

COOK ISLANDS HERALD

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5 7 20 30 31 39 SUPP: 9 22

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Visit to the Cook Islands by His Excellency Mr. WANG Lutong

The Chinese Ambassador designate to the Cook Islands, His Excellency Mr. Wang Lutong, is visiting the Cook Islands from 24 – 29 November 2013.

The Ambassador will present his credentials to the Queens Representative as Ambassador for the People's Republic of China to the Cook Islands resident in New Zealand, at the Government House today [Wednesday 27th November 2013].

Ambassador Wang replaces Ambassador Xu Jianguo who to his credit made significant inroads to the deepening of relations between the Cook Islands and the Peoples Republic of China.

Ambassador Wang will continue to be part of facilitating various projects in the Cook Islands including Te Mato Vai water project for the Cook Islands, and more recently, progressing projects under the Cook Islands - People's Republic

of China 3 Year Strategy For Utilisation of Grant Funding 2013/14 – 2015/16, outlining the utilisation of the grant funding for projects prioritised by the Cook Islands.

The Ambassador is currently based in Wellington and will be accompanied on this visit by his wife and young son, Political Counsellor, Mr Zhang Wei and Economic & Commercial Counsellor, Mr Zhang Fan.

During this visit the Ambassador will also meet with the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, as well as Government Officials to discuss matters of mutual interest and possible cooperation.

The Government of the Cook Islands appreciates the provision of grant funding from the Government of The People's Republic of China and hopes to continue strengthening relations with China through the Chinese Embassy in Wellington under Ambassador Wang's leadership.



Ambassador Wang Lutong and Tiki Matapo

Parliament to consider 12 Bills in next session

By Charles Pitt

John Tangi, Clerk of the House has advised that parliament will resume next Monday 2 December at 1pm and will sit all week and into part of the following week.

The House will consider 12 Bills as below;

1. Traditional Knowledge Bill
2. Copyright Bill
3. Financial Institutions (Provision of Customer Information) Bill
4. Banking Amendment Bill
5. Departure Tax Amendment Bill
6. The Financial Transactions Reporting Amendment Bill

7. The Foundations Amendment Bill

8. The International Companies Amendment Bill

9. The International Partnership Amendment Bill

10. The International Trusts Amendment Bill

11. The Limited Liability Companies Amendment Bill

12. Trustee Companies Bill

In addition, 15 papers will be presented, among them will be the Salary, Allowances and Other Entitlements of the Clerk of Parliament Order 2013, Serial No. 2013/13

Also, 13 papers will be presented for consideration.



Clerk of the House, John Tangi

The perils of being inside the glass house

By Wilkie Rasmussen, Leader of the Opposition

People with public profile are literally doomed. Indeed, for such people, the greater the profile, the higher the expectation of acceptable conduct is required of them. This is a golden rule of fame, notoriety and reputation. Pop and movie stars are all expected to behave in a certain way and many of them of course spend half of their time rebuking such expectations. When they do they get labeled as rebels. Politicians are not an exception to this rule. Of all publicly known personalities, they are the most scrutinized because of the duty they have to taxpayers and to voters. If they fail, they have been overcome by the perils of being in the glass house.

There is a metaphor of a King who regarded himself invincible that he did not listen or heed to the wishes and concerns of his people any more. He was so blinded that he thought walking around naked in his castle was acceptable but his people was mocking him instead. That's the theory of people in glass houses.

Our Prime Minister Mr Henry Puna needs to disclose to the public matters that are disconcerting to his party and to the nation. Rumours of his philandering behaviour and indiscretions are mounting up and if not addressed could embarrass him, his family and the nation. I am at pains to write this column because there

are boundaries to my scrutiny as Leader of the Opposition of my political nemesis, the Prime Minister. However I consider it my duty to seek answers from him in his capacity as PM, no matter how tough.

The length and breadth of the country, the hierarchies of people in Rarotonga and the Outer Islands and even the naïve of the households are murmuring, mocking, rolling their eyes at the volumes of the amorous adventures our top man, "the Boss" is involved in. For goodness sake, we could all be wrong here and forgive us all if that is the case but enlighten us and deny all of it. If not then, step down. That would be the logical thing to do and the most honourable.

A man in such a position such as his must exercise caution all the time, if not and by not, one becomes the initiator, that would amount to a serious breach of power and position. I scratch my head and wake up each day hoping that all of these rumours are just that, speculation and gossip. But as I have said sometimes ago, a law of nature says that where there is smoke, there is fire.

I know in journalism that there is a certain rule of not publishing the private affairs of politicians or high profile people with a view that it is no-one else's business. Indeed I know of one former New Zealand Prime Minister, who was married but was having an extra marital relationship with

a woman in his staff. They were left alone by the media until they chose to announce publicly their relationship; only then was it published by the media. So you can understand why the media here in the Cook Islands is coy about investigating and publishing such matters pertaining to our Prime Minister. Nevertheless if public interest in this is high, the media will be compelled to find information and disclose it to the public.

I also live in a glass house but at least I am very conscious of that fact and I know that the eyes of the people of the nation are on me following me everywhere. If I was just your ordinary bloke and has the propensity to be a Don Juan or Cassanova, that may go unnoticed and perhaps ignored by people as just being cheeky. But professing to hold such a mantle while sitting on the throne of the country may prove to one's



downfall. Many a King and Queen have lost their thrones and heads when their indiscretions were discovered and disclosed to the mass. This may yet be the fate of our Prime Minister unless he has the last trick in the book at his disposal.



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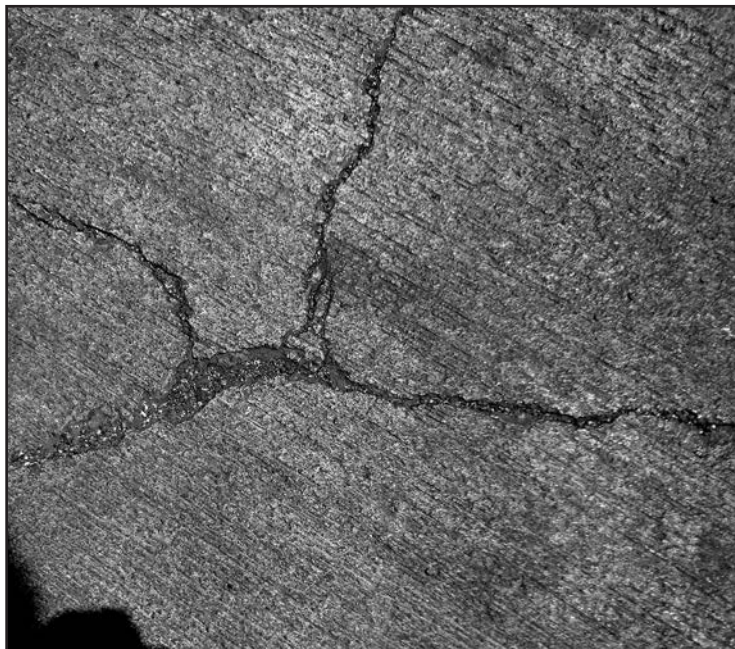
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- Use a torch to find your way around.
- Be prepared. Stay safe.

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Harbour development cracking up

Repairs may take millions of dollars to fix



Multi directional cracking indicates the seriousness of the surface deterioration.

Seven months after a fanfare grandiose opening on the 12 of April 2013 the redeveloped Avatiu Port is facing a potentially serious maintenance problem that could take millions of dollars to fix. Completed on time and under budget the worst case scenario for the Ports Authority is a repair bill in excess of the \$24.2 million it cost.

Potentially the Government is facing a catastrophic financial disaster if the initial evidence of damage is more than cosmetic. With another multimillion dollar project Te Mato Vai gearing up to start next year the Ports Authorities predicament is a nervous distraction. There are evolving lessons to be learnt from the Avatiu Port's living experience and these need to be applied in the context of TMV.

The growing concern is the superficial cracks in the concrete surface which began appearing one month after the port was recommissioned have increased and become deeper. In a media release after the cracks were first noticed, the Ports Authority CEO Bim Tou stated hair line cracking was a normal expectation and not a matter of great concern.

Tou must have had a change of mind because it is understood he has requested an engineering

report from the designers and project managers New Zealand Company Beca International Limited (BIL). Ports Authority's New Zealand based Board member, retired civil engineer Geoffrey Vazey is expected to take up the cracking concrete concerns with BIL in Auckland this week.

The hair line cracks have evolved into a lot more than being just that, they have the appearances of becoming fractures and that's serious enough for the Asia Development

foot containers. It is noticeable where the original concrete was not replaced there is no breaking up of the concrete.

The Apia Port in Samoa is a busy operation that has a concrete surface and it doesn't have visual evidence of the cracking deterioration that the Avatiu Port is experiencing. The cracking is both longitude and laterally thus ruling out the cracking is due to shrinkage because these are one directional. The cracking is not occurring in the expansion joints. This tends to point to being a

too much steel, the water and cement ratio may have been distorted. The curing process may have been faulty; there is also the possibility of it because of sedimentation. The cement grade may have been incompatible with our tropical environment, or it could be caused by a combination of these factors.

Whatever is causing the cracking which is continuing to get worse is a worry that needs to be addressed immediately and Crown Law needs to start examining the contract for liability clauses. The concrete's deterioration has the potential to cost millions of dollars to fix the longer the problem is left to evolve.

Any member of the public who has concerns should simply go to the wharf and take a look for themselves.

In May 2017 the Government commences the repayment of the ADB loan at a staggering \$US95,000 per month. Prior to the redevelopment of the Avatiu Port the shipping companies with the support of local importers were lobbying the Government to undertake the redevelopment claiming it would reduce the freight costs by 30%. Sadly that did not eventuate, the freight rates have actually increased. -George Pitt

Crown Law needs to start examining the contract for liability clauses.

Bank (ADB) the funding agency to conduct their own independent engineering inspection. The area has been mapped into segments and between 440 and 450 cracks have been identified and recorded.

For a Port that isn't busy by international standards or used by multiple heavy machinery the cracking can hardly be called normal. The bigger cracking is developing on the track where the fork hoist drives when unloading and placing the 40

structural failure which is the worst news possible for the designers and McDowell's the contractors.

Despite BIL having no history in the specialized discipline of tropical coastal harbor construction there was no peer review on the design. In addition to that, the contract supervisor was a graduate with limited experience.

Several factors may be contributing to the deterioration of the concrete surface, the steel to concrete ratio may be incorrect especially if there is

Creeping Federalism will pen in free ranging MPs

The inevitable rise of the Bureaucracy

By Charles Pitt

In New Zealand, civil servants run the country. That's because MPs in NZ are locked into systems which restrict their freedom.

In the Cook Islands, freewheeling, free ranging MPs have long been able to pick up the phone and demand funding and work to be carried out at the drop of a hat.

That's all about to change if the Ministry of Finance gets its way and with the blessing of a Minister worried about the loose change.

Cabinet was used to approving yearly budgets with pet, constituency wish-list items able to be deferred until the following year. The problem then faced by MFEM, was, where to get the money to finance this wish-list. The POBOC (Payments On Behalf Of the Crown) list was growing faster than Jack's Beanstalk.

Now, with a move to three yearly budgets, there is the potential to "lock in" government spending. Any new policy or items will then have to be justified, or funding sources found or a cost benefit exercise carried out.

Amending the legislation to provide for 3 year budgets will potentially curb any "spur of the moment" projects or impetuosity on the part of MP's.

Cabinet can still consider any new policy or spending provided it can be justified and funding is available.

New policy or spending may also be considered against NSDP (National Sustainable Development Plan) priorities.

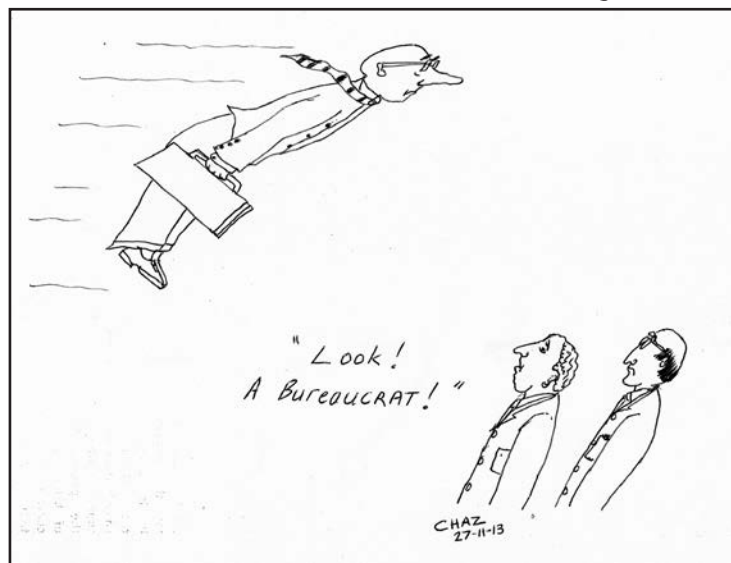
What does this mean for MPs?

Firstly, implementation of such a framework would curb freewheeling, free ranging MPs. It would ease pressure on a Cabinet that may be inundated by MPs with dubious funding requests for questionable projects.

The downside for Cabinet may be the difficulty in implementing new policy, implementing items promised under an election manifesto and implementing changes to approved items.

Put simply, the power and authority of Cabinet could be diminished.

Should Cabinet however, agree to run with a new framework, a further change will need to be adopted to assist Cabinet in



navigating the new system.

That change will be to create a new small unit independent of MFEM, called, "The Treasury".

MFEM will go back to being headed by a chartered accountant and will be responsible for overseeing, controlling and accounting for funding under the Budget.

Treasury will scrutinize all spending proposals submitted to Cabinet (including the Budget). It will be responsible for wide ranging Policy advice to government on all matters related to finance. Treasury will carry out the cost/benefit

exercises, it will determine possible funding options and it will conduct any research, analysis, monitoring and evaluation required. Treasury research and analysis may even determine the future economic direction of this country.

Treasury will provide Cabinet with robust policy advice independent of MFEM.

The Treasury will be headed by an economist.

Should the above changes take place, it is not known if current Finance Secretary Richard Neves (an economist) would apply to head the Treasury.

\$5 CAPPED CALLING

UP TO AN HOUR FOR NATIONAL
LANDLINE TO LANDLINE - ISLAND TO ISLAND

Our Frontpage model Improving teacher practice through action research



Our frontpage model this week is 20 year old Jess Kelly, she is the great great niece of Andy Thompson and is currently in New Zealand, studying. Check out our website www.ciherald.co.ck and facebook page: www.facebook.com/ciherald



On the afternoon of Thursday 28 November teachers involved in researching an aspect of their practice will present their findings to the education community.

This is a continuation of the 'Teachers as Researchers' initiative developed by the Ministry of Education in 2012. The initiative is based on the understanding that teachers who take part in action research, initiated and carried out by themselves, will become more engaged in their teaching practice. The purpose is for teachers to think critically about what they do in the classroom and look into ways of improving outcomes for students. It is also about developing a process to investigate an issue and coming up with solutions to overcome these issues. Action research has been around for a long time and is a straightforward and practical approach to researching that works well in a classroom setting.

It typically involves the researcher identifying an issue, gathering data that highlights the issue, planning an intervention, gathering data on the effects of the intervention and then critically evaluating the effects on teaching and student learning. Having the teacher take ownership of the research ensures it is relevant and they are exploring areas that are important to them and their students. This results in teachers becoming more effective at what they care most about – their teaching and the development of their students. The final step in the process is having the researcher share the findings of their research with their peers and the community.

This year 14 teachers, including Early Childhood Education teachers, Primary and Secondary School teachers and Ministry of Education staff, will present their findings. The research topics include language use and learning stories in early childhood education, mathematics teaching in primary schools and the use of pastoral periods in secondary schools. Korero, the research journal for Cook Islands educators, will also be launched during the presentations. This journal contains the research that teachers carried out in 2013.

The education community and public are invited to attend these presentations.

They will take place on Thursday 28 November, from 3 – 5pm, in the Ministry of Education Conference room.



Cook Islands Herald goes QR

The Cook Islands Herald now has a QR (Quick Response) code.

Simply scan this code into your Iphone or Smartphone and it will automatically take you to the Herald Website in your phone's internet browser.

Purse seine consultations on Mauke completed

Media release - Tension on Mauke Island concerning purse seine fishing has been lifted following a meeting with the public and the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) on Thursday last week.

Held at the church hall the meeting was well attended by around 50 persons and chaired by the Mauke Island Council.

The MMR secretary Ben Ponia explained the Ministry's proposal to seek a 30,000 tonne quota for the Cook Islands from the Pacific's abundant skipjack tuna resource and the proposed EU partnership.

"It is difficult to digest all the issues by piecemeal but when the public see the bigger picture then there is greater appreciation of what the MMR is trying to achieve" says Ponia.

"Me mako te akatertereanga ku puapinga teia akakoroanga. E tai tuanga toe koia oki ko te akaoki akaou I te au manako ki te au tapere no te au tangata tei kore I tae mai te uipaanga", says Island Council member Mr Vaine Aberahama

Mauke Policeman Mr Tangata Ateriano said that people were initially concerned that fish could be depleted. "But now we know that purse seine fishing can be selective and fish species like skipjack breeds fast and at a young age" he says.

The industrial scale approach of purse seine fishing worries conservationists and led to local environmentalists June and Andrew Hosking to launch a petition on the island to ban purse seine fishing.

The Hosking's are concerned that industrial approaches to fishing drives down the price of fish and lower its conservation value. The petition also flags concerns highlighted by regional scientists and MMR about the quantity of by-catch of juvenile bigeye tuna being caught around fish aggregate devices (FADs).

June has some specific concerns about the EU purse seiners and whether they will swim the by-catch out of the



Mauke residents attending the MMR purse seine consultation

purse seine net compared to the practices highlighted by MMR.

"Some locals are concerned that there are no fish and this needs to be addressed. The boys believe the fishing boats are taking their fish", she adds.

Eight Pacific Island countries known by their treaty name "PNA" account for the bulk of the 1.5 million skipjack caught in the Pacific. In return the PNA countries receive hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue.

MMR believes the skipjack

in the Cook Islands EEZ is as abundant as the PNA countries but the fishery is not being used. 3,800 tonnes was caught in 2013 worth around one million dollars of revenue to government. According to MMR its proposed 30,000 quota would generate at least \$9 million dollars a year.

"We are not doing enough to get our fair share from this resource", says Ponia.

Concern for the bigeye tuna has led the Tuna Commission to propose a cap on purse

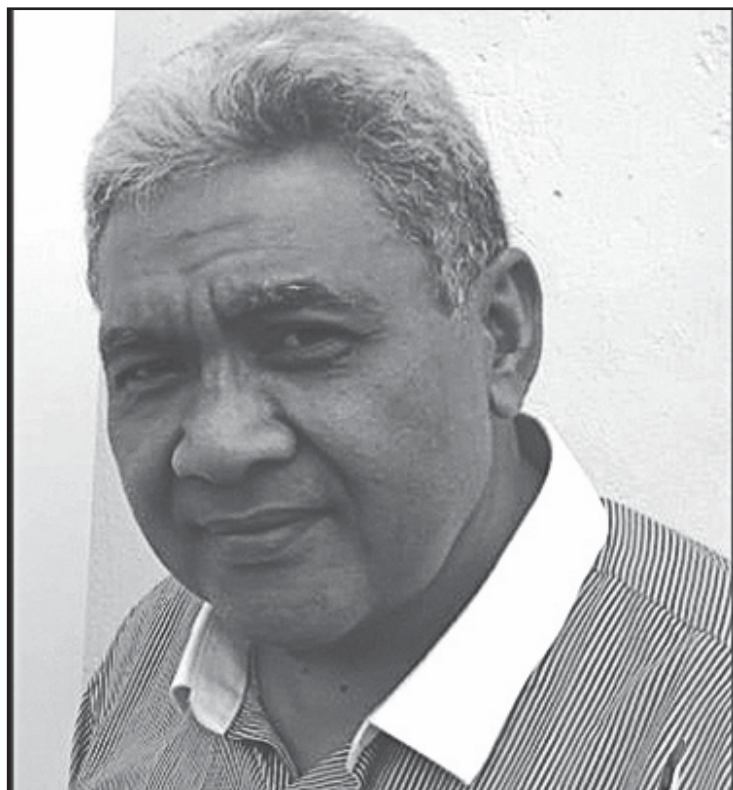
seining at the next governing session to be held in Cairns next month in December. The proposal will award most of the quota to PNA countries, raising concerns from MMR that the Cook Islands future rights will be marginalised.

"If we don't use this opportunity we lose it. Now we understand the situation, our resources have to be utilised to benefit the people of the Cook Islands" says Mauke Executive Officer, Mr Taukea Rau.



MMR secretary Ponia explaining the purse seine fishery on Mauke Island

Te Mato Vai Project facing multi pronged backlash *Part 1*



Project Manager Latu Kupa on nearly \$500,000



Publicist Jaewynn McKay on more than \$350,000

Don't expect the multimillion dollar Te Mato Vai infrastructure upgrade project to be completed let alone started on time. The project's steering committee and the management company Kupa Engineering and Water Consult Limited (KEW) will first have to manage a resistant public comprised of several common interest groups with their own issues of concern.

Delays cost money and with little information to offer for public consumption, progress will be snail paced if any is viable. While any current information concerning the Master Plan is a closely guarded secret most likely because the detail is yet to be finalized KEW has launched an introductory media marketing exercise that sets out to promote the benefits of the end product, clean and treated water that is drinkable from the tap.

KEW's highly paid publicist Jaewynn McKay (over \$115,000 per year) has her work cut out for her considering she lacks local connectivity and accumulated

years of networking among the nation's four influencing sectors and unrestricted media accessibility. For Cook Islanders it's who you know rather than what you know and have achieved elsewhere that makes the difference. McKay's monumental mission is to sell the project to an increasingly skeptical public.

McKay claims a presentation for the consultations will be ready by next week along with a schedule for the public meetings. Because details of the master plan are still a closely guarded secret and weeks from being completed just what can we expect to be presented? We can expect a marketing presentation of the TMV features, compliance psychology laced with subconscious subliminal benefits will no doubt be involved in order to overturn public resistance.

The consultations will be lead by Minister of Infrastructure and Planning (MOIP) Minister Teariki Heather who very rarely or if at all makes public comments in English, so let's hope he has a

good interpreter or translator.

Each of these power groups will with certainty need to be convinced their different issues of concern are addressed beyond reasonable doubt. The delays will become months of delays that will need skillful negotiations that may satisfy one group but inflame another one. These delays and the interruptions during the work program if it gets started will drive the cost significantly beyond the current estimate of \$60 million.

Issues of resistance that will be raised by two groups, the natural resources guardians the House of Ariki /Kotanui traditional leaders and land owners will be diametrically different to those of the Chamber of Commerce and the business sector.

Issues of resistance have already been identified earlier this year and provided for those interested when the project's position of Communication's Co-coordinator was advertised. Environmentalists will gorge themselves on the feast of short comings the project will offer.

The delays incurred by the slow moving Environmental Impact Assessment will provide KEW with plenty of panadol moments of frustration. Projects of this magnitude come once in a life time and the environment forensic Don Dorrells of Rarotonga will seize the moment and relish the mental stimulus engaged in the challenge of dissecting and probing the information offered for public scrutiny.

Government has yet to justify why the Te Mato Vai project is the best or most cost efficient solution to Rarotonga's long term water management and conservation. The general public's embracing of the aims and objectives of Tourism and associated environment compatibilities took years of proactive awareness programs through the media and active people participation, a lesson seemingly overlooked by the powers to be concerning our water. Currently private company CITC have incorporated a 'Go Green' policy in their

continued on page 13

Colagate a big hit on Facebook

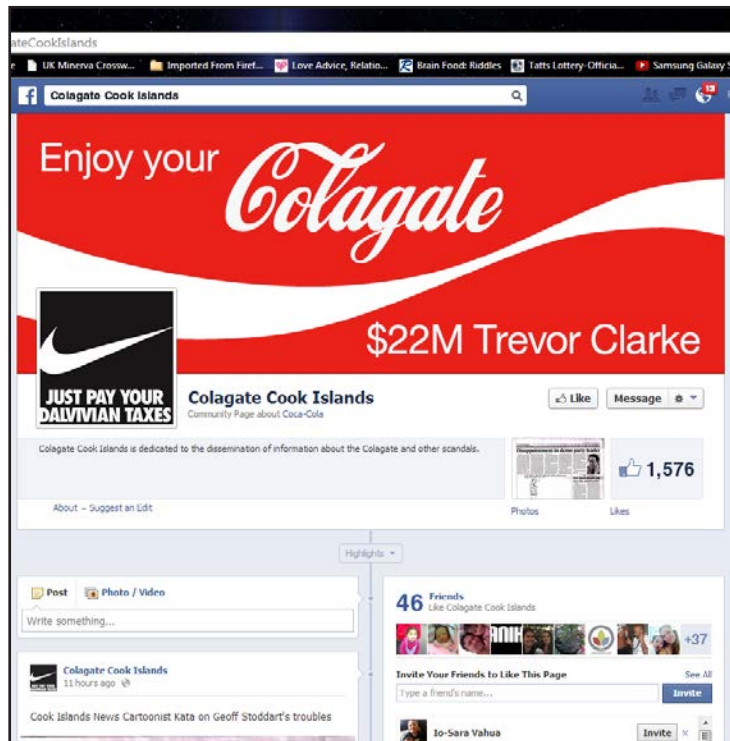
Cook Islanders, it seems, have quickly become fixated to social networking, with users spending hours every week on such services as Facebook and LinkedIn.

So does this mean that this is a dawn of a new era in information dissemination in the Cook Islands? It appears so.

It isn't surprising then that savvy Cook Islands politicians now have their own Facebook page and regularly practice "Facebookplomacy", one of the most active politicians is leader of the opposition Wilkie Rasmussen.

The social networking site COLAGATE Cook Islands on Facebook has had a total of 197,500 hits in the past 5 days according to some reports, confirming that new age technologies using social net working sites like Facebook are extremely popular with Cookies and their friends around the world.

Ever since Tata Crocombe's successful High Court Appeal was loaded onto the Colagate Facebook website the comments have been coming in thick and fast.



The very popular Colagate Cook Islands Facebook page

The power of social media should not be understated, as the Arab Spring showed.

Dictators and corrupt government officials met the brunt of anger from the citizens of these nations and the enveloping wave of protest took the the Arab nations

by storm, those fires are still burning today! This brought a whole new dimension to people power. People power with networked technology could over throw a government and bring a country to its knees. We are unable to print exactly what has been said on Colagate Cook

Islands but getting a Facebook account is the first thing you'll need before you are able to sign in.

Upon opening the page the first thing that jumps out at you is a banner with Colagate in the Coke Cola swirl with a caption below that saying..." Trevor Clarke \$22M"

Here is a snippet of some of the comments that we have been careful not to reprint verbatim. "F*&ked up Cook Islands government!"

"Stupidass nincompoops!!! Gudluck Mr Crocombe..."

"Good job Trevor Clarke... dats wat u get. No te angaanga crook oki. Congrats to u Tata." The mood on Facebook Colagate is certainly anti CITC and anti Trevor Clarke, with some real venom in some of the comments.

Its obvious that the website is designed to stir up the emotions with moral quotes from dead but famous people, and it even has links to recorded interviews from people like NZ First leader Winston Peters and investigative reporter Nicky Hagar.

For this old hag, finding the time to sign up to Facebook is something I'm still trying to come to terms with. - George Pitt

from page 12

television advertising as well as banners, posters, competitions and T shirts. Educating people by comparison is cost effective and more sustaining.

What a great awareness and educational opportunity was lost when we recently hosted a regional water conference. Local grass roots participation at least for some relative selected presentations could have been opened to the public instead of entry by registration and a \$50 fee which ensured local engagement was very minimal.

Te Mato Vai objector businessman Temu Okotai wants public consultation on alternative solutions or options mainly due to the expense of TMV. It is understood the Chamber of Commerce want the project deferred for at least six months till sufficient information is forth coming so people can make a qualified and an informed decision and alternatives are

explored.

The Democratic Party Opposition's approach is to engage the project in self funding financially manageable segments over a five year period including the resealing of the roads rather than committing the country to questionable debt servicing of a huge loan from the Peoples Republic of China. By under taking the project in segments the first completed segment becomes the learning vehicle of trial and error for the rest of the project. It also allows for the flexibility of installing different types of water collecting and storage methods.

Any hopes the project principals had of being exempt from the EIA process are zero. Any work carried out within 30 meters of the high water mark is legally subjected to an EIA.

At the moment a draft Master Plan is in hand and feedback isn't positive due to the absence of construction engineering details.

The Master plan is expected to be completed by the end of January 2014. Predictions are it will not include sufficient details required to get a comprehensive EIA report completed. The delays in processing the EIA will wilt away at KEW's profitability and add cost to the overall project.

A no frills upgrade was costed by ADB in 2008 at \$44 million then the \$60 million in 2012, now there is talk the current estimate is just over \$70 million. No one should be surprised at the eventual cost overrun driving the completed cost over the \$100 million mark. Te Mato Vai will become Rarotonga's version of Australia's Opera House, the initial budget of \$6 million ended up 14 years later being over \$200 million.

Minister of Finance Mark Brown begs to differ on any overrun to the already publicized \$60 million, it is understood he has made it crystal clear to Master Plan consultants AECOM New Zealand Limited to deliver a final master plan for \$60

million or less.

Those who have access to the draft Master Plan are unable to confirm the inclusion of a Risk Management Schedule that must be prepared and published for public consumption. Cherry picking information for public release is unacceptable; there must be full transparent disclosure especially of any cost overruns.

Driven by pen pushing Ministry of Finance and Management Secretary Richard Neves the Te Mato Vai project is becoming more and more evident it has the seeds of self destruction well imbedded. Neves autocratic overbearing approach under pinned by his lack of local protocols and sensitivities will only make it more difficult for KEW to manage the project at the coal face reducing much of their media and communication efforts to reactionary fire dousing and damage management activities. Part 2 next week.

- George Pitt

NES tree planting at Rutaki School



The National Environment Service held the last of this year's tree planting program with Rutaki School last Friday.

Around 10 students were selected to plant tamanu & mene-mene seedlings along the coastal area and falls in line with the National Environment Service's 2013 theme, 'Love Your Coast – To Tatou Pirianga Tai'.

The program which is being coordinated by the National Environment Service's Education Unit, headed by Senior Education Officer Matthew Rima. Rima says, "students were educated about the importance trees are to our coastal areas in which it helps to prevent coastal erosion."

Apia Rutaki Teacher, Miss Kylie Rawiri appreciated the NES initiative, and looks forward to working closely with the

government agency in 2014.

So far, three tree planting programs held been held this year with Titikaveka College, Rakei Toa students and Apia Rutaki.

The National Environment Service gives special thanks to the Ministry of Agriculture's William Wigmore and the Nursery Department for providing the seedlings for Apia Rutaki.



Budget Consultation Document 2014/15 Released

The Budget Consultation document 2014/15 has been released and is now available electronically on the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) Website and in hard copy from the MFEM Office. The document contains some basic facts to inform people on how to prepare for the 2014/15 Budget. The 2014/15 Budget intends to outline in detail every estimate of revenue and expenditure for the next three years out to 2016/17 enabling Ministries to improve their planning and improve coherence with the National Sustainable Development Plan.

The Minister of Finance along with the Financial Secretary would like to encourage the public to have their say into the budget process for 2014/15.

It is the Government's desire

to get more input into the budget process from across the community and welcome ideas from people across the country. This is aimed at the on-going development and prosperity of the Cook Islands.

It is in this sense of community consultation that the Government would like to take the opportunity to invite individuals, the business community, the church, non-Government organisations and other representatives of civil society across the Cook Islands to present a submission to the Government on the formulation of the 2014/15 Budget.

There is no set format to a submission, but there will be two stages in the submission process. Submissions can be brief or as long as the author desires, but we have provided some prompting questions below to

assist in forming submissions.

Stage 1: General sector input by 6 December 2013

What sectors do you feel need the most attention?

- Infrastructure (such as water, roads and harbours)
- Social (such as education, health and social services)
- Economic (such as tourism, fisheries, agriculture and economic development)
- Law and Order (police, customs and justice systems)
- Governance (public sector reform and political reform)

Within these sectors, what strategies do you feel need attention or are absent? Why?

Are there other areas you feel could contribute across the different sectors or other strategies the Government should be pursuing?

Stage 2: Specific initiatives by 6 January 2014

This will depend on your submission. For example:

- What strategies should the Ministry of Health invest more in to combat NCDs?
- What initiatives can Government do to improve transportation between the Pa Enua?
- How can Government improve its investment in the tourism industry?
- What programs should the Government invest in to improve public safety?

Please send your submissions via email to budgetinfo@cookislands.gov.ck, subject heading: Budget Consultation Document 2014/15 or Hand deliver to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, Treasury Office Avarua, Rarotonga.

Poetry

By Tiarn Brown

Everything Has A Reason

At one point in our lives, we have all come across goodbyes and regret
They are the things we do or the times we choose to remember or forget
We can't predict our future, or change our past,
But we can live in the present and make the good times last
When things go wrong they say it's best to just forgive and forget.
Sometimes we tend to make this as an opportunity to relive and regret
Even though sometimes it's what we cherish or what causes us pain
We need to learn that the sun will eventually come out after the rain
What I'm saying is that, we all have memories that'll always remain
Even though there are some moments, that drove us beyond insane
That even though laughs and tears have its reason
Remember that every smile has its own season
Over and over we continue to question
I guess goodbyes and regrets just have their own intention.



Tiarn Brown is a student at Nukutere College.

Scenes from the Tinomana Investiture



Scenes from the Tinomana Investiture



Minimum wage review panel

The Minister of Internal Affairs shall appoint a Minimum Wage Review Panel to conduct a review the current minimum wage rate in the Cook Islands.

Under the Employment Relations Act 2012, a review of the minimum wage must be conducted

on an annual basis. A Minimum Wage Review Panel will be formed to make recommendations to the Minister, who will ultimately make the final decision on any changes to the current rate.

Factors such as prevailing economic conditions, income distribution, protection for low income

earners, work Incentives, and any written submissions made by the public will be considered

when the panel conducts the review.

The review panel will consist of 5 members, a representative from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, an association of employers, an association of employees, and 1 other suitably qualified person.

The rate of minimum wage in the Cook Islands has not been reviewed or changed since 2006

and is currently set at \$5.00 per hour. The current minimum wage order is dated 1 July 2006.

-The Ministry of Internal Affairs

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Best Windows 8 Apps

Bing Translator

It's in Microsoft's best interests to get some good quality Windows 8 apps into the Store, and the free Bing Translator tool certainly fits that description.

As well as typing out your queries you can take a webcam shot of signs and documents for instant translations. 40 different languages are supported, including Spanish, French, German and... Klingon. The app also has an offline mode, enabling you to download language packs so you can get quick translations without an internet connection.

Comics

The Comixology mobile apps are joined by this impressive Windows 8 version called Comics, which syncs all of your digital comics to the Start screen, as well as enabling you to browse for and purchase new ones with a few mouse clicks or finger taps.

The useful guided view option, which automatically navigates from pane to pane rather than showing the whole page, is carried over from the mobile apps, making it much easier to work your way through the pages.

AutoDesk SketchBook Express

Get creative with this stripped-down free version of the full AutoDesk SketchBook, SketchBook Express. There are plenty of brushes and effects to play around with, and this being Windows 8 you can easily operate the app with a touchscreen as well as a keyboard and mouse.

The tutorial will get you up and running with the app's interface within a minute, and then it's down to your drawing and painting abilities. Make use of the symmetry effects and you can create some impressive abstract designs.

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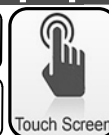
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Ripoti note Uipaanga Mataiti 2012-13

I roto ite Uipaanga Mataiti kua veevee aroa atu te au mema o te Putuputuanga Breast Cancer i tetai au mema maroiroi o te kopapa akaaere i tumaiana, i mua ake i te ikianga o tetai kopapa akaaere ou. Kote Peretitani no tetai 6 mataiti ko Dawn Baudinet, kare aia i tu akaou e pera katoa te Mou Moni ko Maara Toleafoa, te Tekeretere ko Karlene Pynenburg, e te mema rai ko Karen Tairea.

I te uipaanga i akanoo pakari ki runga i te au angaanga no te mataiti moni akaope i te ra 30 oTiunu 2013, kua anoano maata ia rai kia taikuia te aka manuia i rauka mai na roto i te au angaanga i tupu, kapiti mai te Zumba Fatburner Party Tarona e rave ua ia ana i te au mataiti e te Gala e te Okooko Tarona, i rave ia i te tuatau o te moni mataiti e i rauka mai ei mei tetai \$35,000 e ara atu.

Tetai atu au tuanga

mamaata i tupu i teia mataiti moni rai i topa koia, kua tae mai te matini akarakara U Mama (no Rarotonga nei) i roto ia Aperira. E tuanga aroa ua teia i ariki rekarekaia na te Breast Screen o New South Wales, Autireiria i oti i te tamoumou e kua akamata i te taangaanga ia i te tuatau tikai o te Porokaramu Mataiti no te Akaraka rai te U Mama i akamata i nga tuatau openga o Tiurai.

Kua rekareka te Putuputuanga kua rauka ia ratou te tutaki i te patete no tetai au vaine e itu no te Pa Enuai tae mai ki Rarotonga nei i roto ia Aukute 2012; na teia tuanga tauturu i rauka ei ia ratou kia akarakaraia ratou.

Ko te au mema ou o te CIBCF koia ko Jaewynn McKay (Peretitani), Liz Koteka (Tauturu Peretitani), Kelly Bullivant (Tekeretere) Alouise Kado (Mou Moni), e pera katoa te au mema o te kopapa akaaere koia

ko, Noeline Bridge, Patricia Tuara Demmke e Erika Kaczmarek. Kua iki akaou ia a Helen Henry, ei Patorona. E kua akameitaki a Helen i te au mema takere e te Peretitani no ta ratou aka tauturu e to ratou maroiroi no teia putuputuanga ngateitei. Kua akameitaki katoa a Helen i te iti-tangata Kuki Airani no ta ratou au tuanga tauturu, "e iti tangata aroa ua tatou e te oronga uarai note au akakoroanga puapinga. I teia au ra uanei, kua rauka ia tatou te oronga atu i ta tatou au tauturu note au tangata i ka to ratou au ngutuare i te ai, te iti tangata i te Pa Enua Philipino i paia ia e te uriaa pakari, e pera te Breast Cancer". Ia Jaewynn McKay i ikiia mai ei Peretitani ou kua akakitea ia," e aka ngateitei e te ngakau parau teia noku." Upon being elected president, Jaewynn McKay said she felt "very privileged to be given such

an opportunity".

"E aka apainga teia e te ngakauparau nei au ko au i riro mai ei tuanga no tetai putuputuanga maroiroi, i te tauta i te akamaramarama ki te iti-vaine Kuki Airani, e pera tet ane-tini i te puapinga kia rauka kia akarakara vaveia ratou no te maki cancer ote U na roto i te akatotoa anga i te marama"

Ko te Putuputuanga Breast Cancer o te Kuki Airani kare i te putuputuanga kimi puapinga inara te vai nei no te akakoroanga akamaata atu i te akatotoa anga i te marama no te maki cancer U Mama e te akamaroiroi e te tauturu (te ra tikai to te Pa Enua i tai mai) kia akarakara putuputuia ratou. Na roto i te reira, te angaanga kapiti nei teia Putuputuanga e te Marae Ora, e, e tuanga maata teia. Pouroa te au Mema o te Kopapa Akaaere, te angaanga nei mate kore e tutaki.

Kia Manuia

Mangaia look to future with introduction of ANZ Junior Cricket

Mangaia cricket is set for a demanding two months ahead. The Pa Enua known for its makatea and welding adze will be welding another piece of wood, the cricket willow, in two weeks time when the new cricket season gets underway.

Chief executive Alister Stevic has just been on a development visit to the island and says it was one of the most productive visits yet "they really have a strong team of office holders on Mangaia. I believe their newly elected board comprising Chair

Taoi Nooroa, deputy chair Ngametua Tangatakino, Secretary Naomi Mareto and with an extra executive officer position to be filled, which I hope will be taken up by the talented Helen Henry will do an incredible job for Mangaia

Stevic added that it is no secret that Cook islands cricket has for 2013/14 a major emphasis on ANZ junior cricket and is overwhelmed that the cricket mad island, whose playing days date back to the 1950's, have also introduced ANZ under 13's to the island. "It isn't

easy being a volunteer so I really do take my hat off to committee members Tangianau Aueovai and Barbara Harry of Keia, Tangi Moeauri and Nancy Rikini of Veitatei, Terepai Ruatote of Tavaenga and Jason Teina and Helen Henry of Ivirua for all the work they will be doing in their communities to support the growth of cricket.

Stevic went on to say that Mangaia are in a great position to collect a medal at next year's Manea Games "undoubtedly the sports programme that Principal Sue Ngatokorua

has instituted with the support of staff such as Moe Tangatakino and others means that Mangaian students are all round talented athletes. A podelium finish for both the men and the women is a distinct possibility for the island come Manea Games".

On Saturdays, each of the four villages will put to the field a Computer Man senior men's, an Edgewater senior women's and an ANZ U13 mixed side. All competitions will be aptly managed by knowledgeable Mangaia umpire coordinator Uaongo Upoko.

China's naval aspirations: A 'blue-water' force



A Chinese navy vessels take part in a drill in the waters off Zhoushan in east China's Zhejiang province on Oct. 19, 2012.

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A century before Columbus discovered America, Chinese naval vessels many times bigger than the Santa Maria sailed the high seas, reaching as far as Africa.

But, unlike European voyages of discovery, the Chinese efforts did not forge a global empire. Beset by internal strife, China abandoned its naval efforts, and by 1500, it was a capital offense to build a seagoing junk with more than two masts.

Today, fueled by a booming economy, Chinese naval power is on the rise again.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy has been producing frigates, destroyers, submarines and missile boats at an unprecedented rate. In September, it commissioned its first aircraft carrier, the 74,406-ton Liaoning.

U.S. naval commanders, ordered to move the bulk of their fleet to the Pacific theater, say it's clear that China is building

a "blue-water navy," capable of sustained operations across oceans and able to project power far from the home country.

The U.S. has denied its "Pacific pivot" is directed at China but has called for "transparency" from the PLA.

"They are not making clear why they require these sorts of forces," said Jan Van Tol, a retired U.S. Navy captain who is a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments in Washington. He noted that China wouldn't need an aircraft carrier to seize Taiwan since the island, which China regards as rebellious province, is well within range of mainland air fields.

One reason for a blue-water navy could be for China to protect its trade routes, rather than relying on the U.S. to guarantee freedom of navigation, Van Tol said.

The Chinese government reported imports and exports worth \$3.87 trillion in 2012, surpassing, for the first time,

those of the U.S. — valued at \$3.82 trillion by the U.S. Commerce Department.

China also could be seeking to emulate the U.S. ability to project naval power and build influence, Van Tol added.

"The Chinese now want to do whatever the Americans can do and say: 'We are here in the region,'" he said.

Col. Lui Mingfu, of the PLA's National Defense University, told Australian media in February that China's goal is to force the U.S. out of the Western Pacific.

Mingfu said American strategic influence would be confined "east of the Pacific midline" as it is displaced by Chinese power throughout East Asia, including Australia.

Such rhetoric is being noted by people like Capt. James Fanell, deputy chief of staff for intelligence and information operations at the U.S. Pacific Fleet. He recently told the U.S. Naval Institute in San Diego that the PLA Navy regularly operates

in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and maintains a robust presence around the East and South China seas.

"These moves into the 'distant seas' would seem inevitable for a nation as large as China," he said. "But it goes without saying that this expansion into blue waters is largely about countering the Pacific Fleet."

China's Xinhua news agency reported that a PLA Navy destroyer and two frigates exercising in the Western Pacific earlier this year were practicing maritime confrontation, open-sea mobile combat, law enforcement and open-sea naval commanding.

"Make no mistake, the PLA Navy is focused on war at sea and about sinking an opposing fleet," Fanell said.

There is evidence that the PLA Navy has ambitions even beyond the Pacific.

Van Tol said China sent a frigate through the Suez Canal in 2011 to evacuate citizens during



In this photo released by China's Xinhua news agency, China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, is anchored in the northern port in Qingdao, east China's Shandong Province, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2013. The Liaoning has docked at its new permanent base where it will be responsible for operations in waters surrounding Japan and the Korean Peninsula, media reports said.

unrest in Libya, and Chinese ships have participated in anti-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia.

According to a Dec. 10 Congressional Research Service report on Chinese naval modernization, the PLA Navy comprises 275 vessels: 75 warships, 60 submarines, 55 amphibious ships and 85 small missile boats. The U.S. Navy's current strength is 285 ships and submarines.

Despite the similarities in numbers, Van Tol said it's hard to compare the navies. A vessel that the Chinese might describe as a "frigate" might not be deemed worthy of the class in the U.S., he said, but added: "They have certainly been building at a vigorous rate."

China has a large commercial ship-building industry capable of producing high-quality vessels.

Some of its latest naval designs, such as the Lanzhou-class destroyers, are equipped with powerful radar. Since 2004, the Chinese have launched more than 80 new Houbei-class missile boats, and they are acquiring increasingly advanced diesel submarines, Van Tol said.

Ralph Cossa of the Pacific Forum in Hawaii said China's submarine fleet is the best that Russia will sell or can be copied. But he added: "The Russians aren't selling their very best to China."

China's anti-submarine warfare capability remains weak, said Lyle Goldstein, an associate professor in the China Maritime Studies Institute at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, R.I.

The Chinese have mounted a massive research effort to improve their sonar capabilities but will likely lag at least two decades behind the U.S. and its allies, he said.

"Certainly for the next decade there is a major gap to be exploited," he said. "We need to make the investments today to keep that gap in play."

U.S. attack submarines have the firepower and survivability to be a strong deterrent and should be spared from budget cuts, he warned.

"I think we could do with fewer carrier battle groups and putting that money towards attack submarines fleet, which is of primary importance," he said. "That is America's sharpest weapon."

The anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) that the Chinese are developing would be a powerful weapon although there's no indication of a successful test against a moving target at sea, he said.

Compared with the Soviet Union's naval build-up — which involved launching a new submarine every month during the height of the Cold War — the

Chinese effort is more deliberate, he said.

"The carrier program has gone forward but it is fairly slow," he said. "They don't seem to be in a great hurry. It is within China's capabilities to build a navy that looks like the U.S. Navy in 15 years, but they may be more restrained."

The PLA Navy's lack of combat experience is another question. The U.S. Navy has had 90 years to reach its current level of proficiency in aircraft carrier operations, Van Tol said.

"It took a lot of training and accidents before we got good at it," he said. "The Chinese are just starting down that road, and it's hard to predict where they will go."

Cossa would rank the PLA Navy behind Japan's Maritime Self Defense Force.

"The Chinese are improving, but there is no question that the Japanese navy is far superior in terms of technology, training and sustaining operations," he said.

The PLA Navy may soon be comparable in strength to the Spanish or Italian fleets, but launching an aircraft carrier isn't enough to make it competitive with the top powers, Cossa said.

"You need to be able to support it (an aircraft carrier) with missile boats and submarines, and all this looks like it is years away for China," he said.

In an effort to gain experience in blue-water operations, the PLA Navy is ranging further from its home ports than many people realize, said Goldstein.

In recent years, it has made port calls in Fiji and New Zealand.

"China is building strategic relationships along the sea lanes from the Middle East to the South China Sea in ways that suggest defensive and offensive positioning to protect China's energy interests, but also to serve broad security objectives," a 2005 Department of Defense report said.

China's Global Times newspaper recently reported that a Chinese company had taken over operation of the strategic Gwadar Port in Pakistan, at the door to the Strait of Hormuz and, according to some commentators, a potential naval base.

Goldstein said China's presence in overseas ports has been almost entirely commercial so far, but he noted that if the PLA Navy wants to operate far from home, it will need places to refuel and repair its vessels.

"For years the Chinese have condemned countries having overseas bases," he said. "We have seen ship visits but we haven't seen efforts to build and sustain a base overseas. Someday that may come." — Stars and Stripes 25 June 2013

Soft landing for government on Peer review Plane

By Charles Pitt

Reading the interim draft report (Aide Memoire) of the Forum Compact Peer Review team submitted on 1 November 2013, one realizes it's the same old problems arising and in that case, one wonders whether government will actually do anything to address the issues raised.

It is in paragraph 3 of the report, that the Team identifies the key issues worrying all Cook Islanders (external shocks, inequality, non-inclusiveness, depopulation).

Excerpt from Para 8-

NSDP could go further to address or at least clearly identify 'big picture' priorities and structural impediments to growth and inclusion that relate both to the Cook Island's middle-income status and move towards a post ODA future. Key issues that have been raised throughout consultations include:

- *The challenge of slowing outward migration (depopulation) combined with the continued practice of importing labour and the risk that this drives a rift between the country's owners of capital and the rest of the population and results in growing unease about local culture and management of natural resources, amplified in the outer islands and with lower income families;*
- *The vast resources being devoted to renewable energies and water infrastructure that will mean a substantive increase in public debt;*
- *The new tax regime and how it will impact the whole population in terms of disposable income;*
- *The impact on the economy as a whole from the recently increased subsidy to air transport costs (now the largest item in the national budget1);*
- *The high cost of telecommunications (telephone and internet services) that will increasingly hamper and even prohibit access to new markets, economic opportunities and even health and education services. The cost of which is closely related to Government's guaranteeing a monopoly to the service provider; and*
- *Unresolved land tenure issues and no meaningful plan to address the systemic land tenure problems that continue to undermine the investment environment and particularly the agriculture sector.*

Comment: The Team fails to show how its recommendations will address these issues. It seems the Team has focused on tinkering with other technical issues to improve accountability procedures and processes.

The Herald is yet to do an in-depth analysis of the team's comments but in the interim offers these observations on some of the comments made. It is appreciated that this is a draft report.

Para 6. Central government is strengthening controls on public expenditure and implementing a public finance management road map.

Comment: Part of the strengthening controls must include failure by government Ministries to settle their accounts with the private sector in a timely manner. Ministries owe Pitt media Group some \$20,000 in unpaid advertising bills. This is totally unsatisfactory and indicates poor performance. Reports have been received that other businesses have been owed monies for upwards of 18 months. If

government does not pay its bills, how can the private sector settle their accounts?

Para 8. The NSDP provides a high level visionary guideline for the Cook Islands. However, it is not clear the extent to which the NSDP is revised to incorporate new political priorities as they arise or if it continues to express a single Cook Islands vision.

Comment: The key issue is that the NSDP was designed by bureaucrats and bureaucrats have seized ownership of the NSDP. MPs will have great difficulty implementing party policy where it clashes with the NSDP.

Excerpt from Para 9

Members of Parliament (MPs) have also expressed a desire for greater time to review in order to fully understand the implications of reports and plans. Government could consider investing more in its analytic capacities to quantify the success of existing policies and to stimulate a wider debate on the Cook Islands' long-term developmental vision. In particular there is an evident need for better analysis on the drivers of migration, distributions of wealth and opportunities, and the long-term economic prospects for the Cook Islands.

Comment: Political parties should have their own, party funded research units to carry out policy analysis. Likewise the civil societies such as Chamber of Commerce should fund their own research units. Each government ministries should have the capacity to perform research and policy analysis.

Para 13. It might be valuable for Government to use well-performing ministries such as the Ministry of Education as a benchmark. The Ministry of Education, for example, has senior managers well versed with the sector because most of them have worked from the bottom up.

Comment: The Team fail to mention the big improvements in Education are probably due to the influx of ex-pat teachers from NZ. The Secretary for Education is an ex-pat. The principal of our main College is an ex-pat. There are senior staff within the Ministry who are ex-pats.

Excerpt from para 15

In this context, attention could also be paid to reinforcing the authority of the statistics office to ensure that statistical data is always presented in a common format and analysis using common methodologies.

Comment: What is needed is a stand-alone Statistics Department, adequately staffed and resourced.

Excerpt from para 18

The team also noted Government's establishing a Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to guide and monitor the implementation of the budget at highest level.

Comment: The Committee's function is seriously hamstrung due to Ministries failure to submit audited accounts to parliament at the end of the financial year. The lack of audited accounts throws doubt on the accuracy of Budget documents presented to parliament.

Para 28. If requested by Cook Islands Government, development partners could assist in creating space for an inclusive dialogue around catalytic opportunities for development and growth and support analysis and dialogue on the structural challenges raised above (paragraph 8). Ideally this would provide a stronger basis for future policy dialogue over the medium term future. In this space there are also evident opportunities to initiate dialogue on other challenges such as climate change, emergency preparedness and resilience. Dialogue could also focus on better programming to orphaned sectors such as culture and agriculture as well as to the outer islands.

Comment: This paragraph is "gobbledegook" and would not be understood by the average MP.

Trusting God

part 1

By Senior Pastor John Tangi

We live in a time where our lives are affected by the environment surrounding us – the social; cultural; economic; religious and political environment. These diverse influences on our lives can impact greatly our focus in life. In the Bible, James 1v.2-3 reads “My brethren count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” Most of the time when everything is going well we congratulate ourselves! We say things such as ‘If it wasn’t for me! or I did that! or I did this! We tend to ‘trust ourselves’, we focus on ‘ourselves’, we loose our ‘Trust in God’ we push God to the back. When things are bad we say ‘God what are you doing?’ we call it ‘the acts of God!’ Psalm 125v.1 reads “Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.” Proverbs 3v.5-6 reads “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

In the Bible, in the Book of Job, is the story of a man called Job who is a righteous and a God fearing person. In Job 1v.13-19 Job lost everything - his huge number of livestock - sheep; camels; oxen; donkeys; the bountiful wealth of his household and even his 7 sons and 3 daughters perished. However, in spite of this devastating situation of Job this was what he said in Job 13v.15 “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” In Job 42v.10-13 God

Encouragement Column

With Senior Pastor John Tangi

blessed Job twice as much as he had before because Job put his ‘total trust in God’. Furthermore, God also blessed him with 7 sons and 3 daughters.

The lesson here is that in spite of the problems, the challenges, the difficult times you face in life I encourage you to continue ‘Trusting God’! Too often when people including Christians encounter devastating situation they gave up ‘Trusting God’. Although the life we live in is full of challenges, I encourage you to stand firm in your ‘faith’ and ‘Trust in God’.

Remember that tough times don’t last but tough people do! After every storm there will always be peace! David said in Psalm 23v.4 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” I encourage you, no matter what kind of problems or challenges you face in life whether it is your relationship with your parents, or with your husband or wife, even with your boss at your work place, or even with your friends at school, continue to stand firm on your Faith and Trust in God.

May God bless you and give you the strength and energy to move on in life, regardless! I will continue next week with Part 2 of this theme “Trusting God”.

May you have a God blessed week. Te Atua te aroa.





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and a Prosperous New Year.*

Brown Brother

By Norma Ngatamariki

I am fully aware that this topic may be a bit outdated (only by about five months lol) but I feel that, even within that lengthy period of time, it didn't get enough "exposure". So, here I am, dedicating this article to the one boy who made us Pacific Island people proud: Joshua Iosefo.

Joshua is a student from Mt Roskill Grammar School. He is of Samoan and Niuean descent and is a prefect. He may sound like your average school student at first, but that all changed when his speech, Brown Brother, was revealed to the world on YouTube. When Nadia (a friend of mine) showed it to me, I was completely blown away. At first, I thought it was a rap, because Joshua was saying his speech so fast. But when I really listened to what he was saying, I could hear his words. He had based his speech on the representation of Polynesian people and culture and how we are portrayed as "lazy, dumb and completely hopeless individuals". He fought against this stereotype using his words as a weapon. People, adults and kids alike, were hooked from the moment he appeared on TV3's Campbell Live in New Zealand. I wish I had the ability to grab people's attention like that, but unfortunately, I'm no good with saying speeches in front of crowds.

It reminds me of our situation here in the Cook Islands. Because we are a small nation (but with loads of potential), our resources are slightly...backdated. We learn to make do with what we've got. Our literacy and numeracy levels may not be as outstanding as New Zealand, but there has been a lot of improvement in this

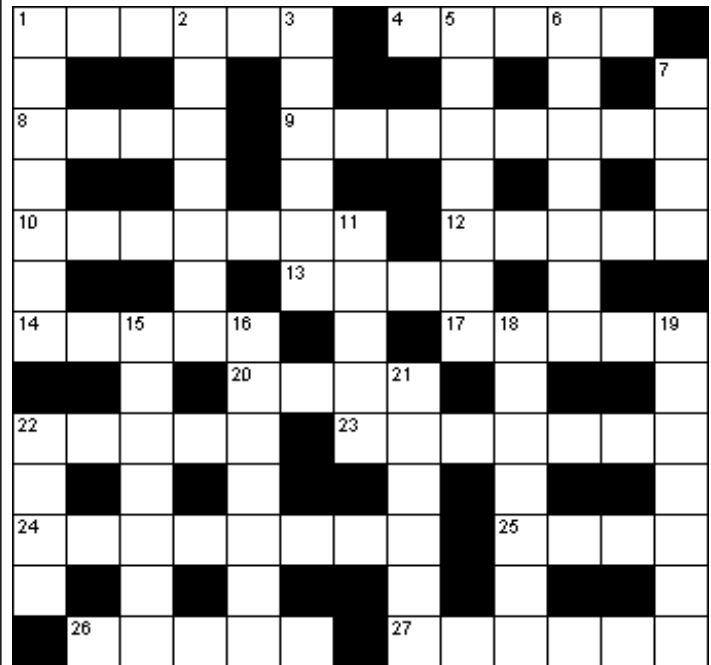


area over the years. We may not be the top of the notch, but what's to stop us from getting there? Kids over in NZ underestimate us just because we aren't as "facilitated" as them. Personally, I think students in the Cook Islands are just as capable as they are and it's been proven on more than one occasion. Take a look at people like Maruia Willie, Tauwi Tiera, Joyanna Meyer and Alex Herman. Their academic success has lead them to places like University and high-cut jobs in a law office.

I'm with Joshua when he says "Brown Brother, do not be afraid to be the first, the first to graduate, the first to climb, the first prime minister or the first good wife." Translation: He saying that just because you are a Pacific Islander doesn't mean you can't accomplish any of those things. I like his style of speech. His rhyming was off the hook and his gestures were simply amazing. He oozed with confidence and wasn't distracted by anything. What amazes me even more was that the speech was only meant to be an assessment!

If you haven't seen it already, then I'm telling you now. Go and watch it. Jump online and just type in the words Brown Brother. You won't regret it.

CROSSWORD



Across

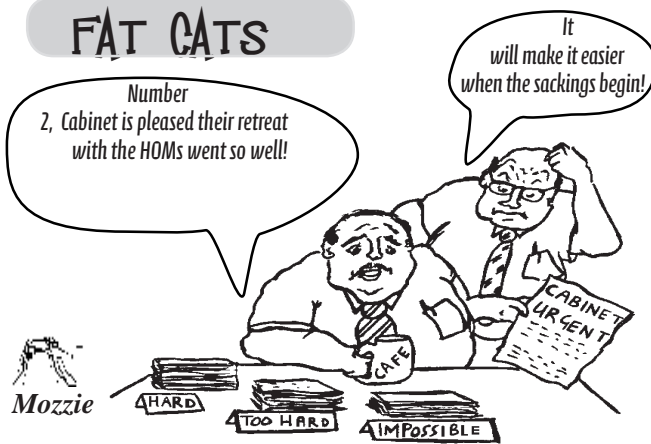
1. Remove the colour from
4. Covered with water
8. Tense
9. Data stored by a computer
10. Dance
12. Coldly
13. Part of speech
14. Frank
17. Huge
20. Unwieldy ship
22. Bishop's headdress
23. Fairly large
24. Person who stays up late
25. State in the central United States
26. Aquatic mammal
27. Ass

Down

1. Tub to bathe in
2. A craftsperson
3. Concealed
5. Whale fishing
6. Endurance
7. Group of birds
11. Ponds
15. Tense
16. Stage
18. Inhabitant of Italy
19. Treatment of disease
21. Deprived of life
22. Long luxuriant hair



FAT CATS



COCONUT ROUNDTABLE



How brilliant is rainwater harvesting? Academics have taken something so simple and turned it into a whole new industry boasting computer programming, computer chip technology and space age reticulation and treatment! Something so simple as going out when it is raining and collecting water in a tin can is too basic! It's so Neanderthal! If you have a university degree, yes! A Doctorate, even better!

Spotted this week, water boys fixing a leaking pipe! Methodology? Replace the old rubber bike tube with a new one! Bravo! No wonder our pipes are leaking all over the place! All those rubber tyres need replacing!

Of course a peer review of government is going to recommend more resources, more dosh, more up-skilling! It's all about public servants looking after themselves!

Oh dear chooks! Were you looking for the Pacific Forum Review Team to give our Mandarins a caning or a slap on the wrist with a wet doughnut? Didn't our polys do well! A pat on the back all round! A nice soft landing, not a thump! Way to go Team! Gloss over the hard bits requiring major surgery and plaster up the nicks and scratches!

And which government agency came out of the Peer review smelling

CHOOKS CORNER

WITH BIG RED



like roses, and held up as a shining example to all? Why none other than the DCD! The glowing report was not even dampened by reports of a high turn-over of staff in the division! A minor point! But why are staff leaving? Did the team look into that?

Umpteen paddlers in town chooks but woe to the restaurants! The paddlers are not exactly flooding to the restaurants to order \$40 plus French style cuisine to be served by Asian waitresses. They prefer it seems, real Cook Island style plates loaded with typical Cook Islands fare like chop suey with rice and only setting them back \$10!

Good grief chooks! A whinging, whining, Chambre de Horreurs is in a tantrum over the BTIB assisting local businesses get back on their feet after a tragedy! The BTIB is not a banco! That's the tune the Chambre de Horreurs is singing! Isn't this the very same Chambre stacked with ex-pats? BTIB is helping locals get back on their feet,

what's wrong with that?

Whoooooops chooks! Daily reports an unhappy burns victim not picking up any dosh from the BTIB to get his business back on its feet! What the Daily forgot to tell its readers was that the BTIB board at that time was not the same as the one there now! Odd that the new ex-pat journo did not seek some comment from the BTIB. Perhaps the journo simply did not know that government changes the BTIB board members around more times than an Arch Bishop changes underwear!

Oh dear chooks! Could we be in the throes of water woes? Even the Chambre de Horreurs wants a pause for a "cuppa tea!" Maybe a 6 month sabbatical to reflect upon what might be. The project may come to be known as "Tierney's terror." Landowners are becoming restless! Where will 1400 truckloads of sand come from to shroud the piping? A whole coastline will be subject to a

small mountain of EIAs.

What's going to happen to all the high flyers in MFEM when the overseas funded projects dry up? While MFEM is cramming highly qualified ex-pat graduates into every nook and cranny, the actual projects are winding down. Overseas funded projects are a "sunset industry" and we should now be preparing for a new future. Maybe the government's redundant witch doctors and bean counters will be able to find employment handling the projects undertaken by the private sector!

We're in the cyclone season chooks and there's a pile of large, loose, coral rocks on a property development in Kii Kii, close to the main road just waiting for some big waves from the next cyclone to come crashing ashore, taking them across the road and into properties on the other side! MOIP says it's the job of the wallahs in NES to point the property developer in the right direction. Who can NES pass the buck to?

Cook Islands
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Scenes from Muri for Vaka Eiva 2013

Scenes of race day for Vaka Eiva. Photos by Lucianne Vainerere



Nicole Murphy Kim Morris Brisbane River Dragons



Scenes from Muri for Vaka Eiva 2013

Scenes of race day for Vaka Eiva. Photos by Lucianne Vainerere



Patterson Lakes - Melbourne Australia



Stephen's Outriggers paddling team





QR Tom Marsters, Akaiti Puna, Mrs Marsters with Ambassador Wang Lutong and PM Henry Puna on Wednesday.

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VACANCY



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