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Where's the apology Porter, never mind the vehicles what about the people?

This publication is calling on Toa Petroleum to apologise to the people of the Cook Islands for its inexcusable blatant disregard for their health. Toa should also be held in contempt for its disregard of the Cook Islands pristine environment that is the heart of our tourism industry.

Government must now review the \$1.5 million sponsorship using the people's money for Porter's business with the intent of revoking it due to the shocking evidence Toa imported and sold and is still selling fuel with high sulphur content. Rather than do the right thing and withdraw every drop from sale Porter shrugs off his latest malpractice like water off a duck's back. Toa should be taking out full page advertising in the newspapers, radio and television apologising for his misuse of public money.

Toa acquired the highly toxic Chinese fuel on 100 percent credit to supply the Luen Thai fishing boats. Ships generally use this very cheap highly toxic fuel because their engines can cope with it and at sea they are out of sight out of mind. The emissions at sea are blown to populated areas with serious health risks. Numerous articles on the Internet confirm this. It must be asked if the Price Tribunal was made aware of the lower grade of fuel used by Toa.

For Porter, an experienced fuel importer, to say it was a mistake is inexcusable as well as unbelievable. Before Christmas in a full page CI News advert, Porter's competitor Triad's Chris Vaile stated Toa had imported fuel with dangerously high sulphur content. In response Porter went public nullifying Vaile's warning with silver

tongue excuses and assurances.

Why the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the Price Tribunal have sat back after being put on notice and allowed Toa to continue selling the dangerous fuel is deplorable. Toa's shocking business practice while being sponsored by the people of the Cook Islands taxes must not go unpunished. Toa's import licence must be suspended and a full independent inquiry conducted.

Porter stated in Saturday's (Feb 1st) CI News the dangerous sulphur content was a miscalculation by his advisor. Instead of 57 parts per million (ppm) in fact the diesel 'turned out to be' 5700ppm. This is 10,000% more than it should have been. Hardly credible.

An independent test was carried out after motorists began complaining about their vehicle's performances. Porter only carried out his own test afterwards. The original test revealed shocking health risk results of 7400ppm sulphur content. This is 740 times more concentrated than the acceptable level for the Cook Islands. While Porter makes an apology in regards to the vehicle damage the contaminated fuel has done, he deliberately avoids making an apology to the people of the Cook Islands who may have become affected with the disastrous health results not being evident for years making it difficult for Porter to be sued.

In New Zealand the sulphur content in fuel is strictly monitored to comply with less than 10ppm. Currently Triad's sulphur content is less than 10ppm as NZ. Porter is well aware of the danger to health when fuel is contaminated with sulphur. The Cook Islands limit is 15ppm so why Toa has not been held accountable for this serious breach of the rules is an absolute

failure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to enforce compliance.

The CIP government must give priority to introducing legislation with the harshest retribution as a deterrent to future breaches. Toa's licence to import fuel must now be the subject of a review

Sulphur is a very serious health risk causing as a result of toxic emissions cancers and cardio-respiratory diseases especially kick starting asthmatic conditions. For many Rarotongans travelling by motor scooters this has been an undisclosed health risk while Toa's highly contaminated fuel has been for sale. How many travellers and their children have breathed those life threatening sulphur contaminated fumes as they have ridden behind motor vehicles?

Unsuspecting road users have been emitting highly toxic exhaust fumes for other innocent people to breathe and possibly eventually die from. All the storage tanks where Porter's poison sulphur concentrated fuel has been stored must be cleaned out, and decontaminated by an independent contractor by order of the Minister of Health and Minister of Internal Affairs Nandi Glassie.

In the context of the Prime Minister Henry Puna's priority goal of a clean and green environment and converting to renewable energy Porter has demonstrated a total disregard and should be dealt with. Further to that, Porter made a media release advocating and promoting a healthy lifestyle through cycling preferably on a bike purchased from his new cycle shop in Avatiu. Imagine visiting tourists riding one of Porter's hired bikes behind a vehicle bellowing out life threatening sulphur polluted omissions he had sold to the



Toa Petroleum owner Brett Porter

vehicle's owner.

It is now implicitly evident Brett Porter cannot be relied upon when he speaks about fuel. All Toa's further fuel imports if it is not suspended, must have independent test reports completed by an external source. Toa must be now carefully monitored for compliance.

As much as Porter's silver tongue endeavours to excuse him from creating this potentially national health problem. As a moral duty the public needs to reconsider where they buy their fuel from. To stay healthy look for the Triad sign and buy their fuel with a sulphur content of 10ppm not like Porter's fuel at 7400ppm.

-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.



SWITCH ON WITH
TE APONGA UIRA

Be careful
around fallen power lines...



Wouldn't it be nice if Cyclone lan was the first and last cyclone to hit our part of the Pacific in 2014! No chance I guess.

During a cyclone high winds and flying debris can bring down overhead power lines which is what happened when lan cut through Tonga. In Ha'apai every span of overhead power line was torn down by debris or wind.

Here are 3 important cyclone safety tips to remember:

- Stay well away from fallen power lines. Always assume they are 'live' and dangerous. Report them immediately.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio for official advice and power restoration information.
- If you experience tingles or shocks from an electrical appliance or water taps, call your electrician to check your electrical wiring immediately.

Chinese Advisors, Neves and Mokoroa stuff up Te Mato Vai project start

After giving the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) assurances that the Te Mato Vai (TMV) project will be launched on the 21 February, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) secretary Richard Nevea Neves and Infrastructure Cook Islands (ICI) secretary Mac Mokoroa are now frantically pointing the finger of blame at others for not being able to meet the dead line. It is unacceptable in the public service for the head of a Ministry to attempt to shift the blame for delays onto someone else. It only demonstrates a failure to accept responsibility. Ministers want action not excuses and ducking and diving.

The February 21 launch by the Chinese contractors China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) was meant to coincide with the presence of the PRC Ambassador Lutong from New Zealand while in Rarotonga to attend the Sponsor's round table funding meetings. A grand launch headed by Lutong celebrating the unique occasion of the PRC's first tripartite project globally was to be the highlight of his visit.

CCECC's assistant project Manager Kefeng Nie, Neves and Mokoroa have only themselves to blame for any resulting diplomatic embarrassment of the failure to launch the Chinese contribution to TMV on the preordained date. It is totally unacceptable for an important envoy such as Ambassador Lutong, to be exposed to a potential "loss of face" and how he responds to this incompetent bungle will be only known to those behind closed doors. Expect Lutong to keep smiling while he seethes within.

Since October 2013 Nie has known CCECC must apply to BTIB for a Foreign Enterprise Registration before any work can commence. Nie was reminded in writing in November 2013 then again in the same month. When BTIB chased him up in January 2014 Nie admitted he hadn't done anything, and then began a stalling tactic by insisting he be provided with all the BTIB Legislation to check out the validity of the BTIB requirements. Managers of TMV KEW also had been prompting CCECC to comply with BTIB requirements.



Richard Neves



Mac Mokoroa

Finance Minister Mark Brown advised BTIB in January 2014 Crown Law had advised CCECC must register with BTIB. In April 2013 the National Environment Service (NES) advised MFEM that CCECC would require an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA). NES continued to advise the TMV project principal Neves of the necessity of the EIA several more times.

With the commencement date within a few weeks away CCECC had their EIA advertised in the CI News at the close of January 2014 for public submissions. The public has 30 days ending on 28 February to lodge any submissions. These submissions if any are reviewed then presented to a NES Council meeting for consideration. The time line for an EIA is unpredictable due to the variations of public responses.

CCECC cannot start any work on TMV until they have been granted EIA approval by NES. BTIB will not approve a FER until an EIA is sanctioned.

Nie, Neves and Mokoroa must take responsibility for this bungle which has the potential to cause great embarrassment and diplomatic rumbles for the unpopular CIP government. Had these three simply complied with related line ministries, everything would have been legally in place

to celebrate the launch of TMV. With Neves and Mokoroa continually telling Nie he doesn't need BTIB approval or a NES EIA, and Mokoroa calling the Chair of BTIB "a dimwit" in a widely circulated email, each man must bear the consequences of their self serving belief they were above the laws of the Cook Islands. For an ex police officer like Mokoroa this is inexcusable. Obviously none has the strength of character to maintain the morality of power their obesely paid positions have for they have abused it with bullying intimidation and slander.

There is no sympathy for Nie and his arrogant behaviour in thinking the PRC is above the legal requirements of a small sovereign country called the Cook Islands. Need Nie be reminded of the fable about the elephant and the mouse? Sadly Nie, along with his incompetent advisors, is having to learn good manners the hard way. Mokoroa, in behaviour most unbecoming of a Ministry head, has widely circulated an email lashing out casting the blame on the politicians well as BTIB, even calling the chairman a dimwit who must be reined in. For a person in charge of a major Ministry of State, with a multi-million dollar budget, he appears to have suffered a brain explosion of incompetent stupidity or arrogant immaturity. -George Pitt



OTE JAMES BEER for MURIENUA

Atiu delighted to receive sponsored hardware

Some parents of students in Atiu are just as excited at the donation of digital equipment for use by their children attending the island's primary school. One parent is hopping after hours classes can be held so they can have access to the new technology to keep pace with their children. They commented, "It's so good for our children to learn to use this new technology because in the outer islands we don't have the resources and our children fall behind those in Rarotonga."

Education Minister Teina Bishop played down the appreciation the Atiuans demonstrated saying, "It's a team effort, the further you go from Rarotonga the more difficult it is to keep pace with new developments in education. Just because these children are out of sight, they and their parents need to have the assurance they are not out of mind."

Bishop thanked Ministry of Education secretary Sharon Paio for the consistently high performance of the Ministry reflected in the regular Public Service Commissioner's performance reviews. "After Sharon has accompanied me to the Northern group islands and some of the southern ones she



Minister Teina Bishop flanked by a happy Syaka Tairi and students is building a team that is holistic driven." A former teacher, Bishop said from his own experiences teaching in the outer islands can often be frustrating due to the lack of resources, an issue he is determined to minimise during his watch as Education's Minister. Principal of the Enuamanu School Syaka Tairi said she was overwhelmed by the Taiwanese fishing company Yuh Yow's sponsorship. "It's my wish list come true." Last week 10 slates and 10 Ipads were presented to Atiu by Bishop on behalf of the sponsors. The choice of equipment was deliberate said Paio. "Hand held devices were more durable and easier for the young ones to use, the equipment was an enabler of education which helped prepare students for the digital age when they left school." Paio also said the over the last two years teachers have had to complete competency standards to be one step ahead of the students they were teaching the technology to. Mitiaro and Mauke are next islands to receive their equipment in the very near future said Bishop. - *George Pitt*

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Our Frontpage model PM pays Tribute to

Inatio Akaruru and Kura Strickland

The Prime Minister has expressed deep sadness over the passing of two long-serving parliamentarians, former Cabinet Ministers, and political stalwarts of the Cook Islands Party. In paying tribute to Papa Inatio Akaruru and Papa Kura Strickland who both passed away a few days ago, the Prime Minister said both men had contributed in significant ways to the development and growth of the Cook Islands throughout their political careers.

“During Papa Inatio’s time as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, he helped spearhead a tremendous wave of growth in the country’s diplomatic relations and engagement in international organisations. He was keenly involved in a number of key development areas and played a strong role in advocating Cook Islands’ interests. Papa Inatio was a solid anchor of support in the Cabinet of the late Sir Geoffrey Henry and oversaw tremendous change over the years.”

“Papa Kura was also a firm community man, who upheld the interests of his people throughout his distinguished service to the country. His tenure as a Minister was marked by his willingness to address social issues and concerns wherever he could. Papa Kura was a dignified representative of the people and was recognised accordingly when he received his OBE.”

The Prime Minister conveys his condolences to the families of Inatio Akaruru, and Kura Strickland, and says both men will be remembered fondly for the way they upheld the Cook Islands and the advancement of our people.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,
I take issue with Howard Henry’s claims in his article last week that the current Opposition is the weakest and most ineffective from any of the others. I suppose the Opposition under my leadership. Really? Did he not know that this Opposition played a major role in the calling to account of his employer Minister Teina Bishop with the Chinese fishing deals? Did he also not know that two by-elections were won against a new Government in office and a third one on the way? There is a growing list of Opposition achievements that puts this Opposition way ahead in this environment of no party hopping. Come one Howard, what do you know about politics anyway? Your grandfather knew about politics, not you. Produce your facts so I could take your comments seriously or air your grievance about your beloved CIP because I agree with you, it is performing abysmally.

*Meitaki Maata
Wilkie Rasmussen
Leader of the Opposition*



Cook Islands Herald goes QR

The Cook Islands Herald now has a QR (Quick Response) code. Simply scan this code into your Iphone or Smartphone and it will automatically take you to the Herald Website in your phone’s internet browser.



Our frontpage model this week is Ngatupuna Teinak who is back for holiday while schooling in New Zealand. Check out our website www.ciherald.co.ck. and facebook page: www.facebook.com/ciherald

Government of Contradictions

By Norman George MP for Teenui/Mapumai (Atiu)

People should be able to trust their government. Minister's words ought to be treated as gospel. Government actions, policies and announced intentions should be binding. But look back at the last 3 years....

The government, in particular Mark Brown made some statements about the Commerce Bill being ready for tabling in Parliament in 2012 than in 2013 and now it's 2014. It's taken 3 years and the public have yet to see any public consultation or debate over this Bill. But readers will remember the grand standing that followed the announcement that the government was going to do something that the Demo's had not. Today this government spends more time patting themselves on the back for the amount of air points they have accumulated. For them 'work' is a swear word. Glory to those pretenders who can look like working but produce nothing at all. For this government it's all about the good times ...let them roll on!

When it comes to raising and collecting taxes and raiding pensioner bank accounts they are truly and cruelly masters of this art form. The point must be made that the public in general have no problem paying taxes, but they do have an issue with paying taxes to politicians who just don't want to do their fair share of work. Doing the only work he knows how by manning the water station in Tupapa is George Maggie. Maggie works harder than Henry Puna.

If his cabinet doesn't make a stand against his travelling excesses and wastefulness then they are no more worthy to be Ministers than Henry is Prime Minister. Maybe it is time to give George Maggie a try.

But would they? Would the CIP accept that Maggie a reformed ex-convict with very little

educational background can do better than Mark Brown a fish and chips salesman as Minister of Finance.

Why is TOAGATE still being propped up by the tax payer? And just how is it that one player alleges that he would never in a million years make \$1.9M in profit if he owned the entire islands fuel supply business including Te Aponga? So quick is this government to raid pensioner bank accounts but where is the due diligence to answer such a pivotal question as that raised by Chris Vaile in his full page article before Christmas? Meanwhile let's wait and see if we can find a few scraps of wood and half tins of paint to rebuild our schools and then go around with our begging bowl in hand to ask for book and desk donations.

Let's look at their taxes. They made statements in early 2011 as soon as they took office, about government efficiency then immediately introduced a withholding tax, it's important that people see where this government came from and where they are heading. Every reader will agree that this government is embroiled in a tax fever. A rapture of taxing taxing...everyone's lives into oblivion.

In September they introduced more taxes, an increase in VAT was forecast. But followed it up with their balancing act that employees would get an increased tax free threshold of \$1000. Do people realise just what that saving really translates into? It's no more than \$3.00 per week! Or about 42 cents a day. But they are quick to point out that they have raised the tax free threshold by a \$1000. They haven't lied, but they sure talk up the \$1000 tax free threshold. I'm almost inclined to think they are selling an actual annual \$1000 increase in income.

Along came their withholding tax replacement plan with another tax on savings, they



Norma George

further stressed and penalized the people who sacrificed wastage to put something away for a special day. Already people are saying that this government lied. I recall Mark Brown saying that With Holding Tax would only be for a 2 year period; low and behold he was right. All he has done is change the name and the method but it's still a tax on your savings. The water just gets browner and browner.

I was accused recently for lacking vision and so I asked myself was what I was writing really about vision? There is nothing visionary about getting taro or nita exports or any local produce exports to earn valuable foreign currency for the people of this country. It's just plain and simple common sense. With our almost total reliance on tourism how can our country really benefit when most if not all the tourist dollars that are spent here are spent on imported goods...sometimes services! I'm not advocating vision when just plain common sense is really all we need.

Let's be honest with ourselves, we've been giving tourism the

benefit of many years of tax and support. In some cases the agency fee that is paid to our marketers in Europe would exceed the annual budget of some of our other ministries. The real problem is that the Minister in charge doesn't know how to prepare an agriculture plan and then go to Cabinet and fight to get a budget to implement it. But worse, is that we continue to see worthwhile projects take a beating because our money is spent under writing the Los Angeles flights instead of facing the reality that it's not commercially viable even for Air NZ.

Of course it could not possibly be viable if Air NZ departs Los Angeles to Auckland about an hour before Air New Zealand's underwritten flight departs Los Angeles en-route to Auckland via Rarotonga. Who in MFEM and which government Minister over looked this small piece of vital information when they sat down and negotiated the agreement. With the PM on his never ending junkets I would have thought he would have seen that himself and commented to his finance minister way before the new agreement was signed in 2013.

Democratic Party says it's time for a real change

TAX POLICY

The Democratic Party Candidate for the Murienua by election James Beer explains the tax policy he is basing his election campaign on

1. A High Court order will be required by Government to withdraw funds from individuals Bank accounts.

This is important! People need to know they are secure and their savings too! It doesn't matter whether they are pensioners or employed residents. Every Cook Islander has the right to stand in Court to defend themselves; it's one of our fundamental rights of our Constitution. Taking money from a bank account without a High Court order or the opportunity for tax payers to defend themselves in court are some of the fundamental building blocks of democracy.

2. No person with outstanding tax will be prevented from leaving the country without Government requiring a High Court order.

This really has to stop. The public service should not have the right to restrict the movement of our residents. Too many people I know who own homes and businesses here or even retired people have been stopped by a letter from the tax department preventing them from traveling, sometimes based on a tax assessment from over 10 years ago. If a person is a serious flight risk and an absconding debtor, then the Judiciary may restrict that

person's movement by means of a High Court order.

3. No NZ pension back tax.

What a wonderful opportunity to grow the economy, increase liquidity and consumption with only as much as a tweak in legislation. Imagine one thousand grey power members from NZ feeling safe that their bank accounts won't be raided, and that the law is on their side. They will feel safe to make Rarotonga their home. We spend \$10 million to get \$16 million in our Air NZ underwrite. How about spending 2 hours in Parliament to amend the legislation to potentially generate over \$20 million in extra spending in the country. Now do the math on the VAT revenue from this group alone.

4. All Internal Affairs pensioner benefits will be exempt from tax.

Yep! The government has increased your pension but now it will form part of your taxable income. We are saying your pension is yours. Should you decide to supplement your income by taking up a job or becoming a market vendor or a market gardener, your pension will not form part of that taxable income. But wait till you see the tax benefits and the opportunities coming



James Beer - Democratic Party Candidate

out soon to encourage growth in agriculture and local production.

5. All persons or businesses with outstanding taxes will be renegotiated with the intent of an amnesty on the penalties and interest with a fixed time frame for payment. Special conditions apply.

This is easily the best

opportunity to get stagnant business owners productive and contributing to the government revenue stream. I am aware of over a dozen businesses where the owners are contemplating closure or who are so burdened by penalties and interest that at times make up more than 60% of the tax bill. This is

Continued next page

Petition calls for a halt to Te Mato Vai project

By Charles Pitt

Due to concerns about the estimated costs of the water project Te Mato Vai, a petition was launched on Tuesday morning calling on government to halt work on the water project and seek a better solution that is robust and cheaper to build and maintain.

Promoting the petition is James Thomson who told the Herald on Tuesday morning that the petition was organized by a committee made up of responsible citizens comprising a lawyer, an accountant, outer islanders and parents.

James said the public response so far was tremendous. In just 5 minutes, 17 people signed the petition.

Once 1,000 signatures or more have been obtained, James said the committee will lodge the petition with parliament. The committee will also seek a High Court injunction.

When asked if the committee would seek an MP to sponsor the petition or lodge it James said they want the petition to be seen as a "people's movement" and an exercise of their right to raise their concerns.

Those concerns include the Master Plan. James asked, "When do we see the Master Plan? We've seen a draft dated 20 October."

From Previous page

so over whelming that their best bet is to give up. This is demoralizing for them and their employees. Why waste a perfectly good business and why waste time? Throw these business owners a life line cut away the penalties and interest and sort out just the tax component. Let's get working again!

6. No DEMO Support for a 15% VAT.

The crazy thing about the increase in VAT is that it's supposed to capture more from tourists when they buy goods and services. But the government introduces a \$750 allowance for everyone! That means every single person that travels here can bring with them up to \$750.00 of food and wine

"If you have a house plan," said James, "you can see what's going on and a plan of the costings and know that inspections have been carried out of health and environmental requirements and compliance with the Building Code. So have they followed the same process?"

"With a house, every item is costed."

James mentioned that with UV treatment, this requires power but no costs have been factored into the plan for this. He asked what back up will be provided in the event of a power failure or failure of the chlorination plant?

WORDING OF THE PETITION

"Article 64 (1) (d) (e) of the Cook Islands Constitution 1964 states "Freedom of thought" and "Freedom of speech and expression"

We the stakeholders and people of the Cook Islands petition the 'Te Mato Vai' water upgrade in Rarotonga to STOP! We must have a better solution for all that is robust and cheaper to build and maintain.

CONCERNS:

'Te Mato Vai' \$72.7 million project is based on assumptions and far too costly for our people.

'Te Mato Vai' water upgrade and system will be a failure. What do you treat when there is no water?

'Te Mato Vai' another

and pay no tax at all. The VAT increase is unnecessary when you look at the flawed \$750 allowance that may counter act any potential increase in revenue from tourists.

7. Excluding Rarotonga and Aitutaki all other Islands will be exempt from income tax.

Today, the outer islands are hardly the power house they once were. If an island is not producing any taxable income now, then why not find some easy to change ideas to encourage and foster development there.

8. Secondary income will be exempt from tax.

A long time coming! Any person who wants to put in the effort and carve out a life here instead of jumping on a plane to work in the mines



James Thomson

government run project and spending spree that will fail like others; (SHERATON, 1997, HARBOR, TOAGATE, Arorangi Jetty.....)

'Te Mato Vai' water upgrade and system does not reflect the concerns and interests of our people.

'Te Mato Vai' debt and user pays system will be a financial

burden to many of our people.

The government is 'for the people' and not the other way around. Thank you and GOD BLESS our people.

QUOTE: Where the elected serve all Cook Islanders, and not just a few. PM Henry Puna, Cook Is News Nov 10th 2010.

Refer to past concerns: Pg 6 Tuesday, Dec 10, 2013."

or meat works of Australia will find this promising. Any person who has worked a second job and been depressed at their after tax wages will now find new energy to go that extra mile. Any employer who is finding it hard to fill positions and starts looking for overseas contract workers will most likely start getting inquiries from suitably - qualified people from here. Will this mean less money for government? Not really, not when they'll spend it all on the rock and it will find its way back to the government in the form of VAT.

For a New Beginning of Change VOTE

James Beer for Murienua We need tax policies

that stimulate growth not devastate moral. We need to encourage people to stay not tax them so they leave. The government it seems focuses on revenue collection by way of taxes. Taxes for interest on savings, increased taxes on consumption, retroactive back taxes on pensioners, but everyone can see that those tax increases are not matched by government curbing its appetite for overseas trips, its ministerial luxuries, its flash new motor vehicles.

So are these tax increases really necessary? You have the choice, you can vote CIP and have your taxes used to buy flash new trucks and first class airfares OR Vote James Beer who is telling you what he and his party are going to do now. The choice is clear!

Time to turn underwrite into an asset says Bishop



Coasting along under the radar out of sight and out of mind is an ongoing cost to the Cook Islands shrinking tax resource base that exceeds the combined cost of the Te Mato Vai Project (\$65M and counting) the new Avatiu Port project (\$27M and counting) but raises few public concerns.

Consider 10 years of Air New Zealand underwrites from Los Angeles to Rarotonga and back will cost in excess of \$100 million.

At least the two infrastructure projects are real, visible and serve a necessary purpose. The Air NZ write off benefits are expressed in fiscal reports that are interpretations of our Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) to justify the continuation of this one sided arrangement with the airline.

In return for the taxpayer's investment of \$10 million a year MFEM crows about the imaginary \$15 million return which nets the Taxman \$1.2 million in VAT, hardly results to get excited about. Then are these real returns when it is fact substantial prepayments in the

Tourism industry are banked at the place of booking not the destination?

Bigger destinations Samoa and Tonga declined to continue with their underwrites with Air NZ when their agreements were reviewed.

Tourism Minister Teina Bishop has advocated our marketers have to start thinking out of the box and produce innovative, smart solutions to getting bums on the direct flights. Bishop's vision of having an international airport on Aitutaki would see him push for the flights to land at Aitutaki instead of Rarotonga.

If Aitutaki had an international airport their marketing pitch will be focused on Canada and Alaska who have climatic conditions that prompt people to travel during their harsh winter months which coincide with our off peak low season arrivals period.

With 65% of Canadians having passports and only 20% of Americans having passports, tapping into the Canadian market offers great potential.

The fundamental problem with the under write isn't that it can't work, the problem is

that our negotiating skills are extraordinarily bumbling and clumsy and we simply don't understand the way fares are calculated or how Northern tourists decide or plan when they travel this far South. After 10 years of underwrites you would have thought the people in MFEM would already know. But then how could they when all they are capable of is ransacking pensioner bank accounts?

Our latest agreement is further proof of that, we are locked into underwriting something where we simply have been out maneuvered and out thought. That's going to happen when you have Neneva Neves at the helm steering the economy from one disaster to another. It's always going to happen when we put up an accountant or an economist to negotiate an airline opportunity against seasoned airline negotiators who know every angle of their own operations, in an industry that is intensely competitive.

Let's analyze this further. The Air NZ underwrite from Los Angeles to Rarotonga and from Rarotonga to Los Angeles can

be likened to the way in which shipping and freight charges are calculated. As we keep hearing, the reason why sea-freight prices to the Cook Islands are so crushing is that the ships come here full and leave here empty. The journey back is mostly empty.

In the airline business and in particular to our Cook Islands destination that comparison is closer to the truth than we'd like to imagine. Here's why.

Travelers predominately first time travelers to the Cook Islands originating out of North America would not come this far to the Southern Hemisphere just to see one place - ours!

Let's face it. We are small, coming to one small place is a risk and to manage that risk travelers will book other places like New Zealand or Australia. They want to get as much value for their green back dollars as they can. So although they may pay for some part of the underwrite through a ticket purchase it's highly unlikely that they will arrive Raro and leave from Raro to go home on the same flight

Continued next page

Lending a helping hand

Why was Te Aponga Uira shipping power cables and clamps this week to Tonga?

On Monday TAU workers were seen busy packing and transporting 100 straining clamps and 4,000m of ABC (aerial bundled cables) to Avatiu harbour as cargo for voyage 22 of the Matson line container ship Liloa V22.

Here is the purpose. It's to help out a fellow Pacific power company restore power and lighting as quickly as possible to homes that were flattened by Cyclone Ian last month. Altogether, some 90 to 95% of the power network in the Ha'apai group of islands was damaged during the height of the cyclone's ferocity on January 12-13. Every span (the distance between two power poles) was torn down by debris or wind.



"We got a request," says TAU CEO Apii Timoti, "that Tonga Power's recovery effort was stalled until equipment arrived from overseas. The problem was that they wouldn't get there until the end of February at the earliest."

"So they asked us if we might help them out with materials which they would replace once their own stock arrived."

From Previous page
that brought them here.

They are likely to either fly directly from Los Angeles to New Zealand see a bit of the long white cloud then, on their return home stopover in Rarotonga and only when they depart from here do they get to contribute towards the cost of the under write, but only in one direction. Similarly, they'll fly here first and pay for the under write on that leg here. But when they travel on from Rarotonga to New Zealand they end up returning home from Auckland to Los Angeles where only one part of the fare contributes to the under write.

The lesson in that is clear from the Canada 3000 days. They made certain that Rarotonga was not the destination but was one of the many destinations on its way from and to Canada.

So in much the same way as shipping freight charges are costly because we import plenty and export zilch, tourists will fly in directly from Los Angeles but return home from somewhere else other than Rarotonga, and that may even be on an airline other than Air New Zealand.

All this of course is further accumulated when on at least one of the directions where

we under write Los Angeles to Raro, Air New Zealand has another flight, a Los Angeles direct to Auckland flight, with the underwritten Los Angeles - Rarotonga - Auckland flight leaving about an hour later. It's the only airline that has two flights departing Los Angeles for a major city; in this case the city is Auckland, within one hour of each other.

If you're flying to Auckland why would you want to go via Rarotonga? If you're flying to Auckland why Air NZ wouldn't put this flight ahead of the other Auckland flight going via Rarotonga? The answer is blowing in the wind..... because you'd fill up the flight that leaves first and leave the left overs for the flight via Rarotonga. After all it's already been paid by some other person, in this case the Cook Islands tax payers.

One out of the box idea worth revisiting suggests Bishop, is giving seats away free seeing we are paying for them. As a marketing exercise free seats can be given away by radio stations as prizes or newspapers and magazines for the same. These can be pitched to the winter States in the USA. Many of the USA States like California have

"We all know and support each other because of our Pacific Power Association affiliation and we all share the same experiences and challenges. We're good friends."

"When we checked our cyclone stocks to see what we could do, we were able to identify that we could accommodate the request and sought Board consideration. When they approved, we looked

at the shipping, and saw the Liloa was coming to Raro on the 6th of February and would arrive in Tonga on 14th February, two weeks later."

In an email, Tonga Power Ltd CEO John van Brink conveyed heartfelt thanks to TAU for the support. "It's great knowing we can lean on others in the neighbourhood when in strife."

Te Aponga Uira media release

no need to chase the sun as they have it all year around, for their change they head for the snow States like Colorado.

The catch is, return tickets are free from LA but accommodation costs for a set minimum stay are at the traveler's expense. At least the destination gets some benefits rather than our underwrite seats being empty. Accommodators can offer incentives to the travelers like first night free. Fifty maybe a 100 or more free seats a flight? At least that's a hundred real visitors a week spending real money in our stagnating economy. Give away 300 seats on every flight that's nearly 16,000 extra North

American tourists spending a conservable minimum of \$1000 each, that's a potential of \$16 to \$25 million injected into the local economy.

Is Air NZ at fault? No not at all. That's their contingency plan for making a profit, seems we have only contingency plans for making losses. This will all change though as Air NZ arranges the agreement to no longer just include an underwrite on costs, but an underwrite on profit as well.

Where to from here Richard Neves? Will you sign this last and final burden to the Cook Islands economy before taking leave to your next job? - George Pitt

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A Political Tribute to....

Inatio Akaruru C.B.E and Kura Strickland O.B.E.

I am feeling quite sad this week. This is because Inatio Akaruru and Kura Strickland have both died in the last few days. I had known both men since I was a "little kid" ... and that was before Self-Government.

Both men were "Foundation Sons" of the Cook Islands Party in 1964. Politics was in their blood. C.I.P. was in their "hearts".

Inatio Akaruru was first elected to the then Cook Islands Legislative Assembly (known as Parliament after 1982) as the MP for Pukapuka/Nassau in 1968. He went on to hold that seat until his retirement from politics in 1999. A period of 31 years.

From 1968 until 1978, Inatio was the Minister of Health in Papa' Arapati's C.I.P. Government. He was the youngest member in Cabinet.

Inatio then served as the Deputy Prime Minister of the Cook Islands under Sir Geoffrey Henry and his C.I.P. Government from 1989 until 1999 where he was also the Minister of Foreign Affairs. And so as far as I can gather, Inatio Akaruru holds three "political records" in this country as follows :

* The longest serving member of Parliament : 31 years.

* Longest serving member of Cabinet : 20 years, and

* Longest serving Deputy Prime Minister of the Cook Islands : 10 years.

You don't get a more impressive political career than that.

Kura Strickland was a C.I.P. Executive Member for many years after the party was formed in 1964. He was later an MP for Amuri-Ureia, Aitutaki from 1978 to 1994. A period of 16 years. From 1989 until his retirement from Parliament (but not politics) in 1994, Kura Strickland was the Minister of Health and Internal Affairs under the C.I.P. Government of Sir Geoffrey.

Both Inatio and Kura were actually quite different in terms of nature and character. Inatio was quiet, steady, inoffensive ... but extremely determined. He never "rocked the boat" but simply got on with the job

he had to do – and did it.

He was also extremely cautious, calculating and often a very deep thinker. Unflappable ... Inatio never made any political mistakes.

Kura Strickland could best be described as a "political sharp-shooter". He was also quite "aggressive" at times in pursuit of what he wanted done and how he thought that should be achieved.

But he was "aggressive" in a respectful sort of way and so no one could ever take offense. Like Inatio, Kura Strickland was also extremely determined and unwavering if he thought that he was right.

In addition to that, Kura Strickland was a "real worker" in terms of the C.I.P. political organisation. He was a "political work-horse" who always had something going on somewhere. Never idle. He was always up to the challenge and never took a backward step.

From a political point of view, both men were "as solid as the day is long". Their "political roots" were firmly planted deep into the Cook Islands Party. They had passion, pride and "aroha" for the C.I.P. in what it stood for in regard to its foundation principals, aims and objectives.

One thing I really admired in both Inatio and Kura was their loyalty to the Cook Islands Party over several decades. You can never have too much loyalty when it comes to politics. Firstly to Sir Albert and then to Sir Geoffrey, both men were passionately loyal and for this I salute them ... and I thank them.

They were also reliable, dependable and trustworthy. But above all else ... both Inatio Akaruru and Kura Strickland were "politically honest".

They were politicians you could look up to and respect. They were politicians who always had time to meet, greet and talk to anyone at any time. They were politicians "of the people" who never considered themselves to be "higher" or better than anyone else.

They were politicians who had "mana". And in this regard, Inatio Akaruru and Kura Strickland had



Inatio Akaruru C.B.E

"heaps of political mana". Both men could have taught many of the present day politicians a thing or two. But I am not sure as to how many would actually bother to listen.

Both men were "political gentlemen". By this I mean they were not afraid to be engaged in the "cut and thrust" of political debates or Parliamentary discussions. They were also very active and outspoken on the campaign trail for any given General Election. In this regard, both men were really in their element.

So while both Inatio and Kura had many "political opponents" during their respective political careers, they did not have any "political enemy's" ... there is a difference.

Both the families of Inatio Akaruru and Kura Strickland can be very proud of what their respective "Papa's" did during their lifetime ... and especially so in terms of their "political contribution" to the Cook Islands.

Both were politically active for more than 35 years after 1965. They rode with the "political high's", of which there were many. And they anguished through the "political lows", which in some cases, were extremely low. But never did their "political C.I.P. heart" waver as they took everything in their stride in the belief that the Cook Islands Party was on the right track in terms of



Kura Strickland O.B.E.

what was best for all the people of the Cook Islands.

Both men were part of the decision making process that saw major "positive" economic and social developments in this country from 1965 to well after 2000.

It was during their "political watch" that the Cook Islands emerged from the "darkness of colonialism" and into the "light of Self-determination" ... and therefore being the masters of our own destiny.

The memory of Inatio Akaruru and Kura Strickland can stand proud and tall next to the memory of Sir Albert Henry, Sir Geoffrey Henry, Tiakana Numanga, Apenera Short, Sam Samuela, Teaukura Roi, Taramai Tetonga, Joe Browne, Lionel Browne, Taru Moana, William Estall, Dan Daniel, Matapo Matapo, Utia Matata, Pera Maurangi, Jim Mareiti, Raymond Pirangi, Niroa Manuela, Papamama Pokino, Pukeiti Pukeiti, Bill Paiti and many others ... as former C.I.P. MP's who "did make a difference" in their political lifetime.

All these men helped to create history.

And they did so with compassion, dignity and with a warm "political C.I.P. heart".

Inatio Akaruru and Kura Strickland ... these were two men I am very proud and pleased to have known. R.I.P - Howard Henry



**MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT
& THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS**

Press Release: Reminder of changes to Social Welfare

As part of the recommendations of the Cook Islands 2013 Tax Review, from 1 March 2014, the Government will increase the local Cook Islands pensions by 25 per cent.

Those who are aged over 70 will now collect \$7,500 per annum, and those who are between 60 and 70 will now collect \$6,000 per annum. For those over 70, this is a \$125 a month increase; for those above 60, this is a \$100 a month increase – an historically large increase, and a significant step closer to the Government’s election promise to double the 70+ pension.

	2013 regular social welfare payments		2014 regular social welfare payments	
	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual
60-69 pension	400	4800	500	6000
70+ pension	500	6000	625	7500

To ensure fairness, and direct the increased payment towards those most in need, the Cook Islands pensions will now become part of an individual’s taxable income. For a large proportion of individuals receiving the pension, it is likely that there is no change in their tax obligations, as the pension payments remain below the tax-free threshold. For these people, they will receive the entire 25 per cent increase. However, for individuals who earn other income, this will mean that they may pay some tax on their pension payments, depending on how high their other income is. When combined with the personal income tax cuts, every pensioner in 2014 (regardless of income level) will have more money in their hand than they did in 2013, which will assist them in adjusting to the VAT change on 1 April 2014. A tax calculator has been made available at www.mfem.gov.ck/tax for individuals to get an estimate of how the changes affect them.

To help ensure that individuals receive the correct payments and are not left with tax debts at the end of the year, the Ministry of Internal Affairs will manage potential tax deductions when they make the payments – similar to the PAYE system used by many employees.

To make this possible, all persons receiving a Cook Islands pension will be required to declare their Revenue Management Division (or RMD) number to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Ministry of Internal Affairs can organise an RMD number for you if required.

Pensioners are encouraged to contact a Welfare Officer in the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Rarotonga, or the Internal Affairs Officer in Pa Enuu, to ensure that the correct payment is made at the relevant tax rate **before 20 February 2014**. There is a simple one page form required.

In addition to pension payments, all other ongoing social welfare payments will be increased by 10 per cent on 1 March 2014, but remain exempt from tax. The child benefit payment will increase to \$792 a year, destitute and carer’s allowances will increase to \$1,800, and the power subsidy will increase to \$264 a year.

	2013 regular social welfare payments		2014 regular social welfare payments	
	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual
Destitute payment	150	1800	165	1980
Child payment	60	720	66	792
Carer's allowance	150	1800	165	1980
Power subsidy	20	240	22	264



NOTE JAMES BEER for MURIENUA

Tereora kicks off 2014 with assembly

By Norma Ngatamariki

Crowds of Tereora College students, old and new, filter through the main entrances of the Princess Anne Hall as they gather for the very first formal assembly of 2014. The Hall was chock-a-block with kids who hailed from all around, even as far as Germany. As usual, it took quite a while for the kids to settle down. When they finally did, it was only because Mr Unuka threatened to take away interval, therefore prolonging the assembly. No thanks, forty five minutes was plenty. It sure did feel good to be back into the whole "Line Up" routine.

Now, like the beginning of any formal event in the Cook Islands, the assembly began with a wonderful church hymn. But, if I'm going to be completely honest, it sounded as if the students were still in holiday mode. I reckon half the school didn't even know the actual hymn. I made a mental note to myself saying that if become an Anau Leader, I was definitely going to do something about that. Like maybe announcing the hymn in the morning notices or something. We've got to get some school pride going with our singing! Not singing the school song properly, I could understand because we've got a whole new bunch of kids. They'll learn it in no time, because Miss Hosking was very adamant about it.

The presentation of the NCEA Certificates seemed to be the highlight of the formal assembly. According to Mr. Haque's statistics, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Merit and Excellence endorsements in both Level One and Two. I am proud to say that I was one of the recipients for those certificates (not bragging or anything). The fact that the majority of recipients were girls did not go unnoticed, so a challenge was definitely presented to the male



half of the school. According to our principal, there were also a large number of course endorsements in the Level Two of 2013. In my opinion, presenting those certificates was a huge motivation for those students who didn't receive any. Hopefully, this will make senior students to strive for even better results this year. Out of the entire lot, only four students were presented with Overall Excellence Endorsements. They were Jessica Puiriri, May Myo Min, Debora Mataiao and Nicholas Henry. Congratulations, guys! Just a little heads up, I'm plan on joining you guys soon.

Our school principal Mr. Bali Haque introduced fifteen new teachers to the school. We even managed to score a South African who taught English. Woop woop! I'm pretty sure the entire school body was curious to know what these people were like, because I was. The introduction was brief and to the point.

And that ends my report for Tereora College's first formal assembly. I am looking forward to a great year, as it is my last year of school, so all of the Year 13 students will most definitely make it a memorable experience.

The **COMPUTER MAN** Tech Tips

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Introducing Cont'd... **Android Phones**



Tip 5: Delete Cookies and Unused Programs or Media

The Android smartphone is capable of storing a variety of information to refer back to or use. This information comes in the form of software apps, photos, files, and video. Most of these things are accessible in the phone's "Gallery," or on the main screen of the phone. Other kinds of information stored on the phone come in the form of "Cookies." Cookies are programs installed on a user's website browser to help keep track of their web usage history for marketing purposes. These files and apps take up a lot of space and when the memory is full, nothing else can be stored. Taking the time to delete unwanted cookies, apps, and media can get a phone back up to peak performance.

Deleting Cookies

Many users end up with lots of cookies on their smartphone website browsers without realizing it. This can hinder the user's ability to surf the web quickly. Deleting cookies can help free up some memory and speed up the Android smartphone. Users can open up the website browser, then click on "Menu," then click on "More Options," then choose "Settings," and then click on "Clear all cookie data" and the phone will ask for verification before deleting the cookies.

Deleting Applications

Users can also manually free up a lot of storage space on their Android phones by deleting unused programs and media. Users can delete software apps on their phones by opening up the "Settings" menu, then clicking on "Applications," then click on "Manage Applications," then clicking on "Downloaded apps," and then select and "Uninstall" the application.

Delete Media

Users can delete various kinds of files and media from their phones by opening up the "Gallery" on the phone. Scroll through the gallery, tapping on files and images you want to delete to select them. When ready to delete the media, tap the "Delete" button on the bottom of the screen and follow the verification instructions.

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Increase in port charges raises concerns at Port's ability to service ADB loans

By Charles Pitt

The Ports Authority Rarotonga Board at its last meeting recently, has approved the new fees, tariffs and charges for port services to apply as from 1 February 2014.

The Board comprises Willie Kauvai (Chair), Lucky Matapo, Makiroa Mitchell John and Teariki Matenga.

Ports CEO Bim Tou told the Herald on Tuesday afternoon that Port charges are reviewed annually and the new charges follow a review which was last carried out in 2012 (applying from 1 June 2013 and running until 2013).

Tou said the new charges represent an increase of 3 per cent and that the CPI (cost price index which measures rises in the cost of living) was used as the bench mark.

One stake holder when asked to comment by the Herald said he did not wish to be named and said he expects his clients and customers will end up bearing the costs through increases to his charges, increases of probably around 10 percent. He said this was a concern because his clients will also have to bear the costs of an increase in VAT by 2.5 percent. He said he expects to lose business.

Another stake holder who also did not wish to be identified echoed the same sentiments.

While increased costs to retail customers is a concern, a greater

concern appears to be the Ports ability to service the ADB loans.

Three stake holders spoken to commented on the ability of the Board to meet the Port's financial commitments in terms of operating costs and servicing of the ADB loans spent on the harbour upgrade.

Their concern was that revenue may be well short of that needed to meet the loan repayments. One stake holder thought the shortfall could turn out to be a high as \$1 million.

Another stake holder expressed concern at the capability of the port to service the loan. He said at the time the loans were agreed to, the project may have been justified but now the outlook in terms of future revenue appeared grim.

The Herald put the issue of loan commitments to CEO Bim Tou on Tuesday. In 2011 in an article in the Cook Islands Times, the issue of meeting loan commitments had been raised.

Tou advised that the ADB loan was approved in 2008 based on revenue projections done at that time. Tou said current revenue projections showed the loan was still manageable.

Tou said the Port was looking at possible partnerships with the private sector as indications were there will be no government bail outs. Government will not provide any more funds said Tou.

To recap, Tou said the ADB loan was in two parts.

There was a soft loan at 1.5% interest. The term was 32 years. There was an 8 year grace period then the principal was repayable




Bim Tou

over 24 years.

Then there was an ADB commercial loan at 3.24% interest. The term was 25 years. There was a 5 year grace period then the principal would be repaid over 20 years. This loan was converted to NZ dollars to remove any risk of fluctuation in foreign currency.

When asked about future development at the port which may increase revenues, Tou said this was up to the commercial sector. He said the frozen fish transshipment plant proposed by the Luen Thai company would have generated more

revenue for the port however, all available space in the international section of the port had been taken up. Due to the change in plans regarding the port entrance it was now unlikely smaller cruise ships would be able to tie up alongside the wharf. The proposal to widen the port entrance was cancelled after wave modeling showed rough seas would cause damage. There was a proposal to develop commercial and retail outlets at the marina end in partnership with the private sector however this was subject to discussions with landowners.



NOTE JAMES BEER for MURIENUA

Te Mato Vai: Other, cheaper options should be considered

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

Part 2

Last week we began a two part look at Enuu Bishop's suggestions for a cheaper option to upgrade the water system.

TOTOKOITU INTAKE: This water intake is very modest in it's construction, a good guess, maybe \$10,000.00 to build. Suggests, that this intake be moved back to the required height with double storage tanks, same as the others. A new trunk pipeline and access road be built onto the existing DSIR road that was built years back to access the pine trees planting scheme at the time. We use to drive up this road to the water source. Hook up the new trunk pipeline onto the ring main in the open area that crosses the stream and install two gate valves on either side of the ring main, and one valve on the trunk pipeline, controlling points for the inland ring main, the main road ring main is already done. This intake can be sectorised to service the areas from Totokoitu Station towards the Up-wind and Down- wind road.

COST ESTIMATE: Two million dollars

AVANA INTAKE: This is the best intake that we have on the island. A Water gallery was constructed to the right hand side of the weir. Both water sources do provide a 10 BAR water pressure at the main road, pressure check point. All the steel trunk pipeline crossing the streams have been replaced with new ones lately, the underground sections done in AC are okay. To me, the only work to be done on this intake, are to install the double tank system, sedimentation process to occur, doing away with dirty water during flooding. Which means, the same old weir water system which was solidly built, has to be redesigned down-stream of the weir to catch water into a trough with chicken wire

mesh over it as primary filter to rid of twigs, leaves, rocks that will be washed over by running stream water. This will be piped into a secondary filtering chamber away from the stream with say a mosquito netting screen, to rid of smaller size debris and eventually into a graded gravel filtering chamber before it enters the two storage tanks. The Gallery and the Weir catchments have to be piped through the storage tank systems to maintain clean water regardless of flooding. Connect system onto existing trunk pipeline. Avana can cope easily with the areas from Up-wind, Down-wind road right up to the Turangi trunk pipeline connections at the back road and main road ring mains.

COST ESTIMATE: One million dollars

TURANGI INTAKE: This is our other good intake that does give good pressure, a lower height level compared to Avana intake is the difference. I believe, if Avana and Turangi were to be tapped of it's full potential, the two intakes can supply all of Rarotonga. For years, we have fed Turangi all the way to the Weather Office at Nikao, main road areas without any problem. Again, I suggest that Turangi be moved back up the valley, storage tanks the pivot point, to attain the 10 BAR mark, water pressure. The same set up outlined for Avana intake from the weir to the storage tanks to be used. Actually, this set up will have to be applied to all the intakes selected. Run a new trunk pipeline from the storage tanks in the center of the access road right through to the back road ring main and install two gate valves either side of the ring main and the third gate valve on the trunk pipe line as control points. Turangi can be sectorised where Avana ends and continue through Turangi, Matavera, to Arai-te-tonga cut

off point, main and back road ring mains.

COST ESTIMATE: One and a half million dollars.

MATAVERA INTAKE: Perhaps for the mean time, shut this intake at where a branch main was connected to the trunk pipeline that used to supply a prawn farm up the valley and if I recall correctly, there was a gate valve installed at this point. Like Rutaki Intake, Matavera intake can also be used for water carting emergencies during times of drought. Future proposal, build a higher dam for water retention, if required.

COST ESTIMATE: NIL

TUPAPA INTAKE: This should also be shifted back up the valley as far as possible, installation of storage tanks and the whole works, extend access road to new position, run a new trunk pipeline and re-connect at the gravel sand filter chamber. Shut off the valve feeding into the chamber unit, use the by-pass and again further down the track, shut off the manual filtering unit, open the trunk pipeline heading towards the back road ring main and control gate valves. Not sure if this trunk pipeline extended to the main road, because a "marae" stood in the way. Whatever is the case, Turangi sectorised zone can be extended to Papa Isaia's shop without a problem. Tupapa intake will be fed through the back road ring main to the High Com's road. I think there are control valves installed at that point. These valves can be confirmed on the Water Works reticulation network mapping, for all of these documents are written just off my head. N.B.- because Turangi intake may be used in Tupapa's sectorised area, the 80mm sub- mains may have to be manipulated to stop any pressure differences.

COST ESTIMATE : One million dollars

TAKUVAIN INTAKE: It

would be ideal to move this intake up the valley, right pass the taro planting areas by the families of these lands. This will constrain human contamination of the water source. Build a new access road towards the new intake and storage tanks. Install a new 300mm and 150mm trunk pipeline and lay them through the center of the access road. Re-connect the 300mm trunk pipeline at the branch main feeding into the concrete storage tank at where the old Happy Valley restaurant used to be. The 150mm trunk pipeline can also be finished at the same point with a washout valve connected onto it. The smaller trunk pipeline is to service consumers in the valley who normally get affected during severe drought periods. We did experience a drought that went on for nine months without rain. Takuvaine intake can be fed into the areas from Papa Isaia's shop in Tupapa and to the High Com control valves and going westward to the intersection crossings at Papa Teeu's resident at the back road of Avatiu. Also the main road from Papa Isaia's shop going westward pass the round-about at Avatiu stopping at the adjacent control valves at that point.

COST ESTIMATE : Two million dollars

AVATIU INTAKE : The same approach of elevating the intakes to possible maximum height to get the best water pressure out of gravity feed is also required for Avatiu. As mentioned earlier, regarding drought spells that we get now and then, we did built a temporary dam across the stream with mount dirt opposite the top end chamber of the water gallery and piped the water through the gallery system. High grounds in Nikao received good water pressure for the first time until we went back to the lower level intake

Te Mato Vai: Other, cheaper options should be considered

when it rained. Just to elaborate the advantage of shifting the intakes to higher levels. By the way, Takuvaine and Avatiu water galleries that were constructed at huge costs, failed to work, and it never did. The same routine as in Takuvaine, do the same for Avatiu. A 200mm and 150mm trunk pipelines to be installed similar to the layout proposed for Takuvaine. Re- connect the 200mm trunkline just before passing the Power Station. Run the 150mm trunk pipeline to the first bridge as you go into Avatiu valley. Avatiu intake can be directed through Avatiu towards Nikao Arametua ending at T. Solomon's shop at the Black Rock. Also supplying Avatiu heading towards the main road at the Avatiu round-about veering off westward main road to Nikao by the sea ending at the Weather Office.

COST ESTIMATE: Two million dollars.

SUMMARY OF COST ESTIMATES PRODUCED:

- Muriavai Intake and Akaoa Reservoir \$2 million
- Rutaki Intake Nil
- Ngatoo and Papua Intakes \$ 2 million
- Taipara Intake \$ 1 million
- Totokoitu Intake \$ 2 million
- Avana Intake \$ 1 million
- Turangi Intake \$ 1.5 million
- Matavera Intake Nil
- Tupapa Intake \$ 1 million
- Takuvaine Intake \$ 2 million
- Avatiu Intake \$ 2 million

SUB- TOTAL-----\$ 14.5 MILLION

CONGINGENCIES-----\$ 5.5 MILLION

GRAND TOTAL-----\$ 20 MILLION

(NB - My draft estimates can be brought to exactness by bringing on board a proper Water Engineer and a proper Quantity Surveyor to design, draw out the blue print for all works to be done, only then proper costing can be done. THIS IS THE PROPER WAY OF DOING THINGS OF THIS MAGNITUDE. We are doing it the wrong way and we will be taken to the cleaners and will be heavily ripped off.)

BRIEF HISTORY ABOUT OUR RAROTONGA WATER SUPPLY

Over the years we have managed to maintain, upgrade, and develop our water resources plus our current existing reticulation water network to a very robust conditions today. Ninety-nine percent of leakages eliminated, except leaking taps, drip irrigation, running garden hoses, or abusive use of water that can be easily remedied with new water policies put in place.

We knew that the final job to be tackled are the WATER SOURCES. Way back, it was thought that when or where the possibilities of developing an intake in any of the villages are identified, priority was given to go ahead with the project. So that the whole of the island community can share the benefits, a consent of mutual agreement in the society to tap into the water sources on their lands free of charge were achieved without a fuss. This is the main reason why people are against water tariffs. Anyhow, people have always paid for the water they are getting now for years through indirect taxes, that government is able to allocate at present about \$750,000 per annum to run and maintain the Water Division. Water usage has always been used for all general purposes, human survival, hotels, factories and all sorts of water consumption, especially the survival of our agriculture industry that is totally dependent on water. All water demand is piped through the same reticulation pipe system for everyone to use. Imagine an expensive treated water with chlorine send down the pipeline to water the cabbage, tomatoes, pig pen, clean the car, it is beyond foolishness. We have always had potable water for donkey years except at times of flooding. Really, are we getting our monies worth from



Enea Bishop

these so called experts, I'll say NO!

REQUEST GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER AND TEMPORARILY PUT ON HOLD ITS DECISION TO BULLDOZE THE MATO VAI PROJECT THROUGH WITHOUT LOOKING AT OTHER SOUND OPTIONS.

- Although public consultations are held round the island, it's just pastry dressing. China has loaned us \$23 million, they are arriving in February with 38 labourers to take \$23.5 million back to China. Now, what about the company assigned to be in-charge of the project, 1, 2, 5, \$ million for their services, your guess is as good as mine. All I know is there are going to be many happy people laughing all the way to the bank on our unfortunate behalf because we lack drive and self determination to do it by ourselves. Our Civil Engineer graduates, proof your worth for your country.

- There is absolutely no need for a new ring main to be put in. Whoever recommended this is totally wrong. The Water System we have is designed on sectorising. The existing ring mains we have in place will last many decades to come.

- There must be no expensive water treatment plants and chlorination of water be allowed to be constructed, too expensive to maintain and run. Ultra-violet purification filters are the answer, to be installed in the homes, owners contribute towards the cost to make them responsible for it.

- No water tariffs, maybe the Golden Goose at the airport (departure tax) can lay an extra million to service the loans, but according to my proposal, loans should be cancelled and allow our government to proudly finance our water projects.

20th New Zealand Scout Jamboree 2013 - 2014

Fielding 28th December 2013 to 7th January 2014

The Cook Islands Boys Scout attended the 20th New Zealand Jamboree 2013 - 2014 this was held in Fielding New Zealand.

We had 26 members, 9 from Mauke, 15 from the St Joseph Scout Troop and 2 from the CIs Boy Scout Association.

The Group left on Christmas eve arrived in Auckland Christmas day just in time for the Boxing Day Special, for the boys to buy last minute stuff for the Jamboree. We drove down to Fielding by Bus which was a 7 hour drive, got to the camp site, the team had to off load the bus and put up the tents and help set up the camp site.

The boys enjoyed the activities which ranged from Shooting, building rafts, ab-sailing, riding motorbike, going through army training courses and much more.

There were evening shows for the scouts even had a new years eve party with it ending the night with Fire works.

This Jamboree was an eye opener for the our scouts from the Cook Islands to see alot of scouts from different countries coming into one place to enjoy the activities, making new friends and being independent, not depending on other people, this was awesome to see the scouts taking and following the theme that was set for the jamboree which is "Empowering".

Now the boys are already planning for the next Jamboree which will be held in Christchurch 2016. If you wish for your son to join the Scouts please contact the following people:

- ST Joseph Scout Troop
- John Paul Wilson - 54267
- Ben Maxwell - 71704
- Matavera Scout Troop
- Tuakana Makara - 21692



Let us fix our eyes on Jesus

part 2

By Senior Pastor John Tangi

In Part 1 of this theme I stated that the path-way we're going through this year 2014 is very exciting and challenging. The main scripture reading is in Hebrews 12v.2 (GN) which 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 from this verse.

I Our Focus v.2(a) reads "Let us keep our eyes fix on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end". 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.

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, ...". In this portion of the scripture is the principle of delayed gratification (enjoyment; pleasure; delight). For example giving up the good to obtain the best. Students give up social life to study. There is sacrifice involved - one is forfeited that a higher one might be achieved. There is pain involved, but it is pain endured for the sake of the joy that comes when the goal is reached. No pain, no gain. No suffering, no glory. No cross, no crown. No tears, no joy.

III. Our Hope v.2(c) "...and he is now seated at the right-hand side of God's throne." It means that the work of redemption is now complete. He must have the preeminence (dominance) in our lives because God has given Him a name that is above every name (Philippians

Encouragement Column

With Senior Pastor John Tangi

2v.9). Ephesians 2v.4-6 reads "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus," These are wonderful verses saying that by grace we have been saved, raised, and even seated with Christ in heaven. Because we are joined with Him by faith, where Christ is right now, we are there with Him. We have a share in the victory He won through His death and resurrection. This truth, wonderful as it is, is hard to comprehend, especially when most of us are dragging through the mud of daily lives. We do not "feel" seated in the heavenly places. But from God's point of view, the battle is over and the victory is already ours. And someday when we see Christ, all that is His will become ours because we are "joint-heirs" with Jesus. Our great hope in the race set before us is that one day soon we will cross the finish line and will be seated with our Lord Jesus Christ in heaven.

In Hebrews 12v.1 it reads "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance (patience) the race that God has set before us." Three simple thoughts come to mind: 1) The only way to win the race is to keep our eyes on Jesus. We have everything



we need to help us along the way. Don't be distracted by the things of the world. 2) When hard times come, don't start with our problems. Start with Jesus and then go back to our problems. Review what you know about our Lord—His mercy, His grace, His kindness, His power, and so on. Once you have laid the foundation from the Word of God, then you can find your way back to your problems. That doesn't mean you will understand all that happens to you but it does mean that your starting point is

very important. Start with Jesus, not your problems. 3) When you feel like giving up, remember that in God's eyes you are already a winner. Remember who you are and who you belong to. God has not given us a spirit of fear but of love and power and a sound mind (II Timothy 1v.7). Let that truth of God give you strength when you feel like you cannot go on. In Christ there is strength, lean on Him. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Government under pressure, desperate for a diversionary tactic

By Charles Pitt

At a media briefing following Cabinet last Tuesday, Prime Minister, Hon Henry Puna revealed that when the NZ Foreign Minister Murray McCully arrives for the Donor Round Table meetings commencing on 10 February 2014, he intends to discuss with McCully three topics; -Membership of the United Nations, -citizenship, and, -the NZ pension.

The PM did not elaborate as to why these three topics in particular warrant discussion however, members of the Democratic Party shadow Cabinet say that all three topics are linked to the issue of "independence."

The Demos suspect the PM will raise these issues possibly as a diversion to deflect the severe public criticism over the way government is handling the economy and infrastructure development process.

Government is unpopular at present over;

(a) the increase of VAT from 12.5% to 15%. The impact on the outer islands, pensioners and low income earners has not been properly assessed according to some commentators. It is likely the Demo Party will revert the VAT to 12.5% if it becomes government.

(b) The potentially illegal extraction of monies from pensioner's bank accounts by MFEM has put Cabinet under pressure from Grey Power. Some prominent local lawyers are of the opinion that no authority exists in law to extract monies from bank accounts without a High Court order. For MFEM to suggest pensioners take the Tax Collector to Court over the issue is an inappropriate use of tax payer funds when the solution is clear. Go to the High Court and get an order. Unable to withstand sustained pressure from Grey Power, government has agreed monies taken from bank accounts will be reimbursed but on condition pensioners firstly agree to pay two years back tax. This is tantamount to emotional blackmail considering the extraction of monies may have been illegal and Grey Power's key

issue is the objection to paying any back tax.

©MFEM's selective use of information to distort the contribution made by Grey Power members to the local economy. Neves had earlier issued a statement on the importance of paying taxes but failed to point out that the amount of taxes that would have been collected by taxing the NZ pension, is dwarfed by the actual amount Grey Power members are pumping into the local economy and have been pumping into the local economy for the last 17 or so years. Grey Power members bring in nearly \$6 million to this country and they spend that money here. Earlier governments had the brains to realize this and the no tax policy of earlier governments was to attract these Cook Islanders home so they would spend their pension here. Those on the local pension are saying they worked here and paid taxes so those on the NZ pension should pay taxes because they did not work here and contribute to local education and health services. From an economic point of view, this argument is invalid. Those on the local pension do not pay any tax on their pension so why should those on the NZ pension pay tax? Since the 1950s, those on the NZ pension worked in NZ and through NZAid some of their taxes came to the Cook Islands to assist with development of the education and health services. The failure on the part of government to publically acknowledge the contribution by Grey Power members to the wider community, is only fueling dissent and dividing the community at a time when the community needs to be united. How the Minister of Finance and indeed the Cabinet can sit by and allow MFEM to manipulate the information to suit its aims, is disgraceful and most unbecoming of the country's prime authority and decision makers.

(d) Government agreed to funding from China and NZ for the water project before the draft master plan was issued with the estimated costs. No agreement should have been entered into until after public consultation and

endorsement of the master plan and the estimated costs. That is how the democratic process is supposed to work. There has not been adequate consideration of other options. Because due process has not been followed, the public itself may move to cancel the whole project and seek a more cost effective solution. The whole matter may become an election issue.

(d) The fluctuating costs, suspicions and dissension associated with the water project has become so unsettling, the Demo Party are indicating that should they become government, they may delay the project until the issue of costs is resolved to the public's satisfaction. As the NZ and Chinese contributions are fixed, any cost overruns must be borne by Cook Islanders through user pays. With depopulation and a shrinking tax base, user pays fees will only increase.

(e) The Murienua by-election default and re-run will cost the tax payer \$60,000.

(g) Dissension within the CIP ranks over government's failure to adhere to the CIP constitution and long held policies, failure to hold a national conference, failure to seek conference endorsement for major new policies as in the tax area, failure to control the actions of public servants, failure to properly scrutinize and question Cabinet submissions and the perceived abdication of responsibility and authority portraying Cabinet as weak, ineffective, without authority and lacking leadership. Some long standing CIP supporters have now withdrawn their support of the Party.

Leader of the Opposition Wilkie Rasmussen told the Herald NZ's McCully will wheel out the same comments made to the Demo government when it was in power. That is, if the Cook Islands want to go down the road of UN membership, it will need to go independent and have its own passport.

Another diversionary tactic Rasmussen believes government will float is that of political reform in the outer islands.

Any reform would require an

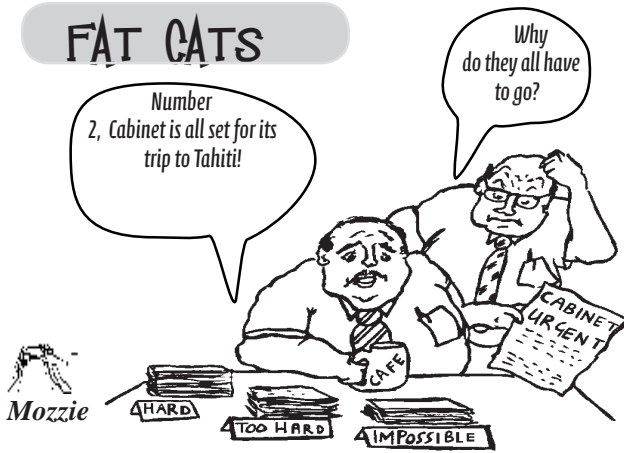
amendment to the Constitution and government does not have a two thirds majority. Government had such a majority following the 2010 election but through a series of blunders this has eroded. Another major blunder was to listen to the advice of an ex-pat. After winning the election in 2010 with a healthy majority, the CIP considered building further on that popularity and holding a snap election after two years. Winning the snap election would give the CIP a further four years in power and a total of 6 years in all to implement major policies. However, the Herald was told last year that Finance Secretary Neves advised against this for some reason connected with the budget process. Now the CIP face the prospect of being ousted before its major policies such as in the renewable energy area, have a chance to come to fruition.

A referendum on political reform is a possibility but outer island MPs should remember they hold the majority of seats in parliament and can out vote the Rarotonga based MPs who get any "funny" ideas. The last PM is an outer islander; Marurai (Mangaia), current PM Puna represents Manihiki. Opposition Leader Rasmussen represents Penrhyn.

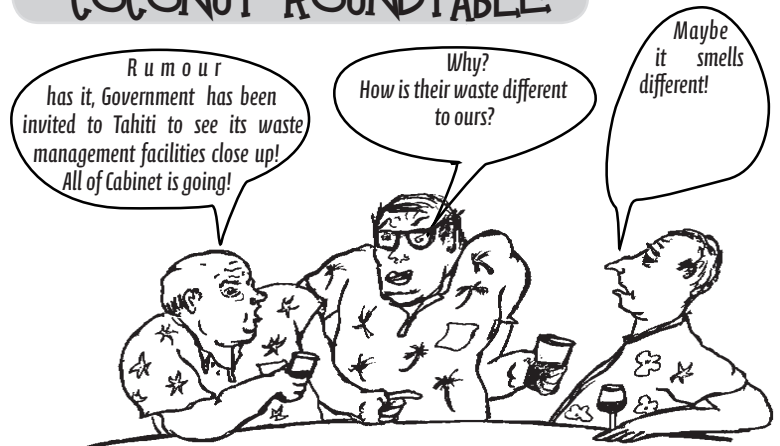
For Rarotonga based MPs to use the old argument about the zero economic return from the outer islands as justification for reform of MP numbers is a sad reflection of the failure of the Rarotonga based government to generate economic development in the outer islands, create new industries, create jobs, improve transportation and prevent depopulation. We now know that the landed value of the Albacore tuna caught in northern waters was \$64.7 million in 2012 yet not a cent of that money came back to the nation or northern group islands in particular to assist development.

The PM would do better to ask McCully for some tips as to how to get government out of the predicament it is in. Better still, perhaps McCully could discuss these matters directly with MFEM since MFEM now appears to fulfilling the role once played by Cabinet.

FAT CATS



COCONUT ROUNDTABLE



Crow about impersonators and look alikes. An observant tourist on the bus was surprised to see a look alike of the Muslim Egyptian Brotherhood leader Mohammad Morsi. (Had Morsi sought asylum in the Cook Islands?) After pointing out the bearded gentleman and making the comment, one of Cooks Buses regular free travelers, an elderly local hen, takes a look out the window and yells out that's Tim Tepaki! The driver said it's moments like this that relieve the monotony of going in circles all day.



Talking about Tepaki, political observers are worried for the PM. Last time Tim bombarded the daily with letters of support for a politician, namely the Bishop, we all know what happened.



Good to see our own people's bank the BCI do the right thing by extending their go green promotion of renewable energy beyond an expat solar installer who isn't even a qualified or locally registered electrician. It all helps locals stay put instead of applying their skills and qualifications in the Australian mining industry.



Murienua's CIP candidate Koata was doing the rounds campaigning and came across a hen pottering around inside her house but instead of going in he

CHOOKS CORNER
WITH BIG RED



suggested she go outside by his vehicle to hear his presentation. Refusing to do so she asks him what was he going to do for her? Koata's answer was, "You vote for me and when I get in I'll show you what I can do." A pretty persuasive answer but not convincing enough for a hen who is highly educated and had worked professionally in Australia for many years unbeknown to the wanna be politician.



The other morning during a passionate radio talk back show, the Demo candidate for Murienua James Beer challenged the PM Puna to a live debate on radio or TV. It was a great presentation spoilt by the host Wee Willie Framhien who obviously loves the sound of his own voice. An answer was received within hours, a message came from Elvis Puna's office accepting a challenge but all exchanges must be in the singing format.



Noticeably absent from CIP trooper Papa Kura's church funeral service was

a solitary Cabinet Minister. Mark Brown prised himself from a commitment and when he arrived there were no empty pews for him to perch so he went unnoticed then flew off after text messages of where are you, were waiting for you to make your speech.



The time has come for the Lord High Mandarins in the Palace to wake up and come to their senses! This preoccupation with propping up big business financially has to stop! First there was Cola something then Toa something now Air NZ gets to have 2 flights out of LA with the Cooks subsidizing one of them! And the Air NZ executives did not even use hypnosis! Air NZ would not schedule an LA to Raro flight because they said it was unprofitable for the company. But hang on, we could pay for the flight if we wanted it! Samoa and Tonga were not sleep walking and rejected any suggestion they subsidize such a flight. Instead of trying to squeeze tax out of the vulnerable, frail, old folk, stop spending money on these

LA flights! Since these flights began our government has shoved nearly tens of millions of dollars down Air NZ's pockets! No wonder Air NZ loves the Cooks!



Expect attacks and robberies on tourists to increase chooks. Big Red has said before that when unemployment is high, cash flow non-existent, when there's no trickle down of money from the tourism sector to the little people, then petty crime will increase and some desperate people will target tourists for ready cash. Government has sat on its hands and done little to ensure the benefits of the tourism sector are fairly and equitably distributed through society from the top to the little people at the bottom. A fairer distribution of wealth should come in the form of raising the minimum wage, limiting the inflow of foreign workers and ensuring hotel owners declare all their earnings and remit overseas held funds back to the Cook Islands or pay tax on these funds.

Cook Islands
HERALD
PMG
PITT MEDIA GROUP

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

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

GOPAC OCEANIA Regional Workshop

*5-6 February 2014, Edgewater Resort, Rarotonga
Keynote Address by Prime Minister Hon. Henry Puna*

Kia Orana
Ministers and Members
of Government
Opposition
Madam Speaker and
Parliamentary Staff
House of Ariki and Koutu Nui
Secretariat of the PLPG
Chair of the RAC
Special Kia Orana to our visiting
delegates
John Hyde, Chair of GOPAC
Parliamentarians from around
the Region
Public Accounts Officials
Ladies and Gentlemen



Welcome to the Cook Islands. Any opportunity to work closely with Parliamentarians and colleagues from around the Region is always a welcome one and we are delighted to host you all here in Rarotonga this week on the occasion of this gathering of GOPAC Oceania – the Regional Chapter of the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption.

The Cook Islands is the right place to host this meeting as I believe this country is a leader in the Region for transparency and accountability.

There is also some irony involved as two important meetings are taking place simultaneously – the Cook Islands Tourism Forum and the GOPAC Oceania Regional Workshop. The Tourism meeting is taking place in a church hall while this one is being held in one of our top resorts. So as someone has remarked to me this morning, perhaps this one, which is talking about morals and principles should be taking place in a church hall and the Tourism one should be held at the resort!

This is a welcome occasion because of its comprehensive approach to instil greater levels of appreciation and understanding about the institutionalised oversight of corrupt practises, as well as advance the structural organisation of Oceania, and alliance of National Chapters.

Acceding to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption just over two years ago, the Cook Islands Government is firmly committed to the development

and strengthening of public accountability and oversight – both at the national level and in the building of regional and international cooperative networks and frameworks to fight corruption and other criminal activity.

In previous years, the Cook Islands, like many Pacific States, was a participant in the processes for, and a willing contributor to the 2003 Asia Pacific Anti Corruption Action Plan Initiative. In the Post-9 Eleven World, the global efforts to close the gaps and vulnerabilities within offshore finance jurisdictions were closely inter-connected with Regional cooperation arrangements to fight corruption, particularly in areas of public accountability and transparency.

Widespread financial reforms were undertaken in the Cook Islands over several years to bolster compliance, oversight, and accountability – resulting in new legislation and institutional strengthening through agencies like the Financial Supervisory Commission and Financial Intelligence Unit.

While it is important for the Cook Islands to demonstrate such commitment, including the eventual ratification of UNCAC in 2011, it remains vital that we, as a community, maintain recognition and a responsibility to combat corruptive practises and influences in our society.

Our communities, small that they are and highly remote, are changing rapidly evolving under the pressures of modern consumption patterns and population trends, environmental

degradation, and our capacity to grow narrow-based economies.

The constraints and vulnerabilities we endure are compounded by the pervasiveness of corruption because of the way these practises present obstacles to our growth and well-being. Corruption erodes the integrity of the governance systems we uphold and the goals to which we aspire as a nation.

Recognition of the gaps and weaknesses is an essential step, especially as the culture of corruption can run deep below the surface of visibility. What passes for acceptable, conventional behaviour to some, could in fact be corrupt or be corruptive to the workplace, the home, and the community. We must recognise corruption for what it is.

As parliamentarians, our communities look to us for the initiative and leadership in taking responsibility to tackle corruption – effectively and in a timely manner.

The organisational structures and regulatory frameworks are key factors in equipping parliamentarians with the necessary tools. In the Cook Islands these arrangements have been strengthened by the formation of a national Anti-Corruption Committee, represented by several agencies and departments, including, Crown Law Office, Police, and the Ombudsman's Office.

Parliament also accommodates the newly-established Public Accounts Committee,

administered by our long-serving former Director of Audit. And both the Audit Office and the Public Expenditure Review Committee continue to provide robust oversight on behalf of taxpayers.

The national strengthening that has been steadily taking place in our respective countries now stands to benefit from a more concerted push among the GOPAC Oceania alliance. The establishment of National Chapters throughout the Pacific is a positive move forward, and the formalisation of the Regional Chapter would be a valued boost to the broader cooperative efforts.

Strengthening parliamentarians with the knowledge and capacity to uphold the UNCAC, and its provisions is fully appreciated, as is the opportunity to forge a strategic plan of action. So in keeping with my theme today of adopting Three Rs, I would like to conclude by mentioning that Recognition of corruption and the Responsibility to take action against it must be upheld by our Resolve to work collectively and cooperatively for better practises.

The Cook Islands will do what it can to provide the necessary support and motivation to build stronger coalitions against corruption. The objectives for this gathering are therefore highly regarded as an important way forward, and I wish us all the sincerest encouragement in working together over the next couple of days for the betterment of our Region, and our respective people.

Kia Manuia

PUBLIC NOTICE



ENVIRONMENT SERVICE PUBLIC NOTICE
Environmental Impact Assessment
(EIA) Reports

Government Departments, Agencies and the General Public are hereby advised that the Environment Service has received the following application for a Project Permit as required under Section 36 of the Environment Act 2003.

Application:

1. TE MATO VAI PROJECT

Project: Phase.1 – The Proposed Ring Water Reticulation Upgrade (Ara Tapu and Ara Metua) for Rarotonga.

Land: Te-Au-o-Tonga District, Puaikura District, Takitumu District.

In accordance with subsection 5 a) and c) of Section 36 of the Environment Act 2003, any person, Government Agencies or Organisation who wish to make a written submission for or against the granting of a Project Permit by the Environment Service for this applications, may do so within 30 days commencing on the 30th day of January 2014. Written submissions may be in Cook Islands Maori or English be submitted to the National Environment Service no later than the 28th day of February 2014.

EIA Reports for the above applications may be viewed at the following venues or on NES Website:

www.environment.gov.ck

NES Office Takuvaine,

National Library Maraerenga,

Super Browns Kiiiki

Matavera Traders Matavera

Muri 6-11 Shop Muri

Akapuao Store Akapuao

Wigmores Vaimaanga

Kavera Shop Kavera,

Rite Price Shop Akaoa

Oasis Nikao

Turamatuitui Shop Tereora

Tauae Shop Takuvaine

Director

Environment Service

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 2014 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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DEMOCRATIC PARTY

IT'S TIME FOR A REAL CHANGE

TAX POLICY

1. A High Court order will be required by Government to withdraw funds from individuals Bank accounts.
2. No person with outstanding tax will be prevented from leaving the country without Government requiring a High Court order.
3. No NZ pension back tax.
4. All Internal Affairs pensioner benefits will be exempt from tax.
5. All persons or businesses with outstanding taxes will be renegotiated with the intent of an amnesty on the penalties and interest with a fixed time frame for payment. Special conditions apply.
6. No DEMO Support for a 15% VAT.
7. Excluding Rarotonga and Aitutaki all other Islands will be exempt from income tax.
8. Secondary income will be exempt from tax.

For a New Beginning of Change



James Beer

for Murienua