. Sharing information between families and friends has helped me remain calm during these weeks when everyone was panicking. But another concern was how to live with markets closed and no garden food for many days. That became another worrying concern for me.

We lived on the little food we had and I started using the supplies from my store. I was worried because my own supply was getting low. Among friends we shared the little food we had, like sweet potato and greens (aibika). This made me happy. Being open minded and into business activities, I kept busy in selling little hand crafted items and also became interested in beautification and cabbage gardening. Keeping busy helped me get my mind off from thinking about the deadly virus. I would look around for 10 kg rice bags, and prepare the soil for nursery. I bought cabbage seedlings and other vegetable seedlings. I have prepared more than twenty bags of cabbages. Preparing the garden itself is hard work. Because of the environment and location everything must be grown in rice bags. I have to carry the soil from the top hill to my house and then look for other materials somewhere to make the soil fertile enough to do the planting. I keep busy with the gardening, but it has made me happy seeing the seedlings grow into little plants during the last two months. The word around the island during this trying time is, “How is your cabbage garden?”. Every small farmer like Mel has found hope in gardening.



Building a new Bougainville through sports



Sports in Bougainville are often seen as a way of promoting unity, bridging gaps and bringing people closer together.

This is the key focus of the NGIP/Agmark Rugby 9s Cup which is set for November this year in Bougainville.

Agmark's Corporate Compliance Manager (and Bougainville Operations Manager), Salome Rihatta, said the competition is part of the company's way of contributing back to Bougainville.

"The company, through its founder and Managing Director, the late John Nightingale, instigated the NGIP Agmark 9s in 2017 in partnership with the Bougainville Rugby Football League as an

Off Season competition, as a way of giving back to Bougainville, especially to the farmers for the lasting partnership in growing the cocoa industry in the region," she explained.

"Sports is one of the greatest medium to build up good character and instill discipline in our youths. The NGIP Agmark 9s aims to encourage youths, both male and female, to take an interest in sports and assist build them up as good citizens of this emerging nation."

This year's competition will also see rugby coach sensation, Michael Marum, run coaching clinics in the week leading up to the games.

The coaching clinics will allow local rugby

league team trainers, coaches and managers to learn the latest techniques in rugby league coaching and training from one of the best in the rugby fraternity. It is anticipated Mr Marum will be running these coaching clinics at selected schools in the region.

Ms Rihatta said these activities are part of the competition's aim of raising the standard of rugby football league in Bougainville.

"One of the aims of the competition is to raise the standard of rugby football league in Bougainville so that teams representing our emerging region are on par with the rest of PNG and world in this sport," she explained.

"The company also wants to promote peace and unity through sports

and contribute to building up the citizens of this emerging region to be well rounded citizens and respectful of each other."

She said talent scouting will also be done during the completion to seek out potential players to trial with the Agmark Gurias Rugby Football Team.

Women in Bougainville are also being encouraged to participate in the competition as the company's way of recognizing and promoting gender equality.

Ms Rihatta said that Agmark is one of the main cocoa buyers in Bougainville and have extended their services to most remote areas in Bougainville by establishing sub-depots

to bring services closer to the people.

"Our plans are to continue to bring the services closer to the farmers by opening up more sub-depots in remote parts of Bougainville. The company's shipping services continues to provide vital services to all ports in Bougainville," she said.

Meanwhile, the company is also working closely with the Bougainville Government to ensure the company is in compliance with relevant legislations affecting this industry.

Interested teams can contact Avis Vanua on 71754321 or 72557479 to register.