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# NIUGINI REVIEW



CELEBRATE OUR HISTORY  
INSPIRE OUR FUTURE

Prime Minister  
**JAMES MARAPE**

Celebrating 50th  
Independence of  
Papua New Guinea

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**“Reform, Resources  
and Leadership”**

50TH INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION



**REMINGTON  
GROUP**  
SINCE 1948



**PART OF PNG'S STORY  
SINCE 1948**



 Remington  
Technology

 Remington  
DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

 Remington  
Hi-TEK

 BizPrint

 OFC  
DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

 OFC  
DIGITAL SOLUTIONS



# Remington Group: A 77-Year Journey of Innovation in Papua New Guinea

When Papua New Guinea celebrates 50 years of Independence this September, one business stands out for having journeyed with the nation long before 1975, Remington Group. Established in 1948, Remington began as the country's typewriter supplier, introducing modern office equipment to government, schools, and businesses. Those machines helped lay the foundation for administration and communication in a young nation finding its feet.

Over the decades, as PNG transformed, so did Remington. The Group evolved from typewriters to photocopiers, printers, and ultimately into today's full-service technology organisation. With a national footprint stretching from Port Moresby to Lae, Goroka, Mt Hagen, Kimbe, Kokopo, Wewak and Kavieng, Remington has become a trusted partner for thousands of businesses. The company is the exclusive authorised Konica Minolta dealer in PNG and has been recognised regionally winning the 2024 Konica Minolta Dealer of the Year award across the Australia-Pacific region.

But the Group's impact goes far beyond hardware. Through its divisions, Remington Technology, FX

Business Centre, the only authorised Fujifilm dealer in the country, BizPrint, OFC Tech Solutions, and Remington Digital Solutions, it delivers everything from managed print services and IT infrastructure to document digitisation, cloud storage, and workflow automation. Its mission is clear: help organisations work smarter, faster, and more securely in a rapidly digitising world.

Looking ahead, Remington is preparing to launch Remington Hi-Tek, a bold retail venture that will bring electronics and technology directly to customers through a modern store in Lae, Port Moresby and an online shop serving the entire nation. Together with Remington Digital Solutions, the Group is positioning itself as the leader of PNG's digital transformation, empowering businesses, government and communities to embrace the next era of innovation.

From typewriters to the cloud, Remington Group's story mirrors Papua New Guinea's own journey: resilient, adaptive, and forward-looking. And as the nation marks its Golden Jubilee, Remington remains firmly committed to shaping the next 50 years of progress.



**PART OF PNG'S STORY  
SINCE 1948**



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# Editor's Note

**H**appy Independence Day, Papua New Guinea! This September marks a historic milestone for Papua New Guinea, 50 years of independence, a golden jubilee of nationhood, resilience, and remarkable growth. Since gaining independence on September 16, 1975, our country has walked a unique path, rich in culture, challenge, and transformation.

It is with great pride that we introduce the inaugural edition of **Niugini Review**, a publication born out of a deep commitment to tell PNG's story through the lens of business, leadership, development, policy, sports, lifestyle and entertainment. As we celebrate our nation's golden anniversary, this first issue serves not only as a tribute to our past but also as a thoughtful look at the road ahead.

Through curated features and in-depth analysis, **Niugini Review** will spotlight the voices and visions shaping modern Papua New Guinea, an economy on the rise, a people grounded in tradition, and a nation looking confidently toward the future.

As we reflect on five decades of independence, we also recognize the immense potential that lies ahead. Papua New Guinea stands at the crossroads of innovation and tradition, where our rich heritage meets global opportunity. This magazine aims to be a platform for dialogue, insight, and inspiration, amplifying the stories of those driving positive change in communities, industries, and institutions across the country.

Our commitment is to provide balanced, forward-thinking journalism that informs, empowers, and connects. Whether you are a policymaker, entrepreneur, investor, student, or everyday citizen, **Niugini Review** is your trusted companion in understanding the forces shaping PNG's future. We welcome ideas, inclusive progress, and a united Papua New Guinea.

Welcome to **Niugini Review**. Welcome to 50 years of independence, and beyond.

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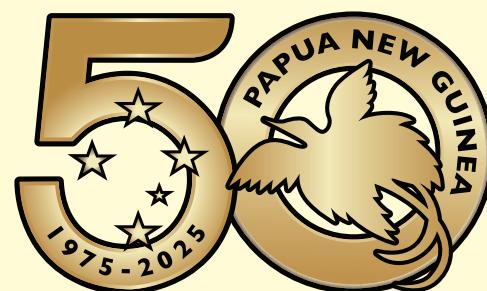
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# **“Reform, Resources and Leadership”**

## **Hon. James Marape and the business of nation-building**

**W**hen Hon. James Marape became Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister in May 2019, he made a promise that struck a chord with many: to “Take Back PNG” so that more of the country's wealth stays with its people.

Since then, this pledge has guided his government's direction, shaping how it negotiates major resource projects, builds infrastructure, supports small business, and positions PNG in the wider region. For the business community, it has meant a more confident government that seeks a fairer share, while still recognising that real growth comes when enterprise is allowed to thrive.

## Roots and resolve

Born in Tari in Hela Province, Hon. Marape's journey reflects the hopes of many ordinary families in PNG. He studied at the University of Papua New Guinea, then worked in management and public administration before entering parliament in 2007 as the member for Tari-Pori. He served as Minister for Education under the late Sir Michael Somare and later as Minister for Finance, before becoming PNG's ninth Prime Minister on 30 May 2019. In 2022, he won another mandate and continues to lead the Pangu Party in coalition.

Hon. Marape is often described as a leader driven by his values, grounded in his faith and guided by the belief that PNG should be "a friend to all," while standing firm on protecting the nation's economic interests. This combination of principle and determination has defined his leadership style.



Hon. James Marape.

Source: PM's Media



The Governor-General Sir Bob Dadae (centre), Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, Barrick Gold Corporation President and CEO Mark Bristow, company representatives, Enga Governor Hon. Sir Peter Ipatas, Ministers and MPs, Porgera landowner representatives, members of the State Negotiating Team, after the signing of four Agreements at Government House on Friday 13 October 2023.

Source: Department of Information and Communication Technology, Official Website of PNG Government.

### **The "Take Back PNG" economic agenda**

From his first day as Prime Minister, Hon. Marape pushed for stronger terms in resource deals. His goal was clear: give more ownership and benefits to the state and landowners, increase PNG's role in downstream processing, and make sure agreements last through good and bad times in the global market. For many, "Take Back PNG" is not just about negotiating contracts, it is also about building confidence and capacity within the nation.

This approach has been most visible in three major resource projects that are critical for PNG's economy:

**Porgera (gold):** After years of closure and tough talks, the mine reopened in December 2023 under a new arrangement, New Porgera, where PNG interests, including landowners, hold the majority share. By early 2024, production resumed and revenue started flowing. For Enga, this meant jobs and supply chains reopening. For PNG as a whole, it showed that even the most difficult negotiations can be resolved in ways that benefit the country.

**Papua LNG(gas):** This project, led by TotalEnergies and partners, is moving forward with a final investment decision targeted for 2025. With its long-term export potential and access to Asian markets, Papua LNG is a vital project for PNG's future. The government's challenge is to secure strong local benefits while keeping the project attractive to investors, a balancing act that captures the heart of the "Take Back PNG" philosophy.

**P'nyang (gas):** Negotiations over P'nyang were one of the first major tests of the government's new approach. The state pressed for better terms than those of older projects. The clear message: PNG is open to investment, but deals must be fair, transparent, and bring value to its people. For companies, this may mean tougher negotiations, but it also brings greater certainty about what the government expects: stronger local involvement and fairer sharing of benefits.

### **Building the foundations: roads, skills and small business**

Hon. Marape's economic plan isn't just about resources. It is also about opening opportunities in other parts of the economy. Businesses have long complained that poor transport networks drive up costs. In response, the government launched Connect PNG (2020-2040), a 20-year program to build and upgrade highways, ports and airports, linking rural markets to urban centres. Better roads and transport mean lower costs for



Prime Minister, Hon. James Marape with Department of Works, Connect PNG Policy 2020 – 2040.  
Source: Post Courier/PCADMINPNG

businesses and easier access for farmers, traders and customers.

Education has also been a focus. The Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP), introduced in 2020, has made it easier for students to afford university and training by spreading out their payments. Over time, this means more skilled graduates entering the workforce, good news for businesses needing accountants, engineers, IT specialists, health workers and tradespeople.

On the business side, Hon. Marape has supported SME and MSME finance by establishing a K200 million concessional loan facility. Hundreds of small and medium businesses across the country have already accessed these loans, with flexible

repayment terms designed for PNG's business environment. Alongside targeted programs in farming and fisheries, these efforts aim to grow the economy beyond mining and gas, and give more Papua New Guineans the chance to build businesses of their own.

### **Governance and institutions**

For businesses, stability and fair rules are essential. That's why the government supported the creation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), passed into law in 2020 and brought to life with the appointment of commissioners in 2023. The ICAC is expected to improve trust in government contracts and reduce unfair practices. Hon. Marape has also backed investigations into past financial

decisions, including the UBS loan, showing a willingness to face difficult issues. Change won't happen overnight, but the direction is clear: stronger rules and fairer governance to support both citizens and investors.

### **Regional partnerships that support business**

Alongside domestic reforms, Hon. Marape has been active abroad. In December 2023, PNG signed a Bilateral Security Agreement with Australia, which came into effect in 2024. This deal covers policing, border management and disaster response, important for businesses because security and rule of law affect investment decisions and costs.

In February 2024, Hon. Marape became the first Pacific leader to address the Australian Parliament, highlighting PNG's growing role in the region. His visit also secured Australian support for PNG's internal security, another factor that



Prime Minister Hon. James Marape (centre) and Minister for Commerce William Duma (right) present a cheque for K100 million to Bank South Pacific CEO Robin Fleming (left) for Small to Medium Enterprises, 2020.  
Source: MSME Council



PNG Prime Minister, Hon. James Marape and Australian Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese signed a bilateral security agreement on 7th December, 2023.

Source: Facebook.com/Anthony Albanese

improves confidence for businesses operating in the country. Hon. Marape's wider message to the world has been simple: PNG is open for business with all partners, but on terms that respect its sovereignty and deliver lasting value to its people.

### **What this means for business**

For resource companies, the lesson of recent years is clear: deals must deliver real benefits to communities and to PNG itself. While this can make negotiations longer, it reduces the risk of disputes later. The reopening of Porgera has restored one of PNG's biggest revenue streams and has already begun creating jobs and opportunities for suppliers.

For other sectors, like farming, construction, and tourism, Connect PNG is creating the infrastructure needed to grow. As highways are completed and maintained, companies can move goods more reliably and reach more customers.

Meanwhile, initiatives like HELP loans and SME credit schemes may take longer to show results, but they are laying the groundwork for a stronger local business class and a more skilled workforce.

### **Leadership shaped for long-term gains**

Hon. Marape's style is a mix of high-level negotiation and grassroots connection. He can be found in boardrooms with global CEOs, but also speaking directly with small business owners in Lae or Mt Hagen. His government's message is that protecting national interests and encouraging growth are not opposites, they go hand in hand.

This has been seen in:

- Stronger deals with delivery: Tougher terms for projects, but also getting them moving again (e.g. Porgera and Papua LNG).
- Opening doors for participation: Ensuring training, jobs and loans allow more Papua New



Prime Minister Hon. James Marape during the groundbreaking of the Southern Corridor - Hiritano Highway Redevelopment Project at Bereina Station, KairukuHiri, Central Province on Thursday 17 April, 2025.  
Source: Papua New Guinea National Information Centre.



Prime Minister Hon. James Marape giving a speech during the groundbreaking of the Southern Corridor - Hiritano Highway Redevelopment Project at Bereina Station, KairukuHiri, Central Province on Thursday 17 April, 2025.  
Source: Papua New Guinea National Information Centre.

Guineans to share in growth.

- Building institutions: Establishing ICAC and supporting reforms to create a fairer, more predictable environment for business.

### **The road ahead**

Two milestones will be especially important in the near future. First, the final investment decision on Papua LNG in 2025, which will mark the start of PNG's next big LNG chapter. Second, the ongoing rollout of Connect PNG, which will determine whether improved transport truly lowers costs and boosts commerce across the country.

Since 2019, Hon. Marape's message has been consistent: PNG must be the main winner from its resources, and the government must do the heavy lifting in building skills, infrastructure and institutions so the private sector can succeed. For businesses, this means a Prime Minister

committed to long-term growth, partnership, and turning ambition into real projects.

PNG's development path will not be simple, but under Hon. James Marape its direction is clearer: negotiate fairly, build the basics, open opportunities for all, and ensure the nation's wealth benefits its people while keeping the door open to those ready to invest in PNG's future.

### **Highlights of Hon. Marape's leadership:**

- Reopened Porgera Gold Mine under majority PNG ownership.
- Advanced Papua LNG towards final investment in 2025.
- Launched Connect PNG, a 20-year national roads program.
- Introduced HELP loans for university students.
- Established ICAC to fight corruption.
- Signed Bilateral Security Agreement with Australia.

# Hon. Prime Minister, James Marape's Government Achievements



## **Economic recovery and growth**

- Rapid GDP recovery: GDP grew from K79.6 billion in 2019 to K111 billion in 2023, with estimates of K122.5 billion in 2024. IMF and KPMG projected 4.7 % growth in 2025 driven by increased spending, mining and improved forex access.
- Fiscal improvement: Domestic revenue rose from 14% in 2020 to 18% of GDP; the fiscal deficit narrowed to 3.9%, an improvement in budget discipline.
- Tax relief measures: In June 2025, GST on 13 essential household items was abolished, easing cost-of-living pressures.
- Resource renegotiation: Major resource deals (Porgera, Papua LNG, Pasca A, WafiGolpu)

now deliver 50% to 70% benefit share to PNG, up from under 20% the previous decade.

- Future economic prospects: From 2026, an estimated US\$55–60 billion in foreign investment tied to major resource projects is expected to drive a 15-year construction boom toward a K200 billion economy by 2032.

## **Education and human capital**

- Expanded access: School enrolment surged to over 2.4 million students nationwide, a record number.
- Flexible and distance education: enrolment rose from 33,000 in 2020 to 82,000 in 2024, with over 2000 students entering tertiary education.

- Tuition Fee Free (TFF): K856 million allocated in 2024 to cover tuition fee free policy.
- Help Loans: Higher education support over 15,000 students have benefited from the Higher Education Loan Programme, enabling university education.
- Government STEM scholarships have supported hundreds of students studying abroad in science, engineering and ICT. TVET upgrades will boost vocational and technical training.
- Capacity building: Plans to expand higher education enrolment from 10,000 in 2024 to 30,000 by the end of the decade.

### **Healthcare advancements**

- Record investment: The 2025 budget devoted K2.86 billion to health, PNG's highest ever allocation.
- Specialist treatment access: Chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and cardiac surgeries inaugurated at major hospitals; public dialysis introduced in early 2025. PNG officially declared free of trachoma disease in May 2025 as a public health threat.

### **Law, justice and governance**

- Law enforcement ramp-up: Police force expansion underway, from 4,500 officers in 2019 toward 10,000 by 2030, supported by significant budget allocations (e.g., K703 million in 2025).
- Anti-corruption framework: Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) established along with legal protections for whistleblowers and asset transparency.
- Judiciary enhancements: New appeals court, more judges, and expanded courthouse construction in multiple provinces including Waigani.
- Civil order response: Following January 2024 unrest, the government offered tax relief and youth mobilization via district development programs.

### **Infrastructure and connectivity**

- Major transport upgrades: Highways now connect key regions (Port Moresby–Lae, Kikori–Madang, Kiunga–Telefomin); airports and ports in Bougainville, Wewak, Vanimo, Kavieng received upgrades or new terminals. Infrastructure spending hit 5.4% of GDP, the highest in PNG history.
- Connect PNG program: Underway to reach remote areas via roads and improve power, telecommunication, and aviation infrastructure.
- ICT modernization: Liberalization of Telikom PNG and Bemobile in 2021, followed by Telstra and Vodafone entry; Telikom PNG partnership with Huawei for 15 data centres across the country. Infrastructure investment has resulted in internet wholesale pricing dropping to 40%.
- Water & sanitation investments: K550 million National Water and Sewerage Programme, and K210 million Towns Water Supply Programme underway.

### **International and regional engagement**

- Global diplomacy:
  - Signed deals with Australia, US, China, France, EU, Indonesia, Israel—including security, defense, aviation, scholarships, and environmental funding.
  - Key entries: PNG Australia bilateral security agreement and NRL inclusion deal.
- NRL entry (rugby diplomacy): \$600 million deal to create PNG's team in Australia's NRL by 2028, fostering national pride and deepening regional ties.
- Health leadership: PNG spearheaded regional malaria elimination efforts via the EDEN initiative, aiming for malaria eradication by 2030.

## Crisis response and resilience

- Natural disaster relief:
  - Following the 2024 East Sepik earthquake and floods, the government allocated funding for relief operations alongside mobilizing military and international support.

- In the 2024 Enga landslide, PNG Defence Force, police, UN, and emergency teams were deployed to the scene under state of emergency.



The Australian Flag Lowered during 1975 Independence Day.

Source: Business Advantage PNG



Raising the Flag of Papua New Guinea.

Source: Columbo Plan Staff College



Prince Charles at Independence Day ceremonies in Papua New Guinea, September 16, 1975.  
Supplied: Denis Williams collection



PNG's first Prime Minister, Michael Somare, and first Governor-General, John Guise, at the Independence Day ceremony in 1975.  
Source: Denis Williams/PNG Post Courier

# 50th Independence Day, National Speech

## “Rising in pride, standing in purpose”

**Hon. Belden Nama, Minister  
for Tourism, Arts and Culture**

Hon. Belden Nama.  
Source: Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture



**M**y fellow Papua New Guineans, On this day in 1975, history was made. A flag was raised for the very first time, our flag. The bird of paradise soared into the sky, proud and free, framed by the stars of the Southern Cross. That moment was not just the dawn of a new nation, it was the awakening of a people whose spirit had never been conquered.

Today, we mark 50 years of independence, a golden jubilee that speaks to who we are, what we have overcome, and what we are yet to become. We took our first steps as a free people. We do not just remember history, we make it. We celebrate the strength of our ancestors, the dreams of our children.

We gather across our beautiful land, from the peaks of the Highlands to the shores of our islands, not only to celebrate, but to honour. We honour our founding fathers who dreamed of a sovereign PNG. We honour our elders who kept our languages and customs alive. And we honour the next generation, whose dreams must now shape our future.

I stand before you not just to celebrate, but to challenge us, to remember that our culture is not only our heritage; it is our greatest untapped potential. We are a nation of storytellers, of dancers, of warriors, and of weavers. We speak in more than 800 languages, each one carrying a world view, a wisdom, and a rhythm unlike any other. We are diverse, resilient, and original.



Tourists with locals celebrating a PNG cultural dance.

Source: PNGTPA/PNG Travels

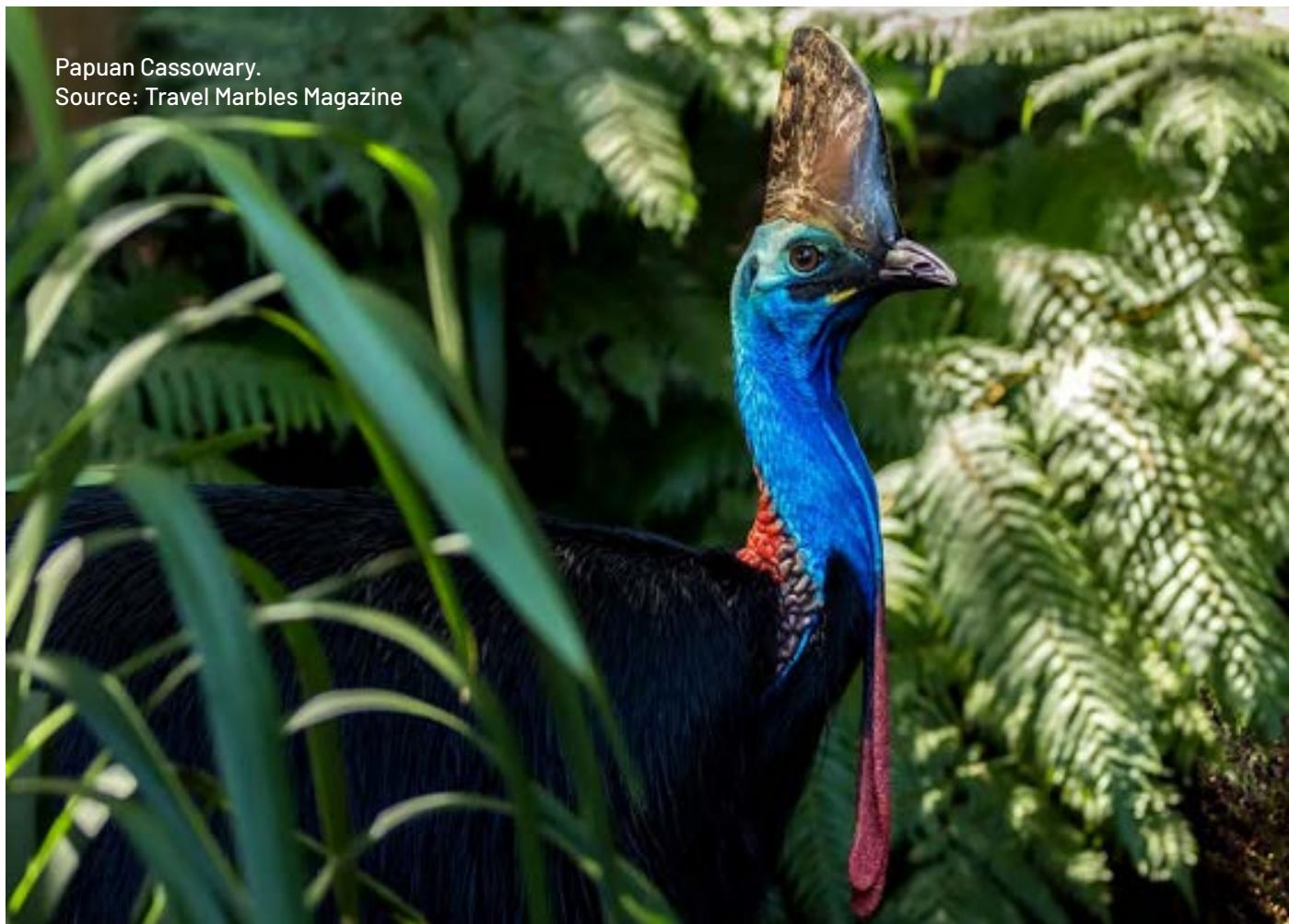
Let me say this clearly: our culture is our economic frontier. Tourists are not only looking for beaches, they are seeking meaning, connection, and authenticity. And where else on Earth can you find a thousand ways of being, all within one nation?



Kids playing in paradise, Mioko Island, East New Britain, Papua New Guinea.

Source: Flickr/Grainconnoisseur

Papuan Cassowary.  
Source: Travel Marbles Magazine



From the sacred sing sings of Enga, to the Hiri Moale Festival in Motu-Koitabu, to the Sepik carvings that speak across generations, we must protect, promote, and invest in our cultural industries. Our war memorials, our bilums, our traditional songs and sacred sites, these are not relics of the past; they are assets of the future.



A tour guide with guests at the Karawari Lodge, East Sepik Province.

Source: David Kirkland



Damarau clay pottery made by the women in Aibom Village on the Sepik River, PNG.  
Source: Ceramics and Pottery Arts and Resources.

Let us also remember that the tourism industry is not just about visitors, it's about jobs for our youth, markets for our mothers, pride for our people, and unity for our country.

On this golden anniversary, we must rise, not only in pride but in purpose.

Let us rise to preserve our languages.

Let us rise to invest in our artists, musicians, and carvers.

Let us rise to open our lands, showcasing our beauty, heritage and culture.

Let us rise to tell our stories, because if we don't, someone else will tell them for us.

This is not the end of a journey. It is the beginning of a new chapter, one in which we do not just remember history, but make it.

I see this moment as more than a celebration, it is a call to action. Our culture is not just our identity; it is our greatest untapped asset. From the highlands to the islands, from our war memorials to our woven bilums, the world is waiting to see us.

On this 50th Independence Day, we raise our flag once again. And we say to our people: Happy Independence Day, Papua New Guinea! May God bless our people, our culture, and this beautiful land we call home.



Chief Minister Michael Somare hands out PNG flags to school children in 1974.  
Source: Denis Williams' estate/PNG Post Courier



Papua New Guinea's first Prime Minister Michael Somare (centre) with former Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam (right) in 1975. (Deed of Gift to Whitlam Institute)  
Source: Denis Williams' estate/PNG Post Courier

# 50th Independence Day, National Speech

**“I carry forward  
that vision with  
humility and deep  
commitment”**

**Hon. Joseph Lelang, Minister  
for Rural and Economic  
Development**

Hon. Joseph Lelang  
Source: Island Business



**F**ellow citizens, brothers and sisters across our beautiful country, On this day, 16th of September 2025, we come together with hearts full of pride, gratitude, and hope as we mark 50 years of independence, a golden jubilee in the life of our nation. It is a moment for reflection, celebration, and rededication.

Fifty years ago, under the visionary leadership of the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, Papua New Guinea proudly joined the global community. He dreamed of a united, dignified, and self-reliant nation where all Papua New Guineans, whether from the mountains, coast, islands, or valleys, could shape their own future with pride.

As the Minister for Rural and Economic

Development, I carry forward that vision with humility and deep commitment. I stand here not only as a public servant but as a son of this soil, someone who has seen both the potential and the struggles of our rural communities. I believe that the strength of our nation lies not only in our cities, but in our villages and rural districts. Our independence will only be complete when opportunity, dignity, and development reach the last mile and the last person.

I say to you: Independence was never just about raising a flag. It was about raising our people, out of poverty, out of isolation, and into opportunity. It was about building a nation where the heartbeat of progress is heard in every corner, not just in Port Moresby or Lae, but in Gloucester, Kabum, Kikori and Kopiago.



A celebration of colour, history and culture during PNG Independence Day celebrations.

Source: TropikNow

This year, our golden jubilee, we reflect on how far we have come, but more importantly, we focus on where we are going. Under the leadership of Prime Minister James Marape, the baton has been passed to a new generation. The Prime Minister has laid out a bold and ambitious vision to "Take Back PNG" and make it economically independent by 2050.

He believed deeply in rural empowerment, in bringing government and development to where our people live, in our villages, hamlets, and communities. That is the dream we, in the Ministry for Rural and Economic Development, are privileged to carry forward today.

Independence is not just a moment in history, it is a living commitment we must renew every day. True independence means that every citizen, in every district and village, has access to opportunity, dignity, and the services they deserve.

The Ministry is at the heart of this vision, working tirelessly to ensure that sustainable independence reaches every corner of our nation. Through the effective coordination of key programs like the Service Improvement Programs, under the District, Provincial, and Local Level Government, we are creating policies needed to support infrastructure, health, education, and economic opportunity for our people. With innovative tools like the Bilum platform, we are tracking progress

in real time, improving accountability, and making sure that no district, no community, is left behind.

Our success depends on unity. Through institutions, we work hand in hand with our provinces, our local-level governments, churches, NGOs, and development partners to bring our national vision to life at the local level. This government stands firm in its commitment to transparency and sustainability and a true independent Papua New Guinea.

So today, on this Independence Day, let us not only celebrate our freedom, let us also honour our responsibility. Let us assist our districts, provinces, and local governments (LGs) to support projects that directly benefit our people. Let us promote fair competition in the market, protect consumers through fair and accessible

insurance, ensure the equitable distribution of public funds, and strengthen the decentralisation of power to the local level. Let us also support access to loans that create real opportunities for our people. Let our LGs continue to invest in rural infrastructure so our farmers can bring their produce to market, and our mothers and children can travel to schools and clinics. Let us empower our rural leaders and entrepreneurs through strong district and provincial support so they can grow businesses that sustain families and strengthen communities.

We are not just talking about rural development, we are doing it. We are walking the path our founding father envisioned, and we are paving a way for Independence for our children to walk into the next 50 years with confidence. We are growing our economy and ensuring that our people reap



Independence Day Anniversary celebrations.

Source: PNGTPA/PNG Travel

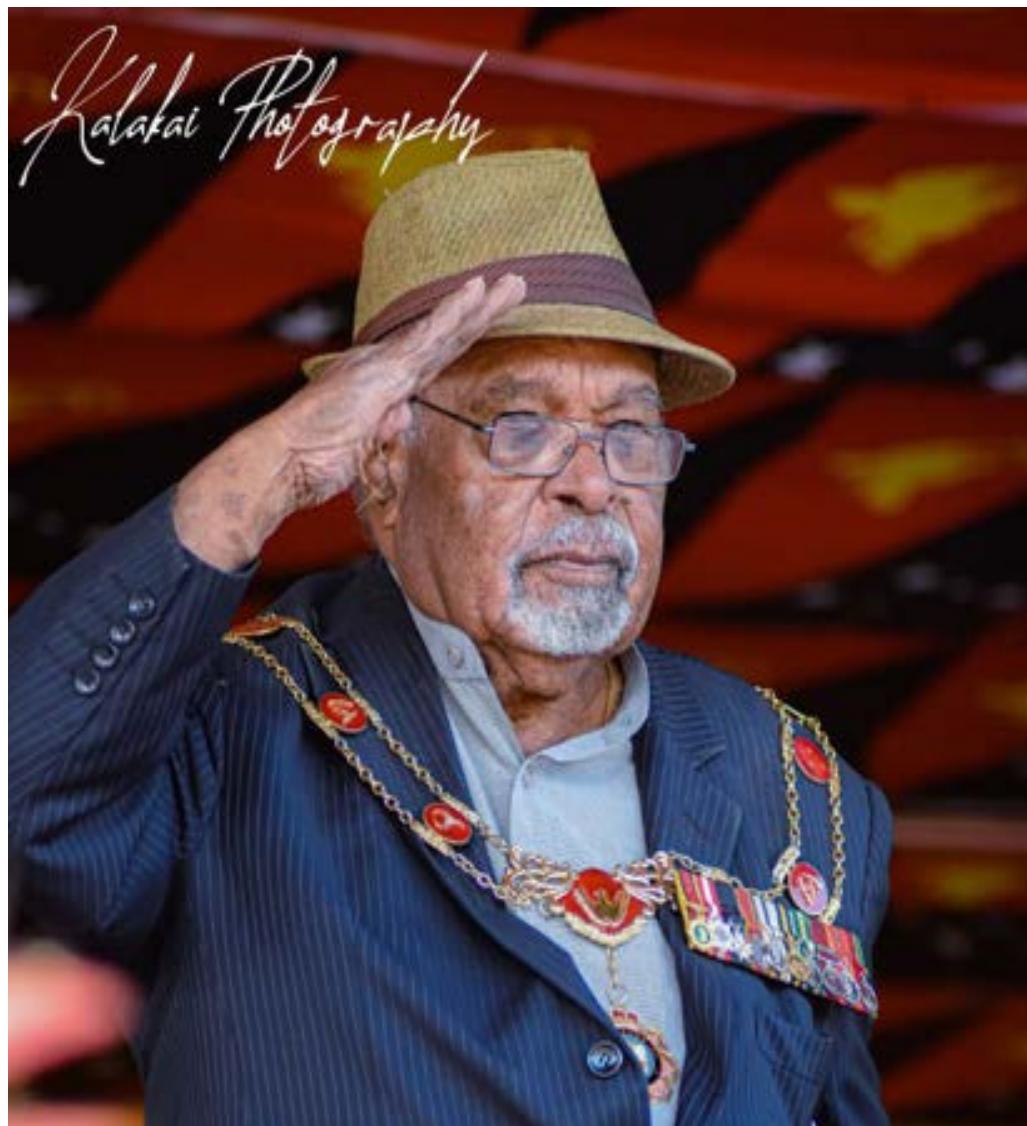
the full benefits of our natural wealth, in mining, petroleum, energy, agriculture, fisheries and tourism.

My fellow Papua New Guineans, as we wave our flag today, let us remember that the true spirit of independence lives in each of us, in the farmer who wakes up before dawn, in the teacher who walks miles to her school, in the youth who dreams of building a better tomorrow. Let us work together to build an independent, knowledge-based society, one that creates jobs, develops skills, and puts kina in the pockets of our people.

Let this golden jubilee be a moment of renewal. Let us honour the past, not just with words, but with action. Let us empower every village, every ward, and every citizen to know: "I belong, I matter, and I have a future here in Papua New Guinea." This is our home. This is our time. And this is our legacy to build.  
God bless you all,  
God bless our rural people,  
And God bless Papua New Guinea.



Grand Chief, The Late Sir Michael Somare, Known as "The Father of the Nation".  
Source: Kalakai Photography



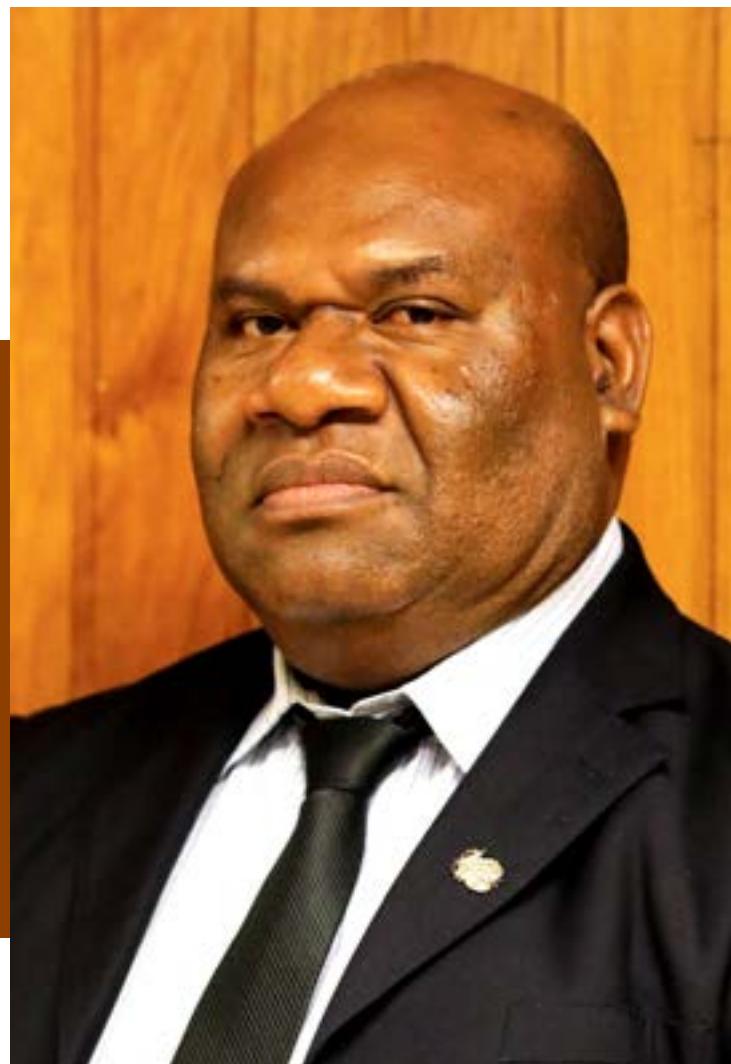
Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister Hon. James Marape speaks at a flag-raising ceremony in Port Moresby to mark the 45th Anniversary of PNG gaining independence.  
Source: PM Media Unit

# 50th Independence Day, National Speech

## **“Independence is about responsible governance”**

**Hon. Freddie Kumai, Chairman  
of Public Accounts Committee**

Hon. Freddie Kumai,  
Chairman of Public Accounts Committee.  
Source: PAC



**M**y fellow Papua New Guineans, As we celebrate 50 years of independence, we stand proudly together, not only in remembrance of our past, but in determination towards our future.

From the vibrant streets of Port Moresby to the volcanic region of Talasea, our Golden Jubilee is more than a celebration. It is a moment of reflection and renewal. Independence is not simply about freedom, it is about the solemn responsibility to govern with honesty, discipline, and fairness.

As Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, I affirm this truth: every kina spent must deliver tangible value to our people. That is the essence of independence. We must act with integrity,

ensuring that every project, every policy, and every decision serves the interests of the people, especially in areas most vulnerable and underserved.

We honour our past by protecting our future. Independence was earned through sacrifice and vision. Let us be its guardians, not through mere speeches or celebrations, but through steadfast commitment, genuine service, and unwavering accountability.

The PAC's ongoing work, through audits, public hearings, and reforms, embodies this spirit. Strong, independent institutions are the bedrock of our democracy. I thank my Deputy Chairman, Hon. Keith Iduhu, and all PAC members for their dedicated service and partnership in safeguarding transparency.



Youths soak in Independence Day Festivities.

Source: Amazing Port Moresby

As flags rise and hearts swell with pride, I issue a calling: let the next 50 years be defined by action, not rhetoric. Let our independence be not just a date on the calendar, but a daily pledge in our hearts.

Happy 50th Independence Day, Papua New Guinea. May our freedom be matched by our fairness, and our pride by responsible governance.



Papua New Guineans riding on bikes with the PNG Flag.

Source: PNGTPA/PNG Travel



PNG Tourism Promotional Authority staff celebrating 49 years of Independence.  
Travel

Source: PNGTPA/PNG



Cultural performers during 49th Independence Day celebrations.

Source: ABC Pacific

# 50th Independence Day, National Speech

## “Together, we can build a Papua New Guinea”

**Hon. Richard Masere, Minister  
for Administrative Services**

Hon. Richard Masere.  
Source: PNG Government



**O**n this 50th anniversary of Papua New Guinea's independence, we reflect on the resilience of our nation and the strength of our democratic institutions. Half a century on from the raising of our flag, Papua New Guinea has grown into a nation of diversity, innovation, and determination.

This Golden Jubilee is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the institutions that safeguard our democracy and ensure every citizen has a voice. From conducting a national census and strengthening our identity systems, to preparing our electoral processes for the future, these responsibilities are central to ensuring that accurate data, fair participation, and trusted governance guide our development.

The Ministry for Administrative Services exists to support constitutional offices in their vital work, providing resources, creating enabling frameworks, and upholding their independence. Strong institutions build strong nations, and we are committed to ensuring they have the support to serve with integrity.

As we celebrate 50 years of independence, let us commit to the next 50 years with renewed dedication to accountability, service, and unity. Together, we can build a Papua New Guinea where good governance and public trust form the foundation of a brighter future. Happy 50th Independence Day and God Bless Papua New Guinea.



Prime Minister Hon. James Marape shaking hands with King Charles III in Apia, Samoa at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, 2024. Source: PMs Media.



Prime Minister Hon. James Marape at the flag raising ceremony at Independence Hill in Waigani, Port Moresby. 49th Independence Day, 2024. The PNG flag was raised in this same place on the 16th of September 1975. Source: PMs Media.

# “Your Voices, Your Money”

## PAC tightens its grip on accountability

In the corridors of Papua New Guinea's Parliament, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has emerged as the nation's vigilant guardian of public funds. Under the stewardship of Hon. Freddie Kumai, the Committee Chairman underscores a clear principle: public money must deliver public value. "The PAC's role is to follow the kina, ask the right questions, and make sure every toea is used for the right purpose. If there are any audit discrepancies, we're here to highlight them," Hon. Kumai states firmly.

### Functions of the PAC

Hon. Kumai affirms that the PAC's primary mandate is to ensure that government departments and institutions manage and spend public funds responsibly, a duty grounded in Section 216 of PNG's Constitution, the Public Finances (Management) Act (1995), and the



Hon. Freddie Kumai, Chairman of Public Accounts Committee.

Source: PAC



PAC Meeting at B2 Conference Room at Parliament.

Source: PAC



Ambua Nipa Road in the Highlands, Part of Audit by PAC.

Source: PAC

Permanent Parliamentary Committees Act (1994). The PAC typically launches inquiries in three circumstances: when compelled by audit findings from the Auditor-General, when formally referred by Parliament, or when national concerns, especially involving public finances demand closer scrutiny.

#### **Connect PNG: Driving national progress**

Launched in 2019, the twenty-year Connect PNG program represents a multi-billion-kina commitment to modernize Papua New Guinea's infrastructure. The initiative aims to upgrade 16,000 km of roads, upgrade critical bridges, and link remote communities, bolstering economic development and accelerating the government's middle-income ambitions by 2050.

#### **A closer look at the Mendi-Nipa highway**

One of the PAC's current enquiry focuses on the K221 million Mendi-Nipa Highway project. According to the Minister for Works & Highways, Hon. Solan Mirisim stated in Parliament, "In total the contractor has been paid K119.8 million Kina. The contractor has been on site for the last 43

months which is equivalent to 3 years and 7 months. The contractor has only 7 months to complete the 64 % outstanding works which is not possible."

#### **Beyond Mendi - Nipa: transforming PNG's infrastructure**

Although the Mendi - Nipa Highway has become symbolic of the PAC's probe, it is only one part of a broader investigation. Several projects under the Connect PNG program include the Hareich Bridge to Aitape section, which is a crucial part of the Sepik Coastal Highway and the Momase Economic Road Corridor. This corridor is Papua New Guinea's only international road link to Indonesia, playing a vital role in cross-border trade and transport. The Yalu Bridge to Nadzab turnoff is a vital segment of the Lae-Nadzab Highway, integral to the Highlands and Momase Highway networks. This route is important for connecting Lae City, Nadzab Tomodachi International Airport, and the Highlands and Madang provinces, facilitating the movement of goods and passengers. The Yalu Bridge itself is a critical infrastructure, linking Lae to the Highlands and Madang highways.

### **PAC investigation nears closure**

In February 2025, during its inaugural meeting under Chairman, Hon. Freddie Kumai and Deputy Chairman, Hon. Keith Iduhu, the committee passed a resolution to probe the Connect PNG Program after mounting public concerns of fund misuse. Supported by a team of civil and structural engineers, legal experts, and accountants, alongside auditors from the Department of Works, the PAC conducted on-site inspections of major roads and bridges. "We've gathered the necessary data to shape our findings," Hon. Kumai reports. "Now, we'll summon the departmental heads overseeing Connect PNG to answer crucial questions in our final inquiry. We aim to complete and present our report during Parliament's November session."

### **A call for patience and transparency**

Addressing growing public speculation, Hon. Kumai said in an interview with Niugini Review: "There's been a lot of rumours. I urge everyone to await the audit results. The PAC will table the

report in the November 2025 sitting of Parliament, let the facts speak for themselves." Insiders anticipate the final report won't just pinpoint shortcomings, it may catalyse sweeping reforms across Connect PNG's management framework.

### **Acknowledgments and appeal for cooperation**

Upon wrapping up the inspection phase, Hon. Kumai extended his gratitude: "I sincerely thank Prime Minister Hon. James Marape and his government for enabling this inquiry with financial support. I also appreciate the diligence of contractors and departmental heads who cooperated fully, your contributions were vital." As PAC moves into its hearing phase, he appeals for continued collaboration: "I respectfully call on all department heads involved in Connect PNG to maintain this level of commitment." He also praised Deputy Chairman Hon. Iduhu and all committee members for their unwavering dedication in strengthening accountability across the program.



Mendi Nipa Road in the highlands, part of audit by PAC.

Source: PAC



Chairman, Hon. Freddie Kumai and Deputy Chairman, Hon. Keith Iduhu and members of the PAC.  
Source: PAC



PAC Team at the Telefomin District of West Sepik Province, Bridge is part of the road that connects Tabubil in Western Province.  
Source: PAC



PAC Team at the Telefomin District of West Sepik Province, along the road that connects Tabubil in Western Province.  
Source: PAC



At the Telefomin District of West Sepik Province Bridge which is part of the road that connects Tabubil in Western Province.  
Source: PAC

# Brewing Prosperity

## *Papua New Guinea's coffee renaissance*

In the mist-clad highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG), coffee is more than a crop, it is the lifeblood of rural communities, a driver of local economies, and a bridge to global markets. For decades, smallholder farmers have labored on steep slopes, navigating poor infrastructure and logistical challenges, all in the hope that their beans will fetch a fair price.

Recent surges in international coffee prices have brought a rare windfall. Yet, despite this economic boost, long-standing issues, from deteriorating roads to land disputes, remain

entrenched, shaping the daily realities of PNG's coffee-producing communities.

### **A storied beginning**

The history of coffee in PNG stretches back to the late 19th century, during the German colonial era. One of the key figures in its early spread was Emma Coe Forsayth, known as "Queen Emma," a businesswoman of mixed American and Samoan descent. Along with botanist Richard Parkinson, she helped establish some of the first coffee plantations in the Kokopo district of East New Britain Province. By the 1920s, Arabica coffee



Farmers in Papua New Guinea use a hand pulper to remove the outer skin of coffee cherries.  
Source: Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)



Coffee beans in a truck ready for processing.

Source: New Guinea Highlands Coffee

sourced from Jamaican Blue Mountain seeds was introduced, helping to cement PNG's reputation for producing high-quality beans.

Experimental stations in Wau, Morobe Province, played a pivotal role in refining cultivation techniques and preparing coffee for commercial export. Over the decades, coffee became deeply intertwined with the social and economic fabric of PNG's highlands, providing a source of income, a medium for cultural expression, and a link to the international market.

### **The heartbeat of the highlands**

Today, PNG's coffee industry is concentrated in the highlands provinces: Western Highlands, Eastern Highlands, Simbu, Morobe, and East Sepik. These regions, characterized by fertile volcanic soils, high altitudes, and abundant rainfall, provide ideal conditions for growing Arabica coffee. Roughly

55% of households in these areas engage in coffee cultivation, underscoring its role as both an economic and social cornerstone.

Smallholder farmers dominate the industry, producing about 85% of the nation's coffee. In 2023, PNG exported approximately 787,000 bags of green coffee, ranking it 17th globally. Despite its relatively modest global share, PNG is Asia's second-largest producer of washed Arabica coffee, prized for its bright acidity and nuanced flavors.

Coffee cultivation in PNG is rarely just an economic activity; it is part of daily life. Families integrate coffee into their subsistence lifestyle, growing it alongside food crops and using the income to pay for school fees, health care, and cultural obligations.

## A surge in global prices

The international coffee market has experienced unprecedented volatility, and PNG farmers are reaping some of the benefits. Between 2024 and early 2025, prices reportedly rose by nearly 90%, driven largely by poor harvests in major coffee-producing nations such as Brazil and Vietnam. Although there has been a slight decline in the June 2025 quarter, prices remain historically high.

This boom has had a direct impact on rural highland households. Farmers have been able to invest in education for their children, improve living standards, and meet social obligations. One community leader from Nivi village in the Eastern Highlands described how coffee income now plays a central role in daily life, from paying school fees to supporting cultural commitments.

The price surge has also stimulated local economies. As farmers spend their earnings on goods and services, wholesale and retail activity receive a boost. ANZ Research forecasts that PNG's GDP could grow by 4.7% in 2025, fuelled in part by exports of coffee, cocoa, and palm oil. This economic uplift is also helping to address long-standing foreign currency challenges.

## The daily struggle of smallholders

Despite the favorable market conditions, the day-to-day life of smallholder farmers remains demanding. In Nivi village, farmers navigate treacherous terrain to transport coffee to buyers. Some walk four hours carrying 40-kilogram bags to reach the nearest truck stop, often after heavy rainfall has made the paths nearly impassable.

Local community leaders have voiced concerns that, while they generate significant economic value, government support is insufficient. Many smallholders feel that the challenges they face, poor roads, limited access to finance, and a lack of modern farming tools, remain largely



unaddressed. The windfall from high coffee prices, while welcome, cannot solve these structural issues alone.

## Government and international interventions

Recognizing these challenges, the PNG government has partnered with international organizations, including the World Bank, to support the coffee sector. The PNG Agriculture Commercialization and Diversification (PACD)



PNG Roasted Coffee Beans.  
Source: JustFreshRoasted

Project, administered by the Coffee Industry Corporation (CIC), is a multi-million-kina initiative designed to enhance productivity, strengthen market access, and support farmers directly.

Officials overseeing PACD emphasize that poor road infrastructure is the largest barrier to achieving high export volumes. Experienced

project coordinators have stressed that policymakers in urban centers often lack a clear understanding of village realities, underscoring the importance of field engagement. Past initiatives, such as "coffee roads" built six years ago, have demonstrated that even small improvements in transport infrastructure can drastically reduce costs and time for farmers.



Researchers/Stakeholders discussing coffee agroforestry systems in Kabiufa, near Goroka, PNG. Carbon Trading, a method to efficiently use natural resources to better manage coffee farms.

Source: Sustineo



Mr Penias holding the signed contract with Mr Aba (left) and Mr Kanekunga as Mr Apinas looks on Kaia Works secured K4.8 million Contract with the PNG Government for Key Coffee Road Rehabilitation in Chimbu.

Source: Write Stuff PNG.

PACD support includes distribution of high-quality coffee seedlings to replace aging trees, provision of pruning tools and drying canvases, and construction of storage and wet-processing facilities. These interventions aim to improve both yield and quality, allowing farmers to earn more from international markets.

#### **Private sector innovation: The case of Las Malo**

Private processors are also adapting to PNG's changing coffee landscape. In Goroka, Las Malo, a family-owned processing company, recently installed an electronic color sorter that automates bean selection, significantly boosting production while reducing manual labor. The company purchases beans directly from smallholders and has contributed millions of kina in taxes since 2019.

Despite this innovation, the vast majority of PNG coffee still comes from customary land. Unlike the state-owned plantations of the mid-20th century, today's growers operate on land governed by complex traditional ownership, sometimes subject to disputes lasting decades. These legal and social complexities present ongoing challenges for investment and expansion.

#### **Social impact and community building**

Coffee initiatives are fostering more than economic growth—they are promoting social cohesion and empowerment. For example, women's associations in the highlands have received funding to establish nurseries, wet-processing centers, and training facilities. These projects not only improve production but also strengthen relationships in areas previously affected by tribal conflict.

By creating tangible benefits for communities, these interventions demonstrate how agriculture can be a tool for reconciliation and empowerment, bridging divides and enabling sustainable development.

#### **Regional profiles: stories from the highlands**

**Eastern highlands:** Farmers in Nivi village produce around 5,000 bags annually despite difficult terrain. The recent price surge has enabled them to invest in school fees, home improvements, and cultural obligations, although road access remains a major challenge.

**Chimbu province:** The PACD project has distributed thousands of seedlings to smallholder farmers, helping revitalize aging trees and improve yields. Local training centers have also been established to teach modern farming and post-harvest techniques.

**Goroka:** Las Malo's adoption of high-tech processing illustrates the potential of private sector innovation to complement government initiatives, boosting productivity while supporting smallholder livelihoods.

#### **Future prospects for PNG's coffee industry**

While elevated prices offer a rare economic boom, long-term prosperity for PNG's coffee sector depends on addressing structural challenges. Investment in transport infrastructure, resolution of land disputes, and expansion of support programs for farmers remain critical.



Ken Dumudi, Director of Lass Malo Coffee (LMC).

Source: PNGHausBung



Coffee Nursery.  
Source: Jazan Mountains Development Authority/The Saudi Times



Las Malo Coffee colour sorter.

Source: PNGHausBung



Sustained high prices alone are insufficient. Capacity-building, market access and modernization of processing techniques are necessary to ensure that smallholders capture a fair share of global coffee revenue. With these measures, PNG's coffee industry has the potential to transform short-term windfalls into enduring social and economic gains.

Papua New Guinea's coffee industry is a study in resilience, opportunity, and complexity. Its historical legacy, fertile highlands, and recent surge in international prices create a unique moment for growth. Yet systemic challenges, poor roads, land ownership disputes, and limited access to modern technology, temper optimism.

Reported accounts from farmers and project coordinators indicate cautious hope: while current market conditions are favorable, sustained

prosperity will require coordinated investment, policy support, and long-term commitment.

For PNG's highland communities, coffee remains more than a crop, it is a lifeline, a source of social cohesion, and a pathway to opportunity.

### **PNG coffee at a glance**

#### **Key Statistics (2025)**

- Total Exports: 787,000 bags of green coffee
- Global Rank: 17th in production
- Asia's Washed Arabica Producer: 2nd, behind Indonesia
- Smallholder Contribution: 85% of total coffee
- Highland Household Participation: 55% of households in Western Highlands, Eastern Highlands, Simbu, Morobe, and East Sepik
- GDP Impact: Coffee, cocoa, and palm oil exports expected to boost GDP growth to 4.7%

# Hon. Joseph Lelang takes helm of new Ministry for Rural and Economic Development

With most of the population living outside urban centres, rural development has long been a challenge in Papua New Guinea. But a new ministry, the Ministry for Rural and Economic Development created in March 2024, aims to change that.

Leading the charge is Minister Hon. Joseph Lelang, who is working hard to turn resource wealth into the institutions that will assist the provinces, local governments and districts. This will allow projects to be undertaken at the community level to support the villages and the people.

## **Hon. Joseph Lelang, expertise and experience**

Hon. Lelang brings a wealth of expertise to the role, not only through his economic acumen, but also through his considerable experience as a former Secretary for National Planning and Monitoring, former Chairman of the National Forest Board and former Chairman of the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission. He brings commitment and is blending his expertise to sharp the country's policy direction. As Minister, he is uniquely positioned to lead the nation's rural and economic development initiatives.

## **Role of Ministry of Rural and Economic Development**

One of the ministry's goals has been shifting power out of the national level, aiming to end the long delays that districts, local governments and



Hon. Joseph Lelang.

Source: Pacific Islands News Association

provinces often face under centralised planning. It creates policies that empower institutions to carry out its vision. It supports a decentralization approach, which is efficient and effective in avoiding bottlenecks that have been a long-standing problem.

The Ministry has a broader role of aligning rural development with broader fiscal governance and economic transformation efforts. Some of the functions encompass several key institutions vital to PNG's economic framework, including the Office of Rural Development, National Economic and Fiscal Commission, Independent Consumer



2024, March 8th, Hon. Joseph Lelang (third from right) the new Minister for Rural and Economic Development at Government House.

Source: NBC News

and Competition Commission and Sovereign Wealth Fund.

The NEFC main focus is to evaluate financial practices, policy development and to advise on intergovernmental arrangements. It has a strategic focus at the macroeconomic and fiscal policy level, and provides oversight over funding flows, systems, reforms and budget practices aligning to national priorities.

In a recent interview with Niugini Review, Hon. Lelang stated that he has been tasked with establishing an ideal structure for the SWF to safeguard Papua New Guinea's future. The SWF will receive a portion of the revenues from mineral and petroleum resource projects. Hon. Lelang aims to develop a SWF structure under the International Monetary Fund approved Santiago Principles, this is to ensure the protection of the funds collected. The fund is designed to serve a dual purpose: first, to save for future generations;

and second, to promote economic stability through strategic interventions in smoothing the Government cashflow management and to stabilize the Kina through periodic interventions.

#### **Partnerships bringing tangible benefits**

Hon. Lelang recently expressed satisfaction in the partnership between the NEFC and Forum Federations. These types of partnerships will strengthen policy and institutional gaps at the local government level, provinces and districts.

With the Forum Federation known for advocating for decentralization, democratic and global fiscal governance, this strongly supports Hon. Lelang argument towards a systematic approach involving functional grants and financial transfer, with accountability, governance and regional coordination.

Given time in the saddle, Hon. Lelang is destined to achieve great things supporting the broader goals of the Government.

# Kokoda Today

*Legacy, livelihoods, and the next chapter for PNG tourism*

**F**ew places knit together Papua New Guinea's past and future like the Kokoda Trail. The 96-kilometre track that threads the Owen Stanley Ranges is both a national memorial and

a living corridor for livelihoods. Its story carries the weight of 1942 and the promise of what sustainable tourism can mean for communities in 2025 and beyond.



Porters who guide tourist and locals through the tough terrain of the Kokoda Trail.

Source: The Insightful Odyssey Travel Blog



After flying into Kokoda Village, Australian Prime Minister, Albanese was embraced by Prime Minister, Marape and welcomed by the tribes of the Oro Province with a "sing-sing".  
Source: Facebook / Tribe 92FM.

### **Trail of memory and momentum**

Kokoda's historical resonance is well known: it was the scene of a brutal World War II campaign that forged deep ties between Papua New Guinea and Australia. That shared history still shapes the present. In April 2024, the prime ministers of both countries walked part of the track ahead of Anzac Day commemorations, an act that underlined Kokoda's place in bilateral friendship and public imagination.

Yet Kokoda is not only a place to look back. It's also a vital economic engine. Pre-pandemic, thousands of trekkers crossed the trail each year; Australian government material still estimates more than 3,000 annually, underscoring consistent demand for a tough, meaningful trekking experience in a pristine environment.

### **What's new since 2024: stability, safety and a master plan**

Recent events have sharpened the focus on how the trail is governed and how benefits are shared. In late 2024, the track briefly closed due to a landowner dispute before reopening after commitments were made to address outstanding

issues. The episode reinforced two realities: Kokoda's communities are the trail's custodians and long-term stability depends on fair arrangements that recognize their stewardship.

In 2025, calls grew for a clear, collaborative master plan for the Kokoda region, one that goes beyond trekking to include nature-based experiences such as birdwatching and river activities, alongside improved camp standards and services. PNG's Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA) and the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) have both been at the centre of this conversation, signalling a more integrated approach to product development and site management.

Security and visitor confidence are also getting tangible attention. A PGK 3.1 million package is upgrading law-and-order infrastructure in the Kokoda Station area, including refurbishment of the police station, new barracks, and dual-purpose police/KTA patrol houses along the track. The program, supported by the Northern Provincial Government, Sohe District, Australia's High Commission and the KTA, aims to make community policing more visible and responsive



An Australian led expedition of tour guides and tourists, trekking through the Kokoda Trail.  
Source: No Roads Expedition

for residents and trekkers alike.

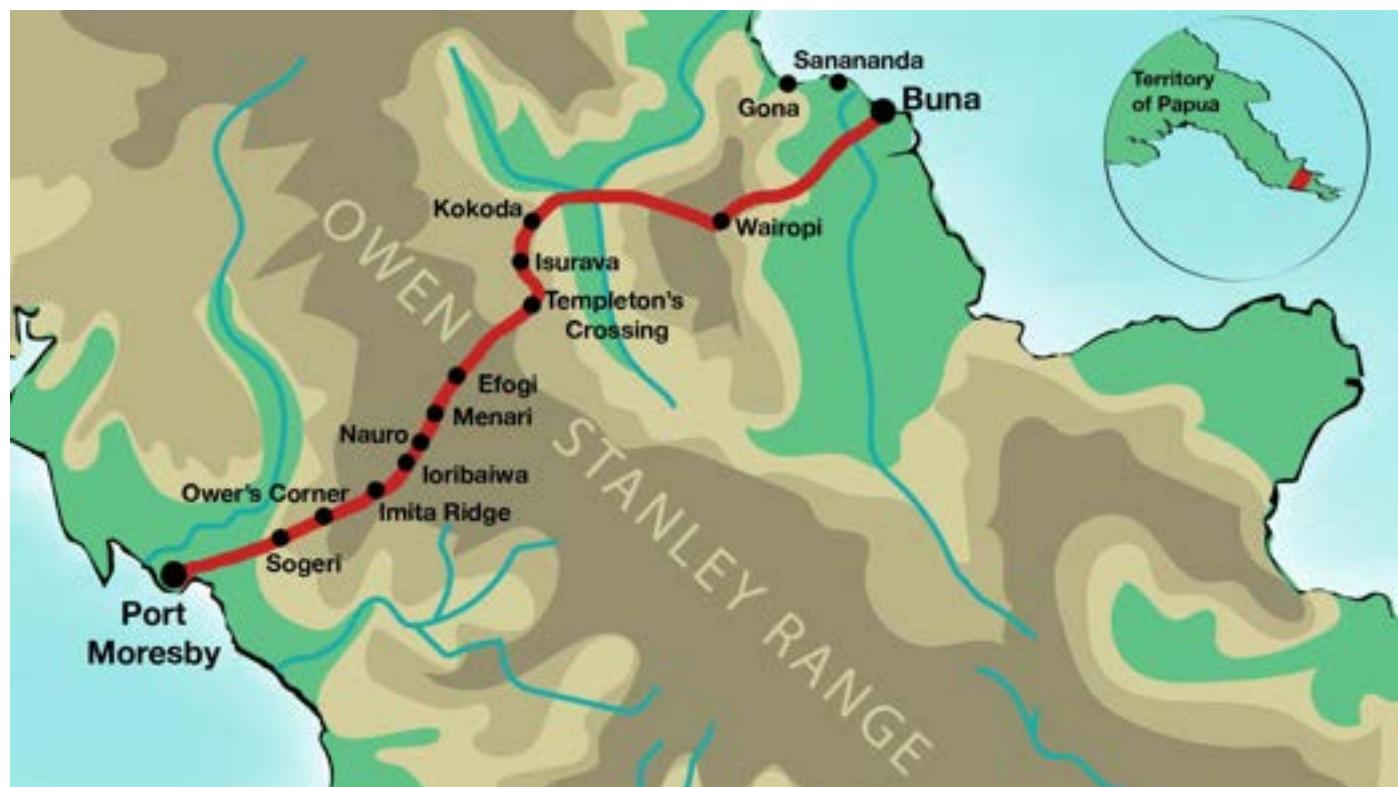
"Health, education and law and order services are essential for the communities living along the Track," Northern (Oro) Governor Gary Juffa noted at the project launch.

#### **Balancing heritage with visitor experience**

Kokoda's power lies in its authenticity: steep, muddy ascents; cloud-forested ridgelines; and villages that maintain cultural traditions shaped by rugged geography. That authenticity is also why careful management matters. In 2024, some tour operators publicly raised concerns about sections of the trail and camp capacity. Those critiques added urgency to ongoing reforms to licensing, facilities, and visitor flow so that

the experience remains safe, respectful, and rewarding for everyone.

Governance improvements have been part of the same conversation. Advocates within PNG's tourism sector have argued that trekking is fundamentally a tourism product and should be aligned with destination standards and marketing. As debate continues, the direction of travel is clear: closer coordination between the KTA, provincial administrations in Oro and Central, and the PNGTPA to ensure standards lift in line with demand and community expectations. PNG Tourism Promotion Authority leaders have said the trail's management should align more closely with tourism oversight because Kokoda is "a tourism asset."



Map of Kokoda Trail.  
Source: National Museum of Australia

## The community dividend

Kokoda's most compelling measure of success is local impact. Trekking fees, porter roles, campsite operations, and small enterprises, from food gardens to handicrafts, form a meaningful portion of cash income for villages along the corridor. Australian-PNG cooperation under the Kokoda Initiative aims to keep the track open and well managed while supporting community health, education, and environmental conservation across the Owen Stanley Ranges. The emphasis is on protecting biodiversity and cultural sites while strengthening services that matter day-to-day.

Importantly, the master-plan push includes product diversification, guided birding in a globally significant habitat, river-based adventures, and curated heritage experiences in and around Port Moresby that connect with the trail's story. This spreads tourism's benefits wider, reduces seasonal peaks and troughs, and provides more avenues for local entrepreneurs to participate.

## Why Kokoda matters for PNG's wider visitor economy

Nationally, arrivals have been edging up, with Australia remaining PNG's largest source market. While those numbers reflect many segments, business travel, diving, cultural festivals, Kokoda remains the country's signature brand in the Australian market and an anchor for storytelling



Hiking through the Kokoda Trail can be a gruelling journey through the jungle.

Source: AAP / Linda McSweeney

around courage, culture, and nature. Every step taken to improve Kokoda's visitor experience supports PNG's broader positioning as a destination for meaningful, guided adventure.

The recent Anzac-linked trek by both prime ministers, the re-opening after the 2024 dispute, and the 2025 security and facilities upgrades all point in the same direction: Kokoda is moving into a new phase of professionalized management and community partnership, without losing the raw, humbling character that makes it unique.

## Practical notes for prospective trekkers

- **Permits & operators:** Treks must be arranged through licensed operators and include a valid KTA permit. This ensures compliance with safety, environmental and cultural protocols, and channels fees back to track communities.
- **Season & conditions:** The trail is challenging year-round; professional guides, appropriate fitness preparation, and adequate time



Hikers cross through a village during their Kokoda Trail journey.

Source: Peek



buffers are essential. Recent attention to camp capacity, sanitation and policing aims to improve reliability and comfort without "softening" the experience.

- Respect & contributions: Trekkers are encouraged to follow local guidance on village

visits, waste management, and photography, and to consider PNG-owned services where possible so more benefits remain in-country. (See Kokoda Initiative and KTA resources.)

### **The road—and ridge—ahead**

Kokoda's future will be defined by collaboration: landowners, local governments, KTA, PNGTPA, tour operators, and partners such as the Kokoda Initiative. With a master plan under discussion, infrastructure and policing upgrades underway, and continued attention to community dividends, the trail is positioned to deliver a better, safer experience that honours its wartime legacy while expanding opportunities for the people who call the corridor home.

As PNG marks 50 years of independence, Kokoda stands as a grounded symbol of what sustainable tourism can achieve: remembrance with respect, nature with guardianship, and adventure with genuine local benefit. The climb is still steep, but the path forward is clearer than it has been in years.



Hikers trekking through a village.

Source: Adventure Kokoda

# Papua New Guinea's Quiet Revolution:

Reclaiming tourism, culture, and community



Hon. Belden Norman Namah Minister for Tourism,  
Arts and Culture.  
Source: PNG Government

Along the sun-drenched coastlines of Papua New Guinea, a quiet revolution is unfolding. It's not marked by grand spectacles or slogans, but by something far more enduring: a national reckoning with culture, commerce, and the country's place in global tourism. And at its helm stands Hon. Belden Norman Namah, Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture, with a message at the 2025, Inaugural National Tourism Conference and Expo, "Tourism in Papua New Guinea is not dead, tourism is alive."

**His Mission and Vision:** "Indigenise Our Arts and Culture, Modernise the Infrastructure and Promote Peace and Unity in Diversity".

Under Hon. Namah's stewardship, Tourism, Arts and Culture has been repositioned as a pillar of national identity and economic renewal. His strategy is ambitious but grounded: blend cultural preservation and heritage, with infrastructure investment and community cultural celebration with sustainability to attract visitors.



## Reviving the cultural heartbeat

September 2024 marked more than just a festival revival, it was the reawakening of our identity. In the coastal town of Alotau, the traditional thrum of kundu drums once again filled the air as the National Kenu & Kundu Festival roared back to life. Minister Hon. Namah's arrival came with a K300,000 injection of funding and a commitment of another K200,000 investment not only in a festival but in the idea that our culture is an asset.

Events like this are not merely attractions, they are the economic lifeblood of rural communities and living testaments to PNG's diversity. In a country of over 800 languages and countless tribal traditions, every region is unique and with its own identity.

## Tourism beyond traditional marketing

Hon. Namah's vision goes beyond tourism brochures and glossy marketing. It means taking a hard look at the basics, clean streets, secure

public spaces, and functional urban centres. Tourists aren't avoiding because of lack of interest, they're unsure due to safety concerns, limited air access, and a lack of awareness have kept PNG off the map.

To address this, Hon. Namah emphasized for government subsidized flights and direct routes to key markets like Japan, where battlefield and memorial tourism could become a niche but powerful draw. This includes using Lae's Tomadachi International Airport not only for agriculture and value-added products but a gateway to a broader strategy of using history and heritage to bridge the global connections for tourist.

Cruise ships, yet to see its full potential, is next in line. Hon. Namah is advocating for new sea terminals in key coastal provinces, enabling cruise liners to engage with communities directly and inject revenue into local economies.

Photo: National Airports Corporation  
Papua New Guinea Nadzab Tomadachi  
International Airport, Lae, PNG.





War Canoe at National Kenu & Kundu Festival.  
Photos: Milne Bay Tourism Bureau

### The blueprint for 2025 and beyond

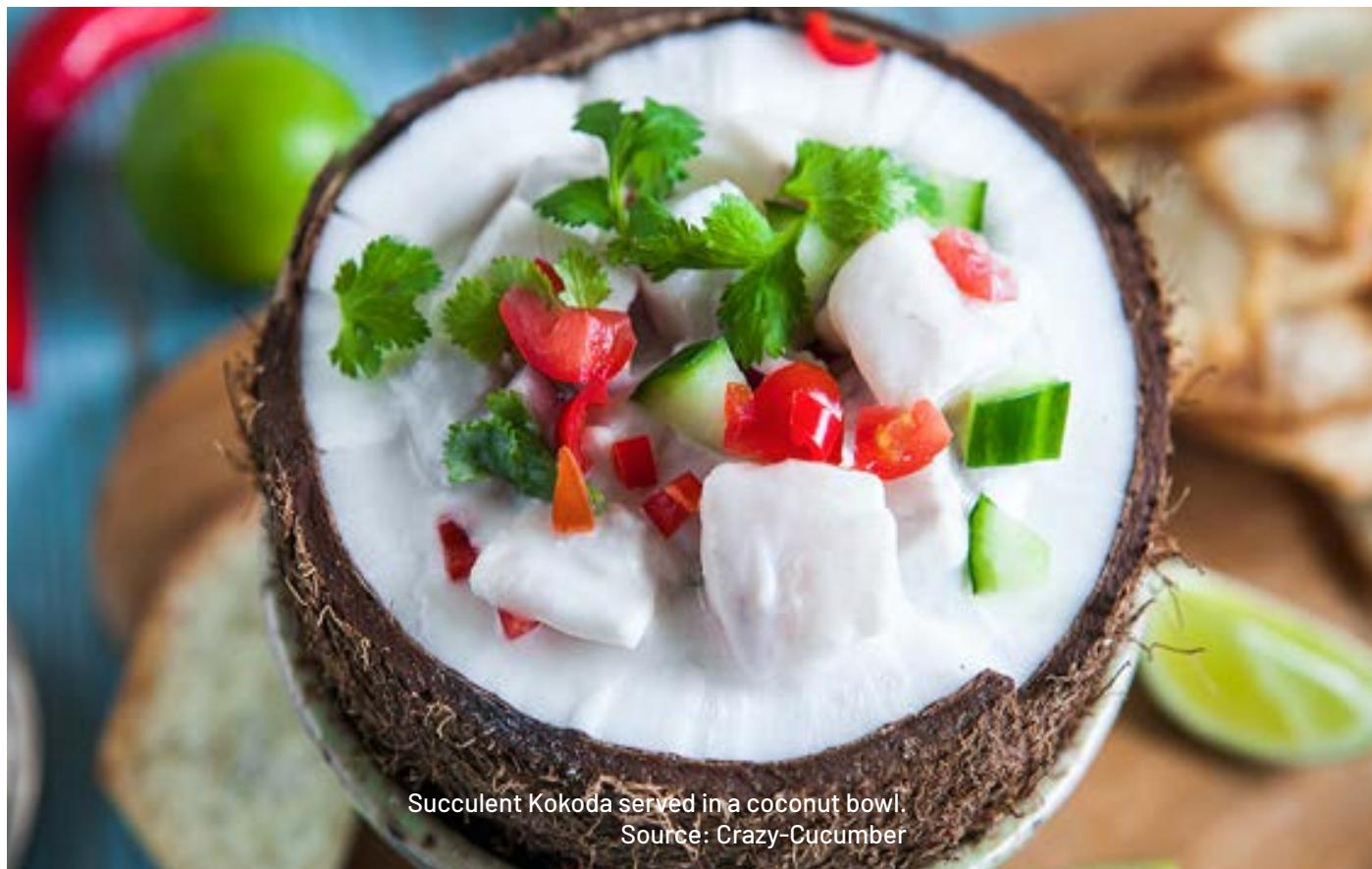
In April this year, the capital Port Moresby hosted the inaugural National Tourism Conference and Expo, marking 50 years of PNG's nationhood and signalling a new chapter in its tourism journey. The theme, "Indigenizing Arts and Culture, Modernizing Infrastructure, and Promoting Peace and Unity in Diversity" through Tourism.

### Among honourable Namah's proposals:

- Nationwide emergency response systems to safeguard travellers.
- No littering, no loitering and no graffiti to keep PNG clean and appealing.
- Affordable airline access, lower airfares and baggage exemptions encouraging adventure and eco-tourism.
- Elevated roles for cultural institutions, ensuring they are empowered.
- Division into seven tourism zones, each



- developed as a flagship regional destination.
  - Introduction of Tourism Policing/Police.
- The result is a comprehensive roadmap that links rural and urban, cultural and commercial, safety and storytelling.



### What's in It?

Kokoda is prepared by cutting raw fish into small cubes and curing it in lime or lemon juice, then finishing with rich coconut cream. These simple ingredients create the unique blend of tangy and creamy flavors that make kokoda so popular. Today, versions often include onion, capsicum, chili, or tomato for extra flavor.

### Best fish for Kokoda

Firm white-fleshed fish hold up best to the citrus cure and blend well with coconut cream. Freshly caught fish is preferred over frozen. Popular choices in Fiji include walu (Spanish mackerel), pakapaka (pink snapper), yatu ni toga (yellowfin tuna), and ulavi (parrotfish).

### A dish unique to Fiji

Though similar to ceviche and the Polynesian 'Ota Ika, kokoda is uniquely Fijian. It developed as a way to preserve fish before

# Kokoda

## An Authentic Fijian Taste

refrigeration was available to the iTaukei (Indigenous Fijians).

### Ingredients

- 500 g firm white fish fillets
- 1 cup lime or lemon juice
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 fresh chili, finely chopped
- 1-1½ cups thick coconut cream
- Salt, to taste

### Method

1. Cut fish into 1 cm cubes and place in a non-metal bowl.
2. Cover with lime juice, mix gently, and refrigerate 30 minutes to 2 hours until opaque.
3. Drain most of the juice, then mix in onion, tomato, and chili.
4. Stir through coconut cream, season with salt, and mix gently.
5. Serve chilled in a bowl or coconut shell. Garnish with coriander or spring onion if desired.

If there ever was a dish that could transport you to the islands with just one spoonful, it is surely Kokoda, a uniquely Fijian treat that has stood the test of time.

# Strengthening Institutions for the next 50 Years, Hon. Richard Masere's Vision for Administrative Services

As Papua New Guinea celebrates its Golden Jubilee, Hon. Richard Masere, Minister for Administrative Services, is spearheading efforts to fortify the nation's governance systems for the next 50 years.

## A Ministry for national institutions

Established in 2024, the Ministry supports key agencies like the National Statistics Office, Civil and Identity Registry, and Electoral Commission, providing resources and legislative backing to ensure their independence and effectiveness. The 2024 National Census, currently undergoing data verification, will provide final population figures in 2025, informing policies in health, education, infrastructure, and electoral roll preparation. The Civil Identity Registration Act 2024 has advanced the National Identity (NID) system, enabling data sharing across agencies to enhance service delivery, population tracking, and voter registration, despite challenges such as underfunding and outdated IT systems.



Hon. Richard Masere.  
Source: PNG Government

## Delivering the national census

One of the Ministry's most significant undertakings has been the delivery of the 2024 National Census. Despite logistical challenges, the census was rolled out nationwide and is now in the phase of data verification and analysis. Preliminary figures are being prepared, with the final population results expected in 2025. This information will be crucial for planning, informing policy in education, health, infrastructure, and resource allocation, while also guiding future electoral roll preparations.

## **Building a national identity system**

The Ministry is also working to enhance the National Identity (NID) system in conjunction with efforts to reform the census and electoral systems. The Ministry's efforts in this space contributed to the passage of the recent Civil Identity Registration Act 2024, which enables data sharing and system integration across various agencies. This legislative milestone supports the NID program's goal of registering more citizens, laying the foundation for improved service delivery, accurate population tracking, and reforms in voter registration and social programs. The Papua New Guinea Civil and Identity Registration ensures the integrity, privacy, and protection of personal data, supporting the PNG Electoral Commission's Common Roll, biometric voting, digital transformation with the Department of Communication and Information Technology, and census coordination with the National Statistical Office. Despite challenges—underfunding, understaffing, and outdated IT

systems, the Ministry is committed to registering births, adoptions, marriages, divorces, and deaths, and issuing National Identification (NID) Cards.

## **Preparing for electoral reform**

As the nation looks to the 2027 General Election, the Ministry of Administrative Services under the leadership of Hon. Richard Masere is working closely with the Electoral Commission to modernise systems and ensure that all citizens can participate fairly. Initiatives under consideration include the modelling of integrated systems of ID Verification during voter registration, leading to free, fair and transparent elections in Papua New Guinea.

## **Supporting independence and good governance**

Hon. Richard Masere has consistently emphasised that the role of the Ministry is not to direct constitutional offices, but to support them in their work. By resourcing oversight bodies



Hon. Richard Masere visit to National Statistics Office with National Statistician, John Igitoi.  
Source: National Statistical Office

such as the Ombudsman Commission and the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Ministry strengthens accountability and the rule of law. This commitment to accurate data, robust identity systems, and trusted electoral processes aims to ensure inclusive, transparent governance, positioning Papua New Guinea for a resilient future.

### **A golden jubilee commitment**

As the nation steps into its next 50 years, Hon. Masere's vision is clear: institutions must be equipped to meet modern challenges. Accurate data, robust identity systems, trusted electoral processes, and empowered oversight bodies will ensure that governance remains strong and inclusive.

### **Advertorial sidebar: key impacts of Minister Masere's Agenda (2024-2025)**

- Census delivery: Nationwide census conducted in 2024, with final data to guide development planning.
- Data for the future: Population figures expected in 2025 to shape health, education, and infrastructure policy.
- Stronger identity systems: Expansion of NID registrations to improve planning and service delivery.
- Electoral readiness: Preparations underway for 2027, with reforms aimed at transparency and participation.
- Institutional support: Constitutional offices resourced and safeguarded to serve with independence.
- Good governance focus: The Ministry's mandate is centred on transparency, accountability, and trust.



NCD Governor Powes Parkop registering for the National Census, 2024.  
Source: NBC News



# Justin Olam

**A true son of  
Papua New Guinea**

Source: NRL.com

**F**ew athletes embody the hopes of an entire nation the way Justin Olam does. From humble beginnings in Papua New Guinea (PNG) to lifting a premiership trophy in Australia's National Rugby League (NRL), Olam's journey is a story of determination, discipline, and national pride. He is more than just a rugby league player; he is a symbol of possibility for thousands of young Papua New Guineans who share his dream.

Olam played the game with a ferocity and passion that made him a beloved fan favorite with PNG Kumuls and the Melbourne Storm NRL franchise. In doing so, he followed in the footsteps of another PNG-born Storm player, the great Marcus Bai, a trailblazer in the NRL for the likes of Olam and other up and coming PNG rugby league stars.

Renowned for his bone-jarring hits in defense and brutal carries into the opposition. Feared by opposing players throughout his relatively brief NRL career, he was equally dangerous a defender as he was an attacker.

## **Early life and beginnings**

Justin Olam was born in 1993 in Chimbu Province, a rugged, highland region of PNG where rugby league is more than just a pastime—it is a national obsession. Like many PNG children, Olam grew up playing the game barefoot in fields and villages, developing both toughness and a deep passion for the sport.

His talent soon became evident, and after completing his schooling, he pursued studies in applied physics at the Papua New Guinea

University of Technology. While balancing his education, he continued to shine on the rugby field, representing his local club and eventually catching the attention of selectors at the national level.

### **Breaking into professional rugby league**

Olam's first major step onto the professional stage came when he joined the PNG Hunters in the Queensland Cup competition in 2016. The Hunters, a team created to showcase PNG talent in an Australian league, provided him with a pathway to test his skills against stronger opposition. Olam thrived in the competition, earning recognition for his fearless defense and powerful running game.

His performances quickly drew the attention of NRL scouts, and in 2017, he was signed by the Melbourne Storm, one of the most successful clubs in rugby league. He began playing for the Storm's feeder team, the Sunshine Coast Falcons in the Queensland Rugby League Competition, The Queensland Cup, as he waited for the opportunity to make his debut for the NRL side.

Breaking into the Storm's first-grade team was no easy feat. However, his resilience paid off as his powerful performances in the lower grades meant Storm coach Craig Bellamy could no longer ignore him.



Justin Olam in full flight with the PNG Hunters.

Source: PNG Hunters

Justin Olam playing for the Melbourne Storm.  
Source: NRL.com



The opportunity finally came on May 6th, 2018 against the St. George-Illawarra Dragons at Jubilee Oval in Sydney. It was a special moment for Olam, receiving his jersey in an official presentation earlier in the day from Storm & Queensland legend, Billy Slater. The Storm lost that day to the Dragons, but Olam had already impressed with his hard running style.

### **Success with the Melbourne Storm**

By 2019, Olam had secured a regular spot in the starting lineup, going on to form formidable partnerships over the next 4 years in the centers with players like Will Chambers, Brenko Lee & later Reimis Smith.

The highlight of his club career came in 2020 when the Storm won the NRL Premiership, with Olam playing a crucial role in their title-winning campaign. His fearless tackles, strong carries, and ability to inspire teammates made him a fan

favorite, not just in Melbourne but across the rugby league world. He went on to dominate in his position the following season in the NRL, picking up the 2021 NRL Dally M Medal for Centre of The Year.

### **Representing Papua New Guinea**

While Olam's success in the NRL is significant, his role as a representative of PNG holds even greater weight. He has proudly worn the Kumuls jersey in international competition, helping to raise the profile of PNG rugby league on the global stage. For a country where rugby league is the national sport, Olam's achievements provide an enormous source of pride and inspiration.

One of the highlights of his international career was the Kumuls' 28-10 victory over the touring Great Britain Lions in Port Moresby on November 16, 2019. This was the first time in 23 years that a Great Britain Lions team had toured and the first

Justin Olam with the ball on attack for PNG.  
Source:PNG Kumuls



time PNG had beaten them in a Test Match. Olam scored a try in that famous win along with another PNG NRL legend, Alex Johnston.

### **Legacy and inspiration**

Olam's inspirational personality is summed up nicely in a quote from an interview he gave to the Melbourne Storm Official Website in 2020:

"I just want to do my best for my team and my country. Every time I step on the field, I carry the hopes of Papua New Guinea with me."

Finally forced into a Medical Retirement in 2023, through injury while contracted to NRL team Wests Tigers, Olam left the game of rugby league

and aspiring PNG athletes a powerful legacy worth emulating.

Justin Olam's journey, from the highlands of PNG to NRL glory, highlights the power of perseverance and the importance of pathways for Pacific Island athletes. He has shown that with talent, hard work, and belief, players from remote regions can compete at the very highest level.

For Papua New Guinea, Olam is not only a rugby league star but also a cultural icon. His career continues to inspire the next generation to dream big, proving that heroes can rise from even the most modest beginnings.

# Golden Jubilee Message from ICER **ICER Health - Wantok Telehealth**

By Dr Issac Rami, ICER Limited



**F**ifty years ago, Papua New Guinea raised its flag of freedom, declaring to the world that we are strong, proud, and united. Today, as we celebrate our Golden Jubilee, we honor that journey while looking boldly to the future.

The next 50 years call for innovation and inclusion, where no Papua New Guinean is left behind in healthcare. At ICER Health – Wantok Telehealth, we are making this vision a reality.

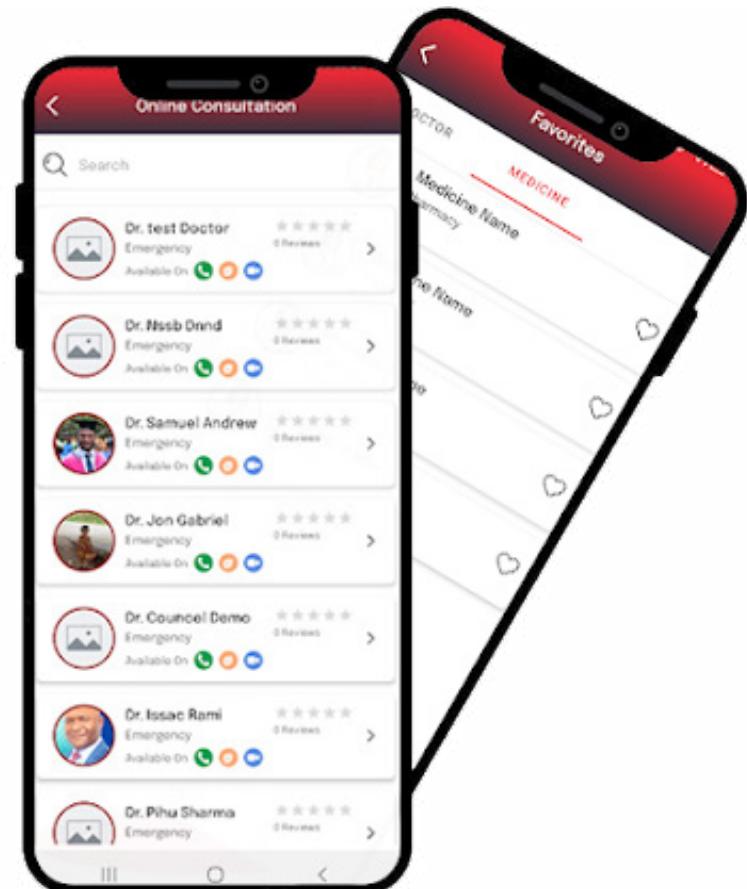
As PNG's first integrated digital health platform, we connect patients to doctors, specialists, pharmacies, laboratories, imaging (radiology) and ambulance services - anytime, anywhere.

From cities to the most remote villages, we are bridging gaps with quality, affordable, and patient-centered care, grounded in the spirit of Wantok – friendship, kindness, and community.

This Golden Jubilee is not only a celebration of our past, but a promise for our future.

Together, we redefine healthcare for the next 50 years.

Your Health, In Your Hands!



# Roots of Change The Farmers and Settlers Association's legacy in nation building



President of HFSA, Wilson Orlegge Thompson at the District Rubber Forum, Upulima Abau District, Central Province of PNG.  
Source: HFSA

## From colonial coffee to political clout: The story of the HFSA and PNG's Agricultural Evolution

In the misty Highlands of Papua New Guinea, long before independence painted the nation with promise, a quiet revolution began, not in Parliament, but in plantations, workshops, and dusty rural roads. The Farmers and Settlers Association Inc. (HFSA), founded in 1953 by legendary pioneers like Jim Leahy and Jim Taylor, would go on to become a powerful force in shaping the economic and political landscape of PNG.

Now over 70 years on, the HFSA's contribution reads like a blueprint for nation-building: agriculture, industry, political representation, and cultural preservation, all driven by grassroots determination.

## Colonial seeds: The Agricultural Beginnings

The roots of HFSA stretch back to colonial trials and errors. While German New Guinea developed plantations with some success, Papua's agricultural efforts lagged until after World War

I, when crops like rubber, copra, and tobacco gained traction.

During WWII, quinine trials against malaria and coffee experiments at Aiyura signaled a new approach. Post-war, prominent figures began leasing land in the Highlands to trial crops, most notably coffee. Jim Leahy's Erinvale Plantation proved that coffee could thrive, and a wave of settlers followed suit.

By 1953, these early adopters formed what would become HFSA, uniting planters, graziers, and rural entrepreneurs under a single banner for agricultural advocacy and development.

### **Voice of the rural heartland**

HFSA quickly became a powerful industry body. With branches across the Highlands, Morobe, and Madang, and a diverse membership of both

expatriates and nationals, including notable figures like Sir Sinake Giregire, Akunai Rovelie, and Bono Azanifa, HFSA was incorporated in 1971, becoming one of PNG's earliest formally registered associations.

Its advocacy led to the establishment of coffee boards, direct export channels, and policy reform. The association also shaped the Coffee Industry Corporation and played a major role in the fight against coffee rust by supporting research and development institutions.

But coffee was just the start. HFSA was instrumental in promoting crops like tea, peanuts, passionfruit, and rubber, while pushing for rural development schemes that transformed agriculture into a viable livelihood for thousands of Papua New Guineans.



Black Coffee Beans.

Source: Pexels/Mali Maeder



Tea Leaves.  
Source Pexels/Min An



Peanuts at Kokopo Market, East New Britain.  
Source: FB/Amazing PNG.

### **Beyond farming: culture, community and commerce**

From the beginning, HFSA understood that agriculture was more than crops, it was culture, identity, and community. In 1956, it hosted the first Highlands Show (today the Goroka Show), a spectacle of agriculture and traditional culture that continues to this day. The HFSA also established the JK McCarthy Museum and EH Cultural Centre, training locals in weaving, pottery, and traditional crafts. These spaces became cultural landmarks, preserving heritage while building rural economies.

Business ventures followed. Through subsidiaries like the Highlands Commodity Exchange Ltd (HCE), Farmset Ltd, and Henene Transport, HFSA helped farmers access markets, supplies, and logistics networks. Their efforts made commercial farming accessible to both expatriate settlers and local communities.

### **From plantations to parliament: HFSA's Political Impact**

As the economy grew, so did HFSA's political influence. Many of its members became parliamentarians and ministers, particularly through the United Party, later branching into the Country Party and National Party. Figures like Sir Sinake Giregire, Bono Azanifa, and Sir Silas Atopare were not just farmers, they were lawmakers.

The association took strong positions during the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) debates, advocating for rural-focused development and delayed independence until PNG was economically self-sufficient. They influenced key constitutional decisions and helped establish political platforms rooted in agriculture and sustainability.

### **Nation builders in boots and broad Hats**

HFSA's influence extended beyond plantations and parliament. It championed the Agriculture Settlement Scheme (ASS), empowering locals

to access land, credit, and training—setting the groundwork for a national farming class.

It hosted national shows, welcomed dignitaries including Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Charles, and several Prime Ministers, and maintained representation in powerful bodies like the APEC Business Advisory Council, the National Research Institute, and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers.

### A legacy still growing

Today, HFSA continues to serve as a voice for PNG's rural sector, organizing workshops, advocating for policy reforms, and championing sustainable growth. Its branches now span Eastern Highlands, Jiwaka, Morobe, Central, Gulf, and beyond, covering industries from beekeeping to oil palm.

The story of HFSA is more than the history of a farmers' association, it is the story of Papua New

Guinea's development, from colonial plantations to independent nationhood. With boots in the soil and a vision for the future, the HFSA remains a powerful symbol of what grassroots leadership can achieve.

### Sidebar: A glimpse at HFSA's impact

- Founded: 1953, incorporated 1971
- First Indigenous Member: Sir Sinake Giregire (1958)
- Major Agricultural Shows: Goroka, Wau, Mt. Hagen, Morobe
- Key Cultural Institutions: JK McCarthy Museum, EH Cultural Centre
- Business Ventures: Farmset Ltd, Highlands Commodity Exchange, Henene Transport
- Political Leaders: Sir Sinake Giregire, Bono Azanifa, Sir Silas Atopare
- Crops Championed: Coffee, tea, rubber, peanuts, passionfruit, livestock
- Current Reach: Active across Highlands, Momase, Southern Region



Classic Goroka show tour.

Source: Journey International

# WaterAid Papua New Guinea is a Non-Government Organization with One Goal:

# To change lives through water

## **PNG Country Strategy 2023-2028**

**Aim 1:** Universal Access – all people have access to reliable, resilient, and inclusive WaSH services in communities, health facilities and schools.

**Aim 2:** WaSH in Public Health – improved public health through better hygiene, sanitation, and infection prevention control.

**Aim 3:** GEDSI in WaSH – more women, girls, and people with disabilities are empowered with equitable WaSH.

**Aim 4:** Climate Resilient WaSH – increased resilience in WaSH services and systems to the impacts of Climate Change.

\*GEDSI – Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion.

## **Three water projects commissioned in East Sepik Province**

Three water projects were recently completed and commissioned for use in East Sepik Province in July.

Each project covers the three focus areas of WaterAid PNG's water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) activities, and despite challenges and setbacks around social issues, safety, and procurement of materials, all three projects were completed and officially handed over to the beneficiaries.

1. **WaSH in Community** – Tarawai Island now receives reliable water supply from an aquifer 30m underground, pumped with solar power into a 9,000L storage tank 4m above ground level and gravity-fed to communal taps servicing almost 500 islanders. Behavioral change advocacy on Community -Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) resulted in better toilet construction and improved hygiene practices. Donor: Water for Women Fund, under Australian DFAT.
2. **WaSH in Schools** – St Joseph's Primary School, Mushu Island, now has a rainwater harvesting system (2x 9000L tanks) with exclusive male & female sanitation facilities (flush & urinal for boys, flush and menstrual hygiene unit for girls). Donor: The Coca Cola Foundation.
3. **WaSH in Healthcare Facilities** – Dagua healthcare facility now has a reliable solar powered bore water supply system, refurbished sanitation facilities for men and women, and improved hygiene. Donor: Water for Women through Australian DFAT.

Many thanks to all partners and stakeholders involved in delivering these projects, notably Wewak District WaSH Coordination Body, our Donors, contractors, and the communities. Together we did it. Together we can deliver more.



Commissioning the water project on Tarawai Is., L-R: Damien Wabi, Executive Officer for Wewak MP; Donald Kanini, Snr Programs Manager WaterAid; Jeffery Yawi, D/Provincial Administrator Economic Services, ESP Administration; Reuben Maiwax, D/Director Public Health, District Affairs, ESP Health Authority



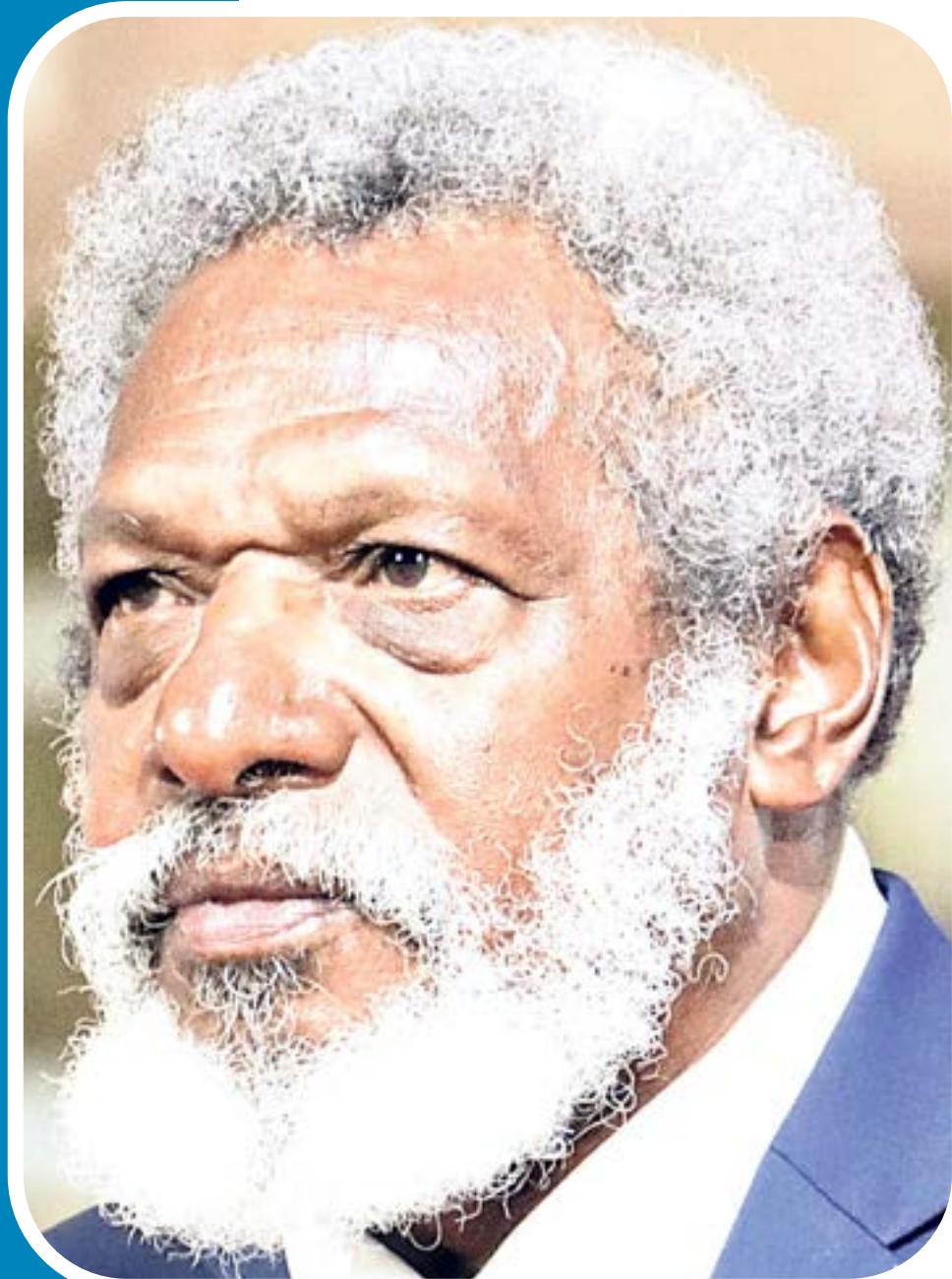
Through collaboration and partnership, the island community of Tarawai now has a reliable climate-resilient water supply.

A quiet leader's journey:

# The rise of Hon. Job Pomat

From village roots  
to the Speaker's  
chair

“That night,  
I made up my  
mind to one  
day contest  
the national  
election.”



**A**s a young boy, Hon. Job Pomat, once watched his father campaign tirelessly for a political seat he would never win. He would grow up to not only win that seat but to ascend to one of the highest political offices in Papua New Guinea: Speaker of the National Parliament.

From humble beginnings in the remote village of Rossun, Hon. Job Pomat's story is one of quiet resolve, unwavering faith, and someone who has become a leader, to a community, and to a country in search of stability and voice.

### **The father's footsteps**

Hon. Job Pomat was born into a family deeply rooted in community service. His father, Peter Pomat, was a respected village chief and a devout Seventh-day Adventist missionary. Peter Pomat was a man of vision and principle, making several unsuccessful bids for political office during PNG's early post-colonial years. Job, the eldest son, watched these campaigns unfold from the sidelines. When his father finally stepped away from politics, Job felt a calling to fulfil a mission that remained unfinished.

Speaking to The National, Hon. Pomat highlighted, "When my Dad lost for the third time in 1972, he made a feast for his supporters and informed them that he would no longer be running for elections. I was only 12 then. That night, I made up my mind to one day contest the national election".

### **Faith and family**

A devoted Seventh-day Adventist, Hon. Pomat's faith is a quiet but steady influence on his political demeanor. He and his wife are proud parents of five children.

### **From technician to parliamentarian**

Hon. Job Pomat's journey was neither immediate nor predictable. After leaving school early, he then worked as a technician, later entering local government in Manus where he served two terms,

once as Speaker of the Manus Provincial Assembly, and then as Deputy Governor. In 2007, Hon. Pomat stepped into national politics, winning the Manus Open seat under the People's National Congress (PNC) banner. He quickly rose through the ranks, holding various ministerial portfolios, including Inter-Government Relations and Fisheries. But politics is never linear in PNG. He lost his seat in 2012, only to reclaim it five years later. That comeback would change his life.

### **Steward of the Sea: Hon. Job Pomat's time as Fisheries Minister**

During his time as Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources, Hon. Pomat under the People's National Congress-led government. In this role, he oversaw one of Papua New Guinea's most economically and environmentally strategic sectors: the fisheries industry, a vital lifeline for coastal livelihoods and a multibillion-kina contributor to the national economy.

For an islander from Manus Province, the sea was not just a resource, it was a heritage. Hon. Pomat brought this understanding to the Ministry, advocating not only for economic growth, but for marine stewardship, local empowerment, and regional sovereignty in the face of increasing foreign exploitation.

### **A Speaker is chosen**

In August 2017, following the general election, Hon. Job Pomat was elected Speaker of the 10th National Parliament. It was a surprise to many, Hon. Pomat was quiet, rarely controversial, and not known for party grandstanding. But it was perhaps those very traits, his neutrality, discipline, and a reputation for humility that made him the right man for the job.

During his address as Speaker of 10th National Parliament, He made his intentions clear from day one: "Whether you voted for me or not, I will serve all members with fairness." It reflected his



Speaker of Parliament, Hon Job Pomat with Speaker of the House of Representatives, Puan Maharani, Indonesia.  
Source: Dok DPR

firm commitment to impartiality and upholding the integrity of the Speaker's office. Hon. Pomat emphasized that the democratic process through which he was elected highlighted the strength of Papua New Guinea's democracy, and he expressed a strong determination to serve all members fairly throughout his tenure.

He was re-elected unopposed as Speaker in 2022, under the Pangu Party, and has since remained a consistent voice in PNG's political scene.

#### **A steward of tradition**

Since becoming Speaker, Hon. Pomat has made efforts to restore the dignity of Parliament,



literally. In a symbolic act shortly after taking office, he reinstated traditional totems and cultural motifs. It was more than décor; it was a statement about national identity.

He also launched the Speaker's Investment Summit, drawing businesses, investors, and MPs together to discuss economic transformation.

Behind the scenes, Hon. Pomat is known for keeping a tight rein on parliamentary procedures, although he has faced criticism, he has made a principle stand on matters that are important in maintaining integrity and fairness.

### **Championing island and maritime provinces**

As a leader from Manus Province, one of PNG's most remote maritime regions, Hon. Pomat has used his national platform to speak out on issues often overlooked. He has consistently advocated for improved coastal infrastructure, shipping services, and inter-island transport.

He has also raised the alarm on climate change impacts in low-lying islands, warning of rising sea levels, food insecurity, and displacement already affecting smaller island communities.

### **Legacy of quiet power**

Hon. Job Pomat was someone who represents a different kind of leadership, one grounded in discipline, humility, and consistency. He is a politician who rarely seeks the spotlight, yet wields considerable institutional power. His long-standing commitment to procedural fairness and quiet diplomacy.

As PNG's democracy matures and navigates new challenges, from economic inequality to decentralization and climate change, Hon. Pomat's legacy may ultimately be defined not by any single policy or speech, but by the stability and continuity he brought to one of the most powerful institutions in the country: the National Parliament.

### **A promise kept**

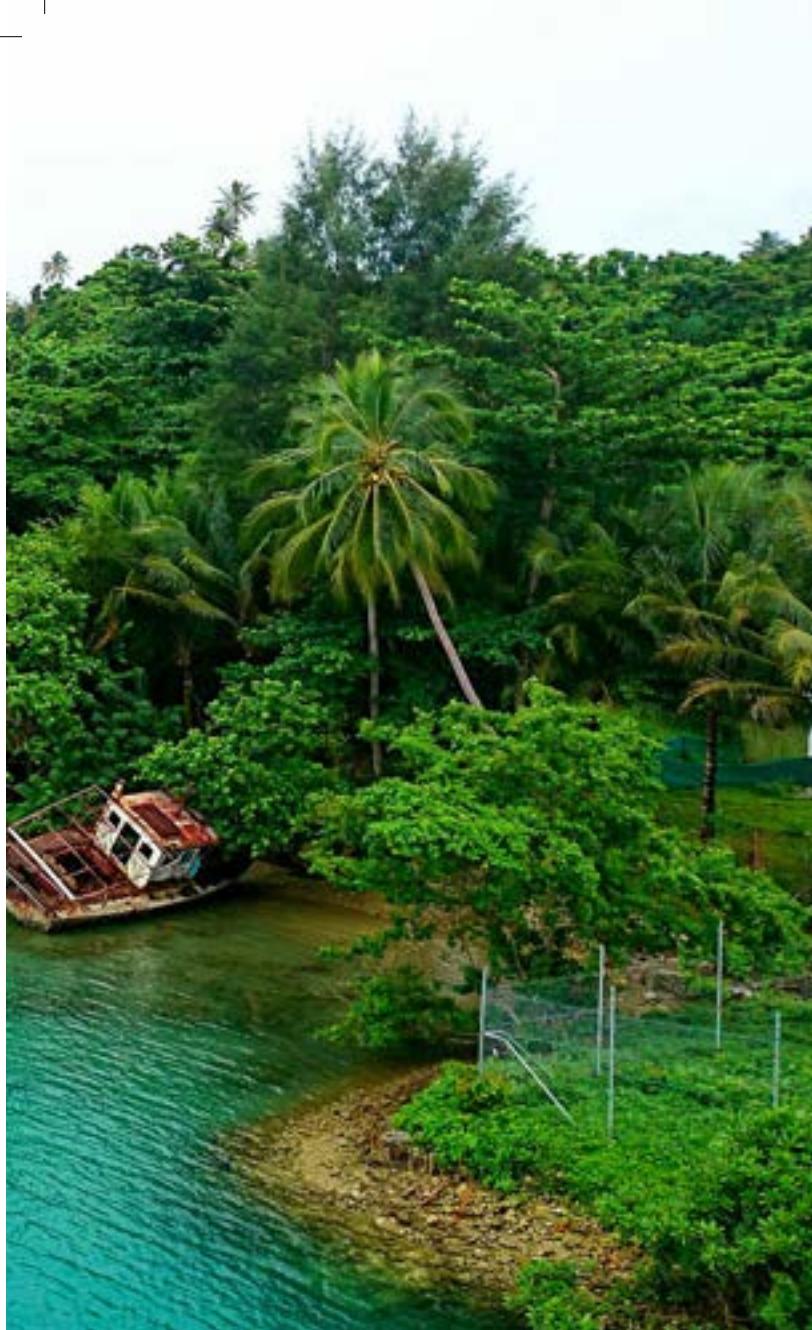
For all his titles and accolades, including being appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) in 2019, Hon. Job Pomat remains, in many ways, the same boy from Rossun who wanted to honor his father's legacy. He is not

A beautiful view of Manus Island, the maritime province where Hon. Pomat originates from.  
Picture: Manus Island. Source: Flickr/Hadi Zaher



Hon. Job Pomat.

Photo: Facebook / Office of the Speaker



“ Whether you voted for me or not, I will serve all members with fairness. ”

because this will definitely be my last general election ”.

He has increasingly turned his attention to youth development, education, and succession planning, stating to the radio station: “I’ve seen a lot of young man and woman participate this GE22, but we must have succession plans in order to prepare the next man /woman to take over the position”.

PNG’s most charismatic politician. He does not dominate headlines. But he presides, steadily, firmly, with the kind of restraint that is rare in today’s politics. And sometimes, that’s exactly what a country needs.

### **Looking ahead**

Hon. Job Pomat’s statements suggest a shift in focus, from legislating to legacy-building. He has been speaking publicly about mentoring his successor, an indication that his current term will be his last. Speaking at a radio show, “For those young men and women who have raised their hands to stand, if you are serious about becoming the next leader of Manus, then I am extending an invitation to you to come and work with me,

### **SIDE BAR: Quick Facts**

- Full Name: Hon. Job Pomat, CMG
- Electorate: Manus Open
- Party: Pangu Party (formerly PNC)
- Religion: Seventh-day Adventist
- Profession before politics: Technician, Provincial Politician
- Family: Married, father of 5
- First elected to Parliament: 2007
- Speaker of Parliament: 2017–present



# The Tree Kangaroo

## Papua New Guinea's Elusive Forest Acrobat

Tree - Kangaroo  
Source: Mongabay

High in the misty canopies of Papua New Guinea's mountainous rainforests lives one of the world's most unique and elusive creatures, the tree kangaroo. Unlike their ground-dwelling Australian relatives, these extraordinary marsupials have adapted to life in the trees, navigating branches with surprising agility and grace.

Papua New Guinea is home to several species of tree kangaroos, including the Goodfellow's tree kangaroo and the critically endangered Tenkile. These animals are perfectly suited for their arboreal habitat, with powerful forelimbs, long tails for balance, and padded feet that help them grip slippery branches. Despite their bulky appearance, tree kangaroos are capable climbers and can leap up to 30 feet from tree to tree.

These shy marsupials are primarily herbivores, feeding on leaves, fruits, and flowers. They play a crucial role in the ecosystem by dispersing seeds and helping to maintain the health of the forest.

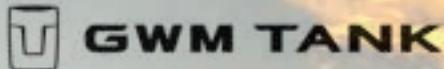
However, their survival is under threat. Habitat loss due to logging and agricultural expansion, combined with hunting pressures, has led to significant population declines in recent decades.

Efforts to conserve tree kangaroos have gained momentum, thanks in part to local community-based initiatives and international support. The Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program (TKCP), based in Papua New Guinea, works with indigenous landowners to protect vital habitat while promoting sustainable livelihoods. These programs emphasize the importance of preserving not just a single species, but an entire ecosystem.

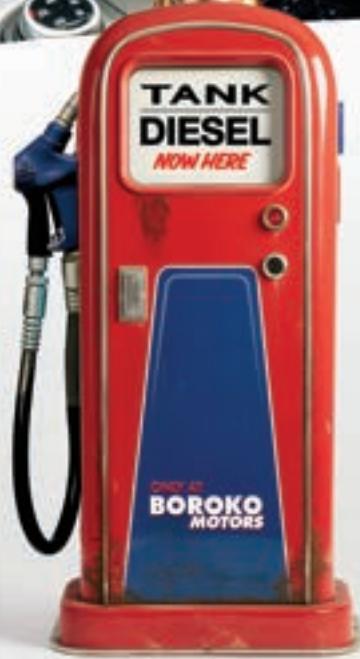
Tree kangaroos remain a symbol of the rich biodiversity found in Papua New Guinea, a reminder of nature's creativity and resilience. Protecting them is not just about saving a rare animal, but about ensuring the future of the forests they call home.



Delivering WaSH in  
**Papua New Guinea**  
Together



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