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Commissioner Tetava refutes assertions of political interference

The increasing public perception that politics are determining the outcome of the one year police investigation of corruption complaint against former Cook Islands Party cabinet Minister Teina Bishop is wrong and disappointing says the Police Commissioner Maara Tetava.

The complaint has never been taken lightly and it's with diligence the Police have conducted their investigations. External and offshore assistance was required; the involvement of the New Zealand Serious Fraud Office has been part of the process that could not be accelerated. Before the NZSFO can become involved in Cook Islands Police investigations, sufficient information must be compiled to justify a commitment from them. Their assistance must be negotiated at the highest level of Police Commanders.

Terms and conditions must be agreed upon because the NZSFO don't come free of charge plus we have to work around their availability. It took four months before the NZSFO physically arrived onshore to participate in the investigation.

As a result of their evidence further investigations were required to be conducted by other agencies in the Cook Islands such as the Financial Intelligence Unit.

Suggestions the investigation process was being politically tampered with are outrageous and without factual substance refuted Commissioner Tetava who is adamant there has been no political interference with the sensitive investigation.

Tetava is sympathetic to the unpleasant impact the protracted investigation has had on the Bishop family but is unapologetic for the perception of the dawdling pace. "Admittedly we have limited resources but the scope of the investigation has been broad



Police Commissioner Maara Tetava

and intensely detailed, it simply couldn't be hurried," explained Tetava.

A complaint of a similar nature in New Zealand that required a multi pronged investigation would take a similar length of time said Tetava.

All investigative reports have been completed and rest now

undermining the integrity of the Police force said Tetava. "It suggests the PM is directing the conduct of the Police, it suggests the Police are not independent, it suggests the Politicians are meddling with the Police investigation."

"Unless there are some people in the collaborating agencies

"Unless there are some people in the collaborating agencies conducting specific investigations leaking information to their political connections, I can categorically state no information has been provided to any politician by the Police," stated Tetava.

with the Crown Law Office to now advise the Police how the conclusion of the investigation should be conducted.

The inference the Prime Minister Henry Puna is exploiting the outcome of the investigation through political leverage over Bishop is misleading and

conducting specific investigations leaking information to their political connections, I can categorically state no information has been provided to any politician by the Police," stated Tetava.

Tetava agreed it was difficult to perform and deliver to the

expectations of the public because of the low tolerance there was for misadventure by public office bearers. Tetava detects a decline of respect for authority and the willingness there is to challenge those in power. Just recently reappointed by the Minister of Police Teariki Heather for a third term Tetava said he planned to endure the challenges of Policing and strengthening public confidence.

Politicians are increasingly coming under public pressure to set standards for themselves that are above reproach because their office is a privilege not a right. The level of scrutiny has intensified and accountability is a public expectation.

Regardless of the prosecution evidence gathered for Crown Law who has to shoulder the burden of proof, the process most likely will have to run its course to insure proof and transparency that there has been no political tampering.

The failure to manage information by the political spin doctors and the reluctance by the Police to update the public with better comments than "no comment," has allowed speculative assertions to cloud public perceptions which if left unattended become immovable realities. To preserve the integrity of the Police and to bring transparent public clarity to their role and outcomes of the investigations, it is likely the Police will let the Judiciary have the final say.

Guilty or not guilty verdicts no longer holds centre stage in the Bishop corruption complaint, the primary concern of the Police in the face of public interest and critical comment is the preservation of its diminishing credibility and integrity. For the Police, the issue has become

continued bottom of next page

Fiscal report fails to acknowledge degree of unsettled private sector invoices held by Ministries

By Charles Pitt

It is interesting that government's half yearly fiscal report issued on 31 December 2014, makes specific reference under "section 4.2 Financial Liabilities," to Island Government's unpaid invoices (page 59), and while it alludes to island governments having the same responsibilities as ministries, there is scant reference to ministries ensuring unpaid invoices from the private sector are settled promptly.

Quote; "Currently, MFEM has not approved any of the Island Governments to take out any contract or security that could result in a potential liability for the Crown."

In terms of public liability or other indemnity, the Island

Administrations are not treated differently to other government agencies. The capacity for the Island Administrations to generate such liabilities is estimated to be low. No risk mitigation has been undertaken to ameliorate risk any more than for other government bodies that are based in Rarotonga.

Unpaid invoices are a potential risk that would be difficult to mitigate without tighter financial controls than those imposed on other Government agencies. Island Administrations are fully covered by the MFEM Act, MFEM financial policies and procedures, and are accountable to the National Audit Office and the Cook Islands Parliament." **Unquote**

While the report alludes to "tighter financial controls" and

legislative and policy impositions along with accountability to the Audit Office and parliament, the actual position is quite the reverse.

MFEM is a ministry that is not "walking the talk."

There are quite a number of private sector companies awaiting government ministries to pay up what they owe for services rendered.

Under section 4 of the report "Specific Financial Risks" which applies to total quantifiable risk, unpaid invoices appear only to be included if there is a legal action or dispute.

There would be cases where a government ministry owes the private sector money for services rendered but for some reason known only to the ministry, simply

refuses to settle.

Ministries should promptly settle all outstanding invoices in the year in which they are incurred. The Audit Office should enquire as to the level of unpaid bills and the reason why such bills are unpaid.

If a ministry fails to settle its accounts with the private sector promptly, then MFEM should settle the account on behalf of the ministry and recover that money by deducting the amount from that ministry's bulk funding. Money needs to circulate through the community not be stuck in some ministry.

Unless MFEM ensures unpaid accounts are settled, announcements such as at the time of the last Budget, of a \$9,000 surplus, appear dubious.

about them, the political fallout for the CIP government and the loss of face for the Police are huge if the prosecution phase in the process is abandoned.

The investigation process has yielded a substantial bulk of information and unless there is a trial none of it will surface. The perception there is an element of political covering up will only be enhanced if Bishop is not charged. The public interest in the outcome and details of the investigation is having their patience tested and any failure to disclose information may be accessed by the Official Information Act.

The Police's extra burden of self preservation interests only add to the plight of Bishop and his family who have endured the scrutiny of a very robust investigation. Only they themselves know the emotional toll it is taking on them. It may take months to get a trial date if that's the course Bishop instructs his legal counsel to pursue. Then the trial may take many months to play out before a verdict is delivered. To defend himself Bishop will need to dig deep and

come up with at least \$300,000. The cost of innocence may well exceed Bishop's disposal resources and test how genuine his parasitical friends are.

Then of course Bishop has the option of ensuring all the investigative information is buried by pleading guilty and eliminating the need of a trial.

With the Vaipae/Tautu by election coming up on 17 February 2015 and Bishop a key player in the campaign for the Democratic Party candidate Kete loane the prosecution phase is heading for a political collision of mass detractions. The conclusion of the investigation phase could not have come at a worse time for everyone.

Ironically it's Bishop's mate the former leader of the Opposition Wilkie Rasmussen who claims the credit for initiating the criminal complaint being laid more than a year ago. How rich coming from a former Minister of Marine Resources who himself was implicated in an unresolved shady deal with a Taiwanese fishing company. How bizarre.

- George Pitt



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MFEM's fiscal report regurgitates nenevanomics

Tender economy drifting without direction

Minister of Finance Mark Brown's impetuous and ill prepared reaction to former Opposition leader Wilkie Rasmussen's unqualified ramblings about MFEM's latest six monthly financial report is evident our money changers are in an economic fantasy land churning out fiscal rhetoric confirming Nenevanomics is being elevated high above common sense.

The politicians and the likes of pretender Rasmussen need to restrain themselves from publically exhibiting their lack of financial intelligence and management of sovereign funds by simply keeping their mouths shut. A former Minister of Finance, Rasmussen without a business background grappled out of his depth then and by his latest interjecting media comments it's evident his financial literacy still remains in short supply today.

Time and time again the Financial Secretary Richard neneva Neves has dumped on his Minister and left it to an embarrassed Mark Brown to publically quell the critics with unconvincing meaningless mumbo jumbo explanations. After four years at the helm of sovereign financial responsibility Brown demonstrates little advancement of economic comprehension.

Brown has failed to grasp the advantage of shaping public opinion by being proactive and getting in first, defending criticism is scatter brain that is unconvincing in shifting public perceptions. Much of



Richard Neves

The arrogance that has pervaded the Henry Puna administration has left many chinks in their defensive armoury making them vulnerable, but fortunately for the CIP government they have had a not so secret weapon Eddie Drollet directing the Opposition traffic in every direction except in focus against the government.

the confrontations the CIP government has become entangled in and bogged down with have been self inflicted because of the lack of basic public relations management application.

The arrogance that has pervaded the Henry Puna

administration has left many chinks in their defensive armoury making them vulnerable, but fortunately for the CIP government they have had a not so secret weapon Eddie Drollet directing the Opposition traffic in every direction except in focus

against the government.

Had Rasmussen collaborated with the Opposition spokes person for Finance and Economic development Murienua MP James Beer instead of shooting from the hip, the Opposition voice could have been intelligently specific and surgical inflicting serious doubts about the credibility and accuracy of Neves' latest fiscal dribble.

By viewing Neves' state of the economy financial reports in a chronological sequence it becomes overwhelming clear it resembles a Disneyland rollercoaster ride of surpluses and deficits. Reports viewed in isolation appear the economy is being responsibly managed and accounted for

continued next page

yet a picture shockingly the opposite is painted when under a panoramic bird's eye view.

Neves' gross failure to produce a consistent financial account of a recovering economy and his over stated revenue forecasts are a consistent trait. Neves' Darwinian evolving reports can best described as still being in the monkey stage also otherwise known as Nenevanomics.

Repetitive predictions of expected economic up surge have miserably failed to materialise, after 50 years of self management our Wizard of Aus neneva Neves continues to stumble around in a fiscal fantasy neneva land leading us down a yellow brick road to nowhere. Numerous inventive excuses are used to justify the failure of the over stated and flawed predictions of past reports. Exactly the mistake Tin ManBrown is publically making, the gullible Minister of Finance in defence of his carte blanche finance secretary and

Nenevanomics has looked into his murky crystal ball and is predicting a looming economic upsurge before the next six monthly rainbow appears.

Brown should insist Neves defends the criticism and publically be accountable for his own sloppy financial reporting. Neves needs to make up his mind as to whether we are in surplus or a deficit and stop this yoyo bouncing of the economy that breeds confusion among the commercial battlers. For a country as small as the Cook Islands with a micro economy the fact Neves cannot put his finger on the button and produce an accurate statement of accounts raises serious questions of his competency.

Neves latest report manifests nothing new, it is a hollow document that masks the true state of our economy and sheds hope where there is none and it is obvious our dependence on external funding will have to be secretly sought most likely from the Peoples Republic of China just

to keep our heads above the water.

Rather than produce a road map directed by compliant prudent fiscal management starting with culling highly paid expats from his own MFEM staff, Neves plays the subtle hand of pandering to his CIP masters in order to desperately cling to his job through contract extensions. For one, Neves knows the 50 year Celebrations are overpriced to the point of being fiscally irresponsible and is compromising what little integrity he has left for the personal short term gain of a contract extension.

Most medium to small businesses know we are drowning and for many it is because the government has refused rather than failed to pay what they owe thus obstructing the merry go round of money. Added to that, the excessive penalties for taxes owed to Treasury are suffocating and choking the life out of many local businesses.

Neves must stop plucking

imaginary figures out of thin air according to his text book version of economics and start living in the real world where real people have to tough it out on incomes less than \$25,000 a year unlike his grossly obese salary package of \$300,000.

Chuffed by his easily conned and hood winked political masters, Neves' gift of the gab and sleight of hand fiscal magic is highly discernible and unconvincing in the real world of local commerce. Neves latest financial report borders on being misleading and absent of innovative economic substance to the point of tipping the flawed scales. If exposed to intelligent debate it will not hold up in the context of responsible sovereign financial management.

For those who are fiscally camped in the Cook Islands painstakingly trying to etch out a living, the economy is a big footprint and it owns a lot of emotional space that needs to be treated with more respect by highly paid fleeting foreigners.

- George Pitt

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Letter to the Editor

Corruption takes many forms

Dear Sir,
Corruption is in the news again, and we see PM Puna hinting significantly that the Bishop inquiry from 18 months ago is 'unresolved.' One could be led to believe this means Puna is pressuring Bishop to stay with the CIP, or face possible charges. Is he sitting on the report waiting for the right moment to play his card? If so then this is politics at its most corrupt. A PM so desperate to hold on to power that he would consider threatening legal proceedings unless a rival surrenders. It might amount to extortion.

As others point out, corruption is most often in government, not outside it. In the private sector, the Courts take care of wrongdoing. Corruption in government pervades everything and takes many forms. By pervading government, it pervades our society. We all become less dignified as people. We need to take note of ways it happens.

Elections and electorates;

If the CIP retains government they will do so with 42.3% of the total vote, which produced 12 seats. The Democratic party got 46.1% of the total vote, which produced 10 seats (MFEM figures after the July election). One seat is up for a by-election. How is this imbalance possible? Only because of the scandalous low numbers of voters in outer island seats compared to those on Rarotonga. It's unfair and corrupt, but the CIP has no incentive to change things because most of their seats are in the outer islands. We should remember as he struts the world stage at our expense, that the PM remains the leader because he won his seats by 4 votes, and the promise of 80 outboard motors.

Election funding

It's no secret that the PM used

government funds to charter thinly disguised campaign trips to Manihiki. Once again, we paid. It happened elsewhere with other ministers in other electorates. The current ruling party used the tax payer owned resources of government to pay for its campaign.

Contracting;

Apart from the well-known and dubious TMV contracts the list of no-bid, no tender contracts awarded to the swelling group of consultants crowding the PM's office is its own scandal. Whether it's the marine park, climate change, or the year long 'anniversary' scam, money is luring into the hands of those close to these projects. Just one example; Nick Henry (part of the Aitutaki clan that likes to run things) wants the 'celebration' to last for 3 years not just the extravagant one year already planned. That's to make his extravagantly paid job last three years and not just one. Henry's budget has been announced at \$500,000, but doesn't take into account the \$1 million cost of chartering a ship to bring the leader's northern voters here. That's what the ship and charter flights back cost 2 years ago. We could well ask; \$1.5 million for what? More fireworks organised by Nick's brother Mike?

Preferential treatment by authorities

Meanwhile too, what of traffic charges against Puna for his very public Saturday morning crash? are the police still 'investigating' or has the commissioner decided, as with Glassie, on another "pre charge warning letter?" What about the "protected" public servants who retain their jobs regardless of ignoring and disobeying direct intrusions, touring the world at their pleasure and our expense for weeks on end and producing nothing of value?

Want a permit? Talk to one of the connected fixers around the island the island. They're called "consultants," i have the impression anything is for sale.

Government spending

While departments like justice and health scrimp and make do, the environment service confesses to employing 7 officers plus 27 staff for an outlay of about \$900,000 annually. Why is so much owed to so many who do and achieve so little? Then we might add the seabed Minerals authority at \$400,000 and so on. At about \$20 million, including the infamous airline subsidies, the Tourist Corporation is in a wasteful league all of its own. The New Year's Day concert at Nukupure park was a 'celebration' event "brought to you by Nick Henry & Co and "the government." Then the show was off to Aitutaki. I wonder how much that cost us? \$100,000? More?

Travel by government officers has become so common place that even non-government people get to go in government sponsored trips. Where it's meetings, training, study tours in other countries, or whatever, nothing results of use to the Cook Islands. Worse, these days, no-one expects it to. It's a perk of a government job.

Conflicts of interest

Numerous government offices makes decisions when their own or family interests are involved. Board members try to sidestep responsibility by not voting on something but still taking part in the assessment and deliberation process. Their influence remains when the vote is taken others say that everyone is related to everyone else and that it can't be helped. That excuse misses that point which is that a board member of official should not take part in any process where board member of official should

not take part in any process where board members are involved in assessing contract bids where they or family or friends are bidders. It's called having a "thumb on the scales."

Nepotism

As in the old days, politicians hire or place aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, cousins and family or party friends in government jobs. Some jobs are simply made up and have no work content. Ordered up by a minister, this easily by passes the mandatory advertising and selection process. In some cases, we learn of the person chosen before advertising even occurs. The about to be new chairman of the parliamentary accounts committee is one example. Puna anoints, and the committee appoints.

Watchdogs

There is a sense in the country that government corruption is at levels not seen before. It's blatant, ignored by the watchdogs, condoned by the party faithful, and certain to undermine the fabric of our society unless we stop it. For Minister Brown to roll out more platitudes about "educating" the public when everyone can see it's government itself that is corrupt is a very bad joke, as always, at our expense. The Audit office and PERCA have been muzzled. The Ombudsman does nothing. Parliament itself is stage managed by CIP stooges.

Anti Corruption

One can only look forward to the Democratic Party establishing the promised independent Commission Against Corruption against corruption. Perhaps then the government might mend its ways and our society might regain some dignity and promise.

Regards

*Mata-Atua McNair
Muri, Ngatangia*

Chinese machinery arrives



Media group off to Qatar



On Tuesday afternoon a media contingent departed for Dohar in Qatar where they will report on the World Men's Handball Tournament which takes place during January at three venues.

The group will transit overnight in Auckland before travelling to Dubai then on to Dohar.

The team of four comprises George Turia

President of Cook Islands Handball and Team leader (second from left), Alex Pere of CITV (right), Harris Isamaela of CITV (third from left) and Norma Ngatamariki a Cook Islands Herald Columnist (second from right). All have been accredited through Pitt Media Group.

According to Makiroa Mitchell John (left) who is General Secretary of Oceania Handball,

the Cook Islands is the only Pacific nation to be invited to the tournament by Handball's World Federation.

Over the next three weeks the media team will attend the matches and send daily reports back to Rarotonga.

All expenses are being met by the World Federation. - *By Charles Pitt*

We no longer have government by the people!

Political commentator Tim Tepaki said he shared the common view that politics in God's own has turned to custard with determination of Government and political stability nowhere in sight.

As to how we got here, he said he did warn before the election that introducing laws as we did to make us behave like saints during the election would lead to a spectacle of petitions and appeals with the real election taking place in court, which of course is the spectacle we are now witnessing.

He said politics as practiced elsewhere in the world and indeed practiced by us previously allowed candidates to treat and convince voters to vote for them, so bringing in laws to make them behave differently was flawed. Needless to say if President Obama of the USA and greatest democracy on the planet was to campaign here in God's own he would be found guilty of corruption under our laws!

He added that expecting

foreign judges who preside over us to get it right when considering petitions and appeals was also flawed, as they are humans like us, not Gods with divine wisdom. He said judgments are matters of opinion often at odd with others, which is evident enough from conflicting decisions rendered by judges to date.

Tepaki said we no longer have government by the people as we did, because we have chosen government by the courts, which can't deliver decisions that avoid petitions and appeals anyway, so where to next, Government by two people?

On coalitions being explored to establish Government and achieve political stability, Tepaki said it marks the devolution of party politics as we know it if politicians choose that path.

Referring to the widely known OCI led coalition with Demo, he said it spells the end of Demo as a major political party and the rise of OCI to take its place, if it proceeds. He said he can't see all Demo MPs

rolling over and becoming the concubines of OCI so he predicts the self-destruction of both!

As for the rumoured coalition between factions of major parties CIP and Demo, obviously aimed at getting rid of OCI, he said he can't see that proceeding either as no self-respecting Demo stalwart is going to share the same bed with a CIP stalwart!

On the way forward, Tepaki said the proper thing to do is to wait for the outcome of the CIP Mitiaro appeal and Vaipae Tautu by-election. He said chances are the line-up of seats following these events will either be 12,10,2 or 11,11,2 for CIP, Demo and OCI respectively, leaving us with a hung parliament, in which case the right thing to do is go back to the people for a clear mandate on who should govern!

Tepaki said he agreed with blogger George Pitt's expressed view in last week's Herald that PM Henry Puna is in charge and does not have to call Parliament until it is necessary to pass the 2015-2016

budget, which will be in July and a long time to influence change in allegiance and support on politics.

He said the PM knows this and his short term strategy of CIP remaining silent and allowing OCI and Demo to self-destruct in their quest for unpalatable power sharing is smart thinking, which may well yield the desired result for him.

But of course if he backed that up by kick-starting his longer term strategy of sourcing affordable money from China and engaging the private sector to develop the outer islands on the back of public sector infrastructure developments, to grow the wider economy so our people can stop leaving and happily pay their taxes, he can expect to go back to the polls and gain a clear mandate from the people to govern, and probably become a legend for defeating recession not of our making that has haunted us and giving us something to celebrate on our 50th Anniversary!



Congratulations to Mrs. Enuatara Raivaru



Woman of the Month of January Enuatara Raivaru

By Poko Utia

Congratulations to Woman of the Month for January 2015 Mama Enuatara Raivaru.

Mama Enuatara was born on the 19th October 1934 and she is now 80 years old. She is of Rarotongan, Mangaia and Mauke connections. She had four sisters and one brother. Mama Enuatara has three sons.

Her mother is Koringo Terekia and her father is Matakino Mataa.

Mama Enuatara loves music and can sing too.

She writes her own songs but they're unheard of. Her favourite songs are "If you throw a Silver Dollar" and "Because of you mum." She plays the guitar whenever she can. She also loves island food and meeting people at the market.

Mama Enuatara loves sewing and making Tivaivai plus knitting, she enjoys planting floral pot-plants and she enjoys socializing (playing the ukulele and singing).

Mama Enuatara's life in education was very different from others of her age group.

She only attended Ngatangia and Avarua schools in a very short time of her young age. She is a member of the Avatiu Ekalesia and goes to Avarua CICC church whenever she can. Even if she does not get to church every Sunday, she has always kept her faith in God.

Nominated by Avatiu Clinic Mamas, she has lived in Avatiu since she was born. Apart from the groups she's been involved with such as the Vainetini, Child Welfare, Church, she always tries to help out when and wherever she can.

Her involvement and commitment with the Avatiu Clinic Committee goes way back and has been a milestone of her life. When she formally became a member of the Welfare Association she was awarded the "membership pin". Later she was awarded the "Good Service Pin."

Mama Enuatara is a very humble, quiet woman who loved to work with women's groups during her younger days and loved to play 9-A-side basketball and tennis in her younger days for her Avatiu Club.



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Asbestos in soil at school being removed



The removal of ground-borne asbestos from Aitutaki's Araura Primary School and College is now well underway. This work, which is being managed by CIIC and processed by local contractors from Aitutaki, will see affected areas around the schools dug up and all contaminated soil removed and disposed of in the manner recommended by experts in this type of work. Director of Finance at the Ministry of Education, Mr Anthony Turua, confirmed that all necessary precautionary measures are being taken during this

removal stage to mitigate risks. He said, "It is vital that we take appropriate safety measures to curb any further possible contamination."

The schools' windows have been covered and buildings secured to reduce the possibility of air-borne asbestos settling in enclosed areas. "We'll also have water running continuously during the digging phase," says Turua, "this is a commonly used measure used to keep disturbed asbestos from becoming air-borne."

The former tennis courts at Araura Primary have

been excavated and a deep hole dug for burial of the contaminated soil. Once the work has been completed, the site will be reconstructed to provide a multi-purpose sports court which can be used by both the schools and the community.

Similar work also took place early in 2014 at Avarua School where ground-borne asbestos was also discovered in surrounding soil. This contamination is believed to have occurred from years of exposure to weather and rain causing particles in the former asbestos clad roofing

to break loose and settle in the soil. The work at Avarua School proved very effective and Turua says, "The same removal process is being followed at Araura Primary School." He stressed that the work taking place on Aitutaki is expected to be just as successful as that carried out at Avarua School.

Although the new school year is fast approaching, Turua is confident that the pace of progress will ensure that "school doors will be open for the first day of the new school term."

Education Min release



Replacement of ring mains progress

10 Rarotonga's water system ring mains upgrade continues in 2015. The Cook Islands government, in partnership with the New Zealand government and the People's Republic of China, has embarked on this project with the goal of delivering a reliable supply of safe drinking water to all properties connected to the existing water network by 2016.

What is happening and when?

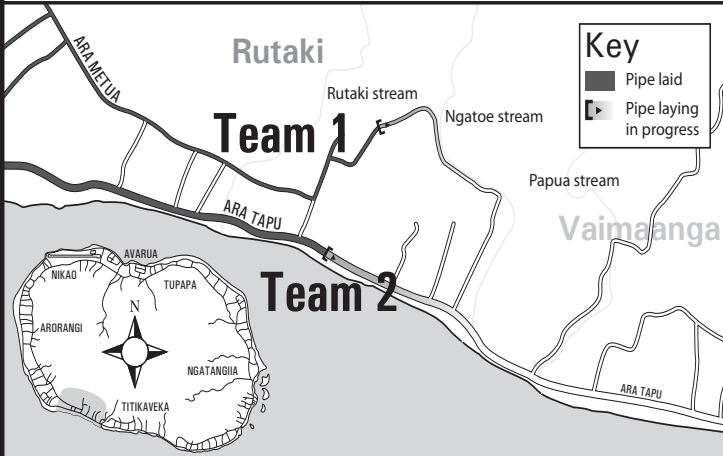
We are upgrading the existing water supply network for all of Rarotonga along both the inner and outer ring roads or loop roads as they are sometimes referred to.

Work has now started in Rutaki heading in an anti-clockwise direction. **Team 1** work crew are working on the Ara Metua (inner ring road). **Team 2** work crew are working on the Ara Tapu (outer ring road).

Pipe laying is scheduled from 7 January 2015 and estimated to finish on 28 January 2015. Valve construction and full road reinstatement may take longer. **Teams** will be working from **7am – 6pm Mon to Sat**.

How will this affect me?

Traffic control will be in place during construction. To prevent damage to your vehicles and our work machinery, we ask that you please drive carefully through the worksites, comply with traffic control staff as directed and observe the temporary speed limits. Your safety and the safety of our work crews are of utmost importance. Our goal is that at the end of the day everybody arrives home safely.



Some disruption can be expected due to the nature of the works. For further information contact Te Mato Vai Project's office on 28 851 or email Jaewynn@wovenpacific.com

Te Mato Vai is a vital component of the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan 2011 – 2015 and complements a range of work underway in the renewable energy, tourism, education, health, transport and economic sectors. All designed to ensure a more prosperous future all Cook Islanders.



First to complete sea bed environment course

An intensive 10 week training secondment at the NZ Environment Protection Authority (EPA) was successfully completed in December 2014 by Cook Islands National Environment Service (NES) Senior Officer, Phillip Strickland.

The NZ EPA is based in Wellington and has responsibility for managing the environmental effects of Seabed Minerals and other restricted activities in NZ's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf.

The NES has responsibility for similar environmental issues in the waters of Cook Islands EEZ and Continental Shelf.

Amongst other EPA Compliance work, Phillip was able to participate and gain experience in the New Zealand EPA's Application process related to Chatham Rock Phosphate Ltd (CRP) which is proposing to mine phosphate nodules from the Chatham Rise, for which it has a mining permit. Gaining this type of high level practical expertise by Cook Islands officials on the EPA's Application process will be very helpful in building local capacity and sustainability

to handle similar issues, as the national Cook Islands Seabed Minerals sector progresses towards Exploration Licensing in 2015/16.

This first EPA Training placement was organised by the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority in partnership with the Cook Islands National Environment Service. This Training placement at the EPA may be just the first of many for Cook Islanders, now that good connections have been made between the relevant Cook Islands and New Zealand regulatory bodies. Generous funding assistance for the NES Secondment to the EPA was provided by the NZ EPA, and assisted by the NZ High Commission in the Cook Islands.



BCI announce withholding tax details

Client status	RMD Tax # IS given to BCI	NO RMD Tax # given to BCI
Resident	0%	30%
Non-Resident	15%	15%
Child UNDER 16	- May load one of the parents RMD # to childs records OR - Parent applies to RMD for a tax number to have loaded to childs records	
Child OVER 16	Parent/Child applies to RMD for a tax number	

From 1 January 2015, banks will be required to deduct tax at a rate of 30% on interest earned in those accounts that do not have an RMD supplied. If you supply your RMD number to the bank, then no tax will be deducted. This relates to residents. Non residents will have tax deducted at 15%.

This is on ALL interest bearing accounts as there is no magic system that will stop tax being deducted from the accounts of those who earn less than \$11,000 or are children.

1. All accounts are required to supply a tax number from RMD, unless they have been certified as being exempt from withholding tax on interest

2. If they don't have a tax number or are not exempted, withholding tax will be deducted from the interest earned on the account.

3. If withholding tax is to be deducted it will be at the rate of 30% for residents and 15% for non residents.

4. If they do supply a RMD tax number, residents will pay 0% and non residents will still pay 15% withholding tax.

EAT LESS

MOVE MORE

HEART FOUNDATION

Top jazz musicians performing in Muri



Gary and Peter jamming outside CITV

By Poko Utia

Two highly talented jazz musicians from Australia, Peter Morgan and Gary Honor, will be performing at the Muri Beach Club Hotel.

On Monday morning, I spoke with Peter and Gary who are old friends and who were at CITV to promote their upcoming performance at the Muri Beach Club Hotel.

I asked Peter what brings him back to Rarotonga each year to perform and he answered it was his favourite place in the world to be. He and his wife Catherine come to Rarotonga every year for a holiday and always stay at the Muri Beach Club Hotel.

Peter and Gary will be performing on Tuesday and

Thursday at the Muri Beach Club Hotel. On occasions they perform together in Sydney. This is Gary and Peter's first time together as a duo on the island. They have known each other for 12-13 years.

I asked what the audience can expect and they replied; "smooth jazz, good music," with Gary on Saxophone. They say it will be a fun event and everyone will enjoy themselves. They will be performing again the following Tuesday Thursday and Saturday.

Gary is passionate about his songs and is very poetic. He has released a couple of CDs the latest is called "Heads and Tales." It came out couple of years ago in the US and did well for Gary. They would most probably

play a couple tunes from that he says. Gary's album was ranked in the top 10 in the States in the American Smooth Jazz Charts.

Peter says after some 14 years of visiting and performing on Rarotonga, he and his wife have a lot of friends here and know a lot of people on the island. They have also become regulars at a local Church. He says that he feels like it's home and he found where his Waka were from but it was too far back so he jokingly says "he can't claim any land."

Gary began playing the saxophone at the age of 10. He got involved in the school band program and carried on playing then later on studied Music at university in Queensland.

After studying he worked in the Navy, he was a musician; he had a four year stint with them. From there he moved to the UK and that's where he met a good friend of his, Silk, who is a world class performer and piano player. Through Silk he met and performed with other artists and performed in places like Dubai where he's performed twice. He's performed with a few famous Jazz artists. Gary is now continuing his career back in Australia and he will be performing again with the Australian Navy. Gary said he's having a good time here in Raro with his partner Emma who is also a professional musician-a flutist. Relaxing and socializing with the locals.

Rarotongan holds Night Street Market

The Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa held a Night Street Market last Friday across the road from the Resort



Site preparations for new Apii Nikao

Photos by Poko Utia



Chinese machinery arrives

The Prime Minister says a new era of development will impact on the Outer Islands with today's arrival of heavy machinery from the People's Republic of China.

A large consignment was off-loaded at Avatiu Harbour today, signalling another important step by the Government to advance Outer Islands' infrastructure and their development support services.

"It's an exciting time and a significant part of what Government has been working hard to achieve for the Outer Islands. This is the start of a new era of advancing all our islands."

The shipment from China was procured by CCECC and provided for under the agreed Three Year Strategy for the utilisation of grant funds from the People's Republic. A wide range of machinery and equipment will be distributed to all the islands for projects and maintenance upgrade work, including excavators, rollers, and loaders.

The long term benefits also include savings and greater efficiency in mobilisation as a result of each island retaining all their required machinery.

The shipping to the Outer Islands will be the responsibility of Government, and is being scheduled to commence in consultation with planned voyages. A northern voyage is expected by the end of the month. - *Prime Minister's Office Release*

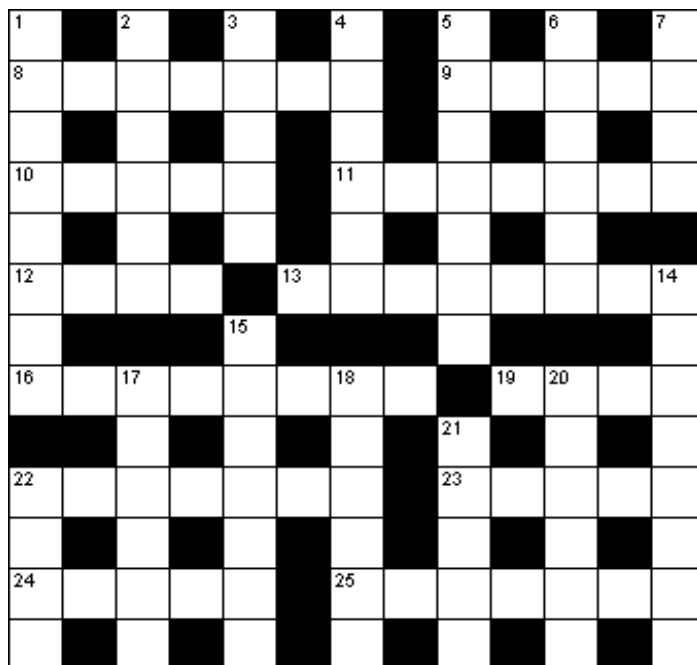
Pacific nations aim to dramatically improve gathering of population statistics

Gathering facts and figures on births, deaths, marriages and health problems are vitally important to governments to assist in deciding what programs to implement.

The 10-year campaign, focussing on civil registration and vital statistics, was agreed on at an Asia-Pacific ministerial meeting held in Thailand late last year.

The Cook Islands Health Minister, Nandi Glassie, in his interview with presenter Bruce Hill of Radio Australia says that while gathering accurate statistics sounds boring, it is something that Pacific nations need to focus on if they want to make good decisions. - *Radio Australia release*

CROSSWORD

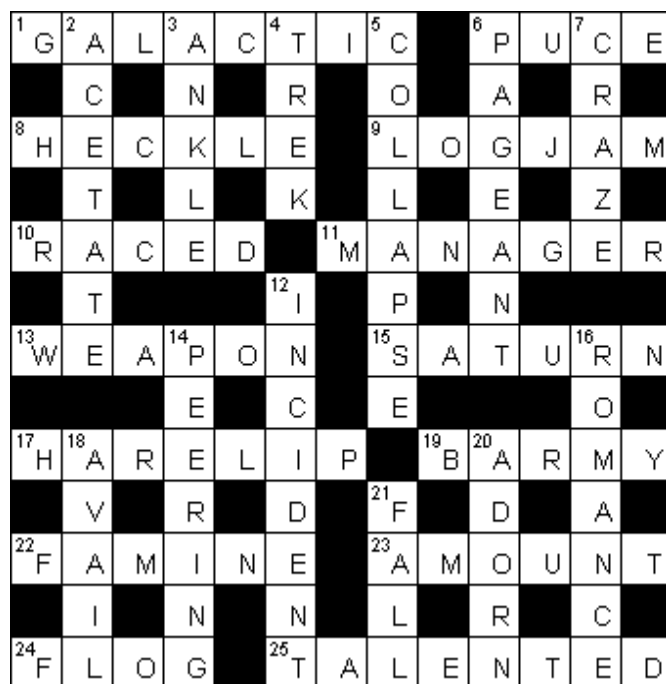


Across

2. Follower of Christ
7. Division of a hospital
8. Penetrating radiation
9. Pet term for dog
10. Person in the petroleum industry
11. Large cave
12. Posed
14. Pier
16. Tantalize
18. Fastener
21. Sign of Sagittarius
23. Man who waits on tables
24. Musical note
25. German Mrs
26. Combustible matter
27. Ritual

Down

1. Trumpet flourish
2. Become confused
3. Keyboard instruments
4. Trial
5. Burst violently
6. Unit for measuring gold
13. Affirmative vote
15. Having tact
17. Knitted jacket
18. Allow
19. Person that gains
20. Store that sells milk products
22. Comfortable



Revolutionary agenda to improve sexual health of people in Pacific

15 January 2015

Suva – With concern over high rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), a collaborative effort is getting under way to implement an ambitious sexual health agenda for the Pacific.

Promoting sexual and reproductive rights and reducing the prevalence of STIs and HIV, adolescent pregnancy, gender-based violence and sexual assault – including among vulnerable populations – are at the heart of a comprehensive Pacific Sexual Health and Well-Being Shared Agenda for 2015-2019.

Representatives of governments, civil society organisations, health networks and key populations took part in a 16-month consultation process to shape the new health agenda, led by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and funded by the Pacific Island Response Fund for HIV/STI, which is supported by the Government of Australia and the New Zealand Aid Programme, and by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Endorsed by Health Ministers from all 22 Pacific Island countries and territories in July 2014, the Shared Agenda is available here: <http://bit.ly/1Bg0sxn>.

This week work begins on detailed planning for its implementation among regional development partners aimed at strengthening coordination to support countries and national stakeholders in shifting the focus from single diseases to a rights-based approach.

In the Pacific context, the populations most vulnerable to poor sexual health and well-being are people living in poverty, people living with HIV or non-communicable diseases, women, young people, people living with disabilities, and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex.

An aim of the new agenda is to expand the reach of sexual health services through greater integration with related services and programmes which is of particular importance for Pacific Islands where sexual and reproductive health services are not always available at the primary health care level.

The agenda complements and builds on other regional plans, including the Pacific Youth Development Framework. Key points to be addressed from 2015 onwards, as per the document, include:

- Health systems suffer from a shortage of human and financial resources which means people in the Pacific, particularly on remote outer islands, are not able to access comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, services and commodities;
- Many services focus on married women and expectant mothers while the range of tailored services for single women, older women, men and transgender people is low or non-existent;
- Teenage pregnancy is generally high – for instance the Republic of the Marshall Islands has the region's highest rate of teenage pregnancy with 85 births per 1,000 females aged 15–19 years, well above

the global average;

- Sexually transmitted infections are hyper-endemic in the region – on average 25 per cent of sexually active young people have an STI and in some countries this is as high as 40 per cent;

- The estimated prevalence of HIV amongst adults aged 15 to 49 in the 17 countries with HIV cases in the Pacific is less than 0.1 per cent. All but Papua New Guinea are on track to achieve the goal of universal access to treatment for HIV and AIDS. However, factors such as high rates of STIs and low condom use mean that acquiring HIV remains a risk for the region;

- Half of all Pacific Island countries and territories are on track to improving maternal health but progress towards universal access to reproductive health care has been slow, with contraceptive use averaging around 26 per cent compared to the developing region average of 61 per cent;

- The human papillomavirus infection (HPV), which can lead to reproductive cancers, is an emerging area of concern although there is limited data on the extent of HPV transmission in the region;
- Discriminatory legislation, policy and social practices act as barriers to sexual health and well-being and promote stigma and discrimination.

The document recognises that to improve sexual health and well-being in the Pacific, emphasis needs to be placed on the delivery of accessible, comprehensive and high-quality sexual and reproductive health services

and programmes based on individual country needs.

Its implementation will be guided by five key approaches, namely: improving the flow of strategic data to inform policy and planning; expanding links between services for STIs and HIV, sexual and reproductive health and other related services; health communication and sexuality education; empowering stakeholders to create inclusive environments through legal, social, structural and policy reform, and tailoring services and programmes to meet the needs and rights of key populations.

With governments facing competing priorities in health financing, donors and other development partners will play a vital ongoing role in the region's sexual and reproductive health activities.

National fact sheets and detailed statistics for all 22 Pacific Island countries and territories – related to aspects of sexual and reproductive health, such as teenage fertility and HIV and AIDS – are available online, produced by SPC in partnership with each government.

To access National Minimum Development Indicators, including for HIV and reproductive health indicators, visit: <http://www.spc.int/nmdi/mdHome.aspx>.

To access national reports and fact sheets on demographic and health survey, and family health and safety surveys for participating Pacific countries, visit PRISM: <http://www.spc.int/prism/reports>.

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community
media release*

Woman of Month Report 2013-2014

Brief History:

Originally part of the Women In Sport Commission, which started in 1994 with founding members:

Chair: Lydia Sijp

Secretary: Mamia Savage

Committee: VP Rosie Blake, Maara Kenning

The WOM Organizers' are currently a stand alone organization with 14 Corporate sponsors which commenced in 2007 and now into its 8th year. Much appreciation is extended to our sponsors who continue their support for the program.

Woman of Month Organizers'

Chair: Maara Kenning

Secretary: Lydia Sijp

Treasurer: Nga Teao-Papatua

Fundraiser Coordinator:

Martha Makimare

Social Media & Marketing Co-ordinator –Melina Tuiravakai

Woman of Month Program

2013 year commenced with January Woman of Month program, and continued for every month until the last awards in December 2013. Our appreciation goes to our many sponsors who help deliver this program every year, and in recognizing the value of Women's volunteer contribution in their communities. Our congratulations to the Awardees for 2013 and 2014. Women Of Month Organizers' have recognized to date 96 Women over the last eight years in this program. (See Tables)

This year our new initiative is to launch a social media facebook page in order for families overseas & in PA Enua to access our recipients' published stories and photos. Much appreciation for this volunteer service is credited to Melina Tuiravakai who has volunteered her service to carry out this work.

Month 2013	Name	Nominating Group
January	Mrs Rangi Pauka	Sport & Culture nomination
February	Mama Mareta	SDA - Basketball
March	Sister Margaret O'Dwyer	Education/Prison services
April	Tapu Munro	Netball, Girl Gudies
May	Tai Turua	Avatiu Netball, Community
June	Te Aruru Takaii	Child Welfare, Dorcus, Nurses/Tupapa Soccer
July	Taamo Heather	Netball/Girls Brigade
August	Amiria Davey	Aitutaki Sports & Girls Brigade & Aituaki Disability Council
September	Tarukua Kaupo Matatei (Shine)	Child Welfare & Tupapa Netball
October	Maruata Aarii Pureau	CETC & Women Devt, culture, Nikao Sport
November	Mariana Mataio	CICC Matavera/ECE/Education
December	Karen Tairea	WIS/Public Health -MOH

Month 2014	Name	Nominating Group
January	Rupe Piakura	Ngatangiaa Cricket Assoc
February	Mata Raeina	CI Nurses Association/Nikao Vainetini
March	Peka Takai George	Tutakimoa Vainetini
April	Tina Manuel	Tikikaveka Community
May	Raiata Heather	CI Family Welfare
June	Teina Etches	CI Teachers & Workers Association
July	Metua Tereora	CI Nurses Association
August	Tereapii Taurarii	MOH- Nurses Association
September	June Hosea	SDA Docus/MOE
October	Teata Ateriano	Mauke Organising Committee-MANEA Games
November	Mama Tua Fariu (Mama Su)	Akaoa Community & Child Welfare
December	Carmen Temata	Apostolic Vainetini

Having self confidence in 2015

By Senior Pastor John Tangi

This article is intended to encourage you during this New Year 2015 to break out of your habits that prevents you from moving forward in life, or from achieving things for yourself, or from moving to the next level. James 2v.17 says "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." Successful people are people of action. They know how to get things done. The question is "What does it take to get you moving? To get you to do something about your life?" There are many different things that motivate people but there are three very common ones:

1) Pain. When people feel the heat, that's when they get moving! When they get desperate, that's when they get moving! In the story of the prodigal son, when he realised his difficulties, he came to his sense, & went back to his father! We rarely change, until we get desperate. Many people hate going to the dentist until they couldn't bear the pain anymore, then they go to the dentist. Proverbs 20v.30 (GN) "Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways."

2) Pressure motivates us to get out of a habit that hinders our progress in life. You go to the doctor and he says, "Lose 50 pounds and quit smoking or you're going to die!" Your boss says, "Improve your performance or you're fired!" That's pressure. The problem is, once the pain and the pressure subside, or go away, we go back to our normal ways. We go on a diet until we loose the weight but that doesn't permanently change our eating habits. The fact is God often uses our situation to push us in a new direction.

3) Perspective (point of view; perception). Paul, on the road

to Damascus, got an inspiration, a new vision. Acts 9v.3-6 reads "Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice 'Who are you Lord?' Paul asked. 'I am Jesus now get up and go into the city and you'll be told what you must do.'"

I want to talk about the 5 steps to get us moving.

i) We must be responsible for our own lives. Some people their favorite phrase is, "It's all your fault!" They want to blame everybody else for their failure. Some people they have excuses for everything. But there are also people who accept responsibility for what happens to them, and when they make mistakes they admit it. Proverbs 28v.13 "A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful, but if he confesses and forsakes them he gets another chance."

ii) Believe you can change. Stop saying "I can't" and start saying "I can". Philippians 4v.13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Reprogram your mind. Romans 12v.2 reads "Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of mind." Success starts in our mind – how we see ourselves. It is typical when God wants to use somebody the first thing we do is come up with an excuse saying, "I can't! You've got the wrong guy. I can't do it!" Mark 9v.23 "Everything is possible to him who believes." Mark 10v.27 "With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible."

iii) Clarify (make clear) what you really want. Make sure that you are clear in your mind what you want to change! James 1v.8 reads "A double minded man is unstable in all he does." James is saying that the problem is, a lot of people can't make up their minds. Decide what you want

Encouragement Column

With Senior Pastor John Tangi



and then commit yourself to it, and start saying, "Lord, change me!" Not, "Lord, change my wife or husband or kids, but me." The only way we can change other people is by changing ourselves.

iv) Don't wait for ideal circumstances. Ecclesiastes 11v.4 (GN) "If you wait until the wind and the weather are just right, you will never plant anything and never harvest anything." The Living Bible says, "If you wait for perfect conditions, you'll never get anything done" If you want to spend quality time with your wife, children or family, - do it now! Because if you're waiting for the right time then it will not happened.

v) Exercise your body. I Timothy 4v.8 "Physical exercise has its value". Most people are simply too tired to change. The fact is God made our bodies for movement. He made us for

activity. Successful people are people of action. They know how to get things done. Proverbs 27v.1 (GN) "Never boast about tomorrow. You don't know what will happen between now and then."

Have you been telling yourself, "I'll never change! That's just the way I am! I can't change!" Begin by allowing God to transform your mind. The worst mistake a person can make in life is to delay committing him or herself to the Lord Jesus Christ. I Kings 18v.21 "How much longer will it take you to make up your mind? If the Lord is God, worship Him!" II Corinthians 6v.2 "Today is the day to be saved!" not tomorrow. Today is your day! Give your life completely to Christ then He will give you the power to make all those other changes that you need to make. May you have a God blessed New Year!

New Year, new beginning

By Teherenui Koteka

It's that time of the year where we get to say goodbye to 2014 and hello to a fresh new year. At this time of the year, I and no doubt a lot of you, tend to hear the flutter of new year's resolutions. All over Facebook I see people spreading the word of their various goals for 2015. I see people's usual targets such as "I'm going to lose weight" or "I'm going to aim to do better at school" and I see the more exotic goals such as "I'm going to save enough money to travel to Europe this year". The catch phrase 'new year, new me' is one often heard throughout the holiday period and into the start of the New Year. By today, January 7th many people have set goals to battle out the journey of 2015 hoping to emerge in 2016 a new and better person.

I think the 'New Year' is the perfect time to set objectives for the on-coming year. To me the New Year is a magical time where any goal seems possible and the next 365 days will test how much you really want to achieve the goals you have set. Although I, and no doubt many of you out there still have New Years resolutions from 2012 that have not yet been achieved, the New Year marks a new beginning and the chance to reach those goals that just seem inaccessible. The New Year for me means that you symbolically get a new beginning. With this new beginning comes new chances, room for improvement, and the

casting away of mistakes made in the previous year. The idea of new possibilities and opportunities also accompanies a New Year. The New Year means new things to look forward to and new adventures to partake on. For many of my friends 2015 means embarking on their journey into adulthood as their initiation into university draws closer.

A New Year always brings hope and a little dread. We hope for a prosperous year ahead, and hold a little dread at the thought of not knowing what the year will bring. January 1st marks the beginning of a voyage throughout a brand new, fresh year. Although we do not know what the next 365 days will bring we have to just hope for the best and battle out what ever challenges come along the way. New Years is a time to reflect upon the previous year and look towards the up-coming year. All I can really hope for this year is a safe but challenging year that helps me emerge in 2016 a better, stronger and wiser person than I was in 2014. My New Years resolution this year is "umeia te marokura" meaning aim for the highest. Although this has been my New Years resolution for the past four years I'm not convinced that I have truly done my best to achieve it. Maybe 2015 will be my year. I go into 2015 with a New Years resolution in my back pocket and the will power to stick it out. I hope many of you do the same. Either way here's hoping that we all have a fantastic prosperous year. Happy New Year!

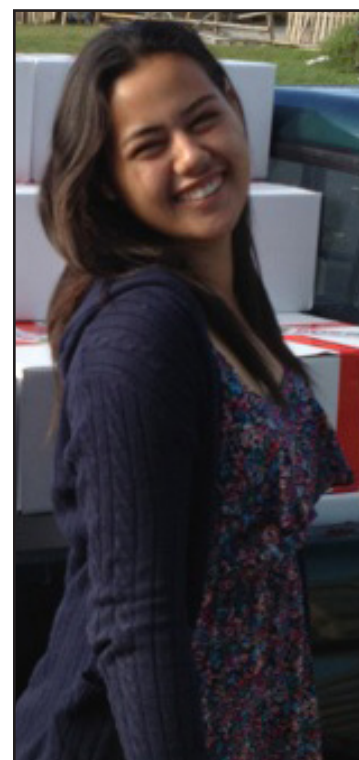
Here comes 2015

By Nadia George

Here it is guys, 2015 is finally upon us and another year has quickly gone by. Time for all those "new year, new me" statuses on Facebook am I right? It's a new year with new beginnings and endless possibilities. So bring out that pen and paper and get started on your list of goals for this year. It could be as simple as passing at school, getting good grades, getting a part time job or saving up for a vacation, new bike, or car (don't be basic). After all, you've got to have a goal to work towards if you want to get somewhere right?

This year, for me, is all about that 'big city life', transitioning from an island of 36KM to a school of roughly the same size, is a huge switch for many of the school leavers of 2014, especially me. How will I even deal without my mum? Where oh where did my years of high school go? Why it seems like it was just yesterday that I was being invested as a school prefect for Tereora, or sitting in the councilor's room and wagging classes. (Jokes, it's not wagging if the teachers know). I think it's safe to say that our senior year of high school will always be the one that we will reflect back on the most because it holds a lot of our final adolescent memories and our final moments of being a child.

We step into this 2015 with visions of how great this year will turn out to be and the promise of making this one a memorable one. We are even given the chance to dust off the old, new year's resolutions list, and to give it another go, with some of us thinking, "Maybe this time around things will be much different". And there's no harm in that, if at first you don't succeed, then try, try



and try again.

Maybe last year you didn't quite reach your weight loss goal that you wanted or your bank account doesn't have as many digits as you had hoped it would but, that my friends, is exactly why the beginning of a new year is so beautiful! I for one am already starting on my new year's resolution, with weight loss being at the top of the page, of course. Now I know what you're thinking, why would I need to lose weight, I'm already skinny enough as it is, right? Well, wrong, two whole hams and a bunch of fatty goodness over the festive period will do wonders to your short size. Like they say, "a minute on the lips, a lifetime on the hips". Why do all the wrong things feel so right? Oh well, here's to 2015, may the days be brighter, the grades be higher, and the waistlines get thinner.

So as the fireworks popped on the eve of a new year and the skies lit up, we bid a final farewell to another year.

Ka kite 2014!

With a barrel of oil crashing to \$US65 from \$US115 this week the savings are quickly reflected at the pumps in NZ but how long is it going to take before we get to see a drop in prices on Rarotonga? When costs including refining are added it equates to a reduction of 40 cents a litre in NZ. With nenevanomics in full flight don't be surprised if the cost of fuel goes up a few more cents a litre.



Rassie's erratic media release about the Demos pondering over the loane complaint started off saying the Democratic Party is considering whether to lodge a formal complaint but before the end "Rassie said that because no action had been taken the Democratic Party felt obliged to file a complaint to the Police Commissioner to formally charge loane." What a load of gibberish, just be clear Rassie, either you are thinking about it or have you done it? What about laying a corruption complaint against others that you bark about behind closed doors?



The PM's recent overnight trip to Mangaia has got Wee Wilky's nickers in a twist, in his rush to blurt out a media statement he stuttered over his own tongue. His version of events was so off the mark it sounded ridiculous, the PM was welcomed with open arms and the meeting with the Demo MPs cordial and appreciated that Elvis sang all the right tunes. Thank goodness there are some MPs who put the needs of their constituencies first before the greedy self enriching ambitions of a few in the Party.



Taken a swim in pristine, picture

perfect Muri lagoon recently chooks? Don't know about pristine. Swimmers report a distinctive odour in the water! It was the smell of poop! That's right! Turd! And it turns out the Environment wallahs have had to take a local resort to task over its raw doo dahs entering the lagoon! It seems that near the shoreline, if you dig down a few inches, dark brown liquid flows out of the sand! Poop! Turd! Oh woe!



Why are the Lord High Mandarin pushing and pressuring Le Commissar Publique to extend the Keeper of the Money box's contract for another 12 wolf howls at the moon? Originally Le Commissar was of a mind to extend the contract for just 6 wolf howls at the moon. The seat has been advertised throughout the Kingdom and is there not a local who has the where with all to do the job? Or has the incumbent, from beyond the black stump, made the job so confusing only he can read the tea leaves and translate the position of the bones?



Word from his political foes that a certain Leader has been howling at the moon, are said to be a mischief. So



desperate has the race for the treasury benches has become, that all logic and rational belief has flown the coup. Expect the Flat Earth Society to re-appear any day soon!



Some of the best brains in the world are on their way to the Cook Islands to witness the strange phenomenon that has befallen us. They are arriving to gain some understanding of why this country defies the laws of physics and why things which should be descending are ascending instead! One example is the price of fuel which in every other country on Earth has fallen by 50%. Members of OPEC, the oil producing nations, are also making a beeline to the Cooks to find out what they can learn about keeping fuel prices up when they have actually gone down!



An Olympic size salt water swimming pool has been proposed for the reclaimed site at the Punanga Nui Market! For a fee, you will be able to swim about, kids will learn to swim, people will be able to exercise those extra kilos away and the fees will provide an income stream for government. But chooks, will it be safe to swim in such a pool given the lagoon is

known to be polluted? And in heavy, rainy weather, will muddy water flowing down from the hills in the nearby creek, turn the pool a brown colour? And whose job will it be to fish out all the trash first thing in the morning?



Interesting to see the concern by visitors about the dilapidated graves in the public cemetery by the Rassa. Foreshore erosion has meant graves near the beach have had their contents splayed across the sands for all to see including passengers aboard incoming flights! Sadly this was all drawn to the attention of the authorities years ago in an article in the Herald. Photos at the time showed open graves and members of the public complained of the odd human bone or two on the beach! In fact, some 20 graves were affected at that time and probably more now.



Where do the cultured go for high tea? Devonshire teas and the ilk? There seems to be no establishment of good taste where those who practice bending of the little finger while raising the cup to sip Earl Gray, can go to join like minded ones who enjoy the graceful, high mannered style the educated and refined are accustomed to. Who is there on this little scrap of turf with the elevated sense of decorum and refinement, to establish such an emporium?



Forget about shoe shiners. Why doesn't someone set up a business washing feet? Given most saunter about town in jandals, it would make sense to have someone specializing in cleaning, washing and perfuming feet!

FAT CATS

Number 2, Cabinet is mystified as to why fuel prices have not come down!

Almost as we are mystified why they are still in government!



COCONUT ROUNDTABLE

Rumour has it, Government is puzzled that fuel prices have not dropped like it has everywhere else!

Well there is a very good reason for that!

We have to keep up appearances!



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OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

VACANCY: PROGRAMME OFFICER – THE SRIC-CC PROGRAMME

Applications for the position of Programme Officer are invited from qualified, experienced and motivated individuals.

The successful applicant will be responsible for assisting in the management and coordination of the Programme; Strengthening the Resilience of Our Islands and Our Communities to Climate Change (SRIC-CC).

The objective of the SRIC-CC programme is to strengthen the ability of Pa Enua communities, and the public service, to make informed decisions and manage anticipated climate change driven pressures (including extreme events) in a pro-active, integrated and strategic manner.

The successful applicant must have a passion for learning, be innovative and have recently worked on community based projects in the Pa Enua or Rarotonga. They must also have excellent communications and interpersonal skills. Proficiency in Cook Islands Maori is an advantage.

To receive a copy of the Terms of Reference for this position please contact Mrs Tina Samson-Hoff at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) between 8am-4pm (Mon-Fri) on phone 25494 or 29300, or email tina.samson@cookislands.gov.ck;

Applicants should submit the following to Mrs Samson-Hoff at the OPM or by email to the address above (hard or electronic copies are acceptable);

1. A full curriculum vitae (CV);
2. A covering letter outlining your interest for this position; and
3. At least two letters of reference that support your application

Applications close on Monday 19th January 2015 at 3.00pm.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE SAVAGE FAMILY MEETING

Saturday 17th January at section 25 next to Peter Toto at 8am regarding land meeting for vacant section and also for section S9.

TENDERS



NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC) seeks proposals from qualified consulting firms or individuals for the development of a Convention Centre Feasibility Study & Design Concepts Project, Rarotonga.

A copy of the Request For Proposal document can be obtained by emailing noeline.mateariki@cookislands.gov.ck

Lodgments of Submission are to be emailed to noeline.mateariki@cookislands.gov.ck

CITC request all Proposals be submitted by 4pm Friday 23 January 2015



ARE TAPAEANGA PROJECT – WESTERN BASIN AVATIU HARBOUR, RAROTONGA.

The Cook Islands Tourism Corporation and the Cook Islands Ports Authority advises that tenders are now invited from suitably qualified tenderers for the following contract work on the Are Tapaeanga Project – Western Basin, Avatiu Harbour, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

Turnkey Contract No. C01/2014 – the supply, installation of materials and equipment for the construction of a new building Are Tapaeanga Project – Western Basin, Avatiu Harbour, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

The contract requires the contractor to provide insurances at specified levels. Suitably qualified and experienced tenderers should apply to Cook Islands Tourism Corporation for tender documents, including a brief statement of their experience and qualifications.

All tenders are to be delivered to Cook Islands Tourism addressed to: Mrs Noeline Mateariki, Destination Development Coordinator, Destination Development Division. During the tender period all enquiries regarding the tender document should also be addressed to the said person above on email noeline.mateariki@cookislands.gov.ck or telephone 29 435.

Tenders close at 4pm on the 16th January 2015. (Cook Islands Time).

PUBLIC NOTICE



PUBLIC NOTICE NO. 2

**VAIPAE-TAUTU BY-ELECTION 2015
POLLING PLACES AND CONTESTING
CANDIDATES**

PURSUANT to Sections 42, 43, 62 and 65 of the Electoral Act 2004 (the Act), I, TAGGY TANGIMETUA, Chief Electoral Officer, HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that the following candidates have been duly nominated to contest in Vaipae-Tautu By-Election.

Kete loane
Mona loane Kake

Democratic Party
Cook Islands Party

The place and time for the taking of ordinary votes for this election is designated to be at Vaipae Sunday School Hall in Aitutaki on Tuesday 17th February 2015 between the hours of 9.00am and 6.00pm.

Provisions have also been made to allow for voting in advance and issuing of postal votes at the office of the Chief Electoral (Statistics Office, MFEM in Avarua, Rarotonga) every working day commencing 14 January 2015 between the hours 9.00am to 1.00pm.

DATED at Rarotonga this 8th day of January 2015.

Taggy Tangimetua
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

News Brief

Swimmers in intakes a concern

Sam Crocombe has expressed concern at people swimming in the Avatiu Water intakes. Wilson Rani of the water works department at ICI says they too have had people ringing up complaining about people swimming in the intakes, especially in the water intake in Avatiu. Another issue is people swimming in the Papua intake at the waterfall, and Rani says people doing this are from overseas as well as local kids. Mac Mokoroa, Head of Ministry of Infrastructure Cook Islands has informed his water works department to make the existing 'no swimming' signs bigger. Rani advises the public not to swim in the intakes as it may lead to water contamination. He asks for community co-operation on this matter and to report it to ICI or the police for law enforcement. ICI is working on putting up new signs for all the water intakes.

College enrolment dates announced

Enrolment dates for colleges across the island is as follows: The Nukutere College office will be open for new enrolments from Monday 19th of January to the 22nd and school will officially start for Nukutere on the 27th of Jan. The Tereora College enrolment dates are from Monday 19th of January to the 21st. On Thursday the 22nd all year 12s and 13s are expected to undergo their subject choices, from 11am to 2pm- students must take their NCEA results along with them. On the 23rd and 26th of January is teacher only day from 9am to 3pm. On the 27th of Jan, students of year 10, 11 and 12 are to attend school for the brief hours of 9am to 12noon and must be in their uniform. On the 28th, students of year 9 and 13 are to attend school for the brief hours of 9am to 12pm as well, and students must be in their uniform. Tereora College officially starts up their school year on the 29th of January. The enrolment dates for Papaaroa College is Thursday 22nd, Friday 23rd and Monday 26th of January. School starts for Papaaroa College on Tuesday 27th of this month. School will be open for Titikaveka College on Friday 23rd and enrolments will be on Mon 26th Jan.

New phone directories

The 2015 Telecom Directory books are out now. They arrived by ship from NZ on the 07th of January and all key clients and major businesses have already had their phone books delivered. The books get delivered by staff who make deliveries around the island and the outer islands books will get delivered on the next available boat or flight. Homes usually get their books posted to their mail boxes. Those of you who haven't yet seen this year's phone book, the cover shows the flags of the Cook Islands, which is based around the 50 year celebrations, with the theme 'What does 50 years of self governing in the Cook Islands mean to you?' Paulina Beddoes, Manager for Directory Sales says the image should reflect and incorporate our history, culture, people, significant points of interest and events. The winner of the cover was Sahara Lang, a student from Avarua School. Those wanting a 2015 phone book can call into any Telecom branch, to purchase a book, for \$15.

New Hope Church

Parekura Conference Centre

Inspirational messages to uplift and empower you

Sunday at 10.30am

Fix me! What about economic reform?

A visitor to Timmy's steam train terminus in Tupapa on Tuesday morning noticed a burst water pipe on the right of way to the left of the entrance. He mentioned this to a local who contacted the water boys and reported it, to wit the water boys undertook to get someone to the site to fix said leak. There must have been a lot of other leaks needing fixing because as at 9am Wednesday the water was still pouring out.



Close up of leaking pipe

By Charles Pitt

Finance Minister Mark Brown remains optimistic that the recent announcement of a \$500,000 operating deficit in the December 31 Fiscal Report can be turned around as it only represent about 0.4% of government's overall projected expenditure.

Brown expressed his confidence the deficit will be turned around when speaking on Matariki Radio on Wednesday morning with William Framhein.

Brown said the small operating surplus of \$9,000 was at risk from outside factors beyond government's control. Factors such as the firming of the Australian currency against the NZ dollar and the effect this would have on tourism figures out of Sydney.

The big drop in oil prices was expected to benefit the Cooks as airlines would have cheaper fuel costs enabling fares to come down and less of the special subsidy to be paid out.

Brown acknowledged that estimates had to be revised downward. That can be expected as no Budget is fixed in concrete. The economy is a fluid beast and the future, like Lotto, is at best a guessing game.

While many are calling for political reform, overlooked is the importance of economic reform. Pressures on our small country mean sooner or later we will need to re-structure our economy and perhaps drastically. Important decisions will need to be made regarding new revenue streams, the tax system, control of interest rates, employment, immigration and job creation.

Some control needs to be imposed on inter-relationships and the degree to which sectors affect each others performance. For example, cheaper fuel costs should flow through to cheaper retail goods but there is little evidence of this. Many students are taking up university courses for jobs that do not exist in the local labour market. Tourism is growing by about 6% per year but the increase in visitors is not matched by any proportionate increase in the production of local crafts and souvenirs. Our economy is like a brain in which the neurons have become disconnected.

Someone in government needs to stand back and look at the whole country-where is it going? There is too much focus on individual sector promotion but not enough on what it is that the community wants.



Dog plans to take a dip when the puddle gets bigger