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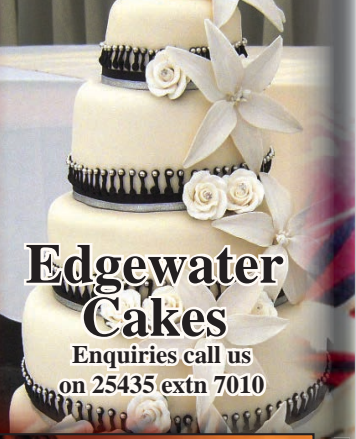
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Brian Baudinet suspended for 5 years fined \$3300

Verdict a knock out blow for FCI trio

While Matariki Wilson's CI News headlined collaborated media release this week with Football Cook Islands (FCI) stated the "Cook Islands Football Association (CIFA) recently tried to have the three members of the football community 'charged' by the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) Ethics Committee," OFC were delivering a thunderous blow of penalties for the breaches of the OFC Code of Ethics in an eight page Decision of the OFC Ethics Committee.

FCI members Tony Jamieson a former Cook Islands national representative, Cameron Robertson a committee member of the Titikaveka Football Club and prominent local businessman Brian Baudinet a former Patron of CIFA were all sanctioned simultaneously with the same verdicts.

Each has been "banned from taking part in any kind of football related activities at national, regional and international level (administrative, sports or any other) for a period of five (5) years from 17 December 2013 in accordance with Article 12(f) of the OFC Disciplinary Code and Code of Ethics." In addition to that all were fined \$1000 and cost for the proceedings another \$2300.

If the monetary penalties are not paid in full after the five years of the ban the ban will continue in force till paid in full.

The decision of the OFC Ethics Committee comprised of three

lawyers from Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga with the assistance of a two person OFC Investigation team is the result of a complaint that began its due process five months ago in September 2013.

CIFA's initial complaint to the OFC only related to the breakaway group FCI's President Tony Jamieson but after an investigation by an appointee of the Ethics Committee, Baudinet and Robertson were both summoned to appear before the Ethics Committee.

All three were given the option to appear individually before Ethics Committee on the 16 and 17 December 2013 at the OFC Headquarters in Auckland, New Zealand or by telephone conference. None of them appeared claiming OFC EC had no jurisdiction to enforce their appearance.

Their allegations of ethical misconduct were based on breaches of the Basic Rules, Representative Duties, Protection of personal rights and Loyalty and Confidentiality. All breaches were confirmed after a very detailed investigation and review of the information before the EC.

FCI's claims they were formed to bring reforms to the existing CIFA which have mainly been played out through the CI News by letters to the Editor and articles have largely been ignored by the football clubs. One such FCI article unwisely published by the CI News provoked a threat of defamation proceedings to which the CI News promptly published an embarrassing apology.



FCI member Brian Baudinet

When the decision of the OEC is forwarded to all the local Football clubs and Island Associations, FCI will be further distanced from those they are trying through the media to influence to bring change. Any continued association by CIFA members at any level with the three banned (Baudinet, Robertson and Jamieson) risk facing similar allegations.

All three banned FCI members have the right of appeal which must be lodged in writing within 15 days.

To date it is understood FCI have not provided CIFA with one submission of how CIFA can improve Football in the Cook Islands. Instead they have been found guilty by FIFA's regional body OFC of bringing the game

into disrepute. CIFA has received many complaints from members of the public concerning the FCI members openly verbally denigrating their officials.

While the breaches of the ethics code seem minor and the penalties harsh it reflects the seriousness the OFC view the image of football and low tolerance of the breaches of their ethics. The decision of OFC is unprecedented for the Cook Islands.

FCI have been linked to the unsuccessful attempt from the Cook Islands to have Lawyer and Member of Parliament Norman George removed from his prestigious appointment to Football's world body FIFA's International Judiciary Committee. - George Pitt



NOTE JAMES BEER FOR MURIENUA

Opinions, threats of court action and perceptions of corruption via Mato Vai

By Wilkie Rasmussen, Leader of the Opposition

Article 64 (1) (d) (e) of the Cook Islands Constitution 1964 says "Freedom of thought"...Freedom of speech and expression" are fundamental human rights and freedoms for all Cook Islanders. Such right(s) and freedom(s) exist and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of ..."opinion". I cite the above to pass as a message to those that got offended by "opinion columns" published in newspapers that such a protection is a mighty stone to roll over.

Last week, my column in this newspaper offended Mr Bill Dougherty when I painted out the scenario of contract lineups where Mr Dougherty's company wins tenders and subcontracts to T&M Heather, the company of the Minister of Infrastructure and Planning Teariki Heather who is Minister responsible for the Te Mato Vai Project. Mr Dougherty instructed his lawyer to seek an apology from the publisher and eventually one from me. I suppose he felt the implication was that he and his company was depicted as being corrupt. Ok, was I talking about future possibility or not? Was I therefore speculating and expressing an opinion? Unless the contracts have already been tendered then Mr Dougherty knows something I don't. Would I be right in saying that in the past the two companies have actually worked together on infrastructure projects, say for instance, the Arorangi Jetty project or some recent road and water works project? Is it therefore possible that it is a public perception that these companies had been working jointly? And let me say the public perception goes further – it sees two companies favoured for such jobs ahead of other local contractors. Members of the public have said that much to me.

Mr Dougherty has of course the wrong end of the stick. My column was aimed at the Minister for his blatant conflict of interest. One company director said to me that his company cannot bid for Te Mato Vai contracts because it is required to have insurance of up to \$1 million. His view was that this was a deliberate strategy to push the smaller contractors out. Now is he and I entitled to think of matters in that way? Of course we are. Politics and public funding and spending perceptions go hand in hand and Mr Dougherty runs a high profile company that should be subject to public scrutiny like any other and people like me are the scrutineers. If I was Bill, I would just get on with his job and have his regular beers and not become too sensitive to opinions. Further, he should be mindful that politics and governments are unpredictable beasts impervious to ones good track record.

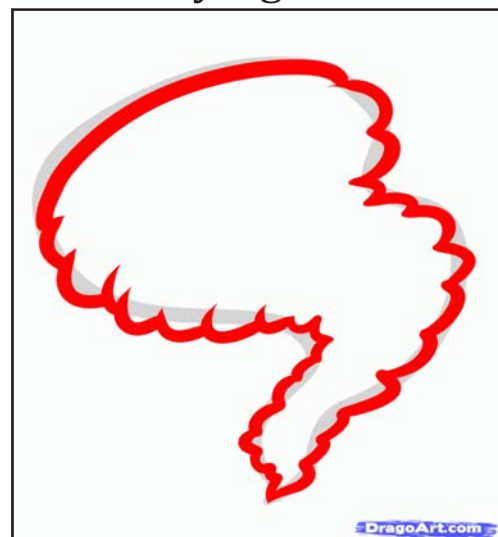
Let me again come back to my initial and constant concern. The Minister for Infrastructure and Planning should not be allowed to work on, decide and determine anything about the Te MatoVai Project because of his involvement with T&M, without doubt, the biggest constructing company on Rarotonga and the Cook Islands. I understand he had already bought a couple of new heavy machinery through T&M ready for the Mato Vai project. Look, I might appear to be really digging into my friend the Deputy Prime Minister but the bottom line is that such public tenders and works must be free of interference by those that will influence decisions that will be made and contracts that will be awarded. I have a long file of potentially damaging information associated with the DPM's activities as the Minister of Infrastructure and

Planning. These range from allegations to actual facts with supporting evidence but I'm not a person with a vindictive streak but I am a person that believes in the law and is guided by the law. I also hold principles dear to me that may cause me to set aside emotions in order to do what is right.

The Opposition is of course extremely distressed with the Te Mato Vai project in the form the Government is now promoting. It is poorly put together, poorly researched and based on models not compatible to that of the Rarotonga. The Opposition is gathering such support and will rally to halt this project so we all can fairly say that what we agree to go forward with is workable, affordable and acceptable to our people.



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The Chinese and Te Mato Vai a done deal

Heather must come clean and disclose his interests



Deputy Prime minister Teariki Heather



Finance Secretary Richard Neves

People who had attended several of the Te Mato Vai public consultations were astounded to hear a new pitch which had taken nine meetings to surface. With the Ministry of Finance and Economic (MFEM) secretary Richard Neves now participating in the TMV meetings after initially being absent due to being overseas he is making it clear to all including Minister Teariki Heather who is in control and driving TMV, which for Neves there is a lot at personal stake.

To have the first Peoples Republic of China's (PRC) trilateral aid funded project highlighted on his CV may make the difference in him getting a lucrative contract when his current contract ends this July.

After nine meetings the 'little bulldozer' (Heather's nick name for Neves) Neves and TMV Operations Manager Latu Kura are now under duress singing

the new tune that the PRC component is a done deal and not open for public scrutiny or debate. At least we have now been told but now let's put the brakes on there! If Neves and Heather haven't been honest about the PRC done deal, what else are they hiding from us? Obviously every word that comes out of their mouths must be carefully weighed and meticulously scrutinized

With the PRC's contribution to TMV a \$23.4 million concessional loan to contract themselves to complete a component of the project now being disclosed as a done deal, it is the only part that has to be paid back. With added interest our debt servicing, logically the repaid amount will exceed \$28 million. When was this arrangement written off as a done deal? Why are the public denied the details of the PRC loan? What has Neves and this Cook Islands government got to

hide?

The PRC loan puts the Cook Islands loan sourcing ability in a state of suspension for the next ten years, on top of existing loans as a country we are trunked, we have indebted ourselves with no margin for error or additional loaning capacity. Thanks to the CIP government and neneva Neves our grand children will be burdened with the loaning legacy, by then both will be long gone.

Next time we are struck with a sizeable cyclone all the reconstruction will have to be donor funded with the PRC in the front line offering help further engulfing us into their web of dependence and obligation.

Hopefully the Democratic Party Opposition will raise these issues at question time next time Parliament is reconvened and hopefully the Speaker Nicky Rattle will refrain from her bias shielding of government

and playing politics and insist the government answer these questions.

How the government is going to raise our contribution of \$26 million over three years is also being fobbed off by the arrogant, secretive Neves who thankfully will be leaving on a jet plane after July. Neves and Minister Heather may just get their slap in the face when a High Court injunction application to stop the project till details of the PRC are presented for public consumption is lodged.

A group of concerned citizens is also preparing a petition calling on government to stall TMV till full financial details of the project are publicized.

Heather has stated at several of the meetings there will be 12 locals employed by the Chinese contractors. A question for Heather the owner of contractor T&M Heathers Ltd, can it be made public the details of what

Continued on page 5

The Chinese and Te Mato Vai a done deal

from page 4

these 12 local workers will be doing. Will these 12 jobs be advertised for the sake of contestability and transparency?

In mid 2013 after the issue of the Chinese contract had been announced local contractors who began inquiring after possible work opportunities were told don't bother, there will be no tendering for sub contracts as T&M Heather Ltd had already been selected to work with the PRC company Chinese Civil Engineering Contractors Corporation (CCECC).

Eventually all will be revealed when planned development starts in conjunction with the visit of the PRC Ambassador from New Zealand for the round table talks is present in February. Any delay to the Chinese contractor's program will cause a serious embarrassment to the Henry Puna administration and an irritant to the PRC.

In November last year Heather and an entourage of four plus his wife made a trip to RPC under the guise of checking the quality of the pipes to be used for two the ring mains. About that time it was alleged the ICI secretary Mac Mokoroa had advanced his Minister Heather \$60,000 as a prepayment for crushed metal. It is also alleged during that trip Heather ordered \$280,000 worth of equipment advised by the contractors as necessary for the

development. Just allegations, time will tell.

For someone who has aspirations he should be the next Prime Minister sooner than later, Teariki Heather certainly walks the fine line of credibility with arrogance bending the rules without giving the appearance of breaking them. Heather has been in one to one meetings privately telling key land owners there will be no charges for water consumption to get their support while he knows very well the NZ grant is conditional on TMV being user pay. Failure to disclose all the facts, just another one of the traits that is characterizing the CIP government.

Heather's nephew Australia based Taura Heather who made every attempt during the land owner's public consultations to rattle him from the floor by challenging many questionable aspects of TMV was visited by family and close supporters of the Minister requesting Taura back off hassling his uncle Teariki because very soon Teariki was going to be the Prime Minister. Taura was encouraged to see the big picture and reasoned with to support his uncle as they played the emotional family card.

It is alleged while in the PRC Heather gave assurances TMV will start on time as planned and any deviation will cause Heather a serious loss of face. A source claims CCECC have filed an

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) application and the National Environment Service (NES) are reviewing it prior to it being advertised for 30 days which gives doubt to the Chinese contractors being legitimately being able to start in February.

Currently the Chinese contractors are constructing accommodation buildings on the former Kia Orana Foods site in Avarua central but there has been no evidence of an EIA or ICI

building permit approval. CCECC is yet to apply to Business Trade and Investment (BTIB) for their Foreign Enterprise Registration which also raises the question of their legitimacy to have started conducting their business in the Cook Islands.

Then again it is further evidence this guilt driven CIP government hypocritically preaches the law but seriously avoids and doesn't practice it.

- George Pitt

News Briefs

Rattle to head 2015 Group

Following Cabinet on Tuesday morning, the PM named Nikki Rattle, Speaker of the House, as the Chief Executive/Chair of the organising committee which will be brought together to plan the 2015 celebrations. The PM said Cabinet is supporting a year-long time frame of celebrations, which will include new events as well as existing calendar events that can be given a 50th anniversary flavour. Rattle will report to Cabinet and steer/oversee the committee's ideas and initiatives that will be generated by those wishing to participate.

-PM Office media release

Rarotonga Airport celebrates 40 years

Wednesday marked the 40th anniversary of the opening of Rarotonga International Airport. The Airport Authority will be celebrating with an official function beginning at 10am on Wednesday. Airport Authority's CEO Joe Ngamata says the staff will be conducting guided tours of the runway to the public that will set the historical backdrop of the airport's opening some 40 years prior and offer a behind the scenes view of Rarotonga airport. During the week, short clips and flashbacks of the Rarotonga Airport prior to upgrade to International standard, will be screened on CITV, showing the development of the Rarotonga Airport over its forty years.

- TeRiu Woonton

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Lorde is with us

Seasonal columnist with the Herald, Cook Islander Mareva Cameron with singer Lorde taken at Crowne Plaza Hotel in Auckland City on 15 January 2014. Lorde went on to win two Grammys for her song "Royals."



Our Frontpage model



Our frontpage model this week is 18 year old Lahela Glennon-Sakaria who comes from the Taraare family. Lahela is here for a holiday and learn more about her family and Cook Islands culture. Check out our website www.ciherald.co.ck and facebook page: www.facebook.com/ciherald

No more bank raids without High Court Order

BTIB adds new registration condition to Foreign bank



The Business Trade Investment Board has advised the Westpac Bank a new condition will be added to their Foreign Enterprise Registration conditions. This is the result of the poorly timed raids of the Grey Power members Bank accounts by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management's Andrew Haigh.

The Prime Minister Henry Puna, in a highly charged emotive radio and television statement to the Nation, followed by news print promised to reimburse the extracted pensioner's funds. Buoyant the PM was now taking control after repeatedly saying, "In matters of tax I have no say," any sense of joy the Grey Power had was short lived because on the Financial Secretary Richard Neves' return from holiday a condition was placed on the PM's promise and that is, before any funds were reimbursed the pensioner had to agree to a back tax payment arrangement with Haigh.

Once again the PM Henry

Puna's poor leadership was illuminated by the expats overriding him and Cabinet, power sharing by Neves isn't an option. Desperate to stem the rate of his unpopularity Puna was compelled to make a promise he couldn't deliver.

The legality of MFEM's Grey Power bank account raids has become a hot topic of public analysis and scrutiny with exchanges and opinions published in the media. Threats of litigation have followed with Puna's administration suffering a further slide down the popularity ladder.

The PM's back down continues to justify Grey Power's claims Puna lack's the credentials to remain Prime Minister. "The PM assured our members would be reimbursed but after four weeks no one has seen one cent," said Grey Power Vice President Denis Tunui. "Henry Puna is the great pretender, if he thinks he should continue to lead the country then call a snap election and see if he gets endorsed."

With Crown Law's Kim

Saunders backing MFEM, Neves is defiant and confident they have done the right thing legally and his challenge to those who differ by taking their issues to Court has only earned himself more public demerit points.

While the political and legal banter continues in the public furnace, BTIB has intervened to bring clarity and a more transparent and accountable process to the monetary extraction from individuals bank accounts.

A variation to the condition of the Bank's Foreign Enterprise Registration (FER) is as follows;

(g) is not to provide information or allow the extraction of monies from any bank account on the request of a third party without an appropriate order of the High Court of the Cook Islands,

Banks have security and protection obligations to their account holders under their own Code of Ethics towards them. Privacy and security are core functions of a Bank and the Grey Power are grieved at being let

down. The additional condition to Westpac's FER will prevent the ease at which the Collector of Revenue can be provided with private personal information or extract money from accounts.

People want to know their money is safe when they deposit it with a Bank according to Tunui. Grey Power brings in nearly \$6 million to the Cook Islands economy through international bank transfers. Tunui hinted there was a possibility the Grey Power would collectively support one Bank to have leverage and greater security over their savings. Tunui welcomed any initiative that made the extraction of account funds contestable.

Neves request for himself, Kim Saunders and a representative from Financial Supervisory Commission to attend the BITB meeting was declined. A spokes person for the BTIB said they were capable of conducting the affairs of the Board without the interference of Neves and company.

- George Pitt

Has the House of Ariki compromised their relevance?

President Tou Ariki's role in Te Mato Vai questioned



House of Ariki President Travel Tou



Deputy Prime Minister Teariki Heather

After attending several of the Te Mato Vai public consultations for land owners it has become explicitly clear to many discernable attendees the Minister of the now Infrastructure Cook Islands Teariki Heather has the House of Ariki President Tou Ariki firmly under his political thumb. Heather is also the Minister for the House of Ariki (HOA) and blatantly without a drop of shame has roped them in to help him fast track the consultation process.

To see Tou Ariki fronting for Heather raises many questions as to his motives. If it is for the reason of a public demonstration the HOA is fully supporting the multimillion dollar Te Mato Vai project then neither of them is convincing. If anything Tou Ariki is publically revealing how gullible and silly he is to allow the HOA to be politicized. Thankfully discernable land owners have publically stated for clarity's sake, the HOA and the landowners are not the one and same, HOA endorsement is not an automatic follow suit by the landowners.

As the public meetings have

rolled out they are for certain not consultations but an informative marketing exercise and should be labeled as such. Presented information has changed as the meetings have evolved as the public have demanded explicit answers that the Minister and his team have no answers for or are reluctant to be honest about.

How Tou Ariki can blindly follow and support Heather's rail roading tactics to get the process over and done with speedily when he knows the consultations are fraught with so many missing pieces of the jigsaw is indicative he is compromising the HOA. Tou Ariki's unwise rubber stamping of the ever increasing publically objectionable TMV project has undermined the integrity and status of the HOA which will once again raise the public perception of what is the relevance of the HOA?

Constitutionally the HOA has a role as an advisor to the government and a watch dog for the interests of the people. Tou Ariki needs to be firmly reminded the HOA are not the servants of government nor is the HOA an arm of government. If Tou Ariki cannot or will not see

the error of his ways he needs to step aside and let a new non political President lead for the benefit of the people.

Surely morally Tou Ariki knows he must speak to Minister Heather as the President and separate himself from the politics of Te Mato Vai. Then again who knows what incentives or persuasive hypnotic conversations Heather has whispered into Tou Ariki's ears?

The HOA is not sustainable without government's token budget funding of \$110,000 per year. Has this prompted the HOA President to become a dancing puppet for Heather? Tou Ariki can hear the concerned responses from the public yet he continues to pontificate on behalf of the Minister who he appears to represent. Is Tou Ariki listening to the people's voices and hearing them, then taking those concerns back to the HOA for discussion?

As negative public opinions have surfaced some tradition leaders within the HOA have begun to question their endorsement of TMV may have been in haste and that their emotionally convincing Minister

Heather may have been using them as a pawn to get the support of the land owners.

The HOA doesn't exist to represent the political masters but to represent the people who make up their collective tribes yet that is not being reflected by their President as he blindly is lead about as a trophy on display by the domineering Heather.

The next budget will indicate the reward the HOA will receive for their political compromise and blanket support of the TMV project as directed by Heather. If there is no significant increase in the HOA's budget appropriation then Tou Ariki was either driven by personal incentives (a government provided pick up?) or he is just plain stupid.

Or is it Tou Ariki being a Mitiaroan, he doesn't have the passion for the Rarotongan people? Maybe Karika Ariki Mama Margret will transfer her baton while she is still alive to her heir apparent to avoid the usual title squabbles and hopefully that will be Ian Karika Wilmont who would make an ideal uncompromising nonpolitical President.

— George Pitt

New pay system will improve productivity

The first phase of the new Cook Islands Government HRMIS has now been completed. The new system is now live and was used to for the first time to deliver the public sector payroll for 15 January 2014.

The system implemented in a cross agency effort between The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management and the Office of the Public Service Commissioner. The new system (pay global) replaced the old system (attache), with significant benefits in terms of improved productivity in payroll management and administration, improved services to employees, and improved reporting for public sector managers.

Teu Teulilo, leader of the implementation team, was proud of the efforts of his team. "We have spent considerable time in getting everything right in terms of system requirements and verifying employees". Improvements in productivities are expected to include:

- an automated charging to cost centers which was previously manually done;
- automated reconciliation of superannuation deductions within the hour as opposed to 5 days;
- automated production of employee payslips which are now sent via email;
- electronic archiving of payroll as opposed to saving of printed copies; and
- improved reporting on costs for managers in the public sector.

The next phase will now involve rolling out ESS (payroll self-service web application) to Ministries and agencies during February/March 2014. ESS will enable staff to login online and view pay slips, manage leave records and submit their timesheets online for approval by supervisors and automatic submission to the payroll at MFEM.- *MFEM media release 24 January 2014*

Neves fast track for Chinese fails

Business Trade and Investment Board (BTIB) are adamant there will be no short cuts for Te Mato Vai's contractors from the Peoples Republic of China (PRC). The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management's finance secretary Richard Neves attempts to have Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) exempt from legal obligations required by BTIB has been over ridden by Crown Law who have advised Neves and Minister of Finance Mark Brown CCECC has to apply to BTIB for a Foreign Enterprise Registration (FER).

It appears CCECC have commenced building their worker's accommodation amenities in Avarua without compliance prompting BTIB CEO Terry Rangi to notify CCECC representative Kefeng Nie to prioritise their FER application and no work should be engaged until approval. With the BTIB meeting monthly and the announcement CCECC will begin working in February after a public launch involving the Chinese Ambassador to New Zealand and Cook Islands there could be a delay to TMV.

Copies of Rangi's notification have been circulated to all Cabinet Ministers as well as officials involved in TMV. In October and November last year BTIB advised CCECC of their obligations. KEW's Latu Kupa had also impressed upon CCECC to make their FER application.

BTIB's concern is CCECC are fully aware of their legal obligations but have not cooperated and are obviously being advised by officials at the highest level. For a project of TMV's magnitude FER applications cannot be expected to be rubber stamped or approved in retrospect.

Rangi stated the current Board have made their position explicitly clear there will be no rubber stamping or tolerance of retrospective application approvals. Neves public disclosure the China component of TMV was a done deal raises the question as to why CCECC's FER has not been submitted. The Board will review their application with the intensity it requires without fear or favour. "At the end of the day if there are any short cuts it will be the Board who will be responsible should there be future failings," said Rangi. "It doesn't matter what deals others have made as far as BTIB are concerned they have stringent legal guidelines that guide their decisions."

- George Pitt

State of the Art Service from Cook Islands Customs

Since automated goods processing was launched in the Cook Islands on 6 November 2013, with the support of New Zealand Customs. Approximately 50% of all goods are now being processed online. Before then, those involved in clearing goods through Customs did all entries manually. The automated system can clear goods in 2 to 3 minutes when a payment regime has been set up with the company importing goods.

Senior Customs Officer, Walter Tangata of Cook Islands Customs (photo) is training businesses on how to use the new system. The aim is that 95% of entries by local businesses will be done online. Walter said: "Five companies were involved in the pilot phase and now 125 companies are registered for online good processing."

Comptroller of Cook Islands Customs, Andrew Haigh noted: "New Zealand Customs support has been comprehensive, thorough and generous." The automated processing of goods is the second phase of a multi-year programme funded by the New Zealand Aid Programme



which has already automated the processing of passengers by Cook Islands Customs, and provided staff and leadership training. Haigh said that the morale of Customs staff has been lifted by moving to modern systems. Automated goods processing will also improve the speed and accuracy of reporting to the Government on imports and exports.

New Zealand High Commissioner Joanna Kempfers said that "New Zealand was pleased to be able to support this programme which delivers direct benefits to Cook Islands consumers by reducing waiting times for stock to arrive on shelves." She also noted that the programme would contribute significantly to the ease of doing business in the Cook Islands.

A Government that we deserve

Election year is upon us. Later this year the people of the Cook Islands will go to the polls in a General Election to decide who will govern this country for the next four years.

In a western democracy, Governments are not elected. But rather, Governments are de-elected or kicked out. That is what happened to the Demo's in the 2010 General Election. The C.I.P. did not really win that election. Instead ... the Demo's simply lost it.

Hence : the Cook Islands got ... "A Government that we deserve".

This time around the "political jandal" is on the other foot. The upcoming General Election is there for the Cook Islands Party to lose.

As the country moves towards Election Day, the big question facing the voters is this : Based on its performance in Government in recent years, does the Cook Islands Party "deserve" to have another four years in Government? ... yes or no?

If the answer is "yes", then the majority of voters will vote C.I.P.. If the answer is "no", then the majority of voters will not vote C.I.P.. But rather, they will vote elsewhere or not vote at all.

In all the previous elections for the last 49 years since Self-Government, which ever party "won" Rarotonga went on to "win" the General Election. This time around will no doubt be the same. The outer islands are traditionally about half C.I.P. and half Demo. So the main focus for any election campaign is centered on Rarotonga.

Given the C.I.P. is the Government, with everything to lose, what are the main issues they will need to confront in the count-down to the next election?

For some voters it will be environmental matters. For others it will be education or health. Salaries and wages will have a following. "Government (apparent) Theft" of "Pensioners Money" will be a "hot" issue. Immigration will be of prime importance to some, while Government debt and Government spending in general will be of major concern to others.

All these are very important issues and deserve to be debated and discussed in the lead up to the

next election. I have no problem with any of that.

However, to my way of thinking, there will be three fundamental issues which the C.I.P. Government needs to seriously address, more than anything else, if they are to have any chance of winning the General Election later in the year.

These three issues are as follows :

- Trust.
- Credibility, and
- Political Party (C.I.P.) ... "Pride".

Can this C.I.P. Government be "trusted" to work, and/or continue to work, in what is the best interests of all the citizens in the Cook Islands? Can they be "trusted" to live up to that Party's motto and "founding philosophy" in that : "No one in the tribe should be left out, and no one in the village should be forgotten?"

Can the Cook Islands Party be "trusted" to be an "honest" Government with its "foundation aim and objective" being ... to "uplift to increased knowledge and prosperity all the people of the Cook Islands?"

Can the C.I.P. be "trusted" to follow its own "founding philosophy" and implement its own "foundation aim and objectives" into the future?

"Credibility" ... or a "Positive Reputation".

What sort of "credibility" does this Government have in the minds of most people today?

Does it have a reputation of being a Government that is caring, fair, honest and just throughout all its dealings and performance in Government in which it puts "the People First"? Or, is it a Government in which the voters lack confidence and are either disenchanted or unimpressed with the quality of its performance in recent times?

"Die-hard-Demos" of course will say this government has no "credibility", a very bad reputation and must be kicked out. Of course the Demo's will say that. What else do you expect?

But for "thinking people" in the community who are not locked into either political party, "political credibility" is of major importance and an issue upon which many will cast their vote.

In days gone by, most Cook Islands Party supporters were

very "proud" of their political affiliation. And they were not ashamed to say this during any election campaign. Many of those traditional "grass-root supporters" had a very big "political heart" for the C.I.P. in regard to its leadership, what it stood for and what its basic aims and objectives were.

Sadly to say ... "political pride in the C.I.P." is no longer the case for many people anymore.

The "vaerua", passion, heart and "political pride" to be a Cook Islands Party supporter is almost a thing of the past. It has been slowly dying away over recent years to the extent the C.I.P. is only a "shell" of what it used to be in the minds of many supporters.

Where has this "political pride" gone and why is it no longer there ... like it used to be?

Answer : Two reasons. The first being that the C.I.P. Government is not fully "trusted" anymore and secondly because its "credibility" is very much cracked and its "reputation" has been tarnished several times in the recent past. Simple as that.

There will be some Democratic Party supporters who will take great pleasure in reading what has been written above. Don't be. The Demo's are currently in major disarray within themselves, and in particular, with Norman "the Destroyer" George being on the verge of moving in and taking over the leadership of that Party.

Some Demo's are saying "No, no, never ... No". Other Demo's are saying "Go Big Norm ... GO." So that Party has got some interesting challenges ahead.

In Parliament, the present "Demo Opposition" (with "the Destroyer" being aside) would have to be weakest and most ineffective "Opposition", from either Party, this country has ever had in 49 years of Self Government. So the Demos have got nothing to crow about.

Can the Demo's be "trusted"



Hon Norman (the Destroyer) George
Could this man be the Prime Minister that "we" deserve?

to do a better job than the C.I.P. in Government? Will the Demo's bring more "credibility" than what the "other mob" has achieved? And what sort of "passion and pride" do their supporters have with regard to what the Democratic Party stands for and what they hope to achieve in Government?

Who knows? ... I don't think they even know themselves.

As we go into election year it is obvious that both political parties are in very "bad political shape".

Both parties have got big "political albatrosses" hanging around their necks.

Both parties are "hungry" for "power".

The Demo's have got everything to gain. The Cook Islands Party has everything to lose.

And following the General Election at the end of this year ... the people of the Cook Islands will end up with – "A Government that we deserve".

God help all the people in the Cook Islands. I think we're going to need it!
- Howard Henry

INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS FORUM



Kia orana

The Cook Islands Tourism Corporation would like to invite you to an **'Industry Stakeholders Forum'** on **Wednesday 5th & Thursday 6th February** at the **Assembly of God Church in Takuvaine** from **8:30am-1pm** daily. Each half day will end with lunch being served.

The objective of the forum is to engage stakeholders at all levels, Government, Community, and the Business Sector to address cross-cutting issues in the industry and re-invigorate debate about the development of the tourism industry in the Cook Islands and issues that are affecting it. The forum will be delivered by way of panel discussions as well as working groups.

Key outcomes from the forum will be focused on action items that individuals or organizations can take ownership of to address or improve the issue / focus areas discussed. See tentative program below.

Program	Time
Day 1 – Wed 5th Feb	
<i>Welcome address</i>	8.30-8.50
<i>AUT Visitor Satisfaction Survey Results</i>	8.50-9.15
<i>Panel Discussion 1</i> MOST APPEALING ELEMENTS FOR VISITORS – PEOPLE, ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE	9.15-10.00
<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>	10.00-10.15
<i>Panel Discussion 2</i> LEAST APPEALING ELEMENTS FOR VISITORS – DOGS, DRIVERS LICENSES, CUSTOMER SERVICE, TRANSPORT, ACCOMMODATION	10.15-11.00
<i>Working group session 1</i>	11.30-12.45
LUNCH – end of day one	
Day 1 – Thurs 6th Feb	
<i>Welcome / Recap of Wednesdays discussion</i>	8.25-8.45
<i>Panel Discussion 3 – GROWING TOURISM IN THE SISTER ISLANDS</i>	8.45-9.45
<i>Panel Discussion 4 – TOURISM EDUCATION & TRAINING</i>	9.45-10.30
<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>	10.30-10.45
<i>Panel Discussion 5 – NATIONAL & EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	10.45-11.30
<i>Working group session 2</i>	11.30-12.45
Wrap up & Closing Remarks	12.45-1.00
LUNCH – end of day two	

All interested participants are asked to please RSVP by Monday 3rd February 2014 to Noeline Mateariki on telephone (+682) 29435 or email: noeline.mateariki@cookislands.gov.ck

“User pays” a condition of funding for water project

When our government signed up for the project’s funding it also had to agree to introduce user pays and it did so without any public consultation. The previous Demo government rejected a similar offer when it was made some years ago.

By Charles Pitt

In public consultations, government has not made it clear that when it agreed to accept a grant from NZ towards the cost of funding the Te Mato Vai -water project, it came with the condition that our government introduce a user pays system.

Government agreed to this condition without any prior consultations with the public or any consideration of other options for meeting the cost of setting up the State Owned Enterprise (SOE) that is to operate and maintain the water system when the project is completed.

The SOE will come with all the trappings of political patronage. There will be a Board with a suitable political appointee to chair it, at an attractive fee. Consultants will need to be called in to ensure the SOE is profitable. As an SOE, it will be required to pay government a dividend each year. This will put pressure on the SOE to increase fees as depopulation causes the tax base to shrink.

Alternatively, perhaps with pressure from the NZ government, our government may be forced to privatize the SOE, selling it off to an overseas company, perhaps from NZ that has experience in Water Works Management. Government, as is the case with Telecom, may retain some shares.

For the public to be discussing user pays now at public meetings on the water project is futile since our government has already committed us, without our knowledge or permission, to user pays. Back in 2008, the ADB in its Inception Report on Infrastructure, (see extract)

pointed to the historical and cultural resistance to the charging of fees for water.

Extract;
“7. User Pay and Cost Recovery

228. While people accept paying for electricity and telecommunications there is historical and cultural resistance in the Cook Islands to the charging of fees for services such as water supply, sanitation and solid waste disposal. Projects for improvement in these services will involve significant capital and operating investment and will require financial and economic justification for this investment.

For water, demand management will assume increasing importance for the sustainable management of a finite resource in the face of Global climate change and the need for contingency planning.

229. Direct payment for water will inevitably become part of the demand

management strategies. Presently reference is made to water being “free”. This is far from the case as the costs are met through government revenues including personal taxation and is “paid” indirectly by the consumer. Over time, the costs are likely to

become too high for the Government to bear while meeting its broader obligations within budget realities. The risk under these circumstances is the under-funding of

the activity as the Government juggles other priorities and demands. There are

indications of this at the present time. This is a

contemporary pan-Pacific issue. 230. Transparent costing of water and the direct charging of consumers, allows

consumers the ability to identify costs and relate these to the level of service and standards of the supply provided, thereby empowering the consumer and water user groups with information which will allow them to advocate directly with the supply agency for service levels matching to their expectations and willingness to pay.

Government needs to develop strategies for the recovery of the costs of services and show how this will be achieved.”

Further extract;
“463. Tariffs are not applied and there is a strong resistance to introducing user

charges both from the government, public sector and the community. While the water may be free, as it is commonly cited in the Cook Islands, the government’s

investment in the delivery assets (pipes and intakes) is significant as is the annual recurring cost of operation and maintenance. Without sufficient funds the system

cannot be maintained adequately. In fact people are paying for their water now.

464. The government’s investment in water through the annual capital and

operational budgets is equivalent to about \$200 per household per year on average.

This is equivalent to about \$17/month per household for clean water being piped into

houses for non-potable use (excluding the cost of water losses in system). This sum

is paid through the general taxes. Households typically use bottled water for drinking and cooking purposes. Assuming three 15-liter bottles per household per week, households pay about \$84/ for potable water. Therefore, the actual cost of water for a typical Rarotongan household is about \$100/month. This is equivalent to \$3.60/m3.

465. The above suggests that if tariffs for potable quality water supply could be

delivered to households for less than this amount, it would actually be cheaper for

users to pay for the service and at the same time have the convenience of drinking

water on tap. A separate “visible” charge for water would also encourage reduction of

wastage through repair of leaking taps and pipes, and would prompt agriculture users to find alternative sources of supply to being connected to the reticulation system.”

The previous Democratic government not only froze the Chinese loan for the project but also rejected an offer from NZ which came with the condition that user pays be introduced.

The previous Democratic Party government froze the Chinese loan because if we ever found ourselves in the position of not being able to repay the loan, the Chinese would convert the loan to a “grant” not requiring repayment but with “strings” attached. Those strings would be access to our resources.

The Chinese made a similar offer when they provided the loan for building the indoor sports stadium. They would convert the loan to a grant if we could not pay.

Adventure and challenge at FLAME 14 Jamboree

Story and more photos page 16



For another country to require user pays as a condition of funding without regard to other potential avenues of funding, is an inappropriate manipulation of our sovereignty, an unwarranted attempt at "social engineering" and a return to colonialism.

For our government to agree to this without public consultation, is worse. Where is the democratic process at work? It isn't.

In NZ there is a legal framework in place called, the "Resource Management Act" which ensures there is a legally binding and enforceable public consultation process and that submissions are taken seriously by a committee independent of government influence.

There is no such legal process in this country, except for the select committee process, and what passes for public consultation needs to be greatly improved.

There may be other options to user pays, for example, why not raise the necessary funds for ongoing upkeep, improvements and

maintenance by bumping up the license fees for foreign fishing boats?

The policy aim should be to reduce the financial pressure on a dwindling population already struggling to cope with the increasing costs of living.

We need to start using our own brains not those of overseas consultants and make our assets work better, smarter and harder for us rather than introducing new taxes on a dwindling tax base.

The ADB in para 465 above mentions agricultural users seeking an alternative water system. Rather than replace the existing pipes, why not retain them for use by the growers? It is an existing asset which should be put to use rather than be dug up and replaced.

Why should we adopt NZ solutions? We have a much smaller population of tax payers and residents so we should seek solutions appropriate for our size. We need to reduce the financial burden on our people to make their lives easier not more difficult.

The policy aim should be to move the country further towards a tax free state.



Te Mato Vai: Other, cheaper options should be considered

An information paper - Te Manako By Enuia Bishop- Former Deputy Director of Water Works

Part 1

I must congratulate the government for taking the initiative to seek funding to help complete the continuous upgrading of our Water Supply System on Rarotonga, which has been done successfully by the Water Works Division for years. The intention is very good BUT the trouble with this sort of funding is that the donor agencies calls the tune about what's to be done, such as, supply of materials, labor force provided, excessive project costs, tax, levy exemptions and so on, The bottom line is, whatever amount of monies borrowed, most of it will go back to the financier of the project and we will be left with huge debts to pay, sometimes with questionable work left for us to fix. The cracked Avatiu harbor wharf is one of the latest examples.

We used to have 100mm diameter galvanized ring mains, 50mm diameter sub mains, from which a 15mm service line is piped into the homes. Over the years these galvanized pipes, corroded, and leaked, so we changed over to AC AND P.V.C. pipes, and increased the sizes of the ring mains to 200mm, 150mm, 100mm, sub mains to 80mm and service lines to homes, in 25mm mpde pipes, this has stopped the leak. It can also be noted, that existing in some areas of the ring mains are done in AC or asbestos pipes and some trunk mains, we also put new water galleries and new water intakes in. Most of these projects were funded through New Zealand, Australia, WHO aids and Cook Islands government funding, NO IOU'S. Although it was done at a piece meal pace we still managed, and did it by ourselves, successfully.

I strongly believe that this is the best way for us to go about upgrading our Water Supplies System, especially now, that government is committed to

front up \$20 to \$25 million and it's more than enough to do the job. We do not have to borrow any money and become indebted to other countries. This can be done professionally, by a qualified Sanitary Engineer and a qualified Quantity Surveyor to monitor, contribute technical assistance with local input. In doing so, we may save \$5 million to do 5 km of the main road, tar-sealed. All government has to do, ask for these two persons and have them included in the task force, comprising of local capable counterparts, to oversee, adjust and come up with a realistic Master Plan for the completion of water projects on Rarotonga. Only then, can it be properly costed and materials can be sourced in New Zealand and Australia direct with manufacturers at reduced costs. At the moment, it's guess work, just pick any number out of the sky and keep adding to it to make it appear real, pulling the wool over our eyes, and it has been sanctioned by government.

Once you ask for so called experts or consultants for advice, straight away you have exposed your weaknesses and your vulnerability and you are sure to be taken advantage of. To make it worse, there is no local qualified person with plenty of guts to affirm the project proposals are the right options for us to go for, even to come up with a master plan to complete our Water Supply System and present it to the government, so shameful and pitiful. The Water Works Division definitely requires urgent institutional strengthening, organizational re-structure, with strong capable leadership at the helm. Hope the government will put on hold the green-light approval until other options like the ones I am proposing, is looked at by two independent experts as suggested above and the right steering committee. I strongly

believe the views and proposals I am about to present below, is the best way for us to go. The huge \$70 million plus earmarked for the water project is a BIG WASTE OF MONEY. With this huge amount of money, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Teariki Heather can wisely use it to:

- Complete the water project
- Complete the road sealing properly, main and back roads
- Complete installations of solar panels on all domestic house- holds on Rarotonga
- Come up with a Sewerage Outfall System for the island, for this is the area that's going to damage our tourist industry

We have to think smart so we do not easily get conned like we did with the Sheraton Hotel and many other projects. We decide why, what, when, who, and how we do the project and how the money is going to be expended wisely. This is not to become a quick rich scheme for some lucky people. Our country and welfare is at stake here. We the people are going to pay it all back to those who gave with one hand and take it away with the other, at our own peril because we allow others to walk all over us. Are we that daft?

SCOPE OF WORKS BASED ON A \$20 MILLION BUDGET

- Re-locating of water intakes to higher levels, to achieve constant water pressure of say, 10 BARS,
- Installation of huge double storage tanks to be used alternatively, also as sedimentation tanks, cheapest way of water filtration.
- Sectorise areas to be serviced by selected water intakes
- installation of water flow meters at the source, storage tanks, for monitoring

purposes

- re-design intake weirs,
- cut in new access roads to new positions of intakes,
- install new simple filtering chambers before the storage tanks
- install neon purification filtering systems in the homes, owners contributing, same as the water tank arrangements
- larger trunk pipelines from the storage tanks to be re-connected to existing trunk pipelines
- Install gate valves as required at sectorised points
- Continue subsidy funding of house hold tanks, the owners putting in for the pump. Harness rain water, roof catchment
- sections of under sized pipes on the ring main in Arorangi main road to be upsized and anywhere else
- Restore Akaoa Reservoir to cope with tourist accommodation water demand in the area
- Installation of water pressure points in sectorised zones for monitoring purposes
- Run a new reduced size trunk line for Avatiu and Takuvaine valley from the source down, maybe to about 10 mtrs above sea level, to cater for people living in the valley during severe droughts

BRIEF OUTLINE OF WORKS TO BE DONE

1. MURIAVAI INTAKE:

First, clear access road and upgrade the Muriavai Intake, the water must be collected in front of the weir like in Samoa and not at the back of the weir, creates high maintenance during flooding. Clear trunk pipeline layout, if required install a new 250mm trunk pipeline to and restore Akaoa Reservoir, about 10,000 CU.MTRS capacity, install a floating outlet system hooked onto a larger say 200mm delivery pipe and connect

COOK ISLANDS HERALD NEWS

to existing back road ring-main. The idea is to utilize the top clean layer of water, cleanse through sedimentation process. Now, sectorise the areas of Arorangi, say from Betela main road and back road, going all the way to the pumping station at the Hospital and towards T, Solomon's shop at the main road. The reservoir can meet the water demand in this area. Data available at Water Works will show the whole of Rarotonga use to consume 10-12,000 CU, MTRS of water on a daily basis.

Sedimentation is the cheapest method of filtering water, meaning, no chlorine, no white elephant cost. Every water shortages that Nikao and Avatiu residents suffered through any minor drought spells happens because Avatiu intake is opened into Arorangi at T. Solomon's shop, main road regardless of the fact that four other intakes feeds into the area, namely, Muriavai, Rutaki, Ngatoe, Papua intakes. The Ministry of Infrastructure worked round the clock, carting water from Ngatoe intake in Arorangi to fill the water tanks in Tepuka and Tereora in Nikao. Residents of the same village were in a way forced to pay to get their tanks filled, absurd. Water flow modeling for the sectorised area will not be accurate because if I remember correctly a 150mm AC ring-main runs along the main road past the Edgewater Resort. Three 50mm pvc water main connections were opened into the property not one as mentioned by Mato Vai news release. There is a section of the ring main in Arorangi, installed in 100mm AC pipe, needs to be up-sized to 150mm.

COST ESTIMATE: Two million dollars

RUTAKI INTAKE: This intake in my opinion, to be left as it is. To be used for water carting purposes during times of drought for the Arorangi area. Reason, water head too low compared to Ngatoe next door creating back flow problems even if a re-flux valve is installed, it will not work efficiently. Future proposal, build a higher dam to retain water for drought emergencies if required.

COST ESTIMATE: Nil

NGATOE AND PAPUA INTAKES: These can be moved up the valley, the weirs, the critical factor is the positioning of the

storage tanks to achieve the 10 BAR water head pressure, if possible, gravity fed towards the ring mains. The point is to get the tanks as high as possible, the water demand will still be met because of sectorising. Ideally, the two intake outlet points be kept exactly the same heights. The capacity of the two tanks to be installed on each of all the intakes proposed can be calculated on water demand in the sectorised area and a period of seven days continuous rain, causing flash floods, which leads to muddied water coloration. Normally, it takes one or two days for the streams to become clear of brown water. These tanks can be used alternatively on an automatic timer, providing clean water at all times because of sedimentation and ample water supply to last the flooding. Both intakes can be directed to service the areas from the failed Sheraton Hotel heading towards Arorangi, back and main road to the cut-off point at Betela Meeting House and the same at the back road. It will be noted that the heights of the intakes and storage tanks are of utmost importance because we want to achieve good water pressure under gravity feed. **NO PUMPING STATIONS HOOKED ON THE WATER RETICULATION SYSTEM, PERIOD.**

COST ESTIMATE : Two million dollars

TAIPARA INTAKE : This intake is almost similar to Rutaki, it does have back flow problems, requires to be moved back to achieve the 10 BAR water pressure level, that I think should be standard for most of the intakes. Similarly, the installation of the weir and storage tanks be consistent where possible with other intakes. The idea is to push water up to consumers at a height of say 35 metres above sea level without pumping. Any consumers above this level will have to go with a roof rainwater catchment system or a pumping system from a holding tank connected to the water mains supply. (New Water Policy legislation) Taipara is to feed the areas from Papua intake trunk line boundary and towards the Research Station at Totokoitu bridge.

COST ESTIMATE : One million dollars

The COMPUTER MAN Tech Tips

Phone 24979 Email: sales@thecomputerman.co.ck

Introducing Android Phones

Cont'd...

Tip 2: Get Memory Management Software

Users can download and install memory management software for free or a very low cost to use on their smartphones. These programs restore memory lost by defragmenting the hard drive or performing a recovery to find the lost information. Defragmentation also helps the Android run faster and this can even be done while using the phone. Once the software is installed, users can click on the app at any time to run the program and free up some memory. These software apps also provide other features for users to help them stay on top of their memory usage.

Tip 3: Close Unused Apps and Processes

Smartphones aren't like desktop computers; they don't have the same amount of processing power. Therefore, they do tend to slow down when several programs are open. If the smartphone does start to slow down, take the time to close a few of the background programs. Users can also end background processes running on the cell phone by using background task killer software. These apps are easy to download and use whenever needed. These programs work like the task manager on a desktop or laptop closing background processes when they freeze or when they slow down the computer.

Tip 4: Clear the Browser Cache

Android smartphones are also capable of surfing the web, which is something that most users love. However, using the Internet for long periods of time can lead to a buildup of data in the phone's active memory. The memory in the browser cache can start clogging up the phone's active memory and slowing down the phone's ability to surf the web. When this happens, users should clear out their browser cache. To clear the history, open up the browser and click on the "Menu," then click on "Options," then click "Settings," and then click the "Clear Cache" button. At this point, the phone will ask the user if he or she wants to clear the cache. Confirm the choice, and the phone will clear the browser cache.

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Adventure and challenge at FLAME 14 Jamboree

We departed from Rarotonga on December 30th 2013 and arrived just in time of the New Year's Eve in NZ. We returned home on the 12th January 2014.

The actual camp started on the 4th January 2014 – 11th January 2014.

The girls and leaders had time to prepare other things for the girls to enable them to gear up for this outdoor adventure program. However the Cook Islands delegation had the opportunity to spend a few days with their families and friends in Auckland before the camp started, meaning shopping, visiting places and so forth.

It was our first opportunity again to have this special link with the NZ Girl Guides for many, many years. There were 15 girls and 3 leaders from the Avarua, Nikao and Arorangi Girl Guides Company who took this on board to enhance their leadership skills and broaden their horizons in our Guiding organization. To offer our young women better opportunities to explore the different programs that we hope to establish in our new curriculum as we are moving forward to become Full Member in our World Association of Girl Guides and Girls Scouts Association in the mid-year.

The FLAME 14 as they call, is the NZ Jamboree every 2 years....we want to encourage our girls and leaders to take part in this in the near future from all our members here in Rarotonga as well in the Outer Islands.

It was tough for us to get this much girls and leaders to attend this Jamboree in NZ, because they have their own agenda and other things happening around the Christmas period and New Year, however we managed to work something out and knowing the returned airfare is high, but we got some great deal from Air NZ and we all

Try it Day schedule table

Clay Pigeon Shooting Archery Cookie & Marsh mellow pops Self Defense Box Fit	Zumba Laughter Yoga Circus Skills What to wear – colors Laser skirmish	Cup cake decorating What to wear – style Barista Training Photography Pamper Experience
Flower Power Raft Survivor Aquarobic Badminton Bell Dancing	Contemporary Dance Fitness Fun Massage Therapy Orienteering Photoshop SNAG Golf	

managed it well.

Nowadays attending any international or regional event is not cheaper, especially in their Event fees are high. So the leaders and the parents committed to fund raise for the girls.

We are hoping for the girls that went on this Jamboree to come up with some ideas how best we can spark our Monday programs to best suit our young women. The National Council hope this year will be a great year for our girls and leaders to have active and lively programs/ activities.

Here are the names of the Cook Islands Delegation: -

1. Haumata Hosking - National Commissioner/ Head of Delegation
2. Tapu Munro - Arorangi Girl Guide - Leader
3. Atingata Messine-Tereu – Avarua Girl Guide – Leader
4. Edna Teio - Nikao Girl Guide - Ranger
5. Annie Moeauri - Nikao Girl Guide - Ranger
6. Korina Manavaroa - Nikao Girl Guide - Ranger
7. Heiarii Syme - Nikao Girl Guide - Ranger
8. Ariana Kiely - Nikao Girl Guide - Ranger
9. Samantha Takai - Avarua Girl Guide - Ranger
10. Nurse Matangaro - Avarua Girl Guide - Ranger
11. Tongia Maora - Avarua

Girl Guide - Ranger

12. Eteta Tuteru - Avarua Girl Guide - Ranger

13. Vaihere Anthony - Avarua Girl Guide - Ranger

14. Talia Mataora - Arorangi Girl Guide

15. Kimiora Raea - Arorangi Girl Guide

16. Roimata Anthony - Arorangi Girl Guide

17. Roimata Katuke - Arorangi Girl Guide

18. Rose Tamarangi - Arorangi Girl Guide

Daily Program – a little about our amazing programme Saturday 4th January 2014

We entered the camp in the morning from our accommodation to Wesley College. We did our registration and then set up our tents with our given buddies in this camp.

Each girl must have a tent buddy. We basically provided everything like our tents and other gears for the camping.

We had our international night, where we showed them our island dancing. We attended this camp with lots of preparation work.

Like we had a training on this side before we went... general knowledge on our country, our guiding history, hoisting and carrying the flags, national anthem, Log book – for recording our travel and other important things in our book, uniform, gifts and so forth. This

was good for us, so we know what sort of things we are expected in NZ.

When we first arrived in NZ, we stayed at the Taha Wahia Woodside, this is a Guiding hall for the Manukau region. We had 4 days there. NZ Girl Guide helped us in this area for the accommodation and also our transport, they arranged for us to be picked up from the Airport and take us to Wesley College.

Wesley College is very big place. The facilities are great. The weather was a bit cold, but we managed well in that area. NZ Guides provide sleeping bags and our cups and plates and we request our families too in this area to enable us to be warmer.

Sunday and Monday

2 days we had the “Flaming Challenge”. We have to complete the Challenge in a team of four (you can choose your team of 4 by combining two tent pairs). The Challenge includes team building, brain teasers, physical challenges (but nothing too hard), chill-out time, food (of course!) and lots of fun and laughs.

We were taken for a Forest challenge, where they have set up almost over 50 obstacle courses for us to do.

Tuesday is our massive day they call TRY IT DAY

WE can choose three activities to try, and it's likely that the members of our group change



every session, as everyone will choose something different to have a go at. It's an opportunity to meet new people, try new things, and make new friends. Our girls choose 3 and here are some of the listing they provided for them all to do. For this day.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
Special day for us all. WE packed up and head out on our three day Off-site Adventure! On our Registration Form, we got to pick which Adventure we would like to do (we gave our top 5 options, and we were allocated in our Adventure Groups). The Adventures cover all sorts of activities.

There were LIME, ORANGE and PURPLE colors given for all participant into this camp. Our girls were in all the colors given.

Each girls and leaders was already allocated into an Offsite adventure before arriving in NZ, such as:-

1. Just Desserts
2. Over the Rainbows
3. Middle Earth in Matamata

4. Awesome Auckland
5. Ride & Glide
6. Pinnacles & Pioneers
7. Waitomo Black Water Cave
8. Canyoning Adventure
9. Splash n Dash Goat Island
10. Auckland Alsorts
11. Tauranga Wonderland
12. Mud Slinger
13. Kawau Capers

Over 25 exciting opportunities that was given for them to choose. Our girls participated in the ones mentioned above and they all enjoyed these off site activities.

Saturday

This was a last day and we all returned to our main campsite at Wesley College and packed to return to our Families in Auckland. It was a wonderful memories of an amazing Event. The girls grew through this experience.

Each day we had our meal cooked on the camp site, however during our off site we have to cook our own food with

a small cooking gadget given to us in pairs.

Each day we had the opportunity to raise our Country Flag with pride and dignity on the camp site. We had other programs that made us proud who we are as Cook Islanders. Displaying photos and other arts and craft artifacts to show case our country and our work in the Cook Islands. Dancing at the International nights and exchanging gifts to others like our local homemade things ... parau, ei pupu, printed pareu and so forth.

We also had the opportunity to celebrate one of our girl's 16th Birthday in this camp in NZ, Ms Kimiora Raea from Arorangi. This is a life time experience that our girls will not forget.

Acknowledgement

The Flame 14 team would like to say: -

- "Thank you "to our Lord for keeping us safe from the beginning to the end of our journey and guiding us each day.

- Meitaki maata to all our Parents, Families & Friends, Leaders in all organizations for your tremendous support in all our Fund Raising programs in Avarua, Nikao and Arorangi. Without we will not be able to attend this exciting opportunity.

- Ata wai wolo to all our Leaders in the Churches for your financial support and your words of encouragement.

- Our Patroness, Mrs Tuaine Marsters and the Queens Representative for your special words and offering our organization the VIP treat upon our departure at the Airport VIP Lounge.

- Meitaki Ranuini to our Mama Tinomana Ariki, Mama Tokerau Munro for your great support "Fare welling "us your children from the Girl Guide organization.

- Meitaki polia to all those who are not mentioned by names and have contributed and played an important role in our Flame 14, from the bottom of our heart. Thank you all.

Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement Consultation

The Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) announced that the first Cook Islands Consultation on the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA) will be held in Rarotonga with Dr Filimon Manoni, Legal Advisor for Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA).

The Cook Islands is one of the current eight signatories to the NTSA and various Ministries, NGOs and Agencies have been invited to participate in this consultation.

Dr Manoni studied Law at the University of PNG, University Malta, and ANCORS (University of Wollongong) and held the post of Attorney General for the Marshall Islands from 2008 to 2013. It is noted that Dr Manoni through his role as Legal Advisor in FFA has conducted a number of in-country consultations on the NTSA.

Dr Manoni advises that we need to be aware that Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU), fishing poses a real threat to all communities in all regions and sub-regions of the world. It is a phenomenon practice that if left to thrive, could prove damaging, not only to the economic interests of governments around the world, but more so, to fisheries as a source of food security.

Our region and our nations likewise, are not immune from this scourge, and stand to lose considerably, if no meaningful strategy is adopted to combat illegal fishing activities in our region.

To put this phenomenon into context, in 2007, the total tuna harvest in the Western Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) was valued over US\$3.7 billion dollars, which represented over 55% of the total world tuna production. In the year 2009, the highest ever catch of 2.6 million tonnes, was recorded in the WCPO, with the value of landed catch, ranging between US\$4 and US\$5 billion dollars.

By the same token however, IUU fishing activities in the region have continued unabated, frustrating Regional, and national efforts to properly conserve and manage our fisheries, and to maximize economic returns. It is reported that the average annual IUU catch is estimated between US\$707 and US\$1557 million dollars. In the context of the region, these figures represent a colossal economic loss, and this trend, if allowed to continue unchecked, will no doubt devastate the economic dreams and welfare of our governments and peoples.

The value of fisheries to the Cook Islands cannot be over-emphasized, The Cook Islands, like many of our neighbours in the region, rely to a certain degree, on the sustainability of our fish stocks, both for economic reasons as well as for reasons of food security. For us to stand idle and to allow the pervasive pillage of our fisheries resources to worsen, does not serve our national interests, nor the region's interests, and the situation requires of us, the commitment to play an effective role at the national level, as well as regionally, in the effective conservation and management of our fisheries. There is no doubt that our economic interests and those of our neighbours are intrinsically linked, in the context of sustainable fisheries, and this point underscores the value of meaningful regional cooperation in fisheries Monitoring, Compliance and Surveillance (MCS) efforts.

In the last 30 years or so, since the adoption of the FFA Convention, our region has implemented a myriad of regional MCS initiatives, to help the region better manage and conserve its fisheries. The convention promoted the spirit of regional cooperation in our MCS

activities, taking into account the vastness of our oceans, and the limitations in each of our jurisdictions. We instituted a number of measures, such as the harmonized minimum terms and conditions of our licensing, acceded to international, regional and sub-regional fisheries agreements, engaged in annual bilateral and multilateral fisheries surveillance operations, and with the assistance of the FFA, we are now fortunate to have at our disposal, the services of the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre in Honiara, amongst others.

It is not to be discounted, that we have as a region, come a long way in terms of the management of our fisheries. However, despite our good efforts, it is recognized that success has been modest, a fact acknowledged by the Forum Leaders in the 2007 Vava'u Declaration. In that declaration, Forum Leaders noted with deep concern, the state of fisheries in the region, and called for the implementation of a new strategy, to safeguard the regions fish stocks against IUU fishing activities. In the Joint Fisheries and Law Ministers in 2010, the proposal to pursue a subsidiary agreement type arrangement as envisaged under the Niue Treaty was adopted, and approved by the Leaders later that year. Following a number of negotiations sessions, the final text of the agreement was finally adopted on 2 November 2012, now commonly referred to as the NTSA.

The NTSA is intended to serve as yet another valuable fisheries MCS tool for the region. It is intended to strengthen implementation of the Niue Treaty, by building into the treaty newer elements, to deepen cooperation in MCS efforts, particularly in the sharing of resources and intelligence, aimed at strengthening fisheries



Dr Filimon Manoni surveillance and law enforcement efforts. It is the vision of the Forum Leaders that this strategy will promote and maximize the social benefits, and economic returns of the members, including the Cook Islands.

The importance of the Agreement to the region is underscored in the directive by the FFC Ministers that the relevant agencies work with members, as they progress the agreement through their own national review processes. I note also the specific directive by the FFC Ministers to the FFA, to consult with fisheries officials and stake-holders, and to raise national awareness on the benefits of the agreement.

Dr Manoni stated that "we now have the opportunity to act on these directives. With these consultations it is hoped that we will be in a position to bring our own review of the agreement to a conclusion. By the end of this consultation; we will all have a better appreciation of the implications of the agreement."

Ben Ponia, the Secretary of MMR would like to express his appreciation to James Movick, Director-General of the FFA, Dr Filimon Manoni and the FFA, for providing support at this consultation and also to the numerous participants that attended. - MMR Media Release

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus

part 1

By Senior Pastor John Tangi

I believe the path-way we're going through this year 2014 is very exciting and challenging. Therefore the purpose of this article of Encouragement is to give you some guidance on the way ahead. In the Bible in Hebrews 12v.2 (GN) it reads "Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. He did not give up because of the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for him, he thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, and he is now seated at the right-hand side of God's throne." There are 3 important issues I want to draw your attention to from this reading.

I Our Focus v.2(a) reads "Let us keep our eyes fix on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end". In a rough sea the captain keeps watching his compass to make sure he stays on course. No one knows what lies ahead for any of us. We all have our plans and dreams but we believe God is in-charge of our future. Sometimes in life, and even this year, we will come to a dangerous path where the way ahead seems to be very difficult and we can panic and fall into terrible trouble, or we can fix our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ and follow him, and we will find at the end of this year that we have been kept safe by his amazing grace.

Our reading gives us encouragement when it says that Christ is "...whom our faith depends from beginning to end." This means at least three things.

First, He laid the foundation for our faith by His death and resurrection. He made our salvation possible.

Secondly, He provided the perfect example for us to follow. Even when He was

tempted in the wilderness, He did not give in. And in the Garden of Gethsemane, He submitted to the will of His Heavenly Father.

Thirdly, He gives us the faith we need when we feel like quitting. All true faith comes from Him because faith itself is a gift from God. In Christ we find everything we need.

II. Our Example v.2(b) "... He did not give up because of the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for him, he thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, ..." The words in this phrase: "joy" and "cross" don't go together. There is no joy in death by crucifixion, but Jesus went to the cross and endured the pain and despised the shame that He might obtain the joy that would be His afterward. The reference to joy is to do with obedience to His Father's will! The joy of completing the work of redemption! The joy of bringing glory to His Father. The joy of triumphing over death and hell. These joys were His but they came at a cost.

There is in this phrase the principle of delayed gratification (enjoyment; pleasure; delight). We can see this principle at work in our own lives. Giving up the good to obtain the best. We give up food that we might lose weight. Students give up social life to study. There is sacrifice involved - one is forfeited that a higher one might be achieved. That is why our children study and do their school works at home for hours rather than watching TV or playing video games. On the other

hand that is why families leave their loved ones and travel to other countries or communities. They want the joy of seeing others come to Christ. In all these things there is pain involved, but it is pain endured for the sake of the joy that comes when the goal is reached. Jesus said, "Follow Me" and He went to the cross. Are you willing to follow Him? Are you willing to endure pain and difficulty knowing the joy of fulfilling God's will for your lives?

If we take this phrase and put it in words that Jesus

might have said, it looks something like this: "I want the joy of seeing my Father's house in heaven filled with His redeemed children. Therefore, I am willing to suffer the pain and shame of a brutal death on a cross." No pain, no gain. No suffering, no glory. No cross, no crown. No tears, no joy. Keep your eyes on the prize through Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

I will conclude this theme in Part 2 of the next issue of the Cook Islands Herald.

God bless

Encouragement Column

With Senior Pastor John Tangi



First day back

By Norma Ngatamariki

Hello, everyone! It's the start of a new academic year, so that means all the students of this nation will be back in their classrooms (except Avarua School students, what with the asbestos issue and all). For Tereora College, the first week of school was split in two days. Monday was for Year 10, 11 and 12 students and Tuesday was for Year 9 and 13 students. Argh, I'm in Year 13 now (it sounds so... old) and we're supposed to be babysitting the younger kids, who still need guidance in life. Jeez, I'm REALLY looking forward to this year.

As I was saying, the senior students (we're the oldest group in the entire school) had to 'mix and mingle' with the junior students (the youngest lot) as a way of "getting to know each other better". I'm not completely against the Anau system because it

does have its benefits, but I really didn't want to have to spend my last year at Tereora babysitting. Oh well, tough luck for me, I suppose. My partner in crime (Dean) and I were given the task of showing our "kids" around the school. We were tempted to go into the whole 'Give-Me-Your-Lunch-Money' routine, but they didn't look as if they had any money on them.

As you would expect a student fresh out of primary school to behave (plus, we had two boys, and at that age, they have the attention span of a flea) they weren't paying much attention. It's hard to believe that I was once that ignorant. In the end, they turned out to be a couple of good kids who were hyped up because they had made it into the national school of the country. Dean and I let them off the hook for now.

Then it was back in the Princess Anne Hall for some

fun activities. Mr Wynn (our supervisor) had given us a piece of paper. On that piece of paper, there were simple instructions for the four Anau groups: Te Kou, Ikurangi, Te Manga and Maungaroa. The first activity was that everyone had to pair up and get to know one another. Once the introductions were done and dusted, the real fun began. My group played this awesome game called 'Pukana' where you had to act real Maori. When I saw the facial expressions, I cracked up so hard that I couldn't play the game properly.

And so, that wraps up my first day back at school for 2014. In a way, I'm glad that we didn't go straight into our classes because I totally wasn't ready to hit the books. I have a really lively bunch for Ikurangi and I just hope that this year; we'll come 1st, 2nd or even 3rd placing for the Overall House Competition



(anything but last placing). Also, I'm looking forward to meeting my future Year 9 Peer Support group. With me as your leader, we're guaranteed to have LOADS of fun lol.

Overwhelming Wellington response to Avatea and Nukutere Schools Book Drive

The Cook Islands High Commission in Wellington has been overwhelmed with the support towards and generosity of many in Wellington towards students of Avatea Primary School and Nukutere College.

Requests to the High Commission from Avatea Principal Nga Charlie and concerned parent Andrea Rongokea in November for assistance with a book drive out of Wellington culminated in the collection by the High Commission of four pallets worth of books over a 3 week period in November/December.

"There are so many wonderful stories of generosity and compassion towards the students and

communities of both schools and it is a tribute to those who gave so generously what was collected in a very brief period of time," said Deputy High Commissioner Tapaeru Herrmann.

Similar book drives were undertaken across New Zealand via Mrs Rongokea and others as well as the Cook Islands Consulate in Auckland.

"At the risk of not being able to mention all who have contributed generously to the Wellington book drive, a few warrant mention for their facilitative role in this process", said Herrmann.

"To Anne Rose Writing, Porirua City Council and Brian Anderson of Porirua City Library who helped promote the book drive jointly with

Kapi Mana News and acted as collection points for the Porirua region, our deepest gratitude."

"To our Cook Islands Community, te Atua te Aroa."

"To Shane McDougall and Mainfreight NZ for your generous sponsorship of cartage from Wellington to Auckland and in particular, the "no worries" when we presented four pallets of books instead of the one we'd indicated, too meke!"

"And last but most certainly not least, to the many who contributed generously, whether you were one of the many schools who gave generously, or a family with a short or long association with the Cook Islands, our heartfelt gratitude on behalf of our

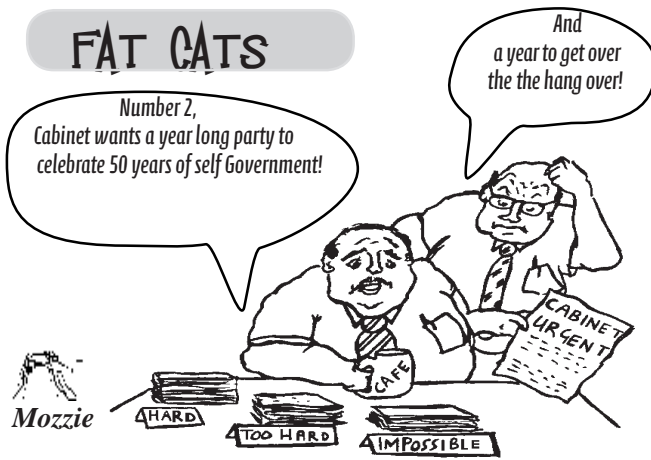
children and communities at Avatea and Nukutere."

The books are currently en route to Rarotonga and are expected to arrive in Rarotonga at the end of January.

"We've been privileged here at the High Commission to have been involved with this initiative," said Herrmann. "While the Office has over the years assisted with initiatives such as these for schools in the Cook Islands, the scale and scope of this most recent drive has surpassed all of these."

"Our heartfelt appreciation to all those who have contributed generously and we trust these books will go some way towards supporting the education and development of our children at Avatea and Nukutere," said Herrmann

FAT CATS



COCONUT ROUNDTABLE



Cabinet plans a year long party in 2015 to celebrate 50 years of self government! That means happy hour will begin at 1 minute past midnight on 1 January 2015 and end at midnight 31 December 2015! Imagine thousands of empty beer bottles not to mention thousands of empty spirits and wine bottles! And the drunken driving car crashes! How about forgetting the party and doing instead, one year of sheer hard work to get this country back on its feet? No overseas travel for MPs! More parliament sittings! Get the picture?



A couple of chooks attending the Murienua CIP green bottle drink fest on Saturday witnessed a rather entertaining incident. At question time 'call me DPM' T Heather got up to answer one and after he retreated to his seat PM Puna got up and gave his answer to the same question mystifying the two chooks as to why it takes two people to answer one question. Crow about the obvious power play going on especially when it was a question for the candidate.



The faithful CIP from all corners of Raro who turn up to help bolster the small weekly gathering of the weekly green bottle drink fest in Murienua are starting to murmur at the failure of Elvis Puna to break out in song. Billed as the star attraction, Elvis is expected to entertain with his three big songs, "Don't Be Cruel", "I'm Leaving on a Jet Plane" and his current gold number one hit, "I'm

CHOOKS CORNER
WITH BIG RED



the Great Pretender." There's still another two weeks to go and still plenty of green bottles in stock so it could still happen if Elvis doesn't leave the departure lounge via gate one.



Will all the improvements at Rarotonga Hospital actually improve performance? The public will be the judge. A chook fronts up to the Pharmacy to collect some pills which he was told by a nurse the day before, would be ready for collection. The Pharmacy said nyet! Nein! Non! No prescription received, so no pills issued! Rather than contact said nurse by phone to seek whereabouts of prescription, Pharmacy sends chook on wild goose chase. Find another doctor says Pharmacy! But doctors too busy! Nurse involved gone to Tupapa Clinic all day! Her Doctor out! Another doctor happens by, unlocks other doctor's office and locates prescription form on desk! Back to Pharmacy with form!



High flying bureaucrat returns from Abu Dhabi minus his suitcase! It went awol at Brisbane! Several days later

there's a phone call, "Can you come and collect your suitcase?" Where was it? In Keri Keri north of Auckland! How did it get there when Keri Keri does not have an international airport! Great one Air NZ!



The humble potato, originally from South America, a favourite of the Aztecs then the Irish, like roses, chocolates, champagne, candle light, it has become an integral part of the conventions surrounding the romance and courting process. Just imagine the scene, candle lit room, champagne on ice, mint chocolates in a bowl, roses in a vase and a potato on each plate! The only disturbance to this blissful scene being a screaming wife-a very hot potato!



Judging by the amount seized from bank accounts, (\$30,000 or so) is it neneva Neves, or Dickie Theves? According to some very sharp local legal types, MFEM can only order banks to "freeze" the tax required, in someone's bank account. Then, MFEM must apply for a Court order to extract the frozen money.

What say ye Fin Sawndahs?



The Poo Bah are back! Can we locals really be that stupid as to allow the Poo Bah back in to tell us what to do? The next thing you know we will all be wearing pink underwear because the Poo Bah said so!



A signal from a satellite moves at the speed of light does it not? So what does it matter if a satellite is 30,000km or 8,000km above the planet? Oh, but of course, the signal may be struck or deflected off its track by one of the millions of bits of space junk up there!



Wwhhoopss chooks! MMR release fails to explain what the Niue Treaty is all about and who the other eight member countries are. That's clarification for you says a chook!



The media person who has a fat contract to publicise Te Mato Vai also has her hands full with work for the Marine Park lot, Breast Cancer lot, and Aid Management lot! Isn't she a busy bee!

Cook Islands
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News Briefs *By TeRiu Woonton*

The Tongan Appeal held last week Friday through a radiothon on Radio Cook Islands saw a total amount of \$8,444 being raised from people across the Cook Islands. All proceeds will go towards the many victims of Cyclone Ian, after the tropical storm hit Tonga a couple of weeks ago and destroyed the livelihoods of the people of Tonga. Donations are still rolling in at the stage, and any unpaid funds from the radiothon can be deposited into the Tongan Appeal bank account with the Bank of the Cook Islands, account number: 315 75 s1. Mama Kafoteria raised \$5,400 two Fridays ago for her village in Tonga - Holopeka, through the sale of her usual \$5 plates of food at her shop. The funds were sent to Tonga and distributed to each family household, church and school in her village.

This Friday the 31st of January, a number of students from the Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute will be graduating. In the food and beverages section, nine students will be graduating with the City and Guilds Certificate as chefs, while 3 students will graduate with a City and Guilds certificate in food and beverages. In the Trades department, 8 students will graduate with Trades and Technology, 13 students will graduate in Trades for building and wiring and 13 graduates will graduate in Trades; Solar. Ten students will graduate with a National Certificate in level 3 for retail qualification, which is delivered by CITC and 8 students will graduate in health training Level 2, which is delivered by CITC also. Five fast track teachers are also expected to graduate. In addition, Violet Tisam from the Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute says that there are 19 new scholarships that will be awarded to the most dedicated and hardworking students. The graduation ceremony will kick off at 3pm this Friday at the National Auditorium.

The new 'Community Education Programme' will be promoted at this Friday's Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute graduation. The initiative, created by the Cook Islands Training Institute will include a series of different courses which come under Trades, Hospitality, Language, Personal Development and Arts and Culture. The programme kicks off next month with food safety, customer care, fun with herbs, French for Travelers, Journalism, Star navigation, rangaranga, ukarere and drumming courses as the first lessons for the year. Registrations will be open to those who are interested in

taking up such courses through the Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute at the graduation this Friday. Those interested are to get in touch with Violet Tisam of CITTI.

A small ceremony held at the Infrastructure Cook Islands office (ICI) last Friday saw 9 staff members receive National Certificates for completing an 'Infrastructure Works – Level 2 Course'. The course – which was completed in 2012 – was facilitated by the Faculty of Trades and Technology (CITTC). Those acknowledged were;

1. Iotia Atera
2. Junior Nia Remuera
3. Mathew Tepai
4. Michael Kamana
5. Tangiau Tepai
6. Teaka Upokoroa Pauka
7. Tutakiau Tutakiau
8. Tutoru Ngametua Arona
9. Willie Wichman

The annual conference of the Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society (PacINET); the only conference in the Pacific that showcases projects, research and best practice of technical and policy aspects of the internet from around the Pacific region could possibly be held here in Rarotonga, if Prime Minister Henry Puna approves the request by Chair of the Board of PacINET, Maureen Hilyard. Last year PacINET was held in Nukualofa, Tonga. Maureen says it was a significant event for Tonga as they have just installed and connected the island to a fiber optic cable so Tonga was experiencing faster speeds of internet for the first time. If PacINET is to be held in Rarotonga this year, this will be the 2nd time for the event to be held here, the first time being in 2008. With over 650 members of the Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society, a marked historic event is the Cook Islands as the first Pacific nation to be using and have already experienced a taste of the O3B operations. With the O3B being a significant event, it will be an ideal opportunity for 22 country members in the Pacific region of PacINET to come and experience it for themselves. Maureen now awaits for permission from the Cook Islands Government, approving for the Pacific Islands Chapter of the internet society conference to be held here.

NZ Research report dedicated to former Cook Islands teacher

By Charles Pitt

A NZ research paper completed towards the end of 2013 has been dedicated to former primary school teacher and Cook Islands government Cabinet member Tupui Henry.

The paper by Barbara Joy Hannant of Massey University is entitled; "What works: Academically successful Pasifika males identify factors contributing to their educational outcomes."

Hannant completed her report as partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of Master of Educational Psychology.

She says the aim of this research was to improve educators' understanding of factors which positively influence academic achievement for Pasifika secondary school males and contribute to research in Pasifika education on factors for improved student outcomes.

Her dedication to Tupui reads; "In 1965, in a New Zealand classroom at Birkdale Intermediate School, a talented Pasifika teacher took a Palagi

girl under his wing. All her life she had been told she was stupid and would never amount to anything. This teacher saw otherwise. He believed in her ability to academically achieve. His belief in her, combined with high expectations and skilled teaching made her believe in herself and she excelled. He taught her for only six months before commitments took him overseas, but she never forgot the impact he had on her. That Palagi girl was my mother. The Pasifika teacher was Tupui Ariki Henry, son of Albert Henry – first elected Premier of the

Cook Islands. It seems fitting almost 50 years later that my research would focus on the academic achievement of Pasifika males.

This research is dedicated to Tupui Ariki Henry, and teachers like him who see more in us than we see in ourselves and who inspire us to be more than we are."

Hannant told the Herald last week that the two University examiners who marked her work commented very favourably saying the report was an excellent study and had merit.

PUBLIC NOTICE



PORTS AUTHORITY

**PORTS AUTHORITY
1994-95; HARBOUR DUES**

Proposed By-Laws imposing new price schedules for harbor dues and other charges made by the Ports Authority in Rarotonga have been printed and a copy of the proposed By-Laws is open to public inspection during office hours at the office of the Board of the Ports Authority, Avatiu Wharf, Rarotonga.

Any queries or comments on the proposed By-Laws should be addressed in writing to the General Manager of the Ports Authority, Bim Tou, and delivered personally to the offices of Ports Authority at Avatiu Wharf.

VACANCY



FISHERIES OFFICER

(Part-time, Mauke, Mitiaro)

The MMR has two vacancies for a part time officer based on Mauke and Mitiaro. Applicants should be familiar with local fisheries and able to work closely with traditional leaders, Island Council and the fishing community. Qualifications and skills are required. For further information contact Uirangi Bishop on telephone 28730. Please provide a letter of application and CV addressed to the Secretary, P.O Box 85, Avarua or by email (rar@mmr.gov.ck) Applications close 4pm on Monday 3 February 2014.

TENDER



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

**SUPPLY OF WATER TANKS AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS
FOR THE ISLANDS OF AITUTAKI, ATIU AND PALMERSTON
CONTRACT NO.SRIC-CC C01/13**

Strengthening the Resilience of our Islands and our Communities to Climate Change (SRIC - CC)

The Office of the Prime Minister through the Climate Change Coordination Unit wishes to seek tender proposals from Suppliers for the Supply of Water Tanks and Construction Materials for the Islands of Aitutaki, Atiu and Palmerston.

Tender documents including specifications can be collected during work hours from the Office of the Prime Minister in Parekura. Tenders close 12.00pm 7th February 2013 and must be submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister in a sealed envelope and clearly marked "Supply of Water Tanks and Construction Materials for the Islands of Aitutaki, Atiu and Palmerston Contract No. SRIC-CC C01/13" and addressed to:

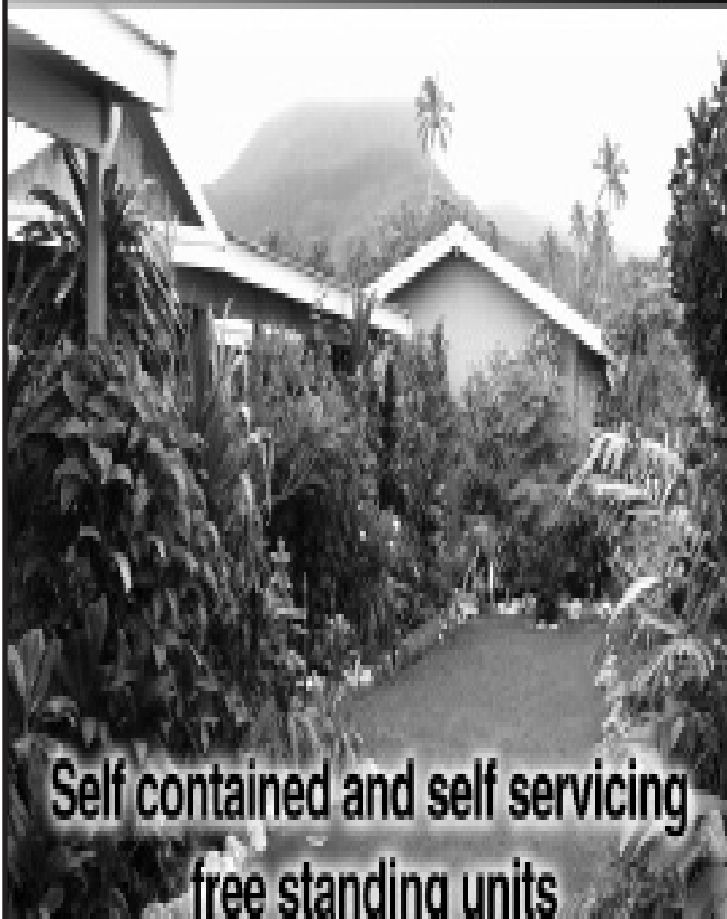
Chief of Staff
Office of the Prime Minister
Private Bag
Avarua
Rarotonga

A non-refundable payment of \$150 will be required for a copy of the Tender Document

All enquiries to Daryl Rairi, SRIC-CC Technical Assistant, Telephone 55-064, or email: daramide@oyster.net.ck

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Cook Islands debts

The recent Te Mato Vai consultations highlighted public concerns around the levels of public debt in the Cook Islands and the sustainability of it into the future. We must never be complacent about debt levels, and the issues raised were valid. There was however, a lack of awareness from those present around the actual levels of public debt held by the Cook Islands.

Every three months, MFEM publishes an updated position on the Crown's finances, which includes the level of public debt. The latest figures publically available are for September 2013. The figures for December 2013 will be available in mid to late February.

Our Current Debt Position

As at 30 September 2013 the Cook Islands had \$79 million in total gross debt. This debt consists of 20 separate loan instruments held with three different institutions with varying lengths of maturity (some are expected to be paid off by 2018 and others by 2045) and are managed on behalf of the Crown by MFEM.

Some of our debt is fixed at concessional rates and other debt is floating. Of the SOE's the Port has the debt associated with the recent redevelopment of the Avatiu wharf which is denominated in NZD but at a floating rate, and the Airport has a commercial facility of approximately \$3 million to finance upgrades at the airport. Full details are available at the MFEM website in the Quarterly Reports.

The Loan Reserve Fund

Against the \$79 debt stands an informal loan reserve of \$19 million. The loan reserve was accrued historically as State Owned Enterprises were then on lent funds which were paid back immediately. The SOE's have repaid these loans fully to the Crown. The Crown has not paid back these on to creditors such as the ADB simply because these loans are concessional, and the Crown receives more interest by holding the payments in a savings account than what it pays on the outstanding loan amount.

The establishment of a loan reserve is a credit to those who implemented it. Building on that a draft bill was tabled in Parliament in December (the Cook Islands Loan Repayment Fund Bill) which will protect the fund and to

enhance its role as the major debt management tool for the Crown moving forward.

Our Current Debt to GDP Ratio

The Cook Islands had \$60 million of committed net debt on September 2013 which is equivalent to around 15 per cent of GDP, our gross debt is equivalent to 20 per cent of GDP.

In September, two loans were committed to by the Cook Islands but had not been drawn down at the time. The first is a loan of \$7.5 million with the ADB denominated in New Zealand dollars which forms the second tranche of a \$17.5 million loan. This loan was a cluster of budget support loans provided to Pacific nations shortly after the Global Financial Crisis to assist the governments in maintaining economic momentum. It is a 15 year loan with a three year grace period and a current floating rate of 3.46%. The second is a loan of 117.7 million RMB (approx NZD 23 million) for the upgrade of the water ring mains (excluding the work done through Project City) from the Export Import Bank of China. It is a 20 year loan with a 5 year grace period, and fixed at 2% rate. Both loans have been committed to.

Adding on these two debts raises our net and gross debt levels to 22 and 27 per cent of GDP respectively. At the time of the Budget we estimated our debt servicing costs for 2013/14 to be around \$5.7 million consisting of interest costs of \$1.4 million and principal repayments of \$4.3 million. This will now increase by a further \$0.8 million in interest per annum once the loans are drawn down.

Comparing our Debt to GDP Position

People asked during the consultations, could we pay our debt off tomorrow? No, we couldn't. But neither do I believe that our creditors are going to arrive tomorrow to ask for the loan to be paid back earlier than what is in a stipulated agreement.

The best way for the public to assess our current level of indebtedness and its sustainability is to compare against the level of debt against the country's income (GDP). Some examples are provided below to allow people to make that assessment.

Our Cash Reserves

On 30 September the Cook Islands had \$51 million in cash

Our Current Debt Position

Institution	Denomination	Fixed or Floating	Amount Outstanding NZD Equivalent
ADB	SDR	Fixed and Floating	62 million
Exim Bank – China	RMB	Fixed	11 million
Development Loans - French	EUR	Fixed	3 million
ANZ – Commercial Bank	NZD	Floating	3 million

Comparing our Debt to GDP Position

	Net Debt to GDP	Gross Debt to GDP
New Zealand	27.5%	37.2%
Australia	13.7%	29.1%
Cook Islands (inclusive of China and ADB)	22.0%	27.0%
Fiji	50.0%	50.0%
Tonga	33.0%	33.0%
Samoa	62.8%	62.8%
Cook Islands Fiscal Policy Ratio	35.0%	35.0%

Source: IMF database

sitting in the Cook Islands banking system, of this amount \$18.5 million is unencumbered, this amount does not include the additional \$7.5 million which we have since received from the ADB.

Debt and Risks

There are risks with debt, and for the Cook Islands that revolves around exchange rate volatility.

Our SDR denominated loans expose us to fluctuations in the USD and Euro, and our loans with China expose us to the fluctuations in the Renminbi (RMB), which is currently linked to some degree to the USD.

Other Commentators

The ADB undertook a Macroeconomic review (much like an IMF Article IV mission) of the Cook Islands in June 2013. The report is available on the MFEM website and states that the debt position of the Cook Islands Government remains comfortable. That debt was at 22.3% of GDP, well below the government's own threshold of 35% and the 40% of GDP that the IMF considers a sustainable level of foreign debt for small developing countries.

The Standard and Poors report for 2013 described the level of debt held by the Cook Islands as modest but warned that a weakened commitment to uphold past fiscal gains through undisciplined spending and further sharp rises in its debt burden could also bring pressure on the ratings.

Future Debt

Public sector debt is not a bad thing, as long as it is channeled into investments that provide a rate of economic return which is greater than the cost of the

debt. Public vigilance of debt levels, fiscal discipline and continued management of risk is crucial to ensuring that public debt does not accumulate and become unmanageable, that's when nations lose their financial sovereignty as creditors come into resolve issues.

The ADB fiscal ratios which underpin our fiscal policy outlines a debt to GDP ratio of 35 per cent and a net debt servicing ratio of 5 per cent, although I believe the latter is unrealistic and needs revision, this was raised by a macroeconomic review undertaken by the ADB early last year. Any future borrowings will need to be assessed in relation to these overall debt levels and the returns which would arise from any future investments funded by those loans.

So in this regard I believe that our current debt levels are manageable, but there is no room for complacency, fiscal discipline is important moving forward.

The Cook Islands Loan Repayment Fund

Finally, the Cook Islands Loan Repayment Fund now before Parliament will protect the Loan Reserve Fund, ensure the appropriation for the servicing of debt servicing is a priority in the budget and requires MFEM to analyze and report to the Parliament and the public on the impact of new borrowing in the context of Government lending policy, including the amortisation schedule, the impact on debt service burden of the government over the life of the loan, and an assessment of the sustainability of aggregate government debt.