

COOK ISLANDS HERALD

8 January 2014 \$2 (incl VAT)

www.facebook.com/RaroPubCrawl

THE **BIGGEST & BEST** PUBCRAWL ON RAROTONGA



RARO PUB CRAWL

WED & SAT \$25, FRI \$30
CALL NOW
on 29700
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

CIPS
IMAGE & COPY CENTRE

DIGITAL PHOTO PRINTS - STANDARD TO SUPER BIG
PRINTED ON PHOTO PAPER OR CANVAS

BETTER & BRIGHTER PRINTS

We also sell digital cameras, printers, mobiles, car audio
and much much more....

FUJIFILM OKI Canon

Located Opposite Cooks Corner
P: 26238 F: 21238 E: fuji@cookprint.com

Cakes for all occasions!



Edgewater Cakes

Enquiries call us
on 25435 extn 7010

Sunset BarBQs
at the Shipwreck Hut

Saturday Seafood menu
with Jake Numanga on
the Ukulele 6pm

Tuesday Sunset BBQ with
Garth Young on Piano 6pm

Thursday Sunset Cocktails
with Rudy Aquino
5.30pm-7.30pm

Reservations required

22 166

Aroa Beachside Inn, Betela

Great Food, Great Entertainment

Goldmine model, Tabitha wearing a beautiful silver ring, necklace and bracelet from Goldmine



Cook Islands
Top Jewellery & Gift Store

Always the best selection, best price & best service at Goldmine!

POWERBALL RESULTS

Drawn: 2/1/14 Draw num: 920

4 8 13 29 36 38 PB 3

TATTSLOTTO RESULTS

Drawn: 4/1/14 Draw num: 3387

5 6 10 28 32 40 SUPP: 29 37

OZLOTTO RESULTS

Drawn: 7/1/14 Draw num: 1038 Next draw:

14 17 19 20 21 28 29 SUPP: 1 45

\$4
MILLION
ESTIMATED

\$2
MILLION

The **COMPUTER MAN**
Sales Parts & Service

ASUS F501A (White)

Unbeatable Value \$1099



Intel Pentium Core 2 Duo B970
4GB DDR3 RAM
500GB Hard Drive
15.6" LED Widescreen
Wifi - Webcam - HDMI
Speakers - Microphone

Special Deals From The Computer Man

www.thecomputerman.co.ck - Ph: 24979

Bishop secures Cabinet agreement for money seized from pensioner accounts to be refunded

By Charles Pitt

Reports reaching the Herald from persons who have been contacted by Aitutaki MP Teina Bishop following Tuesday morning's Cabinet meeting and press release from the Prime Minister, indicate that Bishop is not happy that the public have not been fully informed of the discussions that took place and the agreement reached between Bishop and the Prime Minister.

On learning of the content of the very brief press release put out by the PM, Bishop is of a mind to issue his own media release.

According to sources, Bishop was said to be pleased that Cabinet agreed to a number of requests he submitted. He was especially pleased that Cabinet agreed that those on the NZ pension who had their bank accounts raided by MFEM for back tax, would receive a refund

and an apology.

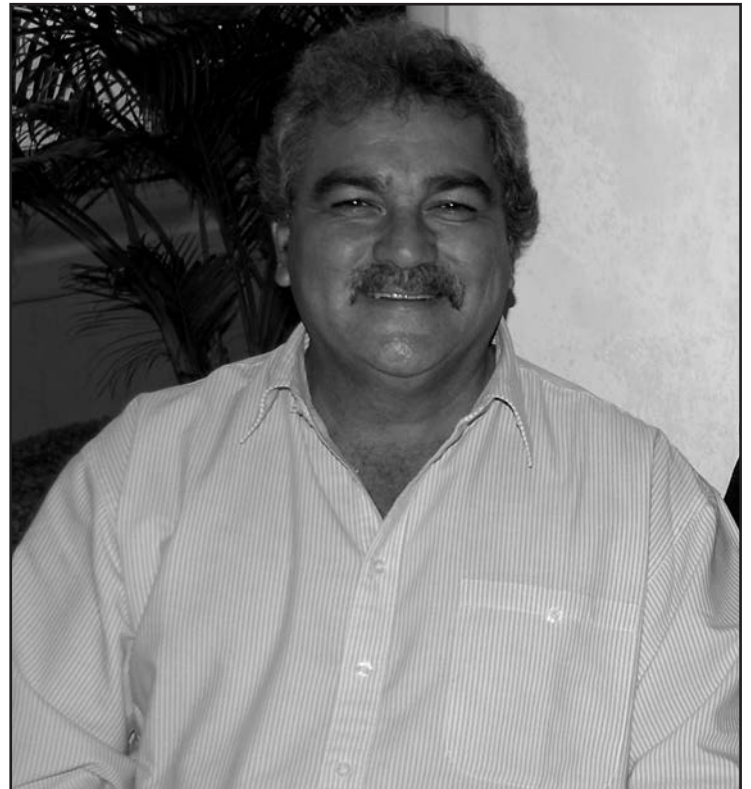
This was not mentioned in the press release from the PM's office. The Herald understands it was not mentioned because Cabinet is still unsure how the refunds are to be actioned.

The tone of the PM's media release gives the impression Bishop bowed to the demands of the Headmaster before the rest of class.

The short press release said; quote:

"The Prime Minister and Cabinet held its first meeting of 2014 this morning. The Cabinet was in full attendance with a mix of minor papers and informal discussion. The Ministers covered a range of topics that included preliminary discussions for the country's 50th anniversary celebration in 2015, and the preparatory work required for events coming up this year.

Minister Bishop remains a key senior member of the Cabinet team. The Prime Minister



Teina Bishop

says the team is confident that should any issue arise, which may present conflict with the ongoing investigation, those issues will be managed appropriately."

Bishop was said to be very unhappy that on the very day the Cabinet met, an Atiu solo mother supporting a daughter at school in NZ, returned home from overseas to find over \$4,000 snatched from her bank account by MFEM.

Water intakes filled after weekend rain

After the much needed rain over the weekend and Monday night, residents will be pleased to know that all 12 water intakes across Rarotonga have filled up to between 50 to 100% of water. Although water intake levels are stable at the moment, Adrian Teotahi of Ministry of Water Works advises the public to remain vigilant and continue to conserve water. As for water orders, Adrian says the delivery orders for water have dropped drastically compared to the amount of people who went in to order last week. He says the majority of orders are requested from uphill residents; otherwise all other tank owners should have water running from the mains. The weekend rainfall is recorded at 73 to 76mm and on Monday night, the amount of rainfall recorded was 40.7mm. Although the weather looks to be clearing up, a few more showers can be expected. -TeRiu Woonton

Oz Lotto Tue 24/Dec/13, Draw 1036	
Winning Numbers	4 6 36 22 24 42 33
Supplementaries	7 16
Powerball Thu 26/Dec/13, Draw 919	
Winning Numbers	16 39 7 35 3 25
Powerball	13
TattsLotto Sat 28/Dec/13, Draw 3385	
Winning Numbers	25 26 22 24 17 40
Supplementaries	30 13
Oz Lotto Tue 31/Dec/13, Draw 1037	
Winning Numbers	13 41 4 9 36 14 7
Supplementaries	43 44

Festive Season TattsLotto Results

Government: a bunch of nest raiders

By Wilkie Rasmussen, Leader of the Opposition

Welcome 2014, the "action year" for a lot of people. Certainly, for me it is the telling year of the fortunes of the Democratic Party I lead. This is the year where a snap election could happen and by November the term of Government comes to an end and the Prime Minister calls a general election. Some people say people will go to the polls early 2015. Whatever and whichever time, the Demo's are ready to rumble and win big.

This is my first column for 2014 and from now on each one of them will be potent, loaded and inquisitive. All will make good reading and will trigger your minds to scrutinize the performance of Henry Puna's Government and indeed what we propose to offer as alternatives.

My theme in this column is about this bizarre saga of Inland Revenue Department, an arm of Government raiding the bank accounts or the savings nests of the elderly without even flinching. I know that they know that such action amounts to probably the lowest point in the working lives of staff at IRD.

Before I comment more on it, it was sad to hear that one of the strongest supporters of the Democratic Party had passed away a couple of days ago. Mama Tu or "Mama Demo" as she was known affectionately, a double recipient of Queen's Honour and an icon of Cook Islands politics and indeed of Pacific women will be dearly missed. She once stood as a councilor in one of the Wellington boroughs at a time when Cook


Islands rarely ventured into local politics in New Zealand. She continued her interest in politics when she returned to the Cook Islands after being a close friend of former NZ PM Helen Clark.

We hear again that IRD has raided the bank account of an Atiuan elderly lady yesterday and took \$4000 from it to pay for her back taxes. This is in addition to others whose savings nests had already been raided. Most of these were humiliated, shocked when Government had no regard with the spirit of Christmas and New Year when it carried out these raids.

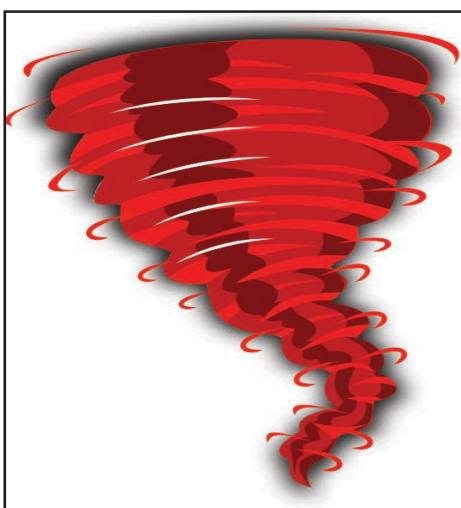
I understand that Teina Bishop, the warrior of conscience had met with Cabinet and put to Government a number of conditions if he returns to maintain the Government status quo and one of them was the money taken from these people to be reimbursed. But Government seems unable to do that because they don't know how to do that. How incompetent is this Government when it does not understand the avenues available to it to lead and govern. A lawyer had put it to me that these savings are not deductible as seen through the eyes of IRD because these are capital assets not "repayments" as stated under the relevant legislation. There's much to put to the Government about the legality of its actions. I know that some accounts it has raided were "joint accounts" as such and the victim of the raid is not entirely the sole owner of the account. Again this as I understand the law cannot be raided. One couple not long ago had their money



reimbursed by IRD when of all, it is the disrespect for it took money out of their the elderly that stands out as account without advising a feature of this Government them. It is the same situation and that's one thing the here with some of the Democratic Party will always Mama's and Papa's. But worst hold dear as a principle.



SWITCH ON WITH
TE APONGA UIRA
Be alert



Cyclone Ian, the South Pacific's first cyclone this season, happened over the weekend. Don't be complacent. Make sure you and your family are prepared for a cyclone. Check your emergency equipment, such as torches, generators and battery-powered equipment, such as cell phones. Stock up on food that will keep. Trim your trees and shrubbery so branches don't fly into your home.

www.teaponga.com

Puna's ambitious renewable energy goal in tatters

Energy Commissioner De Bray failing to deliver

Roger de Bray may as well pack his bags, renege on his three year \$300,000 plus allowances NZ Grant Funding Agreement contract and head back into retirement to Northern New Zealand, where he'll be able to reminisce and renew his friendship with the former New Zealand High Commissioner to the Cook Islands John Carter, the man who got him the cushy Cook Island job as the Energy Commissioner.

When de Bray took up his appointment in 2011 after a review of the Energy Ministry he was flavor of the month with unlimited access to the Prime Minister Henry Puna, de Bray had far reaching powers and authority that very quickly began to get under the skin of locally employed senior government electrical and energy workers.

It didn't take long for the locals to realize the conventional electricity de Bray had arrived empty headed and handed when it came to in depth knowledge and experience of renewable energy. De Bray soon began to mimic his boss Puna who was just as empty headed on renewable energy (RE) matters.

As soon as he arrived and while he had the PM's confidence de Bray should have pointed out how ridiculous it was to publicly announce the grandiose ambition of the country being 50% RE by 2015 and even more nonsensical to promote a 100% result by 2020.

Rather than convince Puna to be more realistic about his goals de Bray exhibited his ignorance of RE by going with the flow. After two years

into his contract de Bray has failed to deliver Government's unrealistic expectations and he no longer has open door access to the Prime Minister. Like everyone else de Bray has to wait weeks for an appointment with Puna.

De Bray's runs on the board aren't in the double figures, his light bulb swap and fridge freezer discounts hardly count as Commissioner material, these have been suggested by Tom Wichman for years. Apart from that, what stands out as a significant contribution to achieving Puna's pipe dream goal?

Te Aponga Uira's recent announcement about Independent Power Producers is rushed and will strain TAU. But pushed by himself and fellow Board member Steve Anderson, de Bray is hoping this imitative will restore some faith in him.

While the Tokelau Islands may claim to have 100% RE the Cook Islands will never achieve that goal unless we have in excess of \$150 million devoted to that end. Rarotonga for one is geographically located in neither a solar or wind friendly position. Samoa has recently received from New Zealand NZ\$14.5 million in funding to help Samoa to achieve a realistic 10% RE goal by 2016.

Last September de Bray attended a RE conference in Hawaii. Puna was also there. That conference was where de Bray managed to get his head around the complexities of RE for the first time. There he also read the signs and realized he was no longer in Puna's inner circle by his exclusion from some meetings where he expected to attend with the PM.



Renewable Energy Commissioner Roger De Bray

Not only has de Bray lost the confidence of the PM and the Cabinet he has lost it with those he works with. De Bray's dress code of track pants and jandals falls way short of the appearances of the office he heads, his colleagues describe him as untidy. Behind his back he is criticized for micro managing and getting unnecessarily involved in operations rather than provide policy and the frame work for RE. Staff are seldom consulted or brain stormed with and they are sick of de Bray continually saying Steve Anderson says this and Steve Anderson says that. De Bray has been known

to scope local RE enthusiasts and plagiarize their ideas and knowledge as his.

A further sign de Bray is no longer in Puna's inner circle is when Puna flies out to Abu Dhabi on the 16th January with his special advisor Trevor Pitt to attend a RE Conference de Bray will not be with them. With the Democratic Party about to launch a series of television commercials ridiculing Puna's failing RE goals the blame for certainty will be directed to de Bray's office along with the Director of Renewable Development Division head Tangi Tereapii.

- George Pitt

Avatiu wharf cracking

The \$28 million ADB funded Avatiu wharf project looks destined for the same embarrassing fate as the multi-million dollar ADB funded waste management project.

On completion, the waste management facility was supposed to last 15 years but barely coped from the outset as problem after problem arose.

The wharf project has been completed but already, faults are appearing. These faults are very serious and the Ports Authority should be calling Beca to account. Instead, it is allowing itself to be a conduit for Beca's explanations. Like the waste management project, temporary fixes have been suggested. This is totally unsatisfactory.

The ADB loaned the government the funds at less than 1% interest and government on loaned the funds to the Ports Authority at around 5%. Now it appears likely the taxpayers will be faced with extra costs for repairs.

This being the second occasion a major ADB funded project has been affected, it's surprising that ADB has not launched a parallel enquiry into the problems arising. Local ADB rep, Vanessa Jenner appears to have taken no action to make enquiries or determine how developments might impact on the ADB.

Ports Authority CEO Bim Tou has to decide who he wants to work for; right now he's behaving as if Beca International the designers of the Port development are paying his salary. Beca are in serious

trouble over the cracking concrete platforms on the wharf and Tou has chosen to be their spokesperson spinning endless tales of misleading nonsense.

Tou should be laying it on to Beca for the deteriorating state of the concrete. Then where is the Ports Authority Chairman Willie Kauvai Senior? His silence and the CEO's amateurish spin doctoring are indicative Beca has him and the Board around their little finger. There is no need for any cover up, BECA needs to be held accountable for the entire shelf life of the development.

The absence of the contractors McDowells is because the fault doesn't lie at their door. The state of the Avatiu wharf is potentially a huge embarrassment for Beca International Limited (BIL) and the manner in which they are addressing the problem is nothing short of unprofessional. Until they have remedied the botch up they should be banned from tendering for any development projects in the Cook Islands.

BIL has engaged local contractors to repair the cracking. Mike Rennie Builders (MRB) has been making repairs but monitoring from a distance isn't clear as to what they are doing apart from applying a product to the cracks. Recently they have ceased work at the instruction of the Board.

Even after early core samples were examined in New Zealand, Tou continued to mislead the public and the government saying the cracks were only shrinkage surface ones, yet the core samples showed



Ports Authority CEO Bim Tou

the cracks were from the top to the bottom of the concrete slabs, over 12 inches or 400mm. One can only conclude Tou was being protective of Beca and acting and speaking on their advice.

Sadly with this CIP Government, like corruption, lying is no longer the exception and must be a concern how it has spread beyond the boundaries of inner politics. BIL are fobbing off their responsibility to service the maintenance of the wharf. All of a sudden the locals who weren't good enough to have the contract are expected to do a harder more difficult job of repairing the poorly designed project.

Internet research suggests MRB were applying a very expensive product that would seep into the cracks coating the steel reinforcing. Left as it is, salted water seeping into the cracks would rust the steel reinforcing causing the steel to

expand thus widening the cracks further. This is not a permanent fix. Within five years the repairs will have reached their shelf life. By this time BIL will have been long gone with them pointing the finger at the local contractors who did the repairs.

The fact is, the cracking is a result of poor design, they are structural cracks as previously stated by this publication. The design fault is highly likely to be an inappropriate placement of the steel.

MRB have ceased repair work until advice can be obtained from the Cement and Concrete Association of New Zealand who will inspect the cracking and deteriorating.

Areas on the wharf that weren't reinforced with steel show no signs of any cracking. Unlike we keep getting told, the cracking concrete on Avatiu wharf is definitely not normal.

- George Pitt

TELECOM'S Broadband Plans keep getting BETTER!

**Now is the time to
check you're on
the right plan!**

Call 123 or Come in and see us

PLANS	PRICE	DATA	EXCESS
INTRO	\$25	1.25 GB ▲	5¢
STANDARD	\$49	3 GB ▲	4¢
VALUE	\$89	7 GB ▲	3¢
PLUS	\$139	12.5 GB ▲	2.5¢
SUPER	\$299	27 GB ▲	2¢
MEGA	\$699	65 GB ▲	1.5¢

SPEEDS INCREASED BY 50-100% ON MOST PLANS

INCREASED ▲
Prices Effective 1st Dec 2013

Our Frontpage model



Our front-page model this week is 16 year old Tabitha Berg. Tabitha is currently attending Tereora College, she has a strong passion for Performing Arts; music, acting and dancing. While on school holidays, she is working at CI Optics and also models for them. Tabitha paddles for Ngakau Toa and this year she would like to take up kick-boxing. Check out our website www.ciherald.co.ck. and facebook page: www.facebook.com/ciherald

Letter to the Editor

Shame on those running Grey Power down

Dear Editor
You out there, if you want to write and run the Grey Power down, you bloody well sign your name-you egg.

People out there, if you don't understand why the Grey Power is fighting the government for, it's because they told us to pay two years back tax. Former Prime Ministers didn't want us to pay tax.

It's this government that wants us to pay up and they draw our savings from the bank without us knowing it. If that was you, would you like someone drawing your savings from your bank? That is your savings for a rainy day or if anything happens to you or your family.

So this government whose members draw salaries of \$2,000, \$3,000, \$4,000 a fortnight, has no feelings for their own old people. Shame, shame, on them.

So if any of you want to run the Grey Power down, shame, shame, on you. It means you don't understand what we're fighting for, and sign your name on your letters or I'll pay to find out who you are.

*Grey Power
One Voice, One Choice.*

P.S. I never liked you Teina Bishop but now that you have stood up for Grey Power, I love you and I think you should be the Prime Minister because you have feelings for your old people.



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.

New Hope Church

Parekura Conference Centre

Inspirational messages to uplift and empower you

Sunday at 10.30am

Study claims Tax Review Process was flawed *Part two*

“There is also a comment about purchases made VAT free at the market, reducing the cost of living for those who earn less. This is consistent with a false perception that those on lower incomes are able to purchase in bulk on a weekly basis at the market. In fact these sentiments have been stated in different forums by persons associated with the Review. These assertions are not supported by research and are irresponsible and ignorant of how Cook Islanders, especially those on lower incomes, live and behave. This ignorance is maybe reflective of the methodology employed in the Review and the composition of the Review team (papa’a).”

By Charles Pitt

In the last issue of the Herald dated 23 December 2013, we reported on a study carried out by the Office of the Prime Minister into the process by which the recent Tax Review was carried out.

That report which was never made public, alleged that mistakes had been made and that there were a number of concerns about how the review was developed.

While the report commended MFEM on taking the initiative in leading the Tax Review, the report listed the following as a concern;

-The consultation process was neither inclusive nor comprehensive,

-There was a lack of supporting evidence-in too many instances assertions were made that either lacked evidence or were either blatantly wrong or inaccurate; and

-The presentation of facts was unbalanced-the review often glossed over the risks of its recommendations, not allowing for an informed or balanced discussion of policy alternatives.

The report mentioned the findings of its study came after the reforms had been approved, however, its findings will ensure we learn from the mistakes of the past when making decisions about moving forwards.

In this, part two, we report more of the findings.

Changes in income tax

Higher income earners benefit

while lower income earners do not. Adjusting tax rates to offset the VAT increase should have been better assessed. Current median income is \$18,667. For the average household, 2 adults and 2 dependents this totals \$37,334. This is \$1,500 below the minimum liveable wage for an average household, \$38,835, as determined by a NDP assessment.

Treatment of non-residents

Uniform, non-discriminatory income tax system created which will simplify administration. May not be consistent with the long term aspirations of Cook Islanders. Foreign direct investment increasing with mortgagee sales de to Cook Islander’s own mortgage/debt crises. Private sector dominated by foreigners and Cook Islanders have a tenuous grip on the destiny of their own country with the majority of non-government assets and their economy being controlled by foreigners.

Growing resentment and resistance of foreign investors as well as the migrant labor they employ. This issue may not be addressed through differential income tax but it is still a political risk that should be considered when introducing this change.

The issue of reduced engagement of Cook Islanders in their own economy needs to be addressed through various policies including (but not exclusive to) the Investment Policy Code; addressing tax loopholes in the tourism industry

(integrated booking systems and accounts held outside the country); Superannuation Scheme and ; Immigration Policy and laws.

Withholding tax (Taxing interest)

An option not mentioned was to eliminate tax on interest. The review mentioned this would be regressive as larger income earners generally have larger savings and thus would not be paying their fair share of taxes. However, what is not considered, is the reality of the situation.

1.The savings to borrowing ratio is extremely low-thus there is a need to increase savings and deposits in banks.

2.The low interest rates on deposits provide little or no incentive for high income earners to hold the majority of their savings here as the situation currently stands. High income earners are more likely to either deposit their money in overseas banks with higher interest rates or invest in other assets that provide a greater return on investment.

3.Based on the above, money on deposit from higher income earners do not earn considerable amounts of interest on their banking deposits. However, there is a risk where an increase in tax may prompt them to lower their holdings in local banks.

4.Based on the first point, it makes sense that it is important to look a incentives for increasing the level of savings in country rather than introducing

disincentives like taxing bank deposits.

Economic and Budget impacts from proposed Tax Reforms

Effects on households

MFEM has estimated a maximum increase in the Cost Price Index (CPI) of 2.3%. It is suggested that there will be a minimal number of households affected (nearly 30% is not a minimal number) and those that are affected will be compensated by an increase in welfare payments and a potential increase in the minimum wage.

However, the question is, what research supports this assertion beyond the arithmetic involved in adding VAT increases to the basket of goods and subjecting proposed levy reduction? Previous experience has shown that reductions in levies, taxes or other fees have not led to a reduction in prices.

When looking at how the proposed increase in welfare payments might offset the decline in welfare from the impact of VAT increases, significant issues with the logic employed are found.

The welfare system is not based on a measure of economic hardship but age. Therefore the system will not necessarily benefit all those who will be worse off from a VAT increase or specifically target those in real hardship.

The greater the CPI (cost of living) increase, the more people that will be negatively impacted

Continued page 18

New freezers for Manihiki fishermen

Christmas came early for the Manihiki and Rakahanga artisanal fishers as they were provided with six new blast freezers during a recent workshop run by the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) senior fisheries officer, Sonny Tatuava. Assisting Sonny was the senior officer from Manihiki, Tangi Napara who provided inputs from the fishery course he recently completed in Vanuatu.

The six day workshop was held in both villages in Manihiki, Tukao and Tauhunu with over 40 participants attending regularly. The same workshop was held in Rakahanga where a large number of the community attended.

The workshop was a follow up to the last one held by Sonny in May 2013.

Stated Sonny Tatuava "the community was very keen throughout the workshop sessions to gain more knowledge and look forward to continuing this practice to assist them with their artisanal catches. It's a fantastic feeling to see the

community getting involved for the betterment of their own livelihood."

The aim is for fishers to fillet and clean their fish, pack, wrap and store it in the minus 35 degree blast freezers for 24 hours and then transfer it to their freezers at home. The rapidly frozen fish has significantly better quality product and has an extended shelf life.

Past attempts to set up blast freezers in the outer island failed as the units were too large and expensive to operate. The modern blast freezers provided hold approximately 1.5 tonnes and are low costs to operate.

It is hoped that the frozen fillets can be transported to Rarotonga by the foreign longliners fishing around these islands.

Fish processing and transportation are seen as two of the main bottlenecks to developing a small scale fishing enterprises in the outer islands.

This venture will also provide fishers with an alternative means of livelihood during the period



that they are waiting to harvest the pearls.

Tangi Napara commented that "the community support is there, this is a quick revenue compared to the time frames for pearls. People understand the importance of fish quality and if you process your product properly, other people will purchase it."

Sonny reports that there has been constant use by the fishers

of the blast freezers which are housed at the Island Council's community centres. In addition there has been positive feedback of taste tests of individual trial shipments sent to Rarotonga.

Small scale commercial trials are planned for 2014.

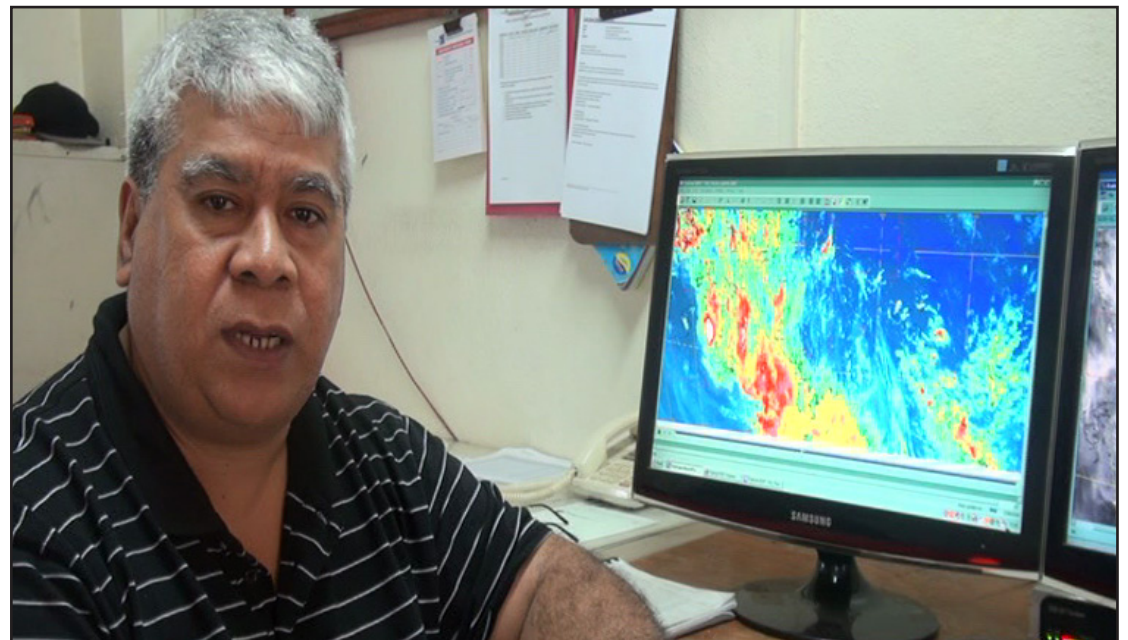
The freezers were funded by government through crown payments (POBOC) deducted from MMR's foreign fishing licence fees.

More rain expected for Raro

By Norma Ngatamariki

The recent downpour of rain has certainly been a pleasant change from the heat that has been plaguing the island since mid-December. Arona Ngari of the Meteorological Services says that the current development within the South Pacific Converging Zone is the main cause for the heavy showers. "It has become active between the last 3 to 4 days, so more showers are to be expected."

At 11am Monday 6th, a tropical depression located 150 miles north of Nukualofa was upgraded to a tropical cyclone, Cyclone Ian travelling at a speed of 35 knots. At 8am Tuesday 7th, it was noticed that tropical cyclone Ian was moving further westerly direction, towards Samoa. "At present, cyclone Ian is still gathering energy from the ocean, which will then



intensify."

Ngari says that the development of tropical cyclone Ian is still considered to be Category One, but that if it

Arona Ngari of the Met Office

continues to travel west, then the risk of passing the Southern Cooks increases. Rest assured, the Met Service will constantly be monitoring the movements

of the cyclone. "It just goes to show that we have entered that time of the year, and I would like to encourage people to take those extra precautions."

Zumba instructor leaving Raro



Well known Zumba instructor Nana Hirata is now considered to be a local as she has lived here in Rarotonga for 4 years now. While she says her years here in the Cook Islands has been the highlight of her life, she will be leaving our shores and heading back to Japan early next month. Nana has been a dancer all her life and before moving to Rarotonga to work at Island Hopper Vacations, she was based in New Zealand working full time and assisting gym instructors with choreography. While in Rarotonga, Nana attended one of Frankie's Zumba classes and that's all it took for her to become addicted. In 2011, she became a qualified zumba instructor and was given the opportunity to step in and take Frankie's zumba classes while Frankie was out of the country for a week. Since then she has been based in Arorangi, looking after the Western side zumba fanatics. Throughout her 4 years here, Nana taught Hip hop classes at Staircase with young ones, the youngest in her classes at the age of 4; she believes this will be one of the hardest things to give up before her departure. Nana joined the Te Maeva Nui celebrations in 2012 for Vaka Puaikura, in 2011 joined the Papaa Dancer of the Year and more recently, last year she led a performance made up of her 30 hip-hop class students at the 7s in heaven tournament. Nana has less than a month to soak up the Rarotonga sun as she departs our shores on the 6th of February. Back in Japan she will be the manager of Athletics, where she will be looking after sports players from NZ and Australia contracted to Japan. Although she would love to live in Rarotonga, where people have greatly supported her during her stay here; she sees this as a new career opportunity and will open up new doors for her. She will definitely return to the Cook Islands, either as a tourist or a permanent resident.

Mount View Lodges O'oa

Accommodation to suit your budget



Self contained and self servicing
free standing units

**FROM \$35
PER NIGHT**

Ph: 29491 Mobile: 50326

Management restructure looming for troubled MOIP

Special audit reveals MOIP's management failings to be an extreme risk

By Charles Pitt

An audit requested by the NZ government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in February 2013 into the way the Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning (MOIP) handled NZAid funded projects over the last two and a half years, has resulted in a report which does not show MOIP in a good light. The Herald understands a major shakeup of MOIP's management structure is on the cards.

The Cook Islands government supported the NZ government's request for an audit due to concerns of its own and together with the NZ High Commission, jointly commissioned a special purpose audit to provide assurance to;

(a) the Cook Islands government as to the control environment at MOIP, and,

(b) the NZ government regarding MOIP's management of development partner funds.

The goals of the assignment were to;

- Provide assurance that NZ Aid Programme Funds from July 2010 to 31 March 2013 have been correctly accounted for by MOIP.
- Provide an opinion as to the effectiveness (or otherwise) of MOIP's financial management systems and internal controls as they

relate to funding through the NZ Aid Programme.

The report was conducted by KPMG and revealed areas of concern that rated "high" and "extreme" on the scale of Risk.

The report was completed on 4 December 2013 but has not been made public by the NZ government or the Cook Islands government. It is not known if the audit report will be tabled in the Cook Islands government as it was initially requested by the NZ government.

Herald readers will recall that in our recent report on the Cyclone Pat document, which was also never revealed to the public, the Herald pointed out that in that document, there was mention of an audit being conducted into MOIP by the NZ Government.

The report's findings require immediate action by the Cook Islands government if it is to maintain donor funder's confidence. Given that the next Donor Round Table is scheduled in the near future.

The audit report identified that some in management positions in MOIP did not possess the required ability to carry out their functions. This is an issue which has not been dealt with effectively despite the major shake up some years earlier when the old Ministry of Works was re-structured into MOIP. This latest report makes reference to "new management."

Indeed, the Herald has learnt that a new management structure



Findings
Extreme Risk

DRAFT

Finding and observation	Impact	Risk Rating	Recommendation	Management response
1. Financial Systems and Internal Controls				
We assessed that the financial systems and internal controls are not effective. Our findings are broken down into the five COSO components (refer to Appendix 3 for the COSO framework).				
<p>1.1 Control environment</p> <p>We have assessed that the control environment at MOIP is not effective.</p> <p>1.1.1 Organisation governance</p> <p>MOIP does not have an effective governance structure to establish formal policies, to make significant and strategic decisions, and to oversee MOIP's activity.</p> <p>1.1.2 Acting employees</p> <p>During our first visit, MOIP's management team was largely made up of acting employees. Employees interviewed appear to lack strong and effective leadership direction.</p> <p>Acting employees (specifically finance and programme management) did not appear to be experienced in their roles. They appeared to have been put in acting roles to fill vacant management positions. For instance, the acting Finance Manager was an accountant from MOIP's finance team. They have not been provided with a framework to ensure that they have the skill set for this role.</p> <p>Programme Managers for the TCPAT programme and CRRP fund had ceased employment during KPMG's visit. They have been replaced by an Acting Director and Acting Manager, who have limited knowledge of the tendering process.</p> <p>A Corporate Director, Funding and Planning Division, was appointed between the first visit and when KPMG returned in November 2013.</p> <p>1.1.3 Employees' attitude</p> <p>Employees we engaged with appeared to recognise the need for change and continual improvement. Also, employees appeared to have confidence in the new Secretary.</p>	<p>Management may lack the skills and knowledge to maintain an effective control environment. This is the foundation of all other components of internal control.</p> <p>An ineffective management control environment contributes to ineffective processes and controls to prevent, detect and report fraud. As a result of ineffective internal controls and management control environment, there is a possibility that fraudulent activities remain undetected.</p>	<p>Extreme</p>	<p>Prioritise the appointment of permanent employees, with the appropriate skill set, into management roles.</p> <p>The new management should address the findings in this report and facilitate an effective management control environment by establishing formal policies (this includes implementing the recommendations from finding 1.1.4 and 1.3.1).</p>	

has been proposed for MOIP which recommends a “flat line” management tree rather than a “multi-layered” management tree.

While the report by KPMG does not make specific comment on the top position of Secretary, it would be fair to say that in recent years, key issues at top management level concerning inter-Ministry priorities, funding, authority and accountability have impacted on the performance of successive Secretaries. These issues needed to be dealt with. The Secretary position at MOIP has, as a consequence, become something of a hot potato.

Currently heading MOIP is Mr Mac Mokoroa, a former policeman who was once in charge of Disaster Management. After a stint at OPM he took charge of MOIP in an Acting capacity after Donye Numa who was also brought in initially, in an Acting position, was relieved of her position. Numa, a university graduate who majored in Interior Design, replaced Ata Herman, a NZ qualified Civil Engineer who is now an MP.

It would be fair to say the top position at MOIP resembles something akin to “Spaghetti Junction.” There are too many loops, twists and turns, and it’s no wonder a person can become lost or confused.

Extracts from the report by KPMG

Conclusion

For the majority of expenses and contracts reviewed, MOIP has correctly accounted for NZ Aid Programme Funds for the period July 2010 to 31 March 2013. Issues were identified with some expenses and contracts and these included sponsorship of the Cook Islands Rugby Sevens,

payments not evidenced as approved before payment was made, and lack of supporting documentation.

In relation to funding through the NZ Aid Programme, MOIP’s financial management systems and internal controls are not effective. This is because there is:

- No delegations framework
- Issues with the payments process
- Ineffective governance structure to establish formal policies, to make significant and strategic decisions, and to oversee MOIP’s activity.

The MOIP has made an effort to address some of the findings since the issue of the interim report. However, there are several significant gaps that were identified that still need to be addressed. The MOIP can significantly improve its financial management systems and internal controls should it implement the recommendations in this report.

Key Observations

Grant Revenue and Expenditure

For the expenses and contracts tested, we confirmed that NZ Aid funds were utilised for the intended purpose. There were some issues identified with the purchase of corporate tickets and sponsorship, and the payment processes.

As the Cook Islands has no sensitive expenditure guidelines, we applied the principles of New Zealand’s Office of the Auditor General “Controlling Sensitive Expenditure: Guidelines for public entities” as our standard.

Readiness for audit

We acknowledge that the MOIP and Development Coordinator Division (DCD) did not have a lot of notice before our first visit (10th – 14th June 2013). The MOIP and DCD were prepared and ready for the audit when KPMG returned on 4 November 2013. Since our first visit, documents and NZ Aid programme related folders are now stored securely and systematically.

Bank accounts and signatories

The MOIP maintained separate bank accounts for individual NZ Aid Programme funded activities. Bank signatories can only be changed with the Cook Islands Government (CIGOV) Financial Secretariat’s approval. At MOIP, the Acting Secretary/Secretary is always a bank signatory.

Cook Islands Audit Office (CIAO) Special Audit Reports

We reviewed five CIAO special audit reports (refer to Appendix 1 for a list of the reports reviewed) completed between May 2011 and January 2013.

These reports concluded that:

- MOIP did not comply with the requirements of the Cook Islands Government Financial Policies and Procedures Manual (CIGFPPM) and overlooked its formal obligations under the Project Management Framework (PMF) and CIGFPPM.

- MOIP allegedly showed bias towards the contractor T&M Heather Ltd by consistently engaging the company for a variety of work without transparent tendering procedures.

- Documentation showed that the Expression of Interest (EOI) process was poorly designed.

- MOIP allegedly attempted to deliberately make use of other Aid project funds to address its cash flow problems.

Testing

The auditors were reliant on the contracts and payments that were provided.

- Not all payments requested were provided.
- We could not ensure the entire population of contracts was provided. This is because a contract register was not available.

Key Findings

Financial Systems

- Financial systems and internal controls that exist to manage NZ Aid Programmes are not effective and are not appropriate for the scale of the programmes. Management is not aware of risks, and has not designed and implemented control activities to address risks at MOIP.

Internal Control Environment

- The control environment at MOIP is not effective for the following reasons:

- The governance structure requires strengthening.
- There were a significant number of acting employees in management positions.
 - Expenses that may be perceived as private benefits to employees were not governed by any sensitive expenditure guidelines.
- There is no formal delegations framework at MOIP.
- Internal controls around the payment process and the process around data and supporting documentation retention can be strengthened.

- Some documentation that was requested could not be located.

- Payment errors occurred, including double payments.
- MOIP needs to develop a more effective monitoring system over its internal control system.

Procurement

- Procurement processes are ineffective for the following reasons:

- A one size fits all approach to public tendering policy may not be suitable for MOIP.
- The current processes are not up to date and there is no ‘easy to follow’ process for MOIP staff.
- Tendering documents were not completed accurately and retained appropriately.

Contract Management

- Contract management processes are not effective as MOIP:
- Does not maintain a contracts register or a works order register.

- Has poor contract management oversight in place.
- Has not signed four contracts and two contracts were unable to be provided.

Recommendations

Governance

- MOIP prioritises the appointment of permanent employees, with the appropriate skill set for the governance and senior management roles.

- The new management should address the findings in this report and facilitate an effective management control environment by establishing formal policies. (This includes implementing the recommendations in this report.)

Sensitive Expenditure

- In the short-term (until policies are established, refer below) MOIP consult with MFAT before incurring expenses that are

potentially sensitive in nature.

- Consider developing a sensitive expenditure policy that is either Cook Islands Government (CIGOV) wide or specific to MOIP.

- Provide adequate training to staff members to ensure they understand sensitive expenditure and probity guidelines when spending public monies.

Data and supporting documentation retention

- Store NZ Aid programme documentation and folders securely and systematically. (This includes payments, tender documents and contracts.)

Risk Assessment Completed

- MOIP complete a risk assessment over the NZ Aid Programmes.

- Once completed, design and implement adequate control activities to address the risks that were identified.

Control Environment

- The new management should address the findings in this report and facilitate an effective management control environment by establishing formal policies.

Internal Control System Monitoring

- Once the recommendations to implement an adequate internal control system have been completed, and in conjunction with NZ Local Government representatives, develop and implement a process to assess and monitor the quality of the internal control system's performance.

Procurement

- MOIP formalise a delegation framework that is fit for purpose.

- MOIP complete an end-to-end flow for the procurement process to clarify roles and responsibilities in the process. This process flow can be used to train staff on the tendering process and document completion. This will also assist in clearly defining expected roles and responsibilities for MOIP employees.

- MOIP ensure that for all tenders the documents are completed and checked by either the Cook Islands Tender Board or Project Steering Committee before awarding contracts to suppliers.

Payments

- Before signing the payment vouchers, staff members checking, certifying and approving payment vouchers should ensure they perform an independent review of the payment voucher against supporting documentation for all outgoing payments.

- Monitor progress of contracts against payments to ensure no "double payments" or overpayment.

Contract Management

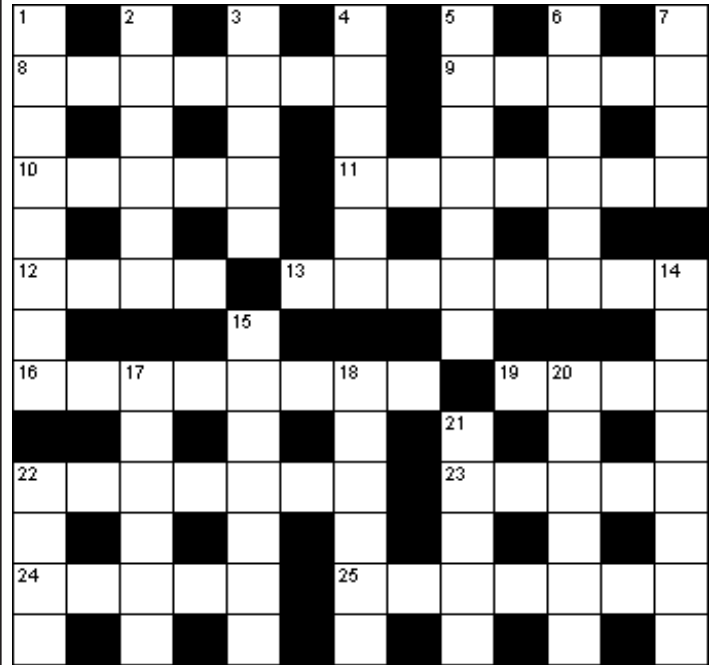
- MOIP maintain a contract register (>\$30k) and a works order register (<\$30k).

- Review the contract management practise at MOIP and centralise the contract management function. Ensure that the staff performing this task receive appropriate training.

- Ensure all contracts are signed and dated by appropriate signatories.

- Formalise employment agreement with future employees for any NZ Aid related work programme to ensure the rights of MOIP and MFAT are protected.

CROSSWORD



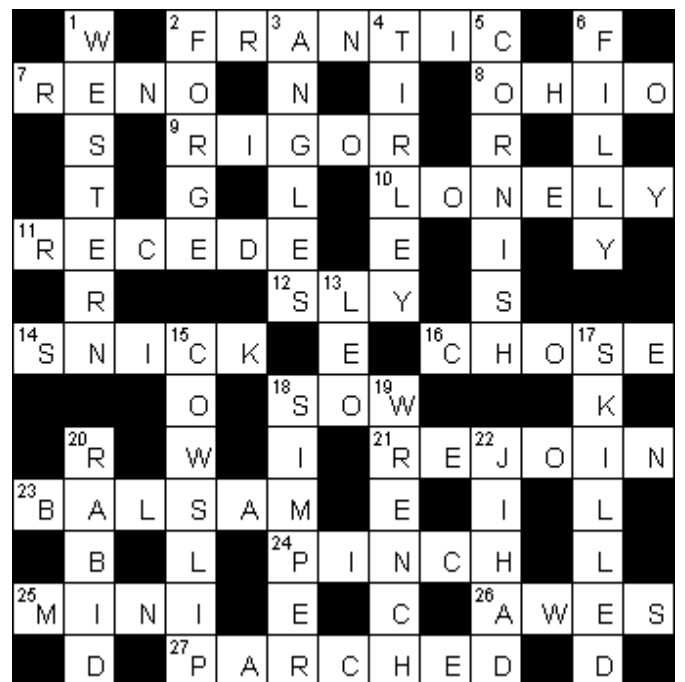
Across

- 8. Send to school (7)
- 9. Clip wool (5)
- 10. Loose (5)
- 11. Unconscious (7)
- 12. Regretted (4)
- 13. Recurring at intervals (8)
- 16. Safety (8)
- 19. 365 days (4)
- 22. Absence of sound (7)
- 23. Hand operated implements (5)
- 24. Stare angrily (5)
- 25. Speech (7)

- 2. Merciful (6)
- 3. Handkerchief (5)
- 4. To lower (6)
- 5. Mohammedan (7)
- 6. Recompense for hardship (6)
- 7. Authentic (4)
- 14. Baptize (8)
- 15. Device for printing (7)
- 17. Underground room (6)
- 18. Triple (6)
- 20. Second book of the Bible (6)
- 21. Inventory (5)
- 22. Narrative of heroic exploits (4)

Down

- 1. Gauges (8)



2014, the year of living fabulously

By Carmel Beattie

Wow! I'm not sure if it's only me but do you feel that 2014 started with a whoosh rather than a whisper?

From the second that the last firework faded into the sky above Muri Lagoon, life seems to have been supercharged. The biggest challenge so far has been about time. Time to spend with friends and family; time to deal with competing priorities – no, friends and family, we can't be with you ALL the time!; time to get yourself set up for the year ahead; and finally time for yourself to just take in the season and get your head around going back to work!

This week, I am without friends and family staying since the beginning of November so my 'newish' house feels very new and it is slightly hard living in relative silence – it is amazing the different decibels generated by a family as opposed to just yourself. Not that I am complaining about decibel levels, my niece especially is the love of my life and I would happily put up with her cheerful noise every day but when Sydney calls them back and my other friends head off to their own pastures, then it is time to take stock and plan the year ahead.

Well, so I thought but apparently the universe has decided that I have to do that planning on the run as 2014 has rushed in to fill the void left by the previous year and to banish all thoughts of easing my way into anything. I had this hazy and entirely unrealistic idea that spending a little time working out of home would allow me to indulge my ideal of lagoon time, work time, me time

etc. Not so! Lagoon time is at some ridiculous time in the morning to allow myself to fit it in, work time takes up 99.9% of the time so 'me' time seems to have slipped down the percentage scale to the .0 somethings.

I guess when you are collectively as a business, running a hotel, settling in new clients and trying to set up an office, time then is at a premium but this is ridiculous. I have decided two things – well, probably heaps more but in the interest of time and your attention span, I'll only list two!

1. This island needs a 1 Stop Shop! Why is it that every shop specialises in something that can't be found anywhere else? This is fine in a big city where speciality shops selling crazy hats or birthday party decorations are a winner but come on guys – cheese? Almonds? I know it is about suppliers but sometimes it breaks the will of a busy (and yes, disorganised) shopper to think that they have arrived around at the other side of the island and realised that a particular urgent necessity is back in town!

2. I need a permanent home handyman on call! With a set of tools and knowing how to use various electrical tools. I want to be a fabulous independent woman who can do anything but the truth is that it is ok to specialise if you have a pool of other specialists to help. Trying to get work done at Christmas is an impossibility because the few handymen around are off the island or on holidays – fair enough but not when I need them!!

3. OK there is a 3rd – never try to open an office over Christmas!

Anyway, this week I am



the Queen of multi-tasking to ensure that everything is working and that life remains on track for the year but my goodness, if this is what week 1 is like, will I survive to week 26 let alone 52?

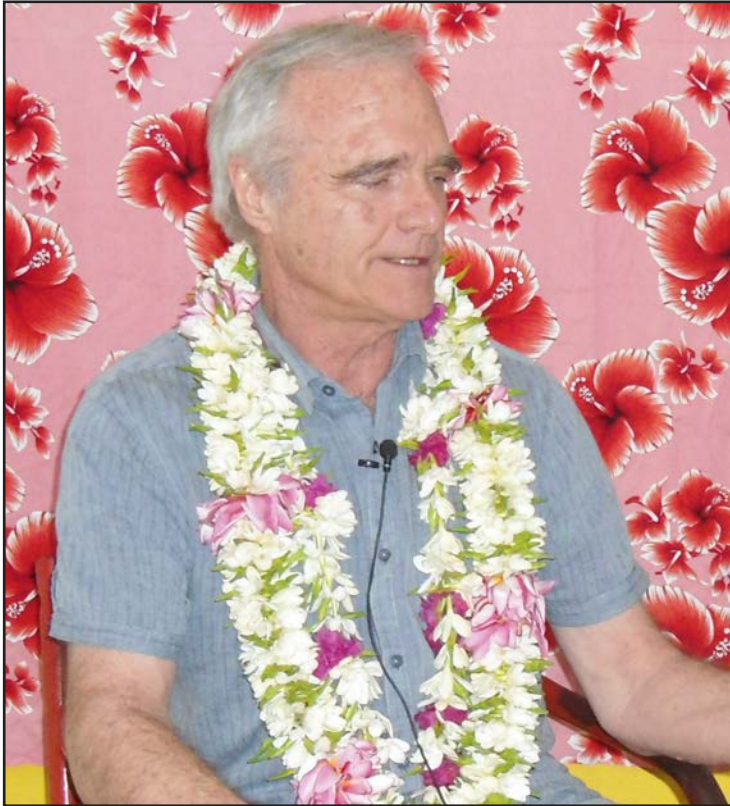
Does this mean that I have to change tack? Probably not but I guess that I have to find a level of activity at which I can sustain a life/work balance which isn't quite happening this week. But that's ok because it is this way with all of us at times, isn't it and we always (?) survive and hopefully thrive.

For me, I have decided that instead of 2014 being the Year of Living Dangerously,

it will be the Year of Living Fabulously! Fabulous work, fabulous life, fabulous times which I feel is achieved by a combination of hard work, great support from those we love and a positive attitude that invites opportunity and adventure rather than being scared of it.

So, here is to an exciting year to us all with a little more of the good life, lots more of happiness and good health, a good balance between play and work and great success and as little in the way of 'challenges' as possible and of course, time to savour it all – in other words a chance to live fabulously!!

Our "Dallas" connection



Randy Powell

By Charles Pitt

Visiting Rarotonga for the first time last week was retired American TV actor Randy Powell and his wife Jacqueline. The Herald spoke with Powell last Monday.

Bound for NZ from Los Angeles, the brief two day stop over was a chance for Powell to catch up with some of his friends with whom he shares a common interest with in Ham Radio. The likes of Victor Rivera whom he has known for some 30 years, former Tax man and Scout leader, Jim Ditchburn and Andy Duncan.

During his career, Powell appeared on such TV shows as "Love Boat," "Fantasy Island," "LJ Hooker," "Riptide," "Logan's Run" and "Dallas."

His stint on "Dallas" lasted from 1979 to 1980 and he played the part of JR Ewing's Attorney "Alan Beam," a character who gave lawyers a bad name. Powell was not recalled when the series recently started up again.

Powell has been an actor since an early age. During High School in the 1960s he studied

drama and continued this study through his university years at the University of Denver, Colorado. His advice for students doing drama at Tereora College, is to work hard.

Powell and his wife, who works at Fox Studios in California where she has been for 20 years, live in Santa Monica California and have two teenage children. They married in 1981 in NZ.

Powell is involved in community and charity work and does occasional commercials and voice overs.

One of his community activities involves teaching after school courses in radio theory and operation to teens at Santa Monica College and this is his connection to Cook Islands.

As part of their course, the students contact Ham Radio operators around the world including the Cook Islands. There are 5 operators on Rarotonga, 1 on Aitutaki and 1 on Penrhyn.

Powell has been involved in Ham radio since the age of 16 when growing up in Iowa, SA.

Powell said he is impressed with Rarotonga and would like to return.

The **COMPUTER MAN** Tech Tips

Phone 24979 Email: sales@thecomputerman.co.ck

Introducing Windows 8

Employ the hottest hotkeys we know

In these key combinations, hold down the Windows key (normally located between Alt and Ctrl) and another key, as described on this list.

- Press the Windows key to enter the tiled Start screen.
- The Windows key + M minimizes everything that's showing on the desktop.
- The Windows key + E opens Explorer for quick access to folders.
- On the Start screen, press the Windows key + D to instantly get to the desktop.
- The Windows key + Tab opens a list of currently running programs.
- The Windows key + Print Screen takes a screenshot and saves it in a Screenshots folder nested in your Pictures folder.
- To take a screenshot on a Windows 8 tablet, simultaneously press the Windows button and the volume-down button on the tablet chassis.
- The Windows key + Q opens a global search menu. Type what you're looking for and where you would like to look.
- The Windows key + W opens a search in your system settings to quickly locate and change system properties.
- The Windows key + F opens a file and folder search.
- The Windows key + "," (that's the comma sign!) makes all current windows transparent, giving you a peek at the desktop as long as you hold down the Windows key.

Compatible

Devices

HP Pavilion Touchsmart



**INTEL
I5 CPU**

**4GB
RAM**

**1TB
HDD**

**14"
TOUCH**

\$1489

Nokia Lumia 520

Windows Phone 8- (micro sim), 4.00-inch 480x800 display, 1GHz processor, 512MB RAM and 5-megapixel rear camera .



\$399

50% off any Micro SD card with the purchase of a tablet, laptop or phone (pending availability of stock)

All prices are Inclusive of V.A.T. Price valid 01/11/2013 - 31/12/2013 E.O.E.

Not on our Specials email List ? Email us at sales@thecomputerman.co.ck

Or Log-in @ www.thecomputerman.co.ck

TE REO MAORI KŪKI AIRANI



Tātā'ia e Ruteru Taripo

Kia Orāna kōtou kātoatoa i tēia mata'iti ōu, rua tauatini mā ta'i-ngauru mā toru (2013). Te irinaki nei au ē, e kua mataora tikāi ta kōtou Kirītimiti ē te maara nei rāi iā tātou te akakoroanga tikāi ō tēia rā. E pērā katoa, i roto i te tuātau ōrotē, tē pāpū nei ē, kua mataora rāi te reira na roto i te au tū angaanga tāokotai, raverave ma te inangaro tikāi, ki te pae i tā tātou au tamariki, tō tātou ngā metua, akaperepere, vouvou, kōpū-tangata, taeake ē pērā katoa tā tātou au manu i te ngutuare.

Nō reira, e mea tau rāi kia rauka iā tātou kātoatoa i te akameitaki atu i tō tātou Metua Tapu i te rangi teitei no tei tiaki mai, pāruru mai ē kua arataki mai rāi aia iā tātou na roto i te mataiti 2012, ē kua akatae mai iā tātou ki roto i tēia mataiti 2013.

Tei ā tātou rāi oki i te ākono i tō tātou au oraanga, tō tātou enua, tō tātou ao-nātura ē te katoaanga e koropini nei iā tātou ē tā tātou e umuumu nei nō teianeī ē nō āpōpō.

No reira, kia mataora, kia manuia ē kia riro tēia mataiti ōu ēi mataiti meitaki atu nō tātou kātoatoa.

Au Kupu no te 'akamata'anga o tēia Mata'iti 'Ōu

Words for the beginning of this New Year

kupu

tākiato

tākiato kōrero

mata'iti 'ōu

'anga'anga tā'okota'i

raverave ma te inangaro tikāi

'akaperepere

vouvou

tā tātou au tamariki

tō tātou ngā metua

to tātou Metua Tapu i te rangi teitei

pāruru

arataki

ao-nātura

mata'iti meitaki, mata'iti mataora

word

phrase

sentence

new year

working together

doing (the duty, job) with real love

loved, treasured one

grandparent (Nga-pu-toru dialect)

our children

our parents

our Heavenly Father

protect, shelter

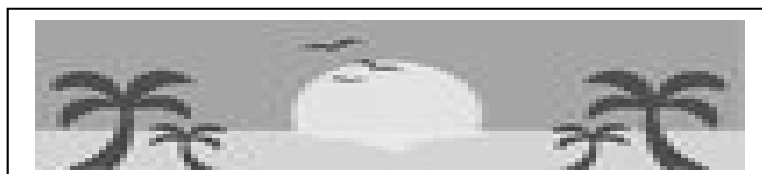
lead, guide

environment (natural)

good year, happy year

Au Tākiato Kōrero Māori (Māori sentences)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Ka inangaro au kia mataora tikāi tēia Mata'iti 'Ōu</p> <p>2. Kia 'anga'anga tā'okota'i tātou i teia Mata'iti 'Ōu</p> <p>3. 'Ākono i tā'au au tamariki.</p> <p>4. 'Ākono i tō'ou ngā metua 'ē pērā 'iā vouvou.</p> <p>5. 'Akaari i tō'ou inangaro ki tō'ou kōpu-tangata.</p> <p>6. 'Ākono i tō tātou `enua</p> <p>7. 'Ākono 'iā kōtou kātoatoa 'ē kia manuia</p> | <p>1. I want this New Year to be a happy one.</p> <p>2. Let us work together this New Year.</p> <p>3. Look after your children.</p> <p>4. Look after your parents and also granny.</p> <p>5. Show your love and care to your family.</p> <p>6. Take care of our island.</p> <p>7. Look after yourselves and good luck.</p> |
|---|--|



New international seabed minerals arrangement

Cook Islands Government (CIIC) in cooperation with GSR of Belgium Ministerial Press Release

The Cook Islands Government is pleased to announce that, in an historic step, on the 26th December 2013, via its state entity, the Cook Islands Investment Corporation (CIIC), it has submitted an Application for exploration of polymetallic nodules to the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

Our application is for approval of a plan of work for exploration by way of a contract to be issued by ISA.

CI-GSR AREA

The area applied for under our Application is Reserved Area GSR-A as defined and designated as such in ISBA/18/C/281 (known hereinafter as “the CI-GSR Area”). It is situated in international waters within the Clarion Clipperton Zone

(CCZ) of the north-eastern South Pacific, between Hawaii and mainland USA. See map attached.

The ISA records confirm that value of the in-ground seabed minerals in the CI

GSR Area, which the Cook Islands has applied for, is estimated at \$US227

Billion.

The CI-GSR Area of 75,000km² will be controlled, explored and developed by Cook Islands Investment Corporation (CIIC) on behalf of and supported by a joint, unique and potentially lucrative arrangement between the Cook Islands Government and GSR with future revenues from developments in the CI-GSR Area to be equally shared.

All potential future revenues from developments in the CI-GSR Area will be shared



GSR rep, Mr. Jacques Paynton and Minister Brown

on a 50/50 basis. Employment, training and capacity building opportunities will be created for Cook Islands people, directly related to work in the CI-GSR Area.

Under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“UNCLOS”) and the further 1994 Agreement² particular seabed minerals areas can be “reserved” for the ISA for developing nations. Tonga, Kiribati and

Nauru have already been granted such CCZ reserved areas by the ISA, which these Pacific Islands nations

will develop with their own minerals investment partners.

The Cook Islands has, through the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority, recently re-engaged with the ISA and expressed at the 19th Session of the ISA in Kingston in July 2013, our wish to develop our own Seabed Minerals resources in our own EEZ (under the national Seabed Minerals Act 2009, the world’s first dedicated seabed minerals legislation).

It further expressed that the Cook Islands also wishes to avail itself, as a

“developing nation”, of the opportunities and benefits of the Convention to the seabed minerals resources in international waters, that are under the control of the ISA. This is an entitlement of the Cook Islands as part of the “common heritage of Mankind”, expressed in the Convention, and will be accessed by the Cook Islands, while responsibly upholding all applicable international, maritime, safety and environmental conventions and best practices.

Continued page 18

Tare Booms Amuri into Top Spot

Amuri are proving tough competition as the Amuri 'Green Machine' head eight points clear of The Computer Man points table courtesy of a 189 run victory over Vaipae.

At the centre of the win was the boundary hunter Dawn Tare. The talented right hander was in sensational form as he rained boundaries on his way to seventy, his second half century of the season. Vaipae needed

something special to put a stop to Tare and it came by way of Joe Katu with a brilliant catch in the deep from the bowling of July Pukenga Junior.

Despite Tare's departure the pressure kept coming, firstly from Retire Puapii as he posted his first half century for the season (54 runs) and then from Daniel Mataiti (59 not out) who, together with Isa Kiria, batted out the remaining over's to see Amuri through to

223 runs.

Life could had been a lot worse for Vaipae had it not been for medium pacer Putai Putai. Putai was the only Vaipae bowler that put a dent in Amuri's momentum as the right armer collected three wickets for 35 from his 4 over's.

The second match of Vaipae's double header, Vaipae versus Arenikau, continues this evening, Monday 6th January, after bad light effected play on Friday.

With Arenikau needing just 42 off 5 over's and Vaipae needing just 3 wickets it's going to be a nail bitter of a finish. The winner will go second while the loser will go lonely last on the round robin table.

The Computer Man Aitutaki Points Table: 1st Place Amuri (8 points, 2 wins from 2 games), 2nd Equal Vaipae (0 Points, 1 loss from 1 game) and 2nd Equal Arenikau (0 Points, 1 loss from 1 game).



Cook Islands High Performance Squad. The small island of Aitutaki boast four international cricketers. Recent performances may increase squad members

17 Year Old Amanda Mangi's 73 Runs Not Enough To Save Arenikau

17 year old Amanda Mangi is the talk of the Aitutakian cricketing community this week as the talented youngster lit Hollywood alight on Friday belting her way to an impressive 73.

Opponents Vaipae had set Arenikau the challenging task of reaching 142 for the win, thanks to an unbeaten 48 by national representative Tekura Kaukura. Tuaine Rota was the pick of the Arenikau bowlers collecting two key wickets.

However the performance of the day was from Arenikau's rising star Mangi. Mangi's 73 ensured that Arenikau were always on track for a win. The game went to the wire but tight bowling from Vaipae,

which included 4 maidens and two wickets from Teata Metua, meant Mangi was fast running out of batting partners at the other end. In the end Arenikau fell just 15 runs short of Vaipae's total.

The win gives Vaipae 4 points from their first match and joint table leader honours with Amuri. Amuri and Vaipae met this Friday (Amuri field) in a match which is sure to draw a large crowd as the two battle it out for title honours in a must watch match!

Women's Round Robin Points Table: 1st Equal Amuri 4 Points (1 win from 1 game), 1st Equal Vaipae 4 Points (1 Win from 1 game) and Arenikau 3rd Place 0 Points (0 wins, 2 losses from 2 games).

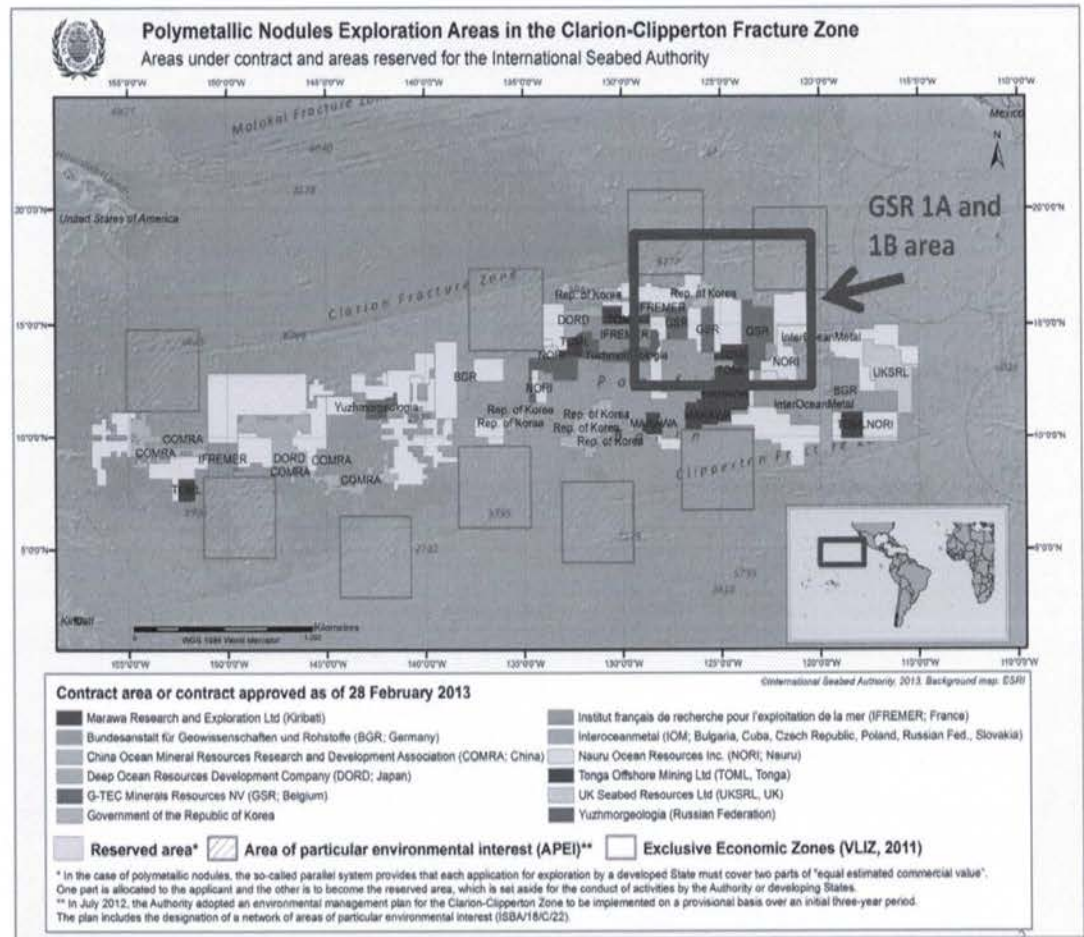


National Representative Tekura Kaukura will be playing for her club Vaipae

From page 16

The Cook Islands Government confirms and assures our people that before any possible seabed mineral exploitation can take place, detailed technical and environmental information must first be obtained and evaluated, through an advanced, rigorous and comprehensive exploration program. Our ISA Application is one of many steps we are adopting for our country to sustainably utilise and harvest the mineral bounty of the sea that has been bestowed upon us, in our own EEZ and the CCZ area. It is our goal for this to be done for the mutual benefit of its investment partners and stakeholders.

We now await the deliberations on our ISA Application by the February 2014 session of LTC of the ISA at its headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica.



Study claims Tax Review Process was flawed

From page 7

by the tax reforms.

This is a significant political risk that has not been adequately reviewed or discussed in the report and public consultations, with the Review and MFEM seemingly more intent on "selling" the proposed reforms than providing a balanced view of opportunities and risks associated with each proposed reform initiative.

Taxpayers

From the graph in the Review document, it is evident that those who benefit most from the reforms are those around the \$80,000 mark with those worse off being those who earn below \$10,740 and those who earn over \$220,000.

The Review points out that 70% of income earners will be better off as a result of the reforms. What is overlooked, is this means 30% are worse off and the majority of these

persons at the lower end of the income ladder.

The Review also mentions that these low income people will be compensated by increases in welfare payments but as previously discussed this is not necessarily the case. If MFEM has underestimated the impact of the reforms on CPI (the cost of living), the proportion of those negatively affected, would increase.

It is naïve to simply state that those who earn under the breakeven point of \$10,740 can simply pick up additional work hours to compensate for VAT related cost of living increases. Employers may not have a significant amount of work hours to simply give away, indeed businesses that are not very profitable often look to cut working hours in order to save on expenses.

There is also a comment about purchases made VAT

free at the market, reducing the cost of living for those who earn less. This is consistent with a false perception that those on lower incomes are able to purchase in bulk on a weekly basis at the market. In fact these sentiments have been stated in different forums by persons associated with the Review. These assertions are not supported by research and are irresponsible and ignorant of how Cook Islanders, especially those on lower incomes, live and behave. This ignorance is maybe reflective of the methodology employed in the Review and the composition of the Review team (papa'a).

Effects on Business

Businesses will most likely absorb the impact of the VAT increase by passing them on to consumers and income tax changes will provide some relief. The primary concern and risk to the private sector will be the

impact of the CPI increases from VAT on the tourism industry. Again, a complete falsehood stated in the Review is the elasticity of the Cook Islands tourism market. Tourism Corp and many operators have refuted this and it remains to be seen what the impact will be on the market in the short to medium term. The challenge now lies with operators to strive to improve the value of the product to these markets to complement increases in price resultant from VAT increases.

Note: On 29 December 2013, Teina Bishop confirmed to the Herald that hard copies were provided to Cabinet Ministers documenting opposition from Tourism Corp and the Aitutaki Island government to the VAT and other Tax matters. A copy was not able to be provided however, the Herald will secure a copy shortly to keep readers informed.

How to start the New Year 2014

By Senior Pastor John Tangi

Because this is my first Article of Encouragement for 2014, I want us to look at areas where we need to improve on from 2013, to help build ourselves up for this New Year. The main scripture reading is Psalm 51v.10-13. The Psalmist is saying these words based on his life experiences. In v.10 he said "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." David is looking back and realized that the problem started in his mind. He entertained evil thoughts until he sinned before God. At one stage in the life of King David, he was walking on the top of his palace and he saw this beautiful lady having a shower and he made some enquiries and found out that this was the wife of one of his soldiers. So he planned to send the husband to war, at a time when he too was supposed to be at war, with the hope that the husband would be killed in battle, so that he would have the wife! His little scheme worked, but later discovered by God's servant the Prophet Nathan, and David realized the huge mistake he made, and repented before God. That was why David said in v.10 on the basis of his past mistake/sin "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

That was David, how about us! What were our weaknesses last year 2013 that requires us to come before God and say to Him "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Only you know where you have failed God, what things



in your life need to be dealt with, and to be left behind in 2013. As we start the New Year, call unto God through prayer to 'Create in you a new and clean heart and put in you a spirit that will guide you and to stop you from going astray.' God said in Ezekiel 36v.26-27 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you, I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them." A 'Clean Heart' with the 'Right Spirit' has one purpose and that is to do God's will, to do those things that pleases God! So, from the start of the New Year this should be our prayer, for God to "Create in us a clean heart, and put in us a renewed and steadfast spirit."

In v.11 it reads "Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. David is desperately pleading with God 'not to give up on him! nor banish him from His presence.' Because David knew that God do take away His Holy Spirit from those who are disobedient to Him. I Samuel 16v.14 read "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him."

During the New Year, this too should be our attitude, be like David and ask God through prayer not to give up on our failures and our



weaknesses because we are only human beings. God said in Isaiah 41v.10 "Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God, I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." And Jesus said in Matthew 28v.20(b) "...I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

v.12 reads "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your generous Spirit." When you do something wrong, you feel bad about it. David felt bad about what he did! And he is saying 'God I know that I was wrong, please help me get back on the path of righteousness!'

Too often when we're down we stay down. But not David, he confessed the wrong he did and he gets on with life! David knew that 'Failure is not final!' This too should be our attitude during the New Year, get up

and go on for the Lord! I John 1v.9 reads "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

v.13 reads "Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You." This is a personal commitment by David, pledging himself to be a witness for God unto others. Declaring what God has done for him in his life. And David believed that when people hear of his testimony, they too will turn to God. God through Jesus Christ saved us in order for us to be a witness for Him unto others. This should be our aim for 2014, to share to others what Jesus Christ has done in our lives, and believing that they too will turn to Jesus to be their Lord and Saviour! May God richly bless you with His abundant blessings and guide you throughout 2014. Te Atua te aroa.

2014, Come At Me!

By Norma Ngatamariki

Hey there! It's my first article written in the New Year, so I'm pretty stoked about this. OMG, it's 2014 already, people, so we better make it count this time round. After an awesome two-week holiday, I am back at the office and sitting at my desk, figuring out what news there is to put in the first Herald of 2014. Feeling psyched! I have to get in the routine of waking up early again (NO!) but it's back to reality now. I'm pretty sure everyone has plans for this year, goals they want to achieve, stuff like that. Well, it is the New Year, guys! What's stopping you?

The fireworks at Sails were off the hook! And they lasted for more than a minute this time. Half the island was there to kick off the New Year with some brilliant, flashing colour that lit up the sky at exactly 12

am Wednesday 1st of January, 2014. The crowds were unbelievable and it was getting a bit rough because everybody was pushing towards the front. Everyone was dolled out in their finest outfits and I felt a bit under-dressed. I didn't really give a hoot because I was having too much fun. But, yeah!

My phone inbox was blown up with Christmas and New Year's messages (I'm sorry I didn't get back to you guys earlier! I ran out of credit). Christmas was pretty chilled out for my family because I got all of my presents before the actual day, but there was a lot of eating. That's the trouble with these holidays. You put on more weight than you've ever lost in one week (It's dangerous) but I guess it all comes down to self-control. Bleh, it's a New Year, so I'm gonna go all out for the first week.

New Years was spent with family and a couple of close family friends, drinking the day away. Well, that's the norm for an average Raro New Years. It's funny when your relatives get drunk. They tell stories from the past (and some stories, you'd wished they had kept it to themselves), give money away like party favours and try to send you to the shop to buy alcohol, even though you're underage. Yes, they just added to the happy memories. For once, though, I'd like to go out for brunch at some fancy place like Edgewater instead of cooking.

Yup, I'm pretty excited about what 2014 has in store for me. Oh, and it's my last year in Tereora College! Un-freaking-believable! It seemed like only yesterday that I was in Year 9, just starting secondary school. Oh no, I'm getting old! (That goes for my friends, as well) I



just hope that I achieve most of the goals that I've set for myself this year. Once again, it's 2014, people! Put the past behind you, live in the present and look forward to the future! Happy New Year, everyone!

Poetry

by Ikram Elabssi

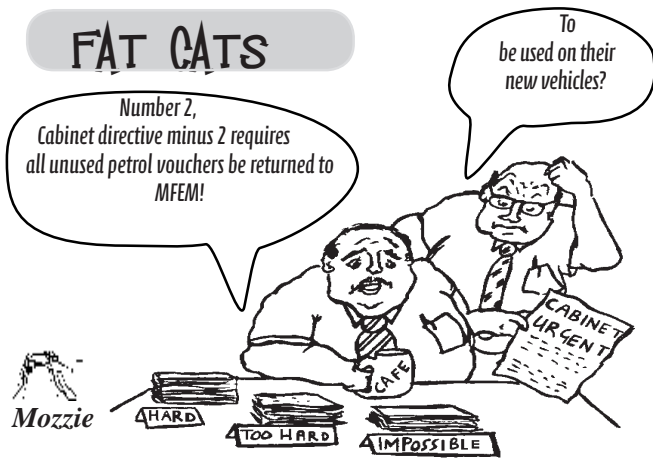
Ikram is a student at Nukutere College.

Hooked

I haven't seen you in a while
 And you haven't lost your sense of style
 when you look at me with that crazy smile
 You make my every move seem worthwhile
 And every time I hear your name
 I can live to face another day
 Through the mishaps, drama, heartbreak and pain
 Cause there's always a rainbow after the rain
 I still remember how you'd make me weak
 How I fought to find the words to speak
 How you'd always use to make me freak
 When we'd play hide and go seek
 Thought I closed the door on what we had
 But these feelings just keep coming back
 Didn't know you could make me lose control like that



FAT CATS



COCONUT ROUNDTABLE



Aitutaki ecclesiastical royalty, Bishop has made a remarkable comeback in popularity as the Grey Power's CIP renegade. Even had to come all the way from Heaven to denounce the CIP Mad Men for their tax mad bank account raids. Even had to drag MMMM-Mighty Magic Maggie Man of Action into action only for MMMM to retract after being doused at an emergency caucus meeting. A week later Bishop flew from Heaven via Raro to Mangaia for CIPs Papa Mama Pokino's unveiling only to find there was not one other CIP MP in attendance. Shame! The plane even waited three hours to bring the Bishop back to Raro. Now had Mangaia been an international destination.



The Mango Tree Parliament has resumed weeks ahead of the Nikao's weak excuse for a parliament. At the first sitting for 2014, the Speaker announced the order of the day for the first session. Bills to be debated are; the Total Abolition of Income Tax Bill; the Reduction of VAT Bill; the Increase in Foreign Fishing Licence Fees Bill; the Increase in Welfare Payments Bill; the Procedure for Removal of Unpopular PMs Bill. Details of each Bill can be obtained by writing to the Clerk of the Mango Tree Parliament.



Those on the local pension better watch out. Previously the local pension was exempt from tax but now it is not. And if any of you local turkeys end up owing government money, they will do to you what they did to the grey power lot-yes, raid your bank account! So, you people on the local pension, get behind and support the grey power! If

CHOOKS CORNER
WITH BIG RED



government say you have nothing to worry about, ask yourself, why all of a sudden, government wants you to show your local pension on a tax form as "local taxable income?" You've been warned!



What efforts is our government making to get its hands on some of that \$2 billion cheap, economic development loan offer from China for Pacific nations announced last November? Is our government not interested in economic development? If not, then assist the private sector to tap into it! That's better than doing nothing at all!



There may be a legal case chooks for no back tax to be paid for 2011. You see, it had been government policy for some 17 years not to tax those getting the NZ pension right up to 2012, when without prior warning or notice, the CIP altered the previous policy. Government cannot blame the MFEM officials because government is supposed to be in charge-is it not? Even if the policy was illegal, government cannot make the pensioners pay tax for a period for which they were not required by government to pay. It's like saying, oops I farted, now I've

changed my mind! Also, adequate warning should have been given of the intention to alter the long standing policy. What say ye Alex Frame? Do you agree? Will ye waggle your tongue? Officials just cannot change long standing policy willy-nilly and whenever it suits them. Citizens must be protected against overzealous bureaucrats.



Big Red has been furiously massaging and rubbing his big, shiny crystal balls and on peering through the mists he witnessed an astonishing vision. Gone was Puna to the scrap heap of political history! Finance had been snatched from Brownie's grip! The Bishop was conducting sermons on balance sheets! The concrete king was on the throne! Packing their bags for a quick exit were Tricky Dickie and Andrew (I was only following orders) Haigh.



Oh dear chooks, the cracks in the wharf are getting so deep there is a danger of persons falling in and not being able to get out! Now rainwater is getting in and affecting the steel reinforcing! But why is the Port CEO acting like a sympathetic spokesman and apologist for the NZ engineering lot? Just get them to fix the problem! At their

cost! Just like the ADB funded waste tip, the wharf project is turning out to be a \$28 million dud!



Why should anyone in this small nation pay income tax? Abolish it! Tax on income only raises about \$26 million per year. We can easily raise this and more by upping the fees for foreign fishing boats from \$60,000 a year to \$600,000.



Chooks did you know the current applicable legislation applying to payment for water supply, is the "Rarotonga Waterworks Ordinance 1960" which came into effect on 1 April 1961. Under Section 8(1) consumers must pay three pounds per year for their water and under Section 8(2) commercial users must pay six pounds per year. A draft Bill, the "Water Resources Management Act 2006" was intended to replace the 1960 ordinance but to date, this Bill has not been enacted. The question now is, will a cash strapped MFEM, pounce to make people cough up what they owe since no-one has been paying this fee for yonks. Will MFEM sneak into people's bank accounts to seize the amounts they owe for water?

Cook Islands
HERALD
PMG
PITT MEDIA GROUP

CITV Building
Moss Road
Parekura, Rarotonga
PO Box 126 Rarotonga
Tel: (682) 29 460
Fax: (682) 21 907
E mail: bestread@ciherald.co.ck
www.ciherald.co.ck

Editor: Charles L. Pitt
Columnist:
Norma Ngatamariki
Graphic Artist: Nga Glassie
Accounts/Deliveries:
Te Riu Woonton

PUBLIC NOTICE



**PUBLIC NOTICE
TE MATOVAI- CONSULTATION MEETINGS**

When Te MatoVai is completed in three years' time it will provide healthier treated water to the people of Rarotonga locals and visitors alike, and will be an encouragement to development on the island too.

Water intakes will be refurbished, there will be an increase in water storage capacity, water treatment facilities will be constructed, all trunk and ring mains will be replaced and all piping to the boundaries of properties served by the current network will be upgraded.

The final stage will be the establishing the operation and maintenance of the new water supply.

Supplying safe, reliable and affordable water for all is the overarching goal of the water partnership. Naturally before any of the physical work takes place the people of Rarotonga, all of whom are stakeholders, will be kept informed through a series of Awareness and Stakeholder communications activities including public meetings.

The first tranche of Te MatoVai stakeholder consultations will begin on Monday 13th January and conclude on Wednesday 22nd January.

Hon Teariki Heather, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure will lead these meetings.

There are meetings for every group of stakeholders as set out below and all residents of Rarotonga with an interest in the Te MatoVai project are encouraged to attend a meeting.

No.	Audience/Stakeholders	Date	Time	Venue
1	UiAriki/Koutu Nui	Monday 13th January 2014	10am	Atupare
2	Intake Landowners - Te-Au-O-Tonga (Tupapa, Takuvaine, Avatiu)	Monday 13th January 2014	6pm	Sinai Hall
3	Members of Parliament for Rarotonga Constituencies	Tuesday 14th January 2014	1pm	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Nikao
4	Intake Landowners Puaikura (Ngatoe, Rutaki, Muriavai)	Tuesday 14th January 2014	6pm	Kavera Meeting House
5	Intake Landowners Matavera, Turangi, Avana	Wednesday 15th January 2014	6pm	Muri Meeting House
6	Intake Landowners Totokoitu, Taipara, Papua	Thursday 16th January 2014	6pm	Titikaveka CICC Sunday School Hall
7	VakaPuaikura Public Consultation	Monday 20th January 2014	6pm	Aroa Nui Hall
8	Vaka Te-Au-O-Tonga Public Consultation	Tuesday 21st January	6pm	Sinai Hall
9	VakaTakitumu Public Consultation	Wednesday 22 January 2014	6pm	Titikaveka CICC Sunday School Hall

The aim of Te Mato Vai is to provide clean water via an efficient and reliable distribution system with minimal loss, to the people who either live or are visiting Rarotonga; and to manage that process and the system in a cost effective way.

Any enquiries can be directed to either Daryl Rairi 55 064 or Jaewynn McKay 55 486

TENDER



**MINISTRY OF
INFRASTRUCTURE
COOK ISLANDS
EXPRESSION OF
INTEREST**

**Purchase and Supply of
Tractor for Pukapuka Island
CONTRACT No. C13/18**

The Ministry of Infrastructure Cook Islands seeks registration of interest from Contractors for the Purchase and Supply of a brand new Tractor and Accessories for the Island of Pukapuka.

Registration of Interest will close at 3pm on Monday, 20 January 2014, and must be submitted to the ICI Office in Arorangi and addressed to:

Contact: Solomona Solomona
Project Program Coordinator
Ministry of Infrastructure
Cook Islands
P.O.Box 24321
Email:
solomona@moip.gov.ck
Phone: +682 20321

**ADVERTISE
WITH
THE**

**COOK
ISLANDS
HERALD**

**EAT LESS
MOVE MORE**
HEART FOUNDATION

VACANCY



PART TIME TELLER

We currently have three positions available for "Part Time Tellers" to join our High Performing Branch Team in Rarotonga. All positions a great opportunity for someone who wants to begin their career in Retail Sales and Service.

ANZ recognizes that our greatest asset is our people. That is why we are creating a unique climate of inspiration, leadership, values and opportunities by delivering continuous challenges, recognition and personal and professional growth opportunities.

While training will be provided to successful applicants, the following preferred requirements for this role would be an advantage:

- Secondary school qualification
- Cash Handling Skills
- Computer skills (ie and understanding of MS Word, MS Excel and MS Outlook)
- Excellent Customer Service
- Openness to take on challenges
- Willingness to learn new skills and participate fully in staff training sessions

Candidates with previous banking experience, especially with ANZ, will be given preferential treatment.

All positions are for 10 hours per week as a base minimum. The expectation is that successful applicants will be available for additional hours as required, for up to 40 hours per week.

If you think you are due for a challenge in your career then this could be it.

Please submit you written applications including a detailed resume, certified copies of academic qualification and references from current and/or previous employer:

Lorraine Von-Hoff
Head of Retail
ANZ Bank
Avarua

Application must be received by 10 January 2014, in order to be considered.

For further information please contact Lorraine Von-Hoff on 21750 ext 234.



**INFRASTRUCTURE COOK ISLANDS
WATSAN UNIT**

**REFUSE & RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICE
FOR RAROTONGA
CONTRACT No. CW001/2014, CW001A/2014,
CW001B/2014**

WATSAN is the Water, Waste & Sanitation Unit of the Ministry of Infrastructure Cook Islands (ICI) tasked with the development and management of Policies, Strategies, Planning and Projects within the water, waste and sanitation sector. It is also responsible for the management of the Rarotonga Waste Facility (RWF) that consists of the Resource Recovery and Recycling Centre, Septage Treatment Ponds and the Landfill.

A key deliverable for the unit relates to improving waste management practices to promote sustainable cultural and recreational use of the lagoons, sustainable tourism and to safeguard public health. Subsequently, one of the main responsibilities of the unit is the management of the Rarotonga landfill and the refuse and recycling collection service with a view to alleviate the impacts on the environment and the well being of the community.

ICI wishes to invite tenders for the collection and disposal of refuse and specified recyclables from residential properties on Rarotonga.

The scope of works under this Contract will involve:

- The collection of refuse (solid wastes) arising from residential properties on Rarotonga.
- The collection of specified recyclables from residential properties on Rarotonga.
- Transport refuse and recyclables to the RWF in Arorangi in accordance with all relevant policies, requirements and procedures and 'best practice' at the RWF.

The term of the contract will be 5 years.

A copy of the Tender document including specifications can be collected during work hours from the ICI office in Arorangi, or can be requested by email below.

Tenders close at 4pm on Thursday, 9th January 2014 and must be submitted to the ICI Office in Arorangi. Tenders must be submitted in hard copy inside a sealed envelope addressed to:

Mr Mac Mokoroa
Secretary
Infrastructure Cook Islands
PO Box 102
Rarotonga
Cook Islands

and clearly marked with "REFUSE & RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICE FOR RAROTONGA

CONTRACT No. CW001/2014, CW001A/2014, CW001B/2014" and the Tenderers name.

Enquiries to: Jaime Short, WATSAN Programme Coordinator
P: +682 22-648 E: jaime.short@moip.gov.ck

2014 Development Partners meeting in Rarotonga and Atiu, 10-14 February

The Minister of Finance on behalf of the Cook Islands Government is pleased to extend an invitation to attend the 2014 meeting to leaders and representatives from civil society, business and government agencies active in the development of the Cook Islands. This year's meeting theme is 'pirianga taokotai; inclusive partnerships'.

The agenda continues to focus on building donor confidence in the Cook Islands government national systems. This continues the practice of increasing transparency with public information and coordinating participation in a manner that provides space for the different perspectives to be communicated to our international partners by local community, business and civil society leaders. Minister Brown underlines that "participation doesn't mean everyone always agrees, on the contrary, a vibrant democracy is one where people have space and the confidence to voice their views and participate in meaningful dialogue."

A coordination team made up of the public sector and non state actors such as business and community/interest groups (e.g. women) is being hosted by the Development Coordination Division (DCD). This group has developed an agenda that builds on previous

meetings and seeks to integrate key policy documents such as the 2014-15 budget policy statement and recent research such as the 2013 PEFA self assessment and peer review.

International participation is expected from the government representatives of development programs of People's Republic of China, New Zealand, Australia and officials from regional and international development agencies like the United Nations, European Union, Asian Development Bank, Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Day one of the meeting will cover an update on the progress with the national development plan, discuss the opportunity to increase the role of private action in development and review the current Development policy in light of the 2013 Peer review and PEFA recommendations. This day will be at the Red Cross Headquarters at Tupapa.

Day two will see partners flying to Atiu to focus on development from a Pa Enea perspective. Themes discussed will include making a living in the pa enua, women's economic empowerment and local government. Small scale tourism, fisheries, agriculture and craft are expected to be prominent topics. This visit is expected to provide key partners with a more representative perspective on the challenges of Cook Islands development.

Island governments will also be provided with an opportunity to present perspectives on Cook Islands development and reinforce the 'Island government' as a new partner in local development. To increase meaningful representation, government will cover the costs of Southern Group island mayors to attend the Atiu meeting. Interested participants should contact DCD to make arrangements.

Participants will be flying back from Atiu on Thursday morning to talks organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with partners where ongoing and new programs will be discussed.

A feature of the 2014 meeting will be the use of radio communication. Talk back shows are planned for Rarotonga (11th February) and Atiu (12th February), interviews with leaders on local and international development issues will be recorded and broadcast. This is combined with World radio day (13th February) which aims to improve international cooperation between broadcasters; and to encourage major networks and community radio alike to promote access to information, freedom of expression and gender equality over the airwaves. More information on world radio day is on the meeting web page. DCD is looking for young people, particularly young women, interested in learning

more about radio. Radio stations willing to provide resources and contribute to world radio day in the Cook Islands are also encouraged to contact Tamara File by email tamara.file@cookislands.gov.ck or phone 29521.

An open invitation to the three networking events is extended to leaders and representatives from interest groups, non-governmental organisations, businesses and government agencies, scheduled during the 2014 meeting. They will focus on Infrastructure (10th February) and ICT and Development (11th February) and Pa Enea Development (12th February in Atiu).

Most participant costs, such as accommodation and airfares, including donor delegates, are born by the organisation being represented. DCD will package up the Atiu event to simplify logistics. Information on the meeting and agenda can be found on the DCD website attendance can be confirmed by contacting the Development Coordination Division on 29521 or email tamara.file@cookislands.gov.ck.

MFEM has a budget of \$25,000 for official travel, communications, interpretation, venue hire and catering and this allocation will be spent locally.

Please join us in getting involved and furthering productive dialogue with our international and local partners.