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Is Puna scared of facing the CIP members?

Conference deferred again, Leadership challenge averted

DPM Teariki Heather's anticipated challenge to Henry Puna for the Cook Islands Party leadership has been stalled again by the deferring of this year's Party Conference. The CIP last held a conference in August 2011 and was obligated by its constitution to convene one last year but deferred it to 2014. Now a report has surfaced that at a meeting of the CIP it was decided there will be no Party conference until the middle of next year (2015).

In an unprecedented move in the history of the CIP no conference will be held before a General Election, a period of four years. The half day Conference in 2011 was to formally elect the Party Executives and office bearers.

In a blatant political manoeuvre the Prime Minister Henry Puna has continued to breach the CIP constitution by not holding a Party conference within two years of the last one. This flagrant disregard and disrespect for the party's constitution is further compounded by the fact that the confirmation of the CIP's manifesto and candidates for the next general election which is normally done by a Party conference will not eventuate.

Many rank and file Party members are frustrated their views will not be aired at a conference. The President, Vic President, General Secretary are three positions expected to be challenged. Long time Party members believe the leadership are more interested in preserving their positions instead of beginning to prepare for the next general elections.

This unconstitutional power play by Henry and those threatened by the prospect of an internal revolt means the CIP candidates will be thrust into a General election poorly prepared



Political manipulator PM Henry Puna

and left to find their own way. There will be no gathering of delegates or candidates to be charged with winning expectations and a unifying vision to enter the political fray, an absolute recipe for disaster.

The financial state of the Party is an issue members want transparency and accountability. "There is a lot of talk that the CIP have no money to contest an election nor do we know in what direction we are being lead," said a long time Party supporter who did not want to be named. "As usual everything will be left to the last minute."

This is another effort of self destruction under the weak insecure leadership of Henry Puna and his close core of Cabinet loyalists Mark Brown and

Kiriau Turepu. Brown and Puna who are blinded by their own cognitive disorder constantly claim and believe the fantasy Cabinet and caucus are united and focused. If it is their belief there are no divisive factions in the CIP why the desperate decision to avoid respecting the Party constitution and formalise a long overdue conference?

While Puna and Brown reiterate the law pertaining to everyone else must be followed and obeyed, they themselves have no passion to lead by example. Their disregard for practising the laws they advocate stems from the fact they do not follow their own Party constitution, they simply shamelessly lack the integrity to practise what they preach.

In the past, Party conferences have followed the Maire Nui Celebrations due to the convenience of having outer islands delegates on Rarotonga. While this may have been helpful in the past some members question the validity of basing the conference dependence on the festivities.

Many disgruntled CIP supporters on hearing this decision about no party conference before the General Election will take this as the last straw in trying to resurrect their Party.

With the CIP caucus and Executive too weak and spineless to reign in the dictatorial Henry Puna and his Minister's blind loyalty to self preservation the next General Elections will see the CIP lose rather than it be won by the Democratic Party.

An extreme alternative would be for three or four courageous uncompromising CIP parliamentarians to lead an internal breakaway forcing a snap Election or a Party conference to set an agenda and strategy to win back the dwindled support of the CIP before their losing cause is beyond retrieving.

Another extreme alternative is like minded MPs from both Parties could forge a new political party founded on principles and policies in objection to the politics of personalities that have driven both Parties for the last 20 years.

How the CIP caucus can continue to allow themselves to be manipulated by the self serving Henry Puna is beyond belief. Is there no one with the moral fibre and integrity who will be true to one's self, resisting the compromise of the easy path of being a shallow yes man and stand up for the sake of the disillusioned supporters who voted the CIP into government?

- George Pitt

RETRACTION AND APOLOGY

On page 3 of the Cook Islands Herald of 22 January, 2014 there was published an article written by Wilkie Rasmussen, M.P.

Mr Rasmussen acknowledges that the article can be construed to imply that Bill Doherty and Landholdings Limited have been and are engaged in corrupt and improper activities as part of their business in the Cook Islands.

Mr Rasmussen states that was never his intention and he accepts this implication is untrue and without foundation. He unreservedly retracts any and all references in the article to Bill Doherty and Landholdings Limited and the untrue implications of corrupt and improper activities.

Cook Islands Herald, as publisher, and Mr Rasmussen, as writer of the article, apologise to Bill Doherty and Landholdings Limited for any loss, harm or embarrassment caused to them by the article.

Special congratulations to Yvonne Underhill-Sem

Victoria University of Wellington Cook Islands Association (VUWCIA) extends hearty congratulations to Cook Islander and VUWCIA Alumni, Yvonne Underhill-Sem for her promotion to Associate Professor at the University of Auckland.

Yvonne works at the Centre for Development Studies and has written extensively on Pacific development, enculturating economic processes, progressive social movements and critical population geographies.

Key publications by Yvonne include "Reclaiming Pacific Island regionalism: does neo-liberalism have to reign" with Claire Slatter in Gender and Politics in the Asia-Pacific and more recently 'Ei of Ma'uke and Te "Ei Ma'uke' a book written by a group of Ma'ukean school students with the assistance of Yvonne.

Yvonne was a Fulbright



Senior Scholar in 2011 and has been a board member of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation and OXFAM NZ.

Cook Islander and a former student of Yvonne, Evelyn Marsters, who completed her PhD studies in 2013 had this to say about Yvonne and her elevation to Associate Professor, "This is such a massive accolade and well deserved. Beyond her extensive credentials, Yvonne works incredibly hard to support young academics who are striving to make a difference to this world".



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Weather watching...



While we've had strong winds and intermittent rain over the past 7 days, it's nothing compared to that experienced in the western Pacific last week.

And when Cyclone Lusi reached NZ over the weekend, it left areas without power for a while, brought down trees, and caused damage. So stay vigilant. Make sure you have the following items on hand.

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 - Battery operated radio to hear the latest news.
 - Food that you can store without refrigeration.
- The fact is you can never plan the weather.

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Chinese advised to pull out of Cook Islands

Political instability and Social unrest a concern

Right now the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) is caught between a rock and a hard place and is facing a serious possibility of losing face in an unprecedented international debacle not of their making but by well meaning association. Much has been promoted about the PRC first ever tripartite project, the multimillion dollar Te Mato Vai with partners New Zealand and the Cook Islands.

T w o

other funded projects for the Cook Islands from the PRC have been delayed or withdrawn. Last year the CIP government boastfully announced a one million dollar grant from PRC to buy Chinese manufactured pearl farming equipment to assist the struggling p e a r l

farmers in Manihiki. There was also an announcement of a gift of heavy machinery and tractors to assist with agriculture.

Last year New Zealand also gifted \$3 million for the pearl industry that was administered by the Pearl Authority. NZ High Commissioner John Carter reclaimed half that amount after he was dissatisfied the grant was not being administered in accordance with its intent.

Later last year after the Minister of Finance Mark Brown appointed his friend Mike Henry to the

Board of the Cook Islands Investment Corporation, Henry working out of Brown's support office was dispatched to the Wellington PRC Embassy to find out if the machinery could be delivered before Christmas. Henry discovered he was out of his depth and Brown ignorant of foreign related protocols. PRC do not deal with tails (Henry) or non Foreign Affairs Officials and appeared insulted at Brown's approach.

Chinese businesses require certainty and stability as the millions of dollars of investment made in fishing ventures requires precision movements of vessels and guaranteed access to the harvest fields. Chinese business is built on good relationships between their non Chinese partners but with the Prime Minister Henry Puna heading the Ministry of Marine Resources facing political uncertainties and

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Poorly advised by PM Henry Puna and Neves, Minister of Finance Mark Brown will become the scapegoat for a China pullout

Chinese advised to pull out of Cook Islands

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the lack of assurance continuity will likely see the Chinese investor Sam Chou and the Leun Thai Fishing Ventures Ltd (Hunan) go elsewhere.

Already as a vote of no confidence in the government, the Taiwanese fishing company Yuh Yow have withdrawn their 15 boats with \$65,000 each in lost licence revenue a total of more than \$700,000.

The PRC must now review their commitment to the TMV project. With the mounting social unrest of protesting disgruntled citizens and the government's inept administration of TMV the Chinese risk losing face internationally if the people of the Cook Islands reject TMV. The February 21 commencement of TMV by the CCECC was to coincide with the Chinese Ambassador from NZ visit to the Cook Islands but the start date is yet to be confirmed due to the bungling efforts of Neves.

Typical of incompetent bureaucrats, Neves untruthfully pointed the finger of blame at BTIB chairman George Pitt for holding up the TMV project but the truth and fact is CCECC cannot commence work till the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) has been approved followed by BTIB granting a Foreign Enterprise Registration approval, on March 14 the EIA was approved.

With over 2000 people and a lot more likely (up to 3000 expected) to having signed the petition opposing TMV, the government is facing an

unprecedented mountain of people pressure to repel the PRC loan. Their dissatisfaction is likely to transfer to voting at the next election.

Having failed to be transparent with the people and with reckless disregard of the political consequences the Minister of Finance Mark Brown and his incompetent sidekick Finance Secretary neneva Richard Neves signed off on the PRC loan. To date the people of the Cook Islands have yet to be told the details of the loan government have just glossed

The PRC should wise up and meet with the Democratic Party and weigh up their options as if there is a change of Government due to the mass public objection to TMV, will the new DP government bow to the people's voice and embargo TMV?

over in their media releases.

The PRC may not have realised the Cook Islands is a true democracy that is aliened to New Zealand unlike other Pacific nations they have established diplomatic relationships with. Here the people require the politicians to be transparent and accountable with the slightest erring resulting in a new government being voted in when the opportunity presents itself. The last 13 years is an

indication politics has been anything but stable.

This is also evident in the current CIP government who are unwilling to call Parliament due to internal instability. The fact the factional and divided CIP have breached their own Party Constitution by not having a conference for nearly three years is because when they do Henry Puna will be tossed out of being the leader and Prime Minister and replaced by the DPM Teariki Heather. Either Puna or Brown are regularly publically stating

DP cannot publically guarantee the continuity of TMV then they are advised to withdraw from the project immediately until further notice before they start work.

With people movements protesting in many parts of the world, the Cook Islands have witnessed the local social unrest and impact the Grey Power is having which is giving encouragement to others to rise up and challenge the CIP Government on their shocking disregard of the voice of the people. Last week's Grey Power monthly meeting drew its biggest attendance with growing support and interest from locally taxed pensioners who may join the Grey Power or start their own lobby group.

The last thing the PRC needs is to be linked to the growing social unrest that is brewing and the continued political instability of the toxic CIP government. The PRC must preserve their "Save Face" importance and call the government to immediate round table dialogue to determine the way forward.

There is a silent but growing movement of landowners who are holding meetings uniting and organising themselves, they will soon present their TMV concerns to government. Plans Neves and his cohorts have to take land by warrant without agreeable remuneration will launch a protest against the government that will attract international media attention

Continued next page

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Chinese advised to pull out of Cook Islands

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and embarrass the PRC by association.

The PRC contracted Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) are threatening to take legal action against George Pitt over alleged misconduct as the former chairman of BTIB, in response Pitt said here is a foreign company sponsored by the PRC threatening to take a local to Court over trumped up complaints unless an apology is published in this newspaper.

Pitt said "I will not be imitated by their bullying tactics, this is the Cook Islands, there will be no apology and I am in the process of taking legal action against CCECC for their defamatory media release." "If they chose to go to Court there is a lot more that will be said than has been."

This is not China where the media can be muzzled or censored, this is the Cook Islands where the freedom of speech is fundamental and politicians, as part of our political matrix are called to account almost on a daily basis.

In 1997 the PRC signed a one China policy agreement with the Cook Islands and one of their points of co-operation

is a commitment to assist the people of the Cook Islands with cultural and social development. Free speech and Media freedom are core values in the social development of the Cook Islands. TMV communication officer and MFEM spin doctor Jaewynn McKay who recklessly wrote the malicious and defamatory media release on behalf of CCECC should apologise to them for causing their media grief.

If CCECC can't understand the importance of avoiding hostility with the media they will endure unwelcomed media monitoring and scrutinising of their work and activities. What possess CCECC to legally threaten a media practitioner and get embroiled in a public spat before they even start work?

Is this the same company that built the shoddy Court House and the Police Headquarters? How can we trust them with something under the ground which we can't see when what we can see is poor workmanship and two buildings needing constant repairs and maintenance?

If one took the time to Google the Samoa Observer newspaper they will read reports of poor workmanship by Chinese

contractors including the new Samoan parliament building which is just one of many examples not to mention the buildings constructed by the Chinese for the South Pacific Games in Samoa.

PRC has a new Premier who is venomously anti corruption and we see international media reports coming out of China reporting on government officials and politicians at the highest level being severely punished for being corrupt. The CCECC no doubt want to position and distance themselves from any perception of corruption for the fear of the wrath of their Government. "But they will not be doing that at my expense," stated Pitt. "In fact I have been to China as a guest of their government and am going to write a letter of complaint directly to their Premier Li Keqiang."

This current unpopular CIP government has dug themselves a wide and deep hole by their testimony and demonstration of arrogance, lazy leadership and poor management of the people's resources accumulating in serious issues of diplomatic misadventures which will fracture our diplomatic relationship with PRC to the end it will require the Cook Islands

to skilfully earn their trust, confidence and friendship over a lengthy period of dialogue.

With G8 tier one nations taking more than a passing interest in this strategic tripartite engagement, the pressure is on China to maintain face by TMV being an absolute success, a guarantee the CIP government cannot deliver. The pressure is also on China to be highly discerning of the local political environment weighing all their options and proactive responses before they are squeezed into reactive compromises that will tarnish their international reputation.

The PRC needs to seriously and politely excuse themselves from the Cook Islands until political and social stability can be assured and guaranteed or endeavour to save face by converting their \$23.4 loan into a straight out grant. This will immediately resolve the possibility of street protest marches, High Court Injunctions and put to rest the fears of all and more who have signed the petition. For many worried citizens, the burden of the Chinese loan is seen as a millstone tied around their necks for many generations.

- George Pitt

Our Frontpage model

Our frontpage model this week is 27 year old Liz Richards. Liz is the Office Manager at Te Uki Ou School and proud mother of 3 beautiful kids. Interesting thing about miss Lizzie is that she loves Yoga and is a big fan of Yogi Maya's classes



Financials juvenile and deceitful

The rise and rise of Nenevanomics

The capital of Rarotonga does not look like a den of thieves, at least not while small groups of tourists wonder through town buying from gift shops or sipping \$6.00 lattes at the cafe's that litter the roadsides. But judging by increased crime rates ranging from petty theft to breaking and entering you would think that Alibaba and the Forty thieves were operating a criminal organisation right here in paradise.

Some have said that the biggest thieves are the Government with its endless tax increases and bank account raids on pensioners that it's impossible to tell the difference between the two. The only perceived difference being one group of thieves has passed legislation to make their thieving all legal.

But while the latte's flow and the tourists still fly in, there is something dark and sinister precipitating that has many people in this community wondering when will it end? Some wonder is this now the best time to pack up and leave and join the rest of the Cook Islands in New Zealand?

An ominous sign that suggests economic calamity for our recent departures is the higher than normal government revenue earned from departure tax. It's one of the few places on earth where the only revenue growth for this Government is the amount of people who leave.

In December 2013 the Cook Islands population dropped by 5%, ending one of the worst years of population loss this country has ever experienced since the 1996-1997 transition.

The same signs from 1996-1997 are beginning to appear but despite the warning signs and alarm bells ringing the government takes no notice, they continue to recklessly spend in the face of all the signs that tell them to act prudently, to control debt and to avoid waste.

While the rest of the country is forced to tighten their financial belts the government perversely throws money into the wind.

By way of example, reportedly

on a recent private golfing trip to NZ the PM Puna and separately his Minister of Finance Mark Brown engaged in some unauthorised work that netted them both a tidy sum out of the government Civil List. What pressing matter do you think would make the Prime Minister who is not known for his work ethic but more for his globetrotting self indulgence would entertain breaking his vacation to meet with shipping officials in NZ?

Is it because Puna is not used to paying for his own vacation costs from his own wallet that he has to get someone else to do it, that someone else being you and I?

Puna's reward for the hour long meeting was several hundred dollars from the tax payers of the Cook Islands. Quietly people have been whispering that the PM is the biggest contributor to departure tax revenue, but they are wrong when that money is simply tax money and paid for by struggling families who wish they could leave too!

There are very worrying signs emerging from Richard Neves' latest MFEM financial report that signals many deeper problems. Not surprising as Neves continues to feed us with his Nenevanomics brand of fiscal responsibility.

Debt levels are by far and away the most pressing financial concern and increased debt on its own is dangerous, but what compounds this further, is debt per capita or per person, and let's be honest, it would have to be debt per capita of all contributors to the tax revenue base of the Cook Islands, you can hardly expect old people to pay the debt and neither can you expect children to either.

Even then we would need to revise that further if we were to be true to ourselves, it would have to be the debt level per capita of all tax payers who are not employed by the public service, and here is why. As the public service may pay taxes, if all that income is derived from employers and employees

from the private sector then the real burden and the true measurement of debt per capita just increased substantially.

What does this all mean? Quite simply, if you recall the 800 people that left in December, the private sector tax contributors from those 800 recent departees increased the indebtedness of the rest, by 11%. If you're worried by a 2.5% VAT increases to 15% don't be, 11% is real bad news!

At this rate the Cook Islands would be insolvent within six months, but that's if we aren't already broke now. Who really knows?

Certainly MFEM appears not to know, their financial forecasting is beginning to show the lie in the quality of their work. Last year you will recall the hoop la! that accompanied the \$1.9M surplus that in reality later turned out to be a \$6million deficit. That's an \$8 million turn around in the deficit department, you would expect some better controls and measures paying that kind of money to the highly remunerated neneva Neves. Then being an economist without the back up of a reputable chartered accountant Neves will continue to deliver deceitful and juvenile accounts.

As more people leave - some forced by the escalating cost of living others by escalating taxes, this Government is playing catch up football. The critical component to all our problems is economic diversification and people, presently there is a lack of both of these.

As the government sees its tax revenue decreasing, it increases taxes to compensate for the losses. But what they need to be reminded of is when residents pack up and leave, each family that departs reduces government's revenue in just about every area.

Lower than predicted VAT revenue is a key economic indicator. It measures consumption, more people, more consumption, more VAT. As VAT is down in this Financial report from its budgeted values



Richard Neves

and it's also down from its 2012/13 actuals, these are dangerous indicators and don't lie to what is really happening.

As it reels from one financial disaster to the next bear this last point in mind, as Finance Minister Mark Brown was saying these words, "The Crown is in pretty good shape, and all in all Government is tracking well, " did he adjust his spending accordingly when armed with the knowledge that 800 people left the country permanently, or did he continue to increase taxes?

You've heard the saying that if you're in a hole stop digging? Not Brown, Neves and company, the more people leave the more they pile on the taxes, which in turn forces more people to leave, it's a slippery slope and its getting very slippery.

The government is looking down the barrel of accusations of massive financial mismanagement, there is no other way to describe it and people wouldn't be wrong to point to this. Next time Brown signs off on another Nenevanomics document he should submit it to three intelligent accountants for a peer review.

- George Pitt

Bruce Mita refused entry to Cook Islands, flagged as a security risk by airline

By Charles Pitt

Bruce Mita has been refused entry to the Cook Islands. He is not able to be reunited with his family on Rarotonga and has asked the Herald to highlight his case. He has provided the information below.

Back on Friday 16 August 2013 in Auckland, Mita went to check in with Virgin airlines for his flight to Rarotonga and was informed he would not be allowed to board the plane due to a "Security Risk" flagged against his name. He was told he would need to have a letter from the Cook Islands Consulate General authorizing him to travel. At that time, the Consulate was closed.

Bruce said he went to the Consulate office on Monday

19 August 2013 and was told by the staff they do not issue travel authority letters. A staff member rang Cook Islands Immigration and spoke to Vasie Poila who advised they were working on his case and would try to have Bruce fly in by the weekend. Nothing eventuated and Bruce was informed the matter was in the hands of the Cook Islands government.

On 23 August 2013 Bruce said he wrote and emailed NZ Minister for Foreign Affairs McCully about his case, with a copy to our PM Puna. Bruce said McCully responded to him on 16 October suggesting he take up his case directly with the airline. PM Puna did not respond and to date has not responded. To date Bruce

has received no explanation why he has been flagged as a security risk.

According to Bruce, his wife has approached Immigration a number of times and was informed Crown Law was looking into the matter. She has also approached the PM's office but was not able to speak to the PM. She has also approached the Ombudsman and the Police Commissioner but to no avail.

On 12 September 2013 Bruce received by email an apology from the CEO of Virgin airlines for not allowing him to board the plane. On 16 September 2013, the Virgin airlines CEO reported to Bruce that Virgin had been directed by the Government of the Cook Islands not to allow

him to travel. On 14 February 2014, Bruce asked Virgin airlines for an update and the CEO informed him the airline had contacted the Cook Islands government who said they invited Bruce to contact them directly.

Bruce said he had tried on a weekly basis to get a response from the PM's office but to no avail.

On Wednesday the Herald asked Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Immigration Myra Patai to comment on the matter of being flagged a security risk, the applicable legislation and right of appeal.

Acting Director of Immigration Vasie Poila advised on Wednesday that a response would be sent in time for the Herald next week.

Cooks quota system gains regional support

The Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) has received strong support for its proposed initiative to implement a quota management system from neighbouring countries and regional agencies at a fisheries meeting recently concluded in New Zealand.

The Cook Islands would be the first Pacific Island in the region to adopt a quota system which would be a significant step towards putting in place limits in our EEZ (exclusive economic zone) and addressing the problem of overfishing.

MMR offshore fisheries director Andrew Jones the presented the quota management system to the governing council of Te VakaMoana (TVM) in Auckland and says offers of support are coming in from FFA (Forum Fisheries Agency) and SPC (Secretariat of the Pacific Community) as well as New

Zealand to help the Cook Islands refine its proposal.

TVM is a co-operative arrangement between the fisheries administrations of the Cooks, NZ, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau and Tonga, signed in 2010. Its overarching goal is 'to secure, protect and enhance associated long-term economic benefits able to be derived from fisheries and protect the important contribution fisheries make to the food security of the communities'.

Prior to the Auckland presentation, Jones had travelled to American Samoa to discuss the concept with fishing companies in Pago Pago where the majority of Cook Islands longliners are based.

"Our presentations went down exceptionally well", says Jones.

The primary goals of the quota system are to develop and regulate the bigeye tuna fishery; to enhance the use of science

as the basis for management, to limit the catch of albacore and bigeye, and to establish a history of catch allocation and use.

According to the MMR secretary, Ben Ponia, the fatal flaw with the traditional licensing approach in the region is that there is no practical way to limit the catches per vessel.

"Basically our systems take so long to tally up the catches at sea that we can't control how much each vessel is catching. This means we have an "open" fishery which can lead to overfishing" he says

According to MMR, the current system of tallying up the catches per vessel takes several months to process and takes place after the vessel returns to port. This time lag makes it almost impossible to manage individual vessel catches.

The proposed MMR quota system is to assign a catch limit per fishing license and to adopt

a dual system of electronic reporting while at sea.

In this manner the ministry will be able to monitor individual vessel catches and the total catches combined.

Although the quota system is still under development, the ministry is considered allowing vessels that have reached their individual quota to purchase additional "unfished" quota, generating additional catch revenue for the country.

MMR is quick to caution that it won't be assigning the quota "in perpetuity" and that the rights of the fishery will stay with the government and individual quotas will only be assigned for the term of the fishing license, which is 12 months.

Next month the MMR is planning to organise a technical workshop with regional organisations and industry representatives to add further to its proposed quota system.

On the right track

Latishia Maui's eyes light up and she zooms in on a small red blip moving across a map on her computer monitor. It's a fishing vessel that appears to be transiting through the Cook Islands EEZ (exclusive economic zone) from French Polynesia. It is one of many Latishia can see on three tracking systems she monitors.

Latishia is the Offshore Fisheries Division's VMS Compliance/Data Analyst –at the Ministry of Marine Resources.

She is part of a team that monitors who is fishing in the country's waters and whether they are meeting license conditions.

An important aspect of this is monitoring purse seine vessels fishing under the US Fisheries Treaty. Under the vessel days scheme (VDS), purse seiners fishing under the treaty purchase a number of fishing days. Each day costs them around US\$5000.

Latishia records whether a vessel is fishing, searching, or transiting in or out of the zone.

Purse seiners can declare part of their time in the zone as non-fishing days, such as when they are transiting out of the zone to offload their catch. Accepting or rejecting these claims is part of Latishia's job.

"It's quite a big responsibility. If I'm too lenient then we could lose the revenue for that fishing day, so we use the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) to compile evidence where we have to dispute a claim or part of it."

The VMS is accessible to all 17 Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries



VMS Compliance/Data Analyst Latishia Maui checks out the movement of fishing vessels in Cook Islands waters using a Google Earth tracking system.

Agency (FFA) member countries and is a satellite-based system that tracks and monitors fishing activity across the region.

Latishia uses the VMS to determine a vessel's position, speed, and course based on periodic transmissions from its onboard ALC (automatic location communicator).

Apart from vessels in the country's waters, Latishia also monitors activity beyond it in the eastern high seas pocket, the northern high seas and the southern high seas.

"Vessels of interest are monitored closely, especially those that are not registered to fish in our zone. The system allows us to detect vessels that are not licensed, or breach conditions of zone entry and exit."

Latishia says information sharing between FFA and member countries allows them to identify potential threats and recognise suspicious fishing activity in and around their fishing zones.

Last November Latishia and her colleague Saiasi Sarau completed 3-week fellowship training attachments at the FFA headquarters in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

"We had the opportunity to work with all its departments and see their surveillance system first hand."

Some data Latishia analyses is sent to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the US federal agency focused on the condition of the oceans and the atmosphere. The ministry also works closely with

the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in monitoring fishing activity.

Catch data, log sheets and observer reports for each licensed vessel adds to the information collected.

Initially hired as assistant VMS officer last year, the 26 year old says she loves her job and enjoys taking on a new challenge.

Before moving back to Rarotonga last year, she gained a qualification in sport and business.

Latishia is now completing a Bachelor degree in Marine Affairs through the University of the South Pacific, with the support of the ministry.

"It will help me understand the industry and learn more about what's going on out there in the ocean."



Ministry of Marine Resources
GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS

Japan grants assistance for Maire project

The signing ceremony for the Project for the Development of Marie Production in Mitiaro Island under Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) was held today, 19 March 2014.

In this project, the Government of Japan will provide a grant of up to NZ\$ 144,437 for the construction of a Maire nursery and satellite shade houses for planting and enhancing Maire productivity and to increase the volume of Maire grown for the women in Mitiaro island.

Traditionally the cooperative called the "Mama-Maire-Club" consisted of local women who took a leading role in the

cultivation, harvesting and marketing of Marie under the Mitiaro Island Council's initiatives. However, Maire grows near cliffs on a steep hill area, and cultivation and harvest involves rough and dangerous work. Due to these factors the productivity of Maire is not sufficient to meet demand. This project is an extension of a pilot initiative of Ministry of Agriculture which had successfully tested the flat land cultivation of Maire.

Mr. Reki Kataoka, First Secretary of the Embassy of Japan to the Cook Islands attending the ceremony congratulated the Mama-Maire-Club and the Mitiaro Island

Council on launching this project and he said, "I have looked forward to this event not only because it is the first project since I have been posted to the Embassy but also because of the potential these grants have to improve the standard of life for members of the Mama-Maire-Club and their families through the opportunities of additional income generation."

The Government of the Cook Islands has prioritised the promotion of social development including increasing women's participation, improving economic development and fostering cultural and creative products in the "National Sustainable Development Plan

2011-2015 (NSDP)". Mr Kataoka referred to Japan's priority areas in providing official development assistance to the Cook Islands as identical to the NSDP.

Mr Kataoka sincerely hoped that with cooperation and assistance of Mama-Maire-Club and the Mitiaro Island Council, the project would progress smoothly toward its scheduled date of completion. He concluded his congratulatory remarks by saying "Let us now take the first important step together, which is to sign the grant to enable the Mitiaro Island Council and the Mama-Maire-Club to begin this project."

Japan grants assistance for Maungaroa Lifelong Study Centre

The signing ceremony for the Project for the Establishment of Maungaroa Lifelong Study Centre under Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) was held today, 19 March 2014.

In this project, the Government of Japan will provide a grant of up to NZ\$146,905 for the construction of the Maungaroa Lifelong Study Centre building and office furnishings. This project is aimed at improving the provision of life skills programmes in communities and it is hoped that this will ensure everyone has access to the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills they need to contribute to the development of the Cook Islands.

Mr Reki Kataoka, First Secretary congratulated the Toko Itu Rangatira o Tinomana, the traditional custodians of the Maungaroa Marae and Paepae Historical Site and said that he understood that the Maungaroa Marae and Paepae Historical Sites Land Trust through a recent development will support the overall aim of the project to preserve and pass on traditional farming and fishing methods along with promoting art and handicraft techniques. He paid tribute to Maungaroa

custodians for their strong leadership and dedication along with hardworking community members that has resulted in the successful conclusion of their project proposal with today's signing ceremony.

The Government of the Cook Islands has prioritized the promotion of social development in the "National Sustainable Development Plan 2011-2015 (NSDP)". Quality social welfare at the community level along with developing cultural and creative industries are a fundamental focus of the NSDP and are also priority areas for Japan in providing official development assistance to the Cook Islands.

Mr Kataoka said in his congratulatory remarks, "I believe that the completion of this project will not only dramatically revitalise Arorangi Village by creating employment opportunities for youth but it will also contribute to promoting the recent educational trend to restore traditional farming cultivation methods and the techniques for creating handicraft works which are part of the unique tradition, culture and history of the Cook Islands."

His congratulatory remarks concluded by hoping that this signing ceremony was the

beginning of a long, meaningful and friendly relationship between people of Japan and people of the Cook Islands.

In closing Mr. Kataoka wished this project's successful implementation and completion in the near future.

Reki Kataoka, of the Japanese Embassy to visit the Cooks

First Secretary Reki Kataoka, of the Japanese Embassy will visit the Cook Islands from the 18-22 March 2014 to finalise support for two new projects, which involve youth vocational skills and maire cultivation valued at almost NZ\$300,000.

Kataoka, who replaces Kiyo Rokutanda who had previously administered the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Program (GGP) out of the mission in Wellington will not only finalise these two new projects, but will be available to discuss possible future projects under the scheme.

Deputy High Commissioner Tapaeru Herrmann welcomed this further support from Japan. "What has been particularly useful about the Grassroots Grant Fund is it's flexibility in accommodating projects in the islands beyond Rarotonga and deliverable by civil society," said Herrmann. In the two years the scheme has been available to the Cook Islands, Japan has provided in excess of NZ\$400,000 to projects in the Cook Islands including for the Mangaia Fishing Association and health equipment for the Southern Group islands.

Detailed information on the Grassroots Fund can be found on the Japanese Embassy website at <http://www.nz.emb-japan.go.jp/cookislands/documents/CI.Guidelines2013.9.pdf> and applications are to be submitted directly to the Japanese Embassy in Wellington.

Commitment to transparency does not match actions

There's an old saying about making a commitment then "walking the talk."

According to the members of the Te Mato Vai Petition organising committee, there are examples where government has failed to follow commitments given in official documents, namely the water project's draft Master Plan.

It is one thing to point to the plan as an example of being transparent but quite another when officials do not "walk the talk."

Set out below are some examples where subsequent actions do not align with the wording in the draft Master Plan.

Introduction

Thursday, February 6th, 2014 Cook Islands News, Prime Minister Puna is reported as saying, "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" (Edgewater Resort, GOPACs anti-corruption conference).

Examples

Extracts from Te Mato Vai

DRAFT Master Plan prepared by AECOM 29th October 2013.

CONCERN 1: Page 5 section 2.1 Authority for governance Paragraph 3 last sentence.

"Service levels, construction standards and water quality have to be developed and agreed with consumers. This effort would likely take a minimum of 18 months." (Check date of draft Master plan... if new one arrives add min 18 months?)

CONCERN 2: Page 1 On the page titled "Executive Summary"

"The Government of the Cook Islands have recognised that the current system will need a Master Plan to realise this opportunity and have secured funds through a grant from the New Zealand Government and a loan from the Peoples Republic of China." (Speech by Minister Brown at launch of TMV on TV, 20th Feb 2014, "We are awaiting a Master Plan")

CONCERN 3: The Master Plan is intended to:

(1) Identify in the water supply network caused by deterioration

of the existing network, changes in population growth and legislation, (2) Analyse the deficiencies under current peak conditions and future peak water demand conditions to determine appropriate and associated costs.

"This will enable a financial plan to be developed that identifies the cost of the required network upgrades and options for cost recovery." (Where is the financial plan? The term cost recovery is separate from user pays)

CONCERN 4: Table 1 Summary of project costs (Page 4) Total cost \$72,771,000.

CONCERN 5: "In parallel to the water upgrade project another component of the Te Mato Vai project is the reform of the water sector in Rarotonga and the implementation of water charges through metering." Neither of these items covered by the master plan.

(Minister Heather states in Public Consultations meters are just to measure water usage, Sinai Hall)

CONCERN 6: Section 2.1.2

Recent developments.

On the 7th September 2012 the Government of the Cook Islands (GoCI) issued a memorandum approving:

The principle of cost recovery and user charges for water supply to households and business in Rarotonga once the water infrastructure is completed. (Notice the terms cost recovery and user charges).

CONCERN 7: (Page 6) The GoCI Budget estimates 2013/2014 Book 3 Capital plan dated June 2013 states in Section 4.7 Ministry of Finance and Economic Management that:

"Cabinet has approved the creation of a State Owned Entity to run water supply on completion of the project [Te Mato Vai] They will be sustained by introducing user pays charges once water quality reaches 'potable' water standard."

OTHER CONCERNS: Concerns about the costs, test and measure, systems, due process and GO LOCAL are additional concerns.

Te Mato Vai or Go Local

A release from the Te Mato Vai Petition Committee

Have you compared the cost and ongoing financing required for the Te Mato Vai (TMV) project?

TMV could end up costing as much as \$72,700,000 million over 3-4 years with debt, not drought proof, introduce cost recovery and a user pays system. (Page iv AECOM TMV Water Supply Master Plan)

Going local

Go local is a viable option for upgrading our water system.

First it must all be agreed to by landowners and consumers thence adopted into legislation and standards documented. Home owners be responsible for maintenance and costs next 10 years! Maybe they prefer to use local water stations, use rain water, boil or buy? After all we live in a democracy!

With a Government Guarantee, we could buy each home a UV treated Water System which

includes installation paid over 3 years. Like wise if we do the same for rain water tanks, to collect rain water but not water off mains. Why? It's because when you have over 1000 tanks opening up at the same time to draw water off the mains it results in a significant drop in water pressure.

UV TREATED WATER:

\$600/156 weeks = \$3.85/ week

RAIN WATER TANKS:

\$2000/156 weeks = \$12.82/ week

Benefits are UV treated water in our homes to our people and 9.6 million ltrs storage. However if we buy a tank making system and joint venture with local businesses we can increase storage capacity, reduce costs and potentially duplicate this in the Outer Islands and into the future. Must also indicate power costs, maintenance and to be checked by health inspectors or Pu Tapere every month or quarter. To be incorporated into building regulations those new homes

above 25mtrs, or a certain distance from mains supply.

RENT TO BUY: (zero costing after 3 yrs total \$0)

Our water mains must be tested to confirm leakage rate. Should not assume leakage is 70%! How? Use Gator Cam or Acoustic Microphones (leak detection kit). From the findings take appropriate action!

That action could be to replace piping, however it might need only a few air valves and basic repairs. Work that can be done by locals! (Go to watercare.co.nz or melbourne.water.com.au, life expectancy on AC pipes is up to 200 years if there is maintenance program in place).

Our intakes can have water galleries built inland and still supply water in times of drought (dry stream beds). All work that can be done by locals. One local in particular, has worked in Rarotonga and Aitutaki (Aitutaki Pacific Resort, Survivor Aitutaki, TeManu Beach,

Reef Motels, formerly Maina Sunset more than 22 years old).

Subject to funding and approvals these measures could cost our people around \$3 million. Maybe costs can be absorbed by the \$4 million dollar surplus government announced last week.

The maintenance program and database, in fact everything for future reference (follow process chart) can be complete in 18 months. By going local we could avoid debt. The \$15 million grant from New Zealand could be used at strategic intakes to hold more storage capacity and move intakes inland for increased pressure.

A go local option would save the country millions with potentially no debt!

Does anyone have some better options?

The PM stated we are leaders in Transparency and Accountability (Anti Corruption conference Edgewater Resort Feb 6th, 2014).

Telecommunications Advisory Committee announced



Jeanne Matenga

Government is anticipating some fundamental changes to the telecommunications sector. Work has already begun with the endorsement of the Telecommunications Industry principles which precedes the development of the new telecommunications legislation. The legislation is almost complete for public consultation and is currently targeted for tabling in the June 2014 Parliamentary sitting. The recent developments around Digicel's interest in purchasing Telecom New Zealand's share have also fuelled public debate.

To assist in providing feedback to the issues raised, the Minister of Telecommunications, the Hon Mark Brown, sought expressions of interest from companies or individuals who have a genuine interest in progressing telecommunications and connectivity to voluntarily serve as a member on the Advisory Committee on Telecommunications. This Committee will respond to telecommunications issues raised by the public and also those that the Committee and Minister feel are pertinent to telecommunications development in the Cook Islands. The primary role of the Committee is to provide the Minister with advice and recommendations for addressing the issues impacting on telecommunications and moving the sector forward.

The Minister has identified 6 members selected from a total of 22 respondents to the expression of interest request. They are Ms Jeanne Matenga (Chairperson), Steve Anderson, Maureen Hilyard, Damon Enoka, Mike Pynenberg and Rebecca Puni. The National ICT Office will be secretariat to the committee.

Shark fin issue still in process

The Prime Minister is satisfied that all the necessary considerations were made in respect to a Chinese-flagged fishing vessel, which was discovered with 8kg of shark fins while traversing through Cook Islands waters, last month.

The Prime Minister said he made an executive decision to allow the boat to continue its journey after all the appropriate steps were completed to record and register the find, and all the information was presented and advised by the Ministry of Marine Resources.

"There are a broad range of issues to take into consideration in a case like this," Puna says.

"This is not for instance, a simple matter of a reading of the regulations with respect to our domestic law governing sharks."

The Chinese boat was fishing in international waters and has right of passage through Cook Islands waters to its destination. But given the absence of shark carcasses on the vessel, there is a case to be answered for finning – an illegal practice under international law.

Government is presently utilising the avenues available to it to convey this discovery to the appropriate Chinese authorities, and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

Puna acknowledged public concerns that the Chinese vessel has somehow gotten away without punishment. A formal letter he had received from Te Ipukarea Society had also raised issues of credibility and the risk of national reputation.

However, the Prime Minister says the matter has not yet ended. He is confident that the advice of MMR is sound and that the current course of action is best.

"Our primary focus is on the sustainable management of our fisheries resource and while we make every effort to safeguard our domestic obligations, we also remain steadfast in meeting the broad demands of our international legal frameworks."

The Prime Minister said the finning allegation, the free right of passage by the vessel, and the lodging of information through the relevant channels, were the key points and these outweighed the unknown quantity associated with pursuing punitive action over the discovery of 8kg of shark fins – approximately 10 sharks.

The Prime Minister added that Government's focus on sustainable management of national resources ought not to be driven by the pursuit of money from fines but by initiatives for growth and longevity.

"We need to remember that this falls under resource management not crime and punishment."



GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS
MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

P O Box 98, Rarotonga, Cook Islands * Tel: (682) 29-370 * Fax: (682) 23-608 * E-mail: secintaff@intaff.gov.ck

MEDIA RELEASE

COOK ISLANDS OLD AGE PENSION - RECALCULATION OF LATE REGISTRATIONS

The Government announced last week that it would re-calculate the March 2014 pension payment rate for those pensioners that had made late registrations for the 25% pension increase, which was introduced as part of the tax reforms. Pensioners that submitted late registrations may be entitled to a reimbursement correcting their March 2014 payment rate. Due to increased administration arising from the recalculation process, the additional payment will be made separately from the regular 16 March 2014 payment. Those pensioners that will receive a reimbursement should expect an additional payment to be made in their Bank of Cook Islands accounts in the period prior to 1 April 2014. If you are expecting a pension reimbursement and have not received it by 1 April 2014, please contact the Ministry of Internal Affairs for further information.

MONI PAKARI KUKI AIRANI – AKATANOANGA I TE TUTAKIANGA A TE ARONGA TEI TAVAREVARE I TE RETITA

I te epetoma i topa manako te Kavamani kia akatanoia te moni pakarki a te au metua no te marama (Mati) koia te au metua tei tavarevare te retitaanga ki roto i te akakakeanga ruangauru ma rima patene.

Ko te au metua pakari tei kore i vivki i te retita, ka akaoki ia mai te moni tei kiritiia mei roto mai i te tutakianga moni pakari o Mati. No te maata i te tauiana te ka raveia ka tutaki takake ia te reira moni mei te tutakianga moni pakari o te ra 16 o Mati. E ka tae te reira tienianga ki roto i ta kotou puka moni i mua ake i te ra 01 o Aperira e tu mai nei.

Me kare taau moni i tae ki roto i taau buka i te ra 01 Aperira no runga i te akatanoanga moni, taniuniu mai i te Opati o te Tango Ropianga no tetai akamaramaanga takake.

END

CONTACT:

Bredina Drollet, Secretary of Internal Affairs

Please reply all correspondence to the Secretary of Internal Affairs

Letters to the Editor

Air Raro assists with outer islands projects

Dear Editor,
I wish to publically thank and acknowledge Mr Ewan Smith and his team at Air Rarotonga for their generous contribution; firstly with the delivery of computer equipment to islands Mangaia, Atiu, Mitiaro and Mauke all on separate return trips. Their assistance was in the way of keeping the plane on the ground for two hours plus on each island till the presentations was completed. Two additional trips, to Atiu and Mangaia were made to present Political Reform proposals and again Air Raro waited up to three hours while meetings were conducted. Significant monetary savings were made due to Air Rarotonga accommodating our request to wait. Thank you very much for your sponsorship.

Teina Bishop
Minister of Education

Which is it, to leak or not to leak?

Dear Editor,
Last night on the CITV program discussing water on Rarotonga, essentially 3 statements were made.

1. Arona Ngari of the Met Office gave an explanation of annual rainfall and the months that were "drier" than average.
2. Adrian Teotahi of the Water Division gave an explanation how Water Works have noted a shift in drier weather areas that are on the Northern side that now extend(s) to include the Northeast area. (Town area though to Matavera)
3. Mac Mokoroa of the Ministry of Infrastructure made a statement that the water issues were related to the fact that 70% of the water collected was leaking out of the mains.

As a former Police officer I trust, that (you)Mac have evidence to support this claim, or are we just chanting the Govt/Te Mato Vai/AECOM chant "the pipes are leaking?"

*"Oh Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are leaking
From glen to glen, and down the mountain side
The consultants gone, and all the taros dying
'Tis you, 'tis you must go and I must die."*

If Arona and Adrian are correct, and there is no evidence to support the "leak theory" or at least none to the alleged 70% level, then what is Mac's position? What does he advise the Minister? Does he in fact give any advice at all or merely faithfully just repeat the official line? And what about the unanswered question about tapping into underground water reservoirs? Still no comment on that because that might be an easier, cheaper solution eh? And what about the pipe relining mentioned in the Petition? Another easier, cheaper solution? It seems anything that might threaten the size, cost and complexity of Te Mato Vai project is conveniently ignored. So much for transparency and fiscal responsibility!

Show the public the evidence, get the conviction or withdraw the case.

Yours,
Leaking patience

The COMPUTER MAN Tech Tips

Phone 24979 Email: sales@thecomputerman.co.ck

PRINTER INK Cartridges

Get a printer with an automatic duplexer - and use it. Most business printers sold today - and many consumer printers as well - include (or offer as an option) an automatic duplexer, which lets you print on both sides of a sheet of paper. At the Computer Man, our laser printers have duplex printing capability. Duplex (two-sided) printing is both eco-friendly and

economical, as it can cut your paper use (and costs) nearly in half. Just remember, when you do need to print single-sided documents, to change the driver setting to simplex printing. Also, note that duplex printing is somewhat

slower than simplex printing for a given document, as the duplexer has to flip the page over to print on the back.

Think (and look) before you print. You can reduce clutter and save ink and paper by only printing the material you actually need. Why print

out the 4 pages of legalese at the end of a bank statement, or the 242 comments that follow an opinion piece? Do you really want a hard-copy of that 50-page report, or will reading it on screen suffice? Preview your document before printing; many documents (particularly Web pages) will print quite differently than they look on screen.

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Te Reo Maori

Na Rutera Taripo

Pukapuka`anga – Conversational

Nō te Ora/Taime, `ē te Tuātau

`E ora tēia	This is a clock
`E a`a tēia/tēnā/tērā?	What is this/that(near you)/that (away from us)
`E ora tēnā.	That (near you) is a clock.
`E a`a te ora i tēia nei?	What is the time now?
`E ora `ā (te ora i tēia nei)	It is now 4 o'clock
`E ta`i-nga`uru-mā-ono meneti	Its 16 minutes past 7
`i pāti i te ora itu	
`E `āpa tēia no te ora iva	Its now half past nine
Kua waitata i te tuaero	Its nearly 12 o'clock
Ā`ea koe e `akaoti ei?	When are you finishing?
Ākonei ake i te ora rima	Later on at 5 o'clock
Āpōpō i te avatea-pū	Tomorrow at midday/noon
Ā tērā`o atu pōpōngi	On the morning after tomorrow
Ā tēia Varaire ki mua	Next Friday
Ā tēia mata`iti roa ki mua	Until next year
Ākōneinei ake!	Just a little, wee while yet!

Te au rā o te `Epetoma: Days of the Week

Mōnitē - Monday	Ru`irua - Tuesday	Ru`itoru - Wednesday
Paraparau - Thursday	Varaire - Friday	Ma`anākai - Saturday
	Tāpati - Sunday	

Kia Ūpoko-tū!

Let it flourish!

Ta`i, rua, toru, `ā!
Ngō`ie `ua kia akatātā
`Ō atu tātou kī mūa
Rima, ono, `itu, varu!
Āru mai `a iva `ē ta`i-nga`uru.
Nā rira `ua rāi te tatau
Ma te mā `ē te `ē ki rua-nga`uru
Te reo ō tātou kia ūpoko-tū
`Ē rau, `ē mano, te tuātau!

One, two, three and four!
It is simple to recite
Let us forward to advance
Five, six, seven and eight!
Followed by nine and ten.
Continue counting in this way
With conjunctions to two tens
Flourish on our language
For hundreds and thousands of years!

Marae Moana - From the perspective of the Traditional Leaders



House of Ariki Kaumaiti Travel Tou Ariki



Elizabeth Wright - Koteka Chairman of CIMPSC

The Cook Islands marine park now named MARAE MOANA is a tremendously exciting project for the traditional leaders of the Cook Islands. It is little known to the general public that the HOUSE OF ARIKI and KOUTU NUI representatives are an integral part of the Cook Islands marine park steering committee formed by the Prime Minister in November 2011. Indeed the traditional chiefs have been supportive of the marine park while it was still a moemoe'a in the imagination of the promoter, Kevin Iro, now the co-chairman of the marine park.

Supporting the Marine Park moemoe'a

The involvement of the ARE ARIKI and KOUTU NUI in the moemoe'a of the marine park stems from when Kevin Iro first approached the traditional chiefs asking for our support of the concept in 2009. The traditional leaders could immediately see the benefit of conserving the marine resources of our part of Moana Nui o Kiva not only for ourselves but for our children and grandchildren - indeed for all generations to come.

At the time the respective presidents of the two Houses of traditional leaders were Tou Travel Ariki of the ARE ARIKI and Te Tika Mataiapo of the KOUTU NUI. Prior to his approach to the traditional leaders, Kevin had already approached the government of the day (under PM Jim Marurai) and gained their support in principle for his marine park moemoe'a. However, at the 2010 elections there was a change of government and Kevin Iro had to start all over again and won the support of Cabinet led by PM Henry Puna.

International Reps from large-scale Marine Parks

The prime minister proved to be a particularly enthusiastic supporter and the marine park concept gained momentum. In 2011, when Kevin Iro returned to the traditional leaders, he also brought reps from international environmental groups including Conservation International and IUCN (International union of Conservation) and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park authority from Australia.

Their input brought form to the

moemoe'a and the traditional leaders now had details of other large-scale marine parks that had been established. Other large scale MPA include Phoenix islands protected area in Kiribati, Papahanaumokuakea marine monument in north Hawaii, and the Great Barrier Reef which was the first in the world to declare a Marine Park. By this time, the president of the Koutu Nui was Turi Mataiapo (Mrs Maria Henderson).

November 2011 – BIG OCEANS workshop

In November, 2011 the Office of the Prime Minister had issued invitations to interested parties to form the Marine Park steering committee. Are Ariki and Koutu Nui reps were on the invitation list as were OPM, TIS, Environment Service, Marine Resources, Ministry of Finance, Crown Law, Tourism and seabed mining authority. At the initial meeting, we voted Elizabeth Wright-Koteka from OPM as chairman – a position that Elizabeth has retained to this day.

Perhaps that initial meeting date was inspired by our

chairman having received an invitation from a worldwide organisation known as BIG OCEANS which is an association of the managers of large-scale marine parks and their scientists. The organisation had scheduled a marine park workshop to be held in Auckland later that month, and had funding for two members from Cook Islands to attend. The committee agreed that one of the places would go to a member of the traditional chiefs and another to our chairman, Elizabeth.

However, such was the enthusiasm of the members of the steering committee, that all of us persuaded our chairman to persuade BIG OCEANS to allow up to four or five reps to attend the workshop - as long as the extras paid their own way. After much resistance from the organisers, that was finally allowed and that is how I came to join the extras that attended – with my return fare paid for courtesy of the Koutu Nui own funds.

On my return, the understanding was that press releases of the workshop would



Co Chairman of CIMPSC Kevin Iro



Rio Rangatira Ted Nia

be provided to our local media, which was duly done. The Cook Islands contingent comprised our chairman (Liz) and Aronga Mana rep (Tairiterangi, Tupe Short) and myself (Itaata Rangatira, Noeline Browne); Joe Brider (NES) who was on way home to Cook Islands; Jolene Bosanquet (TIS) who was in Auckland on business. At that intensive four day workshop, we all became versed in the meaning of large-scale marine protected areas, with the Big Oceans mantra that 'size matters'.

From then onward the steering committee met at least once a month or more, during which time various environmental organisations reps were invited to discuss various aspects such as creating a charitable trust fund, indeed how to raise funds for the marine park, creating a website or coming up with a management plan and many other issues. Notably, in the case of Oceans 5 rep, Chuck Fox sit in on a steering committee meeting and to observe the committee in action.

Pacific Leaders Forum August 2012

Just months later, at the Pacific Leaders Forum of August 2012, PM Henry Puna made the momentous declaration

of the formal establishment of the Marine Park that would encompass just over 1million square km of our EEZ. That announcement was enthusiastically by the leaders at the Forum which included US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton and a top official from the People's Republic of China as well as New Zealand and Australia and all the other Pacific leaders. The declaration also put the Cook Islands on the world stage and created a great deal of excitement in worldwide environmental circles, because our marine park is the largest MPA that has ever been declared in the world – and still is to this day.

Oceans 5 funding - HOUSE ARIKI-KOUTU NUI sub-grant

During the time of the Leaders' Forum, Chuck Fox from Oceans 5 came forward and signed an agreement for a grant of for the development of the marine park, with the money to be managed by TIS. Under that same agreement, there was a sub-grant to the ARE ARIKI KOUTU NUI for our component of the MARAE MOANA project: to conduct meetings in the Pa Enua to ensure the Aronga Mana, Matakeinanga and community are properly informed of the

aims of the marine park. The Aronga Mana are seen as "working as a partner with government to secure the best interests and welfare of the Cook Islands people."

In practice, this has meant that at least one rep from ARE ARIKI, KOUTU, TIS and four other steering committee members have travelled to all pa Enua islands to conduct marine park consultations. Members have always included Tou Travel Ariki and Kevin Iro joined by either Turi Mataiapo or her delegate from the Koutu Nui; a rep from OPM of either Dr Teina Rongo (marine biologist) or Celine Dyer from Climate Change or Liz the chief of staff of OPM.

Other regulars include Joe Brider (from Environment), Jacqui or Ian Karika from TIS, and Eruera Nia as camera man. Islands visited are: Mauke (under Conservation International funding) and Palmerston, Aitutaki, Atiu, Mangaia (under Oceans 5 funding) in 2013. The Northern Group islands of Manihiki, Rakahanga and Penrhyn were visited in mid 17 February- 3 March 2014. The only exceptions are Pukapuka and Nassau – owing to the closure of Pukapuka airport for major repairs.

Work carried out under the Sub-grant

Under the terms of the sub-grant, the traditional chiefs were to 'encourage and support' the introduction of the marine protected areas. It was also about 'fostering the understanding and knowledge of our customs and traditions with regard to Raui and Atinga concerning our fishery resources'.

The sub-grant also entailed the documenting every visit by means of recording audio-visual footage of all meetings and personal interviews on each and every island. From that footage, the Aronga Mana are in the process of painstakingly transcribing into hard copy the English rendition of the meetings (conducted in Maori) and the editing the footage to produce 15-minute DVDs of each and every island visited. (details and photos of visits and workshops to be published next week and future issues of the Herald).

The sub-grant proposal was written by Koutu Nui member, Eruera Nia (Rio Rangatira) and co-written by Ian Karika, president of TIS.

*HOUSE OF ARIKI-KOUTU NUI
RELEASE by Itaata Rangatira
(Noeline Browne)*

Renewable Electricity Generation Amps Up on Rarotonga

The New Zealand High Commission and Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister today welcomed the signing of the construction contract for a photovoltaic electricity generation system to be built at Rarotonga Airport.

“New Zealand is working in partnership with the Cook Islands’ Government to boost renewable energy use across the islands. The goal is to provide efficient, reliable, safe, affordable, and sustainable electricity,” said New Zealand High Commissioner Joanna Kempfers.

“Wellington-based company NETcon International Ltd has been awarded a contract to develop a 961 kilowatt photovoltaic array to the West of the runway at Rarotonga Airport. Once connected into the island’s electricity distribution

system in September 2014, it will provide 1,413 Megawatt-hours of electricity per year; representing almost 5 percent of the annual electricity generation on Rarotonga. It is estimated that this development will lead to a reduction of 370,000 litres of diesel fuel imports per year”. Said the Cook Islands Prime Minister’s chief of staff Elizabeth Wright-Koteka.

“The contract was awarded to NETcon International Limited through an open and competitive tender process. I am very pleased to report that a large proportion of the construction work will be undertaken by local Cook Island companies” said Wright

“This is part of a larger renewable energy programme funded by New Zealand in the Cook Islands, which also includes building six photovoltaic-diesel mini-grid systems which will

meet around 95 percent of the electricity demand on the islands of the remote Northern Group”.

“The Cook Island Government has set ambitious targets for 50 percent renewable energy by 2015 and 100 per cent by 2020. The projects on the Northern Group will enable the 2015 target to be reached ahead of schedule”. Explained Wright

“We are also working closely with our European Union counterparts who are funding similar systems on the Southern Group of the Cook Islands, all under the EU/NZ Energy Access Partnership.” Said Kempfers

Renewable energy is a major focus of New Zealand’s support to developing countries. These investments in the Cook Islands are in line with New Zealand’s \$65 million commitment toward renewable energy initiatives in the Pacific, made at the Pacific

Energy Summit in Auckland, 2013.

NETcon is a renewable energy and distribution company and a subsidiary of Alpine Energy Ltd, which owns and operates the electricity distribution network in South Canterbury. NETcon will be working with Rarotonga based subcontractors Andersons Limited and Mike Rennie Builders Ltd for the installation works at Rarotonga airport. NETcon will be making the normal applications to the BTIB for registration to operate as a foreign owned enterprise.

Work on site will commence in April.

For further enquiries please contact Helen Bradford by phone on 22201 or by email at Helen.bradford@mfat.govt.nz, or Elizabeth Wright-Koteka by phone on 29301 or by email at Elizabeth.wright@cookislands.govt.nz.

Big Runs in D-League

The Cook Islands T20 Domestic League produced plenty more big hits last weekend as 356 runs come by way of boundaries taking the tournaments total run tally to 1928. With five matches remaining it is conceivable that the 3500 run mark could be broken.

Womens national player Daena Kataina enjoyed success with the bat against opponents Pukapuka as the lefty batted the bulk of the innings to post an unbeaten 42 from 63 balls. National skipper June George saying that Kataina’s success was representative of the team relishing the challenge of competing against men in the T20 Domestic

League “each week the team sets itself objectives and each week the team grows in strength. Against Pukapuka the team posted our highest total, batted our full 20 over’s and picked up more wickets in an innings than our previous two matches”.

One man who didn’t make life easy for the women was Pukapuka’s opening speedster Vinegar Richards. Richards’s fiery opening spell produced 2 wickets conceding just 4 runs. The Wale lads were methodical in their run chase picking up the win with Terry William breaking the 100 run tournament barrier adding to his 72 the week before with 38 runs.

The World’s Jeff

Viniconbe continues his dominance of the Domestic T20 League collecting his third consecutive half century of the tournament, this time against opponents Rarotonga. Team mate Nic Rous posted the highest total for the World XI as the opener batted superbly to notch up a match winning 93 not out to steer his side to an imposing 231.

Rarotonga’s captain Sepa Tangimetua led the wicket takers with three wickets, brother Vane Tangimetua collected two and Steven Kavana was in solid form with two wickets from his opening over before leaving the field with an unfortunate groin strain. Apii Mamanu lead Rarotonga’s run

chase as the big hitting middle order bat pounded 50 runs however solid bowling from the World XI, including three wickets for captain Matthew Beasley, saw Rarotonga lose wickets regularly handing the World XI their third consecutive win.

The World XI will try to go four from four against the womens side this weekend (11am) while Rarotonga take on Pukapuka at 3pm. Both matches are scheduled for the Turangi Oval.

Points: 1st World XI 12 Points (3 wins from 3), 2nd Pukapuka 8 Points (2 from 3), 3rd Rarotonga 4 Points (1 from 2), 4th Aitutaki 4 Points (1 from 3) and 5th Cook Islands Women 0 Points (0 from 3).

How to be great in life

By Senior Pastor John Tangi

Some people say that the secret to greatness is money and lots of it. But God said "the secret of a great life is when you learn to serve!" Jesus said in Matthew 20v.26 "Whoever wants to become great must be a servant of others." (New Living Translation) "Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant." Great Teachers serve their students. Great Shopkeepers serve their customers. In other words the key to being great at anything is to serve others!

God says the way to go Up is Down. The more you serve the Greater you are. The two words that best define the Christian life are GIVING and SERVING. Jesus said in Matthew 20v.28 "...I didn't come to be served but to serve others and to give my life as a ransom for many." The 4 main reasons why we should give our lives to serving God and others.

1. WE ARE CREATED FOR SERVICE. God made us for that purpose! Ephesians 2v.10 reads "For we are God's workmanship, created in Jesus Christ to do good works [that's called ministry, service] which God prepared in advance for us to do." God designed everything on earth for a purpose. Birds, and Bees have functions; cows. The Bible say that you and I were put on planet earth for a reason. Human beings are here to serve...To help each other...To make the world a better place to live in...And

Encouragement Column

With Senior Pastor John Tangi

we're created by God for ministry, and for service.

Illustration

If you leave batteries in a torch for a long time and not use the torch, the batteries will corrode and ruin the torch. Why? Batteries are made to be used. Like Batteries we too are meant to be used, made for service! And if we don't serve others, we get corroded, ruined on the inside!

2. WE ARE SAVED FOR SERVICE II Timothy 1v.9 reads "It is God who saved us and chose us for His holy work." "...holy work..." means Ministry or Service. The Bible says you were saved to serve. God didn't just put you on planet earth to take up space, to sit around, watch TV, have a good time, and die. Why did God leave you here on earth the moment you became a Christian? and not take you to heaven. Because He has something for you to do. You're left here for a reason. Let me ask you, 'Why do you come to Church?' Why do you Read the Bible? Why do you Study the Bible? The Bible teaches very clearly that Maturity is for Ministry! You might say "I want to be a mature Christian!" or "I am a mature Christian!" Let me tell you something, 'You'll never be a mature Christian until you start ministering. Remember that we are SAVED FOR



SERVICE!

3. WE ARE CALLED BY GOD TO SERVICE. We're not only Created for Service, or Saved for Service, but we have been Called by God to Service. The Bible says that every Christian is called to serve. Every member of God's family is a Minister. Not everybody is a Pastor, but everybody is a minister. What is a Minister? A Minister is a Servant! What is a Servant? It is somebody who Serve! Every time you help other people in the name of

Jesus, you're ministering to them!

4. WE HAVE BEEN GIFTED FOR SERVICE. God did not give you your talents and skills just to spend on yourself, and retire, and then die! But He gave you those talents and skills and even abilities to help other people. I Peter 4v.10 read "God has given each of you some special abilities. Be sure to use your abilities to help each other." May you have a God blessed week, in His service. Te Atua te aroa.

Rain, rain, go away

By *Norma Ngatamariki*

With the weather being moody and all, I have decided to write an article about it. I know it's a random topic (and plus, I was kind of stuck on what to write about this week) but the weather we've had lately has been...well, crappy (I just had to say it) It's affecting my mood swings and how I function. Like how I would rather stay home, cuddle up in my warmest mink and watch a television series instead of going to school. Sitting in a classroom while the wind blows everything around me is a buzz kill.

Ever since that stupid Cyclone Lusi started forming just above New Zealand (Seriously? Who would've thought that a cyclone would ever hit New Zealand?), our small island has currently been experiencing the after-effects of it. For example, the crazy wind that almost knocked

my cousin and I off the bike on our way to school. That shizz was freaky (and you'd think with two people on the bike, it would weigh it down) or when the rain comes down when it wants to (usually on our way back home).

But for me, the rain brings memories of my younger days (yes, I was young once lol). Back then, I would never miss an opportunity to have a pai vai (rain bath) or have a dip in the nearest river or beach. Sure, I would risk getting sick (as well as getting a hiding from Mum) but it was really liberating. Back when I was in Avarua Primary, my fellow school students and I would march to the Avarua Harbour, even when it was pouring with rain. Sigh. Those were the good, old days when we didn't care about anything.

Now that I'm older, the rain just annoys me because it comes down at the most inappropriate

times. Like when I'm driving to work or school, for example. I arrive to my destination soaking wet and grumpy.

On Tuesday, we were issued with a tropical cyclone warning at school. My first reaction was, Hallelujah! We've been dismissed from school early and there might be no school at all! But then I really thought about it and said to myself, "Man, there's going to be one heck of a clean up this after the storm dies down."

As I type this up, I'm tuning in to the local radio station and listening for some more information on the cyclone that's supposedly headed this way. I find it really exciting because this is the first cyclone that I'll be experiencing (I wasn't here when the last five cyclones hit Rarotonga). At the moment, it still looks like we're in the clear (Bummer. I really



didn't feel like going to work in this weather, but as it is).

I'm going to make sure that my roof is tied down properly (I don't want to wake up to an open sky) and that there's enough food in my pantry to last. You should do the same as well.

A test of unity

By *Nadia George*

I know I'm beginning to sound like a broken record with all my, last week Friday stories, but bear with me. So anyway, last week Friday, the student leaders were once again set to organize and orchestrate our school assembly, based on the theme of Unity and had been asked to do an item as well. Like really, an item that we had to preform in front of six hundred OD students? So we did what we normally did at the beginning of every school week and had a group meeting to discuss what we were going to do. We knew we had to make it good, it had to be epic or we'd be laughed off the stage and never be able to live this down. We decided to go with a song, as per my suggestion, we went with a song that everyone knows and loves.... 'Lean on me'. I mean who could go wrong with a song like that, right? Wrong!

Ever heard the expression,

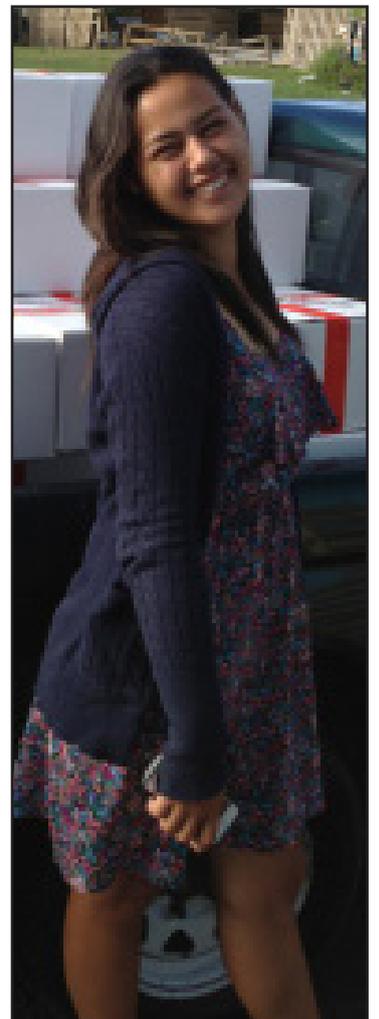
"too many chiefs and not enough Indians"? Well, during our rehearsals we had quite a few of those and man was it driving me crazy! Id likes to think of last week as a ticking time bomb. With only five days to rehearse and our time slowly running out, each day just brought us closer to Friday and as each day went by, the stress of the item, amongst some of us, grew bigger and bigger. I know this may sound depressing but their really is a happy ending to all this, I promise.

So everyday we rehearsed, and every time we did, it felt as though we took one step forward and three steps back. We weren't getting the words right, not everyone would show up and when they did, they'd just bum around, not all, but some.

But then on Thursday things were finally beginning to come together, thanks to the amazing Ms. Pukerua and almost as amazing, Dean

Tangata, who both came in and whipped us all into shape.

Friday had come all too soon and the stage fright was getting to us all. Heleina was on the keyboard, Abe on gat, I was on drums and the rest were on vocals. We started off a bit jittery, tried to pick it up and with the help of our heroic rapper, we were able to save our performance. I'd like to think that the crowd loved it but I'm not quite sure because my pulse was throbbing in my head. But who cares, I was just glad that the whole thing was finally over. I mean it was great that we had pulled off what we set out to do. Although it wasn't the giant glee performance I envisioned it to be. It was still cool to see that everyone picked up their game, got on stage and performed their hearts out in front of the entire school. If that isn't a show of unity, then I don't know what is?



After the Met office kept telling concerned callers the cyclone prediction to the day announced in last Wednesday's CI Herald was nonsense and not true, during the Met office's weather report on CITV on Monday night their forecasters were singing a different tune warning the public about a possible cyclone.



Looks like the CIFA AGM will be a robust meeting on Thursday night. The three suspended members of Football Cook Islands may gatecrash the occasion to put forward their case and try and stand for positions. Their candidate Raymond Newnham has a campaign manager and a pamphlet as he actively lobbies to displace the long standing General Lee Harmon as the CIFA President. Don't expect any changes; Newnham would be better off putting his efforts into reviving his low performing Matavera Football Club than challenging for the top job. Other misguided FCI sympathisers can be expected to be phased out gradually in the future.



It seems the Demo's overpaid raffle organiser Ed Drolley who also promotes himself as a finance wizard can't add up simple numbers. His leader's comments on the daily dribble's front page attack on Government's fictitious financial reporting were just as fictitious. Since when is \$4.9 million less \$2.8 million equal to \$3.1 million? Drolley should stick to raffles and let real business brains advise the Demo Leader. Wasn't Beer appointed the Demo spokesperson on finance and economic matters? And how bizarre, the ex convicted fraudster Drolley wants to be the Fin Sec if



the Demos are the next government. It's bad enough Drolley's is sponging a tax funded job through the Opposition Office when he never repaid the \$24,000 of tax payer's money he spent a year in gaol for stealing.



While the clumsy heavy handed CIP Cabinet were quick to sack the outstanding BTIB chairman, in their haste they didn't remove him as a Director of the Board. His sackers still can't specify what incompetency or misconduct he did. A second notice of removal was dispatched but delivered to an unauthorised person hoping they would pass it on; it seems no one has the balls to deliver it personally to the victimised former chairman.



Speaking about Cabinet, after the former chairman of BTIB was removed as a punishment by unanimous decision of Cabinet, within a week he was spotted having a Saturday morning breakfast with two of them, all seemed jovial and friendly. Word is only the PM and DPM aren't on talking terms with the former chairman, that's Cook Islands politics for you, things are not what they

seem sometimes.



A visiting consultant warned about lifting the levies on restricted imports like eggs and pork suggesting imports will become cheaper than locally grown or produced consumables. As normal the politicians ignored all that and the challenge they had made to produce locally as import substitution. Well this week agriculture is announcing an over \$2million grant to produce more local fresh food which will in the end sell for more than imported fresh produce. That's the dumb CIP government for you, anyone who thinks they should invest in locally growing agriculture should wake up and realise they will be growing produce they won't be able to sell profitably. Too often the government's right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing or what the mouth is saying.



Thank God for the doggie problem! If it weren't for the doggies, what would the new Captain of the SS Daily, Bark Ebdray, have to bark about? We've had reports about doggie proliferation, doggies on the prowl, doggie attacks

but what about the doggie doo dah problem? Has that been covered yet? We could have reports on doo dahs on the beach, doo dahs in the streets, doo dahs on properties, doo dahs on tourists-that should cover the week!



When is the FAO (Failed Agriculture Org) going to give us some hard moolah so we can actually produce something? A big wig with a pocket full of moolah-US\$290,000-waltzes in and makes a huge noise about FAO help to our poor, struggling, country! Oh, boo hoo! This dosh will all go it is announced, to hire a big time consultant to come here and tell us what to do! We already know what to do! We were a major agricultural producer once and don't need the FAO to pay some turkey big bucks to tell us how to suck eggs!



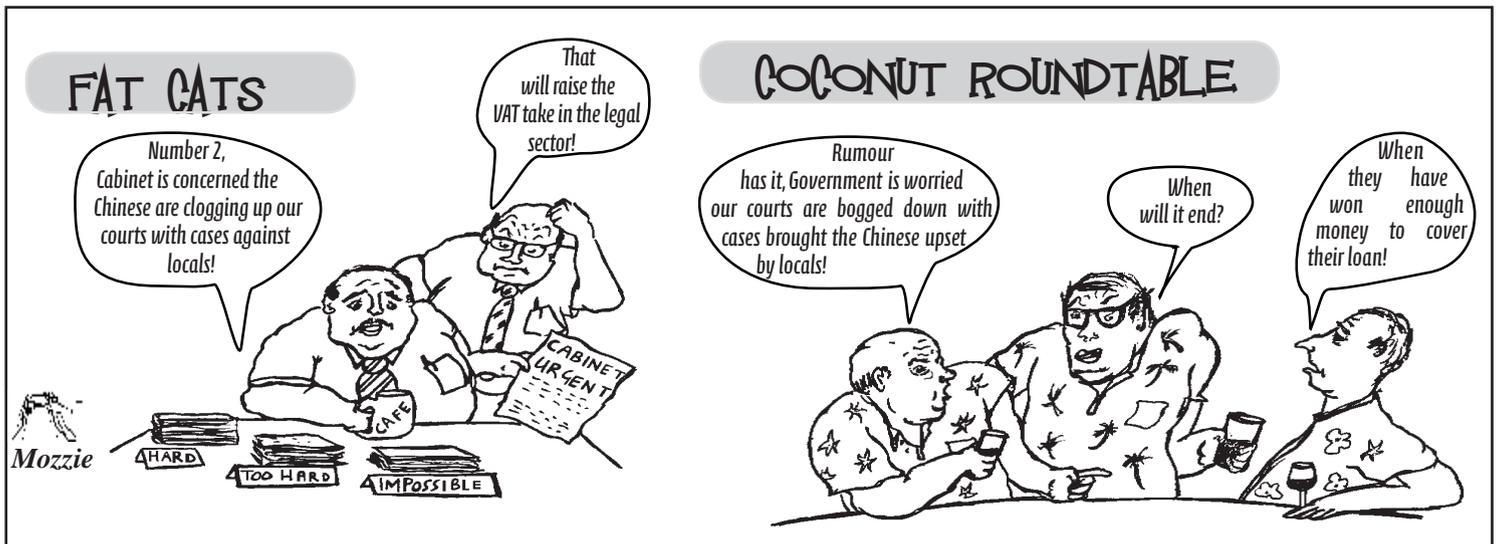
Was the topic so hot to handle the equipment couldn't take the heat? Local FM radio station's power crashed putting the broadcaster off air when a phone in session with a local media mogul began heating up! Or does the Minister for Broadcasting have a special, secret switch which he throws every time he objects to radio content?



Ooopss chooks! Hands up that team at the golf tournament recently which couldn't tally their strokes properly and ended up in the bunker after being disqualified and having to return the prizes they were awarded!



Oh dear chooks! When will government update some of their websites? Foreign Affairs still show Jim Gosselin in charge.



Mozzie

Fantasy Odds on who will WIN League Premier FINAL

Team	Date	Date
	<i>March 12th</i>	Mar 19th
Eels	\$5	\$5
Bulldogs	\$9	\$9
Panthers	\$11	\$9
Sea Eagles	\$25	\$35
Bears	\$30	\$20
Warriors	\$30	\$40
Sharks	\$40	\$40

Tupapa Panthers have shortened up with their convincing WIN last Saturday while their opponents the Sea Eagles have blown out. True diehard supporters would be attracted to these lucrative odds NOW as 1 WIN would change the landscape. The Bears still offer GREAT value and a loose \$10 bucks at \$20-1 odds could net any punter a tidy return. Smart money is still pouring in for an Eels and Bulldogs FINALS showdown. One punter speculated on the Warriors at 30-1. He will probably come back for more as this weeks odds are better. Don't you love these FANTASY odds.

The Fantasy Odds column is a hypothetical scenario based on the writer's opinion. This is NOT real

Game 7 - Who they picked

Aussie Thora bred

Bears, Bulldogs, Panthers

Mr "X"

Sea Eagles, Bulldogs, Eels

Grocers Review

Bears, Bulldogs, Panthers

Matutu

Bears, Bulldogs, Panthers

VKT

Bears, Warriors, Eels

Vallima

Bears, Bulldogs, Eels

RUGBY LEAGUE.. IS IT TRUE?

IS IT TRUE

Half time breaks are kept to 2 mins so the Mat man can't keep prattling on

IS IT TRUE

That the Mat man is Bi Polar

IS IT TRUE

When kickers miss an absolute sitter in front of the goal post, mobile phones go crazy with calls from Book makers in India

IS IT TRUE

That the headache Grey Power is giving Govt is something PANADOL can't cure?

IS IT TRUE

That prop Clinton Charlie (Sea Eagles) has taken a vow of silence?

Simple Simon says.... It rained black and white

The forward power of the Tupapa Panthers proved too much for the visitors at Victoria Park. From the opening minutes the concrete tackles of the home team had newly promoted Sea Eagles prop Papa Jack, in Disneyland. The Panthers continually pounded the opposition with hard running players like Rongo, Saamu and Kore Herrmann while the tactical kicks from the Lettuce man Tyson Oariki kept the Panther on the front foot. If the weatherman had being there he would have predicted "Blustery winds and at times light showers" what he wouldn't had being able to predict was the ease of which the Panthers dismantled the Muri based team in the 2nd half. It rained 22 unanswered Black and White second half points, with the Fijian duo of fullback Amenayasi Aroi and centre Joe V added their names to the score sheet and once again proving that "Money needs too be spent to get a positive result"

So saysGet A Hair CUT SIMON the New Moti Saamu Fan

Who Played Well

Panthers

Saamu, Rongo, Olaf Rasmussen, Rueben Barere

Sea Eagles

Clinton Charlie

Half Time Score Panthers 12 Sea Eagles 10

Final Score Panthers 34 Sea Eagles 10

Scores Last Week Game 7

Eels 38 v Sharks 26
Bears 56 v Warriors 12
Panthers 34 v Sea Eagles 10
BYE - Eels

Draw Wk 8 Sat March 22

Bears v Sea Eagles
Raemaru Pk
Arorangi, 4pm
Bulldogs v Warriors
Titikaveka, 4pm
Eels v Panthers
Avatiu, 4pm
BYE - Sharks

Avatiu Eels held off an impressive fight back from the Aitutaki Sharks to remain undefeated

Avatiu had maintained their undefeated streak, holding off an Aitutaki fight back to steal victory 38-26 in their last Friday afternoon clash at the Swamp Park.

This is a game that I have predicted, that the Eels will win it by 20 points, however, the Araura boys came to town with intent of spoiling an Eel's party. My oh my, the Eels monster pack hit the paddock with a vengeance, and was thumping the Shark's defense like there is no tomorrow. What a sight, an intimidating pack of forwards, running away bulls were exactly how the Eels forward pack was dominating the game, and was leading the Sharks at half-time by 34:4. The Sharks only holding onto two penalty goals by Junior Wichman.

But speculation that the Sharks are a spent force in 2014 appears premature after they went down by twelve points to the reigning leaders in front of the Eels fans. But someone forgot to tell Aitutaki. Trailing 34-2 after halftime, Aitutaki made a fight of the game to score some hard earned tries. A couple of their short stocky numbers, were being belted at impact, but constantly bouncing back, and with unfatigable guts, these short warriors fought back with pride for their jerseys, ensuring a barnstorming finish. Incredibly, the spirit within the Shark's guys, the twinkle spark in their eyes made me proud to be an Aitutakian. I salute them

for their mighty effort, though the Eels may have taken their foot off the throttle, that burst of life that they offered the team from Araura may just be the turning point for the Hammerhead Sharks

"I don't know what was said at halftime but the Man Mountain Mau George came out leading his team with a different attitude and it triggered an attitude of "ready to play". Whatever Sharks coach Junior Tamati said at halftime worked as the Sharks came out swinging after the break. "Still, we are not used to having 34 points scored against us in the first half. It was a bit disappointing to lose our grip on the game like we did. History tells us that the Aitutaki Sharks are known to throw in the towel when an opponent has scored early in the game, not this time.

"We got a jump on them but we just couldn't go on with it." That's a few words from George at the end of the game.

In the end, the Eels' playmakers, Terry Piri, Bobby Hansen were great in directing their attacks, especially in the first half, and kept the Eels remain unbeaten this season. But the Sharks will gain much needed heart after being written off before kick-off. It was easy to see why. Still, even diehard Avatiu fans

would have been surprised by the Eels' whirlwind start to the 2014 season. The Eels Hulking Fijian centre could be the destroyer come finals time, along with his countrymen on one wing and at fullback. The flying fullback pounced on an inside pass - and gaping hole - and raced over to score a run away try.

Eels coach Albert Nicholas would have seen the Sharks fight back coming. "They are a very proud club. We knew it was going to be a dog fight," he said. "I never felt comfortable at halftime, even at 32 points to 4. Some things we weren't doing in defense and it snowballed in the second half." - Teuira Ka

Worrying signs in quarterly financial report

By Charles Pitt

Government's quarterly financial report to 31 December contains some worrying signs the first of which is that the report should have been more timely. The report announces a net operating surplus balance of \$8.3 million and an overall fiscal balance surplus of \$4.7 million.

There is however, a query concerning depreciation. Under "Key Points" it is reported that the overall fiscal balance excluded depreciation. However, in Table 2, depreciation is shown as "added." The fiscal balance in Table 2 clearly shows depreciation being included. If fiscal balance was excluded, the fiscal balance would be a surplus of \$3.580 million not \$4.7m.

An underlying concern is how government itself regards its performance on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being excellent.

It is pleasing to see government making some savings but at the same time, worrying that tax revenue is down by \$2.8m on forecast (income tax is down by \$1.3m) and Table 5 which shows other revenue, shows the revenue collected is just under \$1m less than forecast. The figures point to no significant new economic activity being generated.

The reasons put forward for the revenue being less than forecast make interesting reading as always but raises questions about the robustness of the forecasting. The question is whether the reasons look more like excuses for poor performance. The public do not want a report that continually attempts to explain why achievements are off beam.

This paper has for some time been pointing to key developments which indicate the economy especially at grass roots level, is under stress.

Where previously one was lucky to come across a road side stall selling fruit and vegetables, now they are all round the island.

More people are fishing off the reef to supplement their food.

Sometime ago this paper reported comments from accountants handling the finances for small businesses saying that cash flow had slowed considerably and some companies had no cash flow.

Government ministries have themselves been slow in settling some accounts with the private sector.

This paper predicted an increase in petty thefts. These thefts appear to be in the main of cash and items able to be cashed up. The worrying feature is the outright boldness on the part of offenders in relation to tourists.

PUBLIC NOTICE



**MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
SOCIAL IMPACT FUND (SIF)
PROJECT FUNDING**

The SIF provides combined Cook Islands and New Zealand support to Cook Islands Civil Society Sector to meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community and is focused on 6 priority areas: Gender equality, Children & Youth, Disabilities, The Elderly, Domestic Violence and Mental Health.

The SIF Board now invite proposals for Project Funding in the following eligible project areas

- Community Education Projects
- Training
- Workshops
- Awareness raising activities
- Income generation
- Organisational Strengthening

Please note Infrastructure projects and International travel are not encouraged, but will be considered on a case by case basis.

For further inquiries please contact the SIF Manager on telephone 29378 or email angeline.tuara@cookislands.gov.ck Ministry of Internal Affairs. The deadline for submission of Project Funding Application is Thursday 24 April 2014. No applications will be accepted after this date.

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PUBLIC NOTICE



Business Trade Investment Board

Cook Islands



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Ministry of Finance and Economic Management**

- Understand basic book-keeping for your small business
- Understand accounting and how it works using a simple tool (computer/Basic Excel)
- Understand business and personal banking services
- Basic computing
- Basic Business planning
- Types of taxes and how these affect your business
- Accountant support/service

The "BTIB Business Support Program for Market Vendors" will provide services through workshops and skills training programs and assist market vendors to better understand how to manage their business finance and tax obligations.

To take part please contact the BTIB Office for a registration form or contact the Business development team.

Business Development Division
Business Trade Investment Board
Ph 24-296 Fax 24-298
Email: btib@cookislands.gov.ck

Registration closes at 4:00pm on Monday 24th March 2014.



Zika is an illness caused by a virus that is spread through an infected mosquito from one person to another. It is closely related to a dengue virus and causes a similar illness but it is usually mild and lasts 4 to 7 days. The symptoms are fever, headache, red eyes, rash, muscle ache and joint pains. For further information if you have zika or dengue symptoms, please see a doctor. Get lots of rest and drink lots of fluids and cover exposed skin by wearing long sleeve shirts, pants and hats and use insect repellent. Call the Public Health for more information on phone 29-110

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