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Landowners wise up to Government's Te Mato Vai land grab

At a meeting of the Takuvaive Water Catchment Committee (TWCC) on 13 January 2015 it is clear accessing private land for the multimillion dollar Te Mato Vai (TMV) will be no cake walk for government. With Takuvaive being programmed to be the first catchment to be established under the TMV project, landowners of the other nine catchment areas on Rarotonga are observing the developments and attempts by government to access land and/or procure land by warrant.

Dealing with the deep seated emotional issues attached to private land in the Cook Islands can bring out the worst in people within a family but against a common foe such as the government families will be united and firm in their resolve to be treated with respect and fairly.

Landowners are in no mood to be emotionally bullied or coerced by legalities for the use of their land by government. In the last session of Parliament a year ago the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure Cook Islands (ICI) Teariki Heather made it crystal clear there was no money available in the \$64 million project to compensate land owners for the use of their land.

There are no leases on any land currently used for inland water intakes; usage is by consent and goodwill of the individual landowners who remain adamant the water is and remains free to the public.

DPM Heather is advocating landowners should continue to provide their land free as an act



Eruera Nia

of civil duty and is lying the water will be free. the people.

Heather also stated in the Parliamentary live Radio Cook Islands broadcast that during the sham public consultations land owners did not raise the issue of compensation therefore land will be provided free of charge. To believe this gives him the mandate to use the land free of charge confirms how domineering he is.

The DPM even spoke against compensation for the landowners saying it would push the cost even higher putting a greater burden on

how was the documented revenue estimate arrived at? Just one of the many issues being dishonestly hidden from the public. The \$15 million grant from New Zealand is conditional TMV is user paid.

One attendee in Takuvaive was very forceful in saying landowner rights cannot be usurped by anyone and this is enshrined in our Constitution, there are laws that protect the rights of landowners. They vehemently claim no government can just take privately owned land without their permission or say, "Previous governments have used landowners' ignorance of Cook Islands law which protected their rights as landowners."

In December 2014 when the TWCC asked ICI for a copy of the plans for the work projected to start in Takuvaive Valley in January 2015 there was none. When Cook Islands Investment Corporation Legal Officer Lloyd Miles made several attempts to soften individual members of the Committee he was rebuked, one said, "Of all examples, he gives me his daughter as an example, a foreigner who is neither a land owner nor an indigenous Cook Islander but is only a PR." Another said, "He also came to see me and told me he wants to talk to me about my land. I told him to get out and he has the cheek to talk to me, a foreigner about my land."

Government's access to the Takuvaive landowners is through the TWCC who are adamant they are opposed to taking of any land by warrant by Government. They are insisting a negotiated *continued bottom of next page*

Significant developments in purse seine fishing point to development of a more businesslike approach by MMR

Recent progress in purse seine fishing negotiations with the Koreans have resulted in a welcome increase in revenue for government but is overshadowed by the need for some major policy decisions at the top level regarding the ultimate future direction and structure of the Ministry of Marine Resources itself. Questions are now arising as to whether the Ministry should establish a "business" arm to develop the earnings potential of not only the fishing industry but our EEZ.

By Charles Pitt

Secretary for the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) Ben Ponia shares the Herald's view that the industry is at the point where some discussions are needed regarding the future role of MMR in the further development of the marine industry.

The Herald spoke to Ponia last week.

The "industry" encompasses all our marine resources within our EEZ including fish, pearls and sea bed minerals.

The Herald is of the view that matters have reached a point where an overarching policy needs to be established regarding government's approach and how government inter-faces with the foreign and local private sector in the development of the resource to increase revenue.

Each sector is at a different development stage to the other and there is no unified approach to the total resource. Fishing is still evolving but is largely in the hands of foreigners, pearls, which are largely in the hands of locals, are making come back while sea bed minerals which will be dominated by foreigners, is approaching the exploration stage.

According to Ponia, MMR's role has largely been to regulate and provide advice to the Minister. While MMR oversees fishing, pearls are overseen by the Pearl Authority and sea bed minerals by the Sea Bed Minerals Authority.

In fishing, Ponia said MMR is increasingly becoming involved in making business decisions. The recent negotiations with the South Korean company Silla Co. Ltd is a clear example of the

Ministry's involvement in what is a "commercial" activity. Should the Ministry contemplate other potential commercial, revenue generating initiatives, the multi-million dollar growth in such activities may warrant the Ministry establishing a Business arm.

What has happened in the purse seine sector is a business milestone of sorts in that the Ministry has opened up the Skipjack Tuna fishery much wider than it previously was. As a business decision and opportunity it has come at a good time. A time when government is facing operating deficits in the years ahead.

The Skipjack resource in our EEZ

is estimated at 300,000 tonnes. In 2014, just 17,000 tonnes was fished. Previously, only the US fleet (some 40 vessels) under the US Treaty with Pacific Island Parties, had access to the Skipjack fishery in our EEZ. While the US paid some \$3m per year under the treaty, the US fleet for many years, barely touched the resource. Ponia says this is probably because most of the Skipjack is to be found further to the west of our waters.

For 2015, the Cook Islands has been allocated 1,250 fishing days by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries, the regional body that decides on the total allocation of fishing days set for each Pacific

continued page 9

Te Mato Vai land grab

settlement for use and access to land, with all landowner's conditions. The consensus of the meeting is a request for a comprehensive plan from ICI of all the disciplines involved.

At a TWCC meeting last week TMV new comer Garth Henderson from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) fronted for government but his honest and factual presentation and comments contradicted many previous ones said by certain politicians in public forums. It is obvious he hadn't been coached to keep the land owners in the dark and dysfunctional.

Government have signalled to landowners there will be amendments to the Rarotonga Waterworks Ordinance 1960 no. 11 to strengthen and widen their claims of water rights for public supply. Intended amendments lessen the landowner's rights over their own land. A Parliament of the Cook Islands explanatory note states the Bill shall be called the Rarotonga Waterworks Ordinance

Amendment Act 2015.

With the current political uncertainty this amendment may linger for months till Parliament is convened resulting in the catchment construction commencement being delayed for months.

If anything, Landowners of the other catchment areas need to be meeting regularly and become proactively ready for whatever under arm and curved balls government is going to pitch at them. Landowners must demand and accept no less than a genuine consultation process to be followed and not a one sided government public relations information presentation of: this is what we are going to do.

The TWCC was set up in 2006 with its own Regulations supported by the Environment Act for the purpose of managing, overseeing and protecting the Takuvaine Water Catchment area. Current Chairman is Eruera (Ted) Nia with Makiuti Tongia deputising. - George Pitt



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Economic Racism stifling development

Donor partners must stop employment disparity

We all know it but do our best to avoid the long suffering subject of employment inequality and let's be brutally honest; we are not talking about a gender malfunction in the work place but economic racism against Cook Islanders. For fifty years of self determination Cook Islanders have been treated by our so called development friends as third class citizens by suffocating our self determining aspirations through psychologically impinging our true self worth.

The denigrating of highly qualified Cook Islands in the Public Service work place is a major stumbling block to them returning to work in the Cook Islands. While no government has the moral fortitude to take remedial action against this glaring disparity, overseas Cook Islanders see no value in being insulted for being intelligent and highly educated.

As an example the position of Finance Secretary was recently advertised. While there are many Cook Islanders well and more than qualified to do the job they will only be paid a so called local rate of say \$150,000. If an expat like the foreigner Australian Richard Neves is given the job he is rewarded with a Donor topped up salary of \$300,000.

Give the same deal to a Cook Islander and we would have great difficulty in deciding who should get the job from the overwhelming applications from Cook Islanders. It is time our Development and Donor Partners are told only Cook Islanders will be employed and they will be along with their salary top up contribution.

Politicians have pandered to the foreign funders doing everything to placate them while selling the true self worth of Cook Islanders to their interests. The excuse that the

extra pay the expat gets is not coming out of our pocket has done nothing but keep the Cook Islands in foreign pockets, how shallow sighted our political masters have been.

Our politicians have got to smarten up and stop kissing Donor arses at the expense of qualified Cook Islanders who would willingly return if there was Public Service parity. The message the Donors have been sending us for years is no matter how qualified or educated we are, we are not equal to an expat. Despite the message of inequality at worst described as economic racism being blatant paraded without an ounce of subtlety, like sheep being led to the slaughter we have been sucked in hook line and sinker.

Once an expat settles into their fat cat lifestyle in Rarotonga they realise there is a generous lack of accountability especially by a Public Service Commissioner who has gender issues and plastic testicles along with being noticeably bewitched by expats. With a tropical life style to bask in and enjoy the likes of Neves and the incompetent Crown Law boss Kim Saunders go about hiring more staff preferably after their own kind to do their work.

The racial slur Cook Islanders are an inferior lot continues to be fostered unhindered by the likes of Neves who deliberately is void of a succession plan as he struggles to accept his contract has expired. The PSC is a soft touch and falls for Neves' self praise and indispensability.

Neves has proven to be short in more than one department, he has brought nothing positively note worthy to the development of our economy. He has denigrated Cook Islanders in the worst possible way, he has introduced social and political disharmony by his foolish disregard for the Cook Islands way and cultural



Fin Sec Richard Neves

protocols. Of all the previous Finance Secretaries ever, Neves has caused the most political and social unrest, his tenure performance has been unprecedented and riddled with incompetency often causing great embarrassment for his Minister Mark Brown.

How his \$300,000 plus package can be justified is beyond comprehension, Cook Islanders of lesser experience and qualifications can do a better job even at half his pay but then why should they be paid any less?

Kim Saunders is a case in point, a gym junkie Saunders is a serious light weight when it comes to putting in the hard yards, often arriving to work mid morning Saunders has a preference for working from home or not returning to the office after lunch. Saunders noticeably makes rare appearances when called upon to advise Ministers, subordinates are despatched instead. Provided with a budget as big as her ego by her soul mate Neves, the lazy Saunders regularly hires overseas lawyers she previously worked with for legal advice. Saunders is noted for politically tailoring her advice for government Ministers with



Kim Saunders

additional political comments to the media.

Such is Saunders silly elevated opinion of herself she is not slow in coming forward about her demands her New Zealand residing police officer partner should be given a job with the local Police. The best thing her Minister Henry Puna can do on behalf of the Cook Islands is to give her a red card, but then come to think of it Saunders did a great job abusing judiciary privilege to protect the reputation of Puna in a Court case last year. Like Neves, Saunders certainly fails all measurements to justify being paid \$200,000, double the salary of a Cook Islander.

Put simply, racial disparity in the work place against Cook Islands is no longer tolerable, take a leaf out of Samoa's book and give the jobs only to Cook Islanders before we wake up as a minority in our own country overtaken by fat cat foreigners hogging all the highest paid jobs in the Public Service.

On a brighter side the likes of businessmen Trevor Clark and John Tierney must be commended for paying overseas recruited Cook Islanders, expat or New Zealand compatible salaries.

- George Pitt

International Flights to be cut but Domestic charters soar

\$38,000 Northern round trip questioned

While the right hand of the CIP government is making the right noises about cutting back on international travel, the left hand is clocking up massive costs for domestic charter flights. On Monday the Prime Minister Henry Puna announced cost cutting of international travel was on the menu but at the same time his Deputy Teariki Heather was chartering an Air Rarotonga round trip to the Northern group of Islands to the tune of \$38,000.

This does not include the additional costs of the on ground expenses of another \$10,000. As Minister of Infrastructure Cook Islands and the Ministry of Culture, Heather will split the charter costs with ICI paying \$28,000 and Culture \$10,000.

Heather will be accompanied next week by the Member of Parliament for Rakahanga Toka Temu, ICI Secretary Mac Mokoroa and the Secretary for Culture Sonny Williams. Others travelling are yet to be confirmed. Two ICI staff working on projects in the North will return to Rarotonga on the charter.

Pukapuka will be the first port of call followed by Manihiki, Rakahanga then Penryhn.

ICI has development projects in all the Islands being visited and this charter is timely to monitor progress and to follow up completed work but as to the Culture component Heather faces criticism for poor co-ordinating of resources.

Using this trip to promote the

50 year celebrations is unjustified complained one unnamed critic. "Heather unashamedly is using public funds to advance his claims for the leadership of the CIP". The complainant claims Heather's wasteful abuse of public funds is a political stunt disguised by a Ministry of Culture output, "Sonny is always complaining about having no money so where did he find his share of the charter costs?"

The Ministry of Culture has set up a Maire Nui committee for each island with the chairs for these committees coming from Rarotonga and it's up to each committee to include representatives from their Home Island as well as reps from NZ and/or Australia. There is to be only one joint group representing each island in the proper Maire Nui competition.

To make things even more interesting for this proposed trip and waste of money to Manihiki and Rakahanga is that the mayors for both islands are currently on Rarotonga and so are their MP's.

One may therefore ask why the Minister and his Secretary can't meet the Northern Island leaders here on Rarotonga then these leaders and the newly selected Island Maire Nui committees' liaison with their individual islands in preparing themselves for the 50th Celebration.

Is this how government is going to save money from their travel budget or does the DPM have another hidden agenda for his



Prime Minister Henry Puna

waste of public money? Will the realised when domestic travel by intentions of prudent financial his Ministers is indiscriminate? management by the PM be

- George Pitt

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Our Frontpage model Westpac sale of operations in the Cook Islands

Response provided by Westpac Group Communications spokesperson to questions posed by Pitt Media Group on Thursday 29 January 2015;

1. Background - how long has Westpac been in the Cook Islands?
Westpac has been in the Cook Islands since 1988.

2. Why is Westpac leaving the Cook Islands in particular? Has the market been shrinking (people leaving), or is it the high rate of unpaid mortgages, are the returns from fees not enough? What is wrong with the Cook Islands economy that Westpac has to leave?

Our decision to sell our operations in these nations reflects our desire to increase focus on our growth plans in the larger markets of PNG and Fiji, where we have a strong history. These markets support our international aspirations by being closely tied to Asia, Australia and New Zealand and the strong flows of capital, trade, and migration.

3. To restore customer confidence, because honestly I am a little concerned myself, what happens to all our services - our loans, our TDs, our visa debit and visa credit, our bonds, all our land lease documents, what happens to those?

Given Westpac's commitment to increase access to financial services across the Pacific, we have taken our responsibility to help local communities to bank and save seriously. Subject to the parties obtaining necessary statutory, regulatory and third party approvals the sale will be completed and Westpac's operations in the five countries will be owned by BSP.

It is worth noting that Westpac Cook Islands will continue to manage operations as business as usual until the completion of sale, which is expected to be in mid-2015. Westpac will provide a number of services for an additional period, with the aim of minimising any impact upon customers and ensuring a seamless transition for all stakeholders – our employees, our customers and local communities.

4. Why wasn't the sale advertised locally so that local buyers could buy it.

We had identified a wish to focus our growth in the region on our presence in the larger markets of PNG and Fiji, which made us receptive to a compelling offer from BSP; however we had not made any formal decision to sell prior to being approached by BSP.

Our decision was the result of a detailed and disciplined assessment which included an assessment of cultural fit and alignment with strategy. BSP represents a good cultural fit for Westpac Cook Islands.

We performed an assessment on the strategy, vision and operation of BSP and consider, as the largest Pacific originated bank, BSP is well positioned to ensure a sustainable future for Westpac's banking business in Cook Islands.

5. One last important question is will staff be made unemployed?

BSP has announced its intention to employ all local Westpac staff in the five jurisdictions following completion of the acquisition.



Our frontpage model this week's Herald Issue 752 is Paea Pakoti. Check out our website www.ciherald.co.ck. and facebook page: www.facebook.com/ciherald



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\$4.00
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\$2.00
330mls

Noni making a come back!

Agriculture Case Study 2

By Derek Fox

Brad Stafford's a character, you only have to meet him once to work that out; he's also an Aussie, a larger than life enthusiast who admits to calling a 'spade a spade', which can prove problematic sometimes. I can vouch for that.

Brad came to the Cooks in 1998 and if you know him at all it's probably because of his involvement with noni juice.

I put it to Brad that the juice tastes vile, I'm clearly not the first person to say that to him because pretty quickly he comes back with the answer that, 'it's an acquired' taste. He admits to people doing 'a chicken dance' after their first sip at the Titikaveka factory, then says you get used to it after about a week; only a week?

But putting the vile or acquired taste to one side, the juice is now this country's number one agricultural export. This year Brad and his business partner Teava Iro will need 300-tonnes, or 300-thousand-kilos of noni juice to fill their export orders to Japan and China.

Noni trees and the juice extracted from their fruit have been grown and consumed in large parts of the globe for hundreds of years.

Planting noni got away with a hiss and a roar here in 2000, but dropped away as the supply of juice far exceeded the orders waiting to be filled, and although the product has a very long shelf life there was just too much of it to shift. Interest dropped off, and many of the older growers died and the care of their orchards went with them.

Today Brad estimates there are about 5 000 producing noni trees here, mainly on Rarotonga although there are also growers on Atiu and a few on Manihiki too.

He doesn't want to see the supply side grow out of hand again, but can see scope for managed growth, and believes eventually there should be about 15, 000 trees producing Cook Islands noni.

The juice itself is one of those alternative health products

whose fans swear by it, giving it credit for providing relief from conditions as diverse as depression, diabetes and cancer; people with skin conditions or cuts and abrasions have applied the juice and claim dramatic improvement.

The juice is high in antioxidants and is extracted from the ripe fruit at a factory in Titikaveka. The initial process is similar to the early stages of wine making, in fact the machines used are wine presses imported from Italy. After pressing, the juice is pasteurised and pumped into 1,000-litre containers, which is how most of it is sent overseas. They used to have some of the juice bottled at a plant in Auckland, but because they weren't happy with the end product from that plant they've since imported and installed their own bottling plant.

Brad makes a point of telling me that he and Teava have done all of this on their own with their own resources. Not just financing the equipment and processing, but gaining organic certification for the product and the farms where the fruit is grown. They had sought help to get the farms certified, but nothing came of it so they did it themselves. Other people have visited and promised help but Brad is skeptical saying, "World peace could break out first."

One of the things he's really keen on is getting more women involved. He believes they can be better than men at looking after the land and the trees. "We have one woman now who actually goes out and washes her trees, cleaning off any mold that may form on them. And her trees produce beautiful fruit."

As a sign of growing confidence in the industry Brad and Teava have recently increased the price they pay the growers for their fruit from 50 – 70 cents per kilo. Twenty cents a kg more may not sound like much, but it is putting 40% more into the growers' pockets. It's not that they're getting huge returns for the end product overseas, in fact they had to drop their price by 23% to get a foot in the door in China, but



Brad and one of the Italian made 'wine presses' worth \$5000 each

they've had the satisfaction of seeing Cook Islands noni jumping to the number one selling noni online in the Chinese market, and believe that can make up for the lower price with a higher turnover.

Other things can catch you out when you're exporting too, like the devastating tsunami that struck the east coast of Japan some years back. Following that tragedy the bottom fell out of the noni market in Japan; but it's bounced back again now. Remember Brad's 'acquired-taste-and-chicken-dance' comments? Well probably with that in mind, one Japanese importer has just begun blending Cook Islands noni with fruit juice, which I'm picking can only improve matters.

So what does the future look like for noni production in the Cook Islands? Brad says good! He doesn't want to see rapid uncontrolled growth, that would get back to the bad old days with people turning up with fruit demanding he buy it without the markets to support that. He reckons it should be possible to have controlled growth to allow the supply chain to keep up with

the overseas demand.

So how do you get into noni? Well a chat with Brad and Teava would probably be a good start.

There are currently about 40 noni farmers with about 5,000 trees.

Obviously to get started you need some land. You plant the trees and it takes about 18-months before they start bearing fruit. You have to mow the area around the trees to keep the grass down. Once they start fruiting Brad reckons, "You go for a walk and pick the ripe fruit and there's your exercise for the day."

Recognising that many of the growers are older and not so mobile, or are busy and don't have the time to tend the trees, Teava and Brad have a share-cropping arrangement whereby they look after the trees and do the mowing, for a half share in the crop – giving the growers a passive income on today's price of 35c a kilo. A number of farmers have taken up that option.

Then again there's that lady who washes her trees down. She has to be a keeper; Brad and Teava are hoping to find a few more like her.

Significant developments in purse seine fishing

Island member for one year periods. This is to ensure fairness given Skipjack Tuna migrate across the Pacific and each nation must share this resource.

Of the 1,250 fishing days, (a fishing day is a period of 24 hours and applies to each vessel each day in our EEZ so if 12 vessels are fishing for Skipjack in our EEZ, on the first day, it actually counts as 12 days), the breakdown of fishing days is as follows;

400 fishing days – to South Korean company Silla at US\$8,500 per day,

300 fishing days- to the US fleet
250 fishing days -under the US Treaty non-pool

300 fishing days -which are un-allocated

1,250 fishing days total.

Those allocated fishing days must pay half the cost upfront in US dollars and the balance at the start of the financial year.

In total, the Cook Islands expects to collect NZ\$10 million for 2015. (The value of all 1,250 fishing days is NZ\$13.2 million).

Korean company Silla are

expected to place 6 vessels in our EEZ and there is a possibility of the company establishing a base at either Rarotonga or Penrhyn.

While Rarotonga has the infrastructure for supporting vessels, distance is an issue where the costs of downtime and fuel are concerned. Penrhyn has a good port and airport, is closer to the fishing grounds but lacks the required infrastructure to support vessels.

There is the potential for Silla to set up processing, filleting, repackaging and cold storage facilities. The company's fleet also has deep freezing capability for its Yellow Fin catches.

According to Ponia, the Luen Thai Fishing Co still has proposals to establish a frozen fish processing plant in the Cook Islands.

Ponia said other potential changes may accrue increased revenue for government.

For example, reviewing the fishing license application fee. Ponia says that while the number of vessels fishing in our EEZ has decreased, there is room to

increase the fees.

Also, an amendment to legislation to require all vessels fishing in our EEZ to be flagged in the Cook Islands (as NZ has done) would mean fish caught in our waters would count as Cook Islands exports and at the same time increase our GDP.

Should all commercial activities relating to pearl farming, sea bed minerals and fishing be brought under one overall business arm of MMR? It would probably mean disestablishing the Pearl Authority and the Sea Bed Minerals Authority in the process. This is probably a matter a future government may contemplate.

Achieving a level of government participation, investment and intervention in these sectors that is acceptable to the private sector and the general public will take time.

A Minister for Business Development?

The opportunities for maximizing revenue returns across a number of sectors need to be identified and nurtured.

In this regard, government should consider establishing the position of Minister for Business Development. Currently development initiatives are fragmented across a number of sectors and some cohesion and cross cooperation should be established. The BTIB needs to be better resourced in terms of expertise and setting national economic development priorities.

In the agricultural sector, growers associations are recognizing the need to form cooperatives to ensure better returns on investment and achieving revenue sustainability by avoiding duplication and market over-supply. Then there is the issue of integrating outer island produce into the main markets on Rarotonga and Aitutaki. The national effort in agriculture needs to be coordinated and well planned.

Government needs to tap into and encourage greater productivity in the creative industries especially arts and crafts where the market is under supplied.



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Australia's football move turns to gold



Mighty Soccerroos receive their trophy from FIFA President JS Blatter(left) and AFC President (right)

In 2006 when the Australian Football bosses pulled the plug and moved to the Asian Football Conference the sceptics were crying foul, the Soccerroos as the national team is branded had little incentive to stay bound to the Oceania Federation. After repeatedly devouring the teams in Oceania year after year, to lift their standard to another level and to be competitive against the world's best and elite soccer teams, Australia had to get regular games against better teams.

In less than a decade the Soccerroos have steadily made advances which resulted in last weekend's historic victory over Asian giant South Korea to claim bragging rights to the Asian Cup. South Korea has now lost their last four finals. It has taken Australia three attempts to become the Asian champions. 32 matches played in 23 days between Asia's best 16 teams broke Australian attendance records. During the last ten years Australia has made it to two

World Cup Championships.

Played out before over 80,000 spectators at the ANZ stadium in Sydney, the Soccerroos redefined team spirit throughout the game which was privileged to be witnessed by four Cook Islanders including CIFA President Lee Harmon who were honoured to be invited guests by FIFA's World President Sepp Blatter.

Despite a 91st minute equaliser by the higher ranked South Koreans, the Australians never doubted their heart and fitness to overcome them in extra time winning 2 goals to 1. Substitute James Troisi who struck the winner said the green and gold won thanks to their belief. "Team spirit got us through." 22 year old Soccerroo Massimo Luongo who emerged as the star of the tournament also won the Most Valuable Player Award has etched his name into the hearts of millions who were glued to their televisions during the Cup games.

Luongo is likely to become a huge football star in Asia with him likely to become Australia's

poster boy now that \$100,000 per game in the English League 34 year old Tim Cahill is winding down his career. By the end of the game after 120 minutes 80,000 fans were hailing his name. Commenting on the final, Harmon said the atmosphere was electrifying and the game was nerve racking for the Australian fans but also a spectacular advertisement for the game.

Coach Ange Postecoglou is now in the sights of interested countries and prominent club teams across the globe. He entered the tournament with questions over his tenure after winning only two of the Soccerroos previous 12 games.

Broadcasters are heralding the AFC Asian Cup costing \$75 million to stage as a stunning success while the final audience figures are yet to be known it is estimated it had a worldwide TV audience in excess of one billion, 650,000 fans turned out to physically watch the games in Australia with football tourists pumping an estimated \$A23

million into the economy.

Comprehending the Soccerroo's win is staggering and a bench mark for the others in the strong Asian Federation which also includes China, Japan, Malaysia, Iraq and Jordan. With Australia having the Asian Cup in their trophy cabinet and A-League club Western Sydney Wanderers with the Asian Champions League trophy, it's the first time any nation has held both at the same time.

The Australian Football Conference can now look back with the satisfaction their 2006 move has been justified and vindicated. Harmon who has observed the development of the Soccerroos since the move said their elevation to the best in Asia is staggering. "Without a doubt Australia has sent a message to the world. The Soccerroos can only get better because more rated teams will readily play them now which will only increase their competitiveness on a global scale," predicted Harmon.

- George Pitt

Qatar: The Road to Prosperity – Part 2

By George Turia

Qatar is a city with a rich history. Located in the Middle East, it shares its borders with Saudi Arabia to the west and the Persian Gulf to the east. Qatar is currently ranked as one of 20 most peaceful countries in the world. The country is currently focusing all of its efforts on the development and growth of its people. HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamid Al Thani's vision for Qatar is "to ensure a future for their nation where every individual will have a high standard of living by acquiring the best in healthcare, education and other facilities." Sustainable living is one of the key focal areas they are aiming to integrate into their society.

Doha is the capital city of Qatar and is derived from the Arabic word "Ad-Dawha" which translates into "the big tree." Qatar itself has a population of 2 million people with a mixture of ethnic groups although national Qataris only make up ¼ of the population. Its main language is Arabic though English is spoken in general as with the national languages of other cultures.

Qatar prides itself on excellence and quality, not too dissimilar to our own aspirations in the Cook Islands however they have used their sources of wealth to progress their development which is derived mainly from oil and gas. Infrastructure development is Qatar's main focus which supports its vision statement "that people are their greatest asset." Qatar invests in its people through a myriad of activities ensuring there is a benefit for all.

Even daily newspapers and TV constantly highlight what is going on in and around Qatar and there are continuous interviews and media statements made by Government and social organizations confirming this country is very much alive and active in both decision making and planning for its future. The fact that there is free wi-fi, transport and a range of government subsidies provided to everyone, shows Government's commitment to stand by its vision and promises to its people by working in partnership with them, that is the key component

to its success.

There is much to comment on regarding the economic situation of Qatar but from observation, it is clear the Government is very much in control because of its ability to share its resources and knowledge with the private sector and to engage in dialogue with the community and its people on issues of national interest. There is no politics in Qatar as we know it in the western world nor any political parties. The Emir is the ultimate ruler and Authority. He chooses his Cabinet and Ministries are appointed under specific ministerial portfolios and responsibilities. A Supreme Council of Advisers are appointed to provide advice to Cabinet on issues affecting the nation. 7 Municipal Councils are elected to manage the social affairs of Government on behalf of the people.

While this may sound simple, there is a complex process in place and it is admirable that Qatar has researched and sought external advice as to its future planning and developed its own strategic approaches with the resources it has at its disposal. This all sounds good but in any society, there are always fiscal risks and these are compounded by activities considered minute initially but left unattended, escalate to become one of national concern.

One example causing negative concern and currently becoming a national issue, is the number of foreign drivers in Qatar especially those being employed driving public transport. Schools have complained not so much because of racial components but more so because of the language difficulties and cross cultural misunderstandings between drivers and school children not being dropped off at appropriate stops or drivers failing to understand and respond to their requests.

It was certainly an issue experienced by the Media Team during their stay as they relied heavily on bus transportation. The Team had difficulty communicating with some of the drivers who don't understand English and had to constantly repeat commands which was quite frustrating. The same sentiments for the people of Qatar are shared because many

of these foreign drivers mainly from the east, often lack the skills required to communicate effectively with people. Many of them have come from countries experiencing conflicts of sorts and have come to Qatar which is considered a safe and peaceful nation amongst the Arab Emirates, as a means of escape from a life of entrapment and poverty within their own countries.

Expatriate workers are a vital cog to the ongoing development of Qatar. Employment opportunities are there especially in the infrastructure sectors where you see thousands upon thousands of people from the eastern nations doing the remedial jobs like digging, machine operators and basic labour intensive duties. Filipinos and others of Asian origin tend to work in the service industries and other like fields of employment.

Interesting enough, although Qataris only make up a quarter of the workforce, they remain in charge of the economy and state of affairs activities which is why there is progress and a desire to achieve. Qatar places an enormous amount of effort to ensure its people get nothing but the best support available to upskill and strive for education excellence and that they remain in control in key strategic positions.

Qatar has attracted global interest in offering employment in various sector areas and what is obvious is the level of competitiveness for top positions in the workforce as well as basic grade positions within the marketplace. It is a country which relies on nothing but the best technology has to offer and they are committed to ensuring that their own people are trained to deliver such services.

Just looking at the number of academics represented in Cabinet and among key Government positions as well as in the private sector, you gain an appreciation of the incredible talent available and the desire to assist with the country's development objectives amongst the Qatari people. It is understood many of the world's leading education, medical and sports experts are coming to Qatar to offer their services or to work because of

the fabulous surroundings and facilities provided in the work environment.

It is considered a safe and secure country where security is tight and the Muslim boundaries of expectations and obligations by foreigners is acknowledged and respected by most. Although crime statistics were not available, one could sense a defensive response when asked how is the crime situation in Qatar. Muslim law applies and it is clear what you can and can't do.

All of this augers well for a country determined and destined to be the best it can be and to provide nothing but the best it can offer. This is evident by what is seen today with the incredible developments taking place in Qatar and the continuous dialogue amongst the Arab nations and other global partners worldwide on critical issues relating to economic sustainability, climate change and social advancement. This can be contributed to the leadership and vision of the Emir who has commanded deep respect amongst his people and colleagues from the United Arab world for the way he has committed and used the countries resources to benefit his people.

This attribute is something that is missing in our part of the region. Political interventions and party politics do not help development per se and only seek to create mistrust and uncertainty amongst a country already divided along political and traditional lines. Looking at Qatar as an overview, the Cook Islands could certainly learn a lot from what they are doing. Potentially, it has the resources and the ability to advance this process forward especially where the manganese nodules are concerned but what is abundantly lacking is the vision, leadership and commitment from those in positions of authority to rise above the personalities and look at what is best for our people, the people of the Cook Islands.

Qatar has set its road map to prosperity and there is no doubting that with current trends, they will achieve it by 2030, the question we should be asking ourselves in the Cook Islands is; where are we today and what is our vision for tomorrow? Only time can tell.

Time to recognize our people's abilities



As the nation approaches 50 years of self-government, the Public Services Commissioner Russell Thomas has noted the "necessity for Government and the private sector to start recognising the competencies and capabilities of our own people which negates the need to go offshore."

Mr Thomas was speaking at a celebration marking the graduation of 16 Cook Islanders from the Graduate Certificate of Business (Project Management), on Thursday the 26th January at Manuia Beach Resort.

The course, offered by AUT University Business School (Executive Education) in partnership with the University

of the South Pacific Cook Islands Campus, comprised four specialist papers delivered in-country over two years.

The graduates came from a range of public and private sector areas, including media production, tourism, Infrastructure Cook Islands, the office of the Ombudsman, and the Office of the Prime Minister, and included students based on Mangaia and Mitiaro. They were joined by their partners for the celebration.

Master of Ceremonies Tevai Matapo, OBE, Chair of the USP Cook Islands Advisory Committee told assembled guests that the partnership between AUT and USP had provided an opportunity

to improve the capacity of the country, and continued the development of a new generation of experts.

For AUT Business School, the head of International Business, Associate Professor Simon Mowatt congratulated the graduates on joining the total of 51 Cook Islands students who have now completed the course. He said this significantly increased the project management capacity of the Cook Islands. "During the courses, students have built on their experience and passion for their work, by acquiring competency in internationally recognised project management processes. These will help equip them for increasingly complex

international projects such as the Te Mato Vai water project." Mowatt said he was proud of his students achievements in applying their knowledge to diverse projects including water tank replacements, harbour development and electrical substation renewal.

Responding for the students Paul Maoate, Acting Director of Civil Works, Infrastructure Cook Islands, said that the course had given them more confidence working with overseas partners.

The next offer of the paper has already begun. Applicants wishing to join the next papers offered in November 2015 and January 2016 should contact USP Cook Islands for registration details. -Release





Community Health Services – Public Health Department
PO Box: 109: Phone: 29110. Fax: 29100

03.02.2015

Syndromic Surveillance, Cook Islands.

January 2015 Update

Table 1: Cumulative Number of cases reported.

Syndrome	Week 5, ending 1 st February 2015	Weeks 1 – 5 2015
Acute Fever & rash (AFR)	0	0
Influenza like illness (ILI)	1	3
Diarhoea(DIA)	3	13
Prolonged Fever(PF)	1	1
Dengue like illness(DLI)	10	34
Ciguatera	0	0

Remarks: Increase of Dengue-Like Illness cases.

Note: **7 confirmed Chikungunya cases** from November 2014 to January 2015. **Three (3)** cases out of the 7 were locally transmitted with no travel history. This marks the beginning of a **Chikungunya outbreak**. No confirmed cases in Te Pa Enua.

-Public Health continues with peri-focal insecticide spraying and larvacides.

- Keep your yards and homes free of mosquito breeding places. Clear overgrown vegetations around the home. Don't give mosquitoes a place to breed and rest! Protect yourself from mosquito bites particularly during peak hours, around sunrise and sunset.

- **Chikungunya:** *Chikungunya is a viral disease spread by aedes mosquitoes. The virus is transmitted from human to human by the bite of infected mosquitoes (day biting). Onset of illness usually occurs between 3 to 7 days. It causes fever and severe joint pain. Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash. The disease shares some clinical signs with dengue. There is no cure for the disease. Treatment is focused on relieving the symptoms. Most patients recover fully, but in some cases joint pain may persist for months or even years. Prevention and control relies heavily on reducing mosquito breeding and resting habitats. People with or suspected to have chikungunya or dengue should protect themselves from further mosquito exposure during the first week of illness to reduce the risk of further transmission. Source: WHO Chikungunya Fact Sheet.*

Travel Advice and Awareness

Take extra precautions if travelling to countries highlighted below.

* **American Samoa, Samoa, New Caledonia, Tokelau = Chikungunya outbreak**

* **French Polynesia (Tahiti) = Chikungunya and Dengue outbreak**

* **Fiji, Northern division = Dengue outbreak**

Avoid being bitten by day mosquitoes. Apply mosquito repellents on exposed skin. People at increased risk for severe disease should consider not travelling to these countries.

* **West Africa Countries (Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia) = Ebola outbreak.**

Practice strict hand washing routines or use alcohol rub throughout the day. Avoid direct contact with anyone who is displaying the symptoms of Ebola or unknown illness. Avoid contact with any objects that could have been contaminated with bodily fluids.

Symptoms: Fever, and one or more of the following; diarrhoea, headache, joint muscular pains, vomiting, weakness, rash and unexplained bleeding.

Seek prompt medical attention if you have Ebola symptoms.

Kura Tauī'anga Reva

January Issue # 24 Climate Change Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister

Welcome to the new Year

Shell cleaning in Manihiki- by Tina Weir

Pinctada margaritifera, the black-lipped pearl oyster, occurs naturally in the lagoon of Manihiki Atoll, Cook Islands where it is cultivated to produce lucrative black pearls. At one time the black pearl was the top export in the Cook Islands, worth an estimated 18 million dollars annually. However, following a devastating vibrio spp. outbreak in 2000 and declining global prices, the Cook Islands black pearl industry drastically declined and has not since recovered.

As part of an EU Global Climate Change project to support and develop sustainable livelihoods on the remote northern atolls, the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) is partnering with local farmers to introduce and trial new techniques and farm management practices to improve the quality and profitability of pearls produced in Manihiki. This report presents findings from a preliminary study investigating the ideal timing and effectiveness of preventatively cleaning shells in-water to minimize bio-fouling.

Growth performance is an ideal indicator for *P. margaritifera* because it represents the integrated response of the physiological activity, and thus overall health, of the entire oyster. Additionally it has been shown that shell growth is strongly correlated with deposition of nacre on implanted nucleus (Coeroli & Mizuno, 1985), and thus with pearl quality (Blay, C. et al, 2014). This study demonstrates that bio-fouling has a strong influence on growth performance of *P. margaritifera* in the Manihiki lagoon, and as such likely on pearl quality as well.

Findings and conclusion

We found that in-water cleaning using a wire brush caused a significant increase in average shell size within a period of just 6 months. Though there were

no significant differences in average shell size between the cleaning treatments, we recommend against using the in-water cleaning technique after periods greater than 8 weeks due to the increased waste load generated from the higher level of fouling accumulated in the additional 4 weeks (as evidenced by the doubling in time required to clean the shells).

The 8 week cleaning interval appears ideal – with shells gaining maximum health benefits whilst keeping labour requirements and waste material to a minimum. By performing the extra work to maintain shells in an un-fouled state farmers will improve pearl quality, oyster health, reduce the amount of stress on oysters at seeding time and also minimize the amount of floats and resources required to run their farms in the long-term.



Diver using a wire brush to clean a *P. Margaritifera* shell (Photo by Tina Weir 2014)

GIZ – SRIC CC Partnership



Chief of Staff, Elizabeth Wright-Koteka signing the agreement on behalf of Cook Islands 6 Jan 2015 (Photo by Ana Tiraā)

Kura Tauī'anga Reva

GIZ- which stands for German Society for International Cooperation has approved a EURO400,000.000 funding in partnership with Strengthening the Resilience of Island Communities to Climate Change (SRIC CC) to strengthen water infrastructure in the Northern Group islands of Rakahanga, Manihiki, Nassau, Pukapuka and Penryhn. The project aims to repair community water tanks to harvest and store rainwater which will provide additional water capacity on each of these islands. The scoping exercise was carried out on the islands of Pukapuka and Penryhn this month with Manihiki and Rakahanga early in February.

50 days for 50 years cycle/walk initiative



Team meeting on 7Jan 2015 (Photo by Ana Tiraa)

Climate Change Cook Islands has embraced the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the nation by launching into the 50 days 50 years walk/cycle initiative. Other government agencies who have joined this initiative are the Ministry of Education, Health, National Environment Services, 50th Anniversary Coordination with NGOs and private sector Te Ipukarea Society, Ride Rarotonga, Cook Islands Cycling Federation and Storytellers Eco Cycle Tours. The initiative is to encourage the public to make a commitment to cycle or walk to work or school for fifty days within 200 days to the 50th Anniversary, 'there are multiple benefits to the individual and also to the nation' says Ana Tiraa, Director of Climate Change Cook Islands. "This will encourage our people to adopt a healthy lifestyle, lose weight and save on petrol money whilst at the same time reducing our green house gas emission into the atmosphere to which Cook Islands is the highest emitter in the Pacific per capita". There are great prizes to be won on achieving milestones and registration forms can be obtained from Climate Change Cook Islands at the Office of the Prime Minister.

Way to Paris

The first meeting of our preparations for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held on Tuesday 27 Jan. This is one of many more meetings as we stratify our position on the world fora of climate change. It was noted that we ought to continue advocating on what we have always been following at these meetings. That is, focus on adaptation, finance and loss & damage. However, the upcoming meeting in Paris at the end of this year is a very important one, as this will endorse text in the new climate change agreement pre 2020. Hence, we want to ensure that our views are reflected in the agreement like every other party that is signatory to the Convention.



UNFCCC meeting Tues 27 Jan 2015 (Photo by Celine Dyer)

Rauti Para in Pukapuka

Our Rauti Para team consisting of Dr Teina Rongo, Celine Dyer from Climate Change and Mitchell Tutangata from ICT all from the Office of the Prime Minister embarked on the island of Pukapuka on Monday 19 January to deliver the Rauti Para project. This phase of the project is fully funded by SRIC CC of the Adaptation Fund with implementing partners, Climate Change Cook Islands, ICT Office of the Prime Minister, SPC EU GCCA PSIS and Rauti Para Kumiti.

Pukapuka is the first island in the Northern Cooks to receive the tablet training that was delivered last year in the Southern Cook Islands. However, due to transport arrangements the team was only able to spend two days on the island.

Being a remote and isolated island in terms of both transport and distance from the main Cook group, we took advantage of the two days to do as much as possible and so decided to run an introductory tablet class rather than a full training.

Kura Tauī'anga Reva



Looking towards Pukapuka from Motu Ko 19 Jan (Photo by Celine Dyer)

Of the two days on Pukapuka we conducted video interviews, climate change awareness presentation and introductory tablet training, to which fifty four people registered their names for tablet training on Pukapuka.



People on Pukapuka having a go at the tablets 20 Jan (Photo by Celine Dyer)

(A full report can be viewed on the climate change facebook page).

Penryhn Rauti Para project



Tetautua village in Penryhn 22 Jan 2015 (Photo by Celine Dyer)

From Pukapuka the team flew across to Penryhn to deliver the same Rauti Para program. Since, Tetautua village is on the other side of the lagoon, one session of the tablet introductory was held on Omoka village to which the children came out and made use of the tablets.



Children of Omoka, Penryhn making use of the tablets 21 Jan 2015 (Photo by Celine Dyer)



Sea water washing over the main road of Omoka 23 Jan (Photo by Mitchell Tutangata)

TE REO MĀORI

Tātā'ia e Ruterā Taripo



Tēta'i Au Kōrero Pakari ā tō tātou `Ui-Tūpuna

Some Wise Sayings of our Ancestors

Kia Orāna, tēia `akaou tēta'i au Kōrero Pakari tei vai`o `ia mai e tō tātou pā-metua kia vai mā`eu`eu `ua nā tātou i te tā`anga`anga `anga ma te inangaro `ē pērā katoa kia parau `T`T`ē te vanavana i te tuatua i tō tātou Reo mānea, te reo o tō tātou tupuna-vaine. No reira, tautā, tautā, tautā `uātu rāi. Pēnei tēnā tei ia koe. E mānganui `uātu rāi te au Kōrero Pakari, te au Tuatua ta`ito `ē te au mānakonako`anga `o`onu ā tō tātou `Ui-tupuna te kā riro `ei tauturu i tō tātou au `akakoro`anga `ē te kaveinga tau tā tātou e umuumu nei. Te vaī ra, te vaī ra `ē te vaī ra kia māro`iro`i tātou i te kimi makitoro atu. Kia Upokotū `uātu rāi.

Kia mau te Selenga, Kia mau te napenga

Hold on to your identity, hold on to your heritage

Me mawutu, ka tungakilu Me waletiko ka wakayapi

Me kite koe i toou kāpua`anga e toa koe

Kia `aite taku ki te pē`au ō te tavake, i te akatika`anga i tō tātou rere`anga ki Avaiki

Let us be like the wings of the white tropic bird coordinating our flight home.

[Let us be in harmony]

Kōkiri kai ate

A small fish which eats its own liver

A person who is always angry and who does not try to get rid of it

Hot temper

Kia pupuru ō vaevae, kia mokorā ō kakī

Your legs like the *pupuru* and your neck like the ducks

Be wise, be steady and cool/ Stand firmly and be alert

A te kerearako `ua koe

You are like a kerearako. You are a big talker

A person who makes a lot of noise

Akara ka ve`u te punā vai

Be careful or the clear pool might become dirty

Be careful that your cleverness does not turn into foolishness

Aue te kakara i angi mai mei silo, kua topa kina tapatapa o te ao nei Kua uiui te no`o o te henua E oue...eaha teia?

`Ānau`ia i te piriau matangi, aaki te tōrea i tāna putarananga

Performed like their mighty mother who laboured to bring one to this world

Tāupeupe te `uru... – e A-Tangaroa

Display thy glorious feathers – oh A-Tangaroa

`E rā au te `opu atū ra, `e rā koe te `iti māi ra

I am the setting sun, you are the rising sun

An older person advising a young person to learn as much as he can, the future is in his hands.

Tātakitaki mai ana i to `ina ki te `Are Karioi ei kai-monomono no tō`ou tuātau

How to be successful in life

Part 1

By Senior Pastor John Tangi

I have never come across anyone who wants to fail in life. It is human nature that we want to succeed in life – in our jobs; schooling of our children; to have a successful family; and so on. In this Article of Encouragement I am going to present some lessons from the story of King Hezekiah in the Old Testament on “HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE” The main Bible reference is in II King 18v.1-8.

When Hezekiah became King of Judah, one of the first things he did was to repair and re-open the temple which has been neglected and polluted through idol worship by the people during the reign of his father King Ahaz. King Hezekiah was a ‘God fearing’ person. But his father was a weak King who allowed the people to do idol worshipping. When King Hezekiah did this reform in Jerusalem he ordered the destruction of idols. Hezekiah also noticed that the people were not sincere in their fear of God or doing what is right before God. People had turned away from God. Hezekiah’s mission was to redirect the people back to God. This is a picture of the mission of Jesus Christ in this world, to bring us back to God and in order for us to have ‘eternal life’.

Hezekiah showed us that he has full confidence in God. We too should have confidence in God. In v.5 it reads “He trusted in the Lord God of Israel...”

The first point to note is that, King Hezekiah TRUSTED GOD. When Hezekiah was a young boy I believe God was preparing him. He could see that the way his father King Ahaz was ruling Judah was not right in the sight of God. When he was 25 years old Hezekiah became King of Judah, and he started to order

the destruction of idols, and repaired the temple, cleansing it to become a place of worshipping God. Ecclesiastes 3v.1 & v.3 reads “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven”... “A time to break down, and a time to build up.” Hezekiah was breaking down the things of Satan and building up the things of God. I believe this is the time to break down the negative things that Satan has been gradually developing into our lives and to build up the righteousness of God, the positive things in our lives. Nothing is impossible when we put our trust in God. Jesus said in Mark 10v.27 “With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible.” Psalm 2v.12 reads “Blessed are those who put their trust in Him.” If we are to succeed in life we need to TRUST GOD.

The second point is found in the first part of v.6 which reads “For he was faithful to the Lord and never disobeyed Him...” The key word here is “faithful”. Although many people were worshipping idols and doing things not right in the sight of God, including his father the King before him, Hezekiah held onto his belief and was FAITHFUL to God. His faithfulness was such that nothing could separate him from the God he believed in. Psalm 31v.23 says “..for the Lord preserves the faithful..” Psalm 101v.6 says “My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land..” To illustrate God’s attitude towards those who are faithful to Him, Jesus spoke the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25v.23 Jesus said “Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” Jesus spoke the word

Encouragement Column

With Senior Pastor John Tangi



faithful twice to indicate how ‘important faithfulness is to God.

I will continue with Part 2 of this article next week.

God bless – te Atua te aroa.

So it's a new school year!

By Teherenui Koteka

School started this week! For most of you out there this was probably a dreaded thought that you had been avoiding for the past few days. For the latter, this week is one you have been eagerly awaiting for awhile. No matter what your feelings are toward the beginning of the new school year we all have to knuckle down and face the fact that it has arrived. With the television commercials blasting back to school specials the younger members of my family have been overly eager to spend their pocket money on the newest stationary and the coolest school bag. And who can blame them when I was their age going back to school meant that I got to checkout who had the best pencil case and who had the school bag with the most pockets.

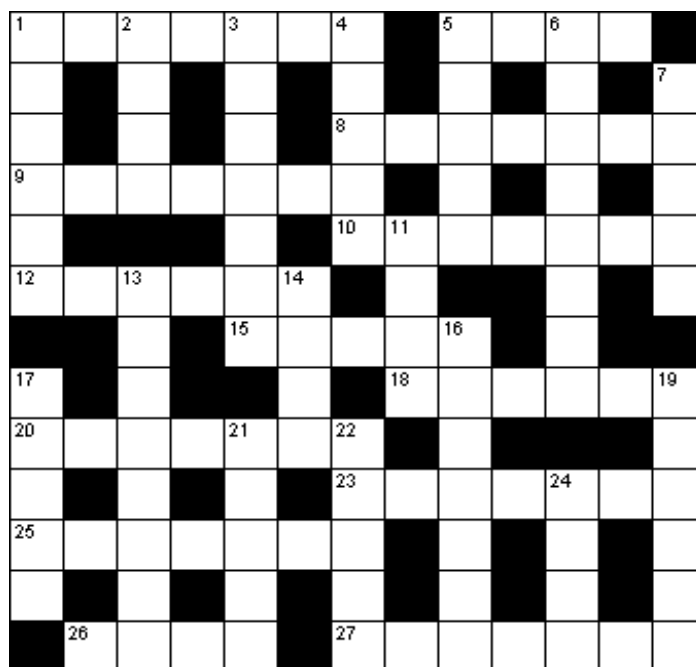
Back to school meant fun quizzes and the teacher reading a cool new book every week. However nowadays a new school year means putting in the mental preparation required to apply yourself in every aspect of your school work for the remainder of the school year. You no longer have time to check out everyone else's cool new knick knacks and gadgets. You have to focus the majority of your energy and thoughts on passing NCEA. The majority of us who are sitting NCEA this year will no doubt have

entered the school gates aiming for endorsements and grades high enough to be recognized by a couple of good universities. Some of us began this year merely hoping to pass. The next four terms will test how much we really want to accomplish the goals we have set.

But not everything about starting a new school year has to be so serious. Even those at NCEA get to have fun at school. School is where you get to goof around with your friends. Beginning a new year at school means you get to see all your friends who went away on holiday. It also means you get to make new friends. I've heard several people say that they couldn't wait for school to start because they miss the canteen food, a funny reason for wanting school to begin, but a reason none the less. For me, I look forward to school beginning because I actually enjoy having the intellectual exercise.

The beginning of a school year brings a vast array of feelings. We may not always like the thought of beginning a new school year but most of us end up longing for it eventually. The start of a new school year brings a great deal of responsibility, but it also guarantees a great deal of fun as well. No matter what this new school year brings at least we always know that the upcoming year will be entertaining.

CROSSWORD



Across

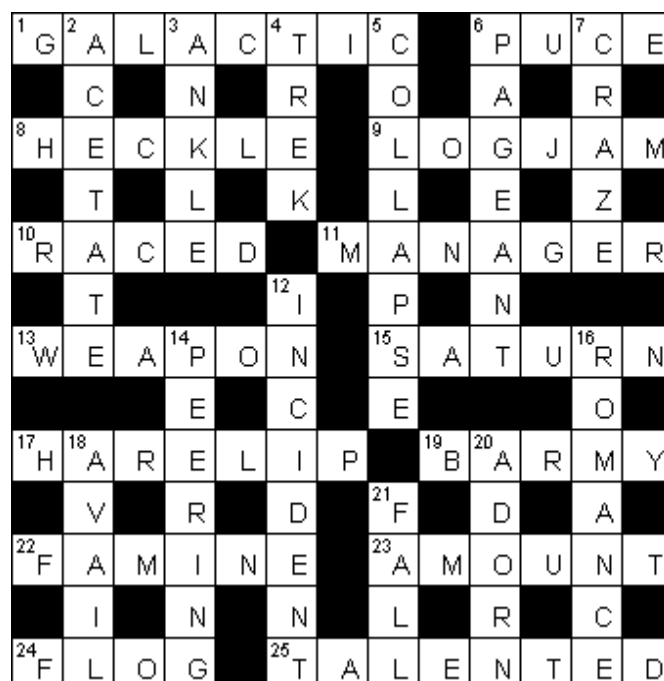
1. Rooms
5. Gravitates
8. At the front
9. Final course
10. Moneylender
12. Agreement
15. Prophets
18. Fired from a cartridge
20. Packages
23. Reveal
25. Overhead interior surface
26. Stains
27. High temperature

2. Puts on

3. Six legged creatures
4. Uses a sieve
5. Covered with soot
6. Belonging to a nation
7. Scale
11. Aromatic plant
13. Infinite time
14. Shout
16. Prosper
17. Piquant
19. Economy
21. Prepares for publication
22. Sucrose
24. Objectionable

Down

1. Outlaw



It has been revealed that Cabinet Ministers have signed up to do certificate courses offered by AUT (Absolutely Useless Topics). The PM is to do "Brain exercises for the long distance traveler." The DPM will study, "The long term effects of umu food on obese civil servants." Glassie will undertake, "Organic crops for the prevention of piles brought on by long meetings in a foreign country." Brown will study, "New maths for the beginner." Kiriau will study, "Jack and the beanstalk-the fate of the cow." Ioane will do, "How to emulate Bishop."



Like good red wine, the longer it ages the better it gets! As was discovered at the recent Demo pow wow called on the reservation to smoke the peace pipe and set a date for the attack on the Fort. Bottles full of younger wine clinked loudly offering their vintage for all but, when it mattered, the old vintage "Villa Ngamau" popped open to declare the date of the next competition! March 31st!



In nearby Samoa and throughout Arab nations, all the top jobs in government are filled with locals. But not so in the trend bucking Cook Islands! As ongoing proof the Cook Islands is a replica of the Bermuda Triangle, all common sense and logic disappears into a black hole! Not only does the Cook Islands import tens of millions of dollars of goods from overseas, it also imports hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of ex-pats from overseas!



Oh dear chooks! Progress with Te Mato Vai is slowing to Biblically trickle proportions! Not only is the political impasse/Mexican/Pharaoh-Moses standoff not helping, but now government is having a tad difficult moment convincing landowners to grant access to their land! Oh woe! Like the seven plagues

in the Book of Revelations, the first woe, "slothfulness" is past and the next, "access denial" awaits. Now Nia Moses is telling Grant Ramses II, "Let go of my land!"



Government's donor buddies will turn up next week for their R&R only to be met by ex-pats! After all it's ex-pats who head the donor funds set up. The ADB even has an ex-pat, ex NZ Warehouse, HR Manager looking after its affairs in the Cooks. The donor buddies will no doubt hear what a wonderful job the government is doing in screwing more taxes out of the defenseless elderly and the downtrodden. Overseas right wing governments would absolutely love the Cook Islands for its continued absence of an unemployment benefit for the idle.



Recent pronouncements by the PM about cutting back on travel costs met by the Civil List appears to have fallen on deaf ears. The PM himself must be deaf because no sooner was the statement delivered, when he scurried to the airport, got on the big bird and flew out to Kiwiland! His Deputy must have been asleep in Cabinet because he's now headed north by special air charter costing nearly \$40,000 all up!



Is the Kiwi government a bunch of stark

raving mad lunatics? Their \$15 million (peanuts) grant towards the big water project, was on condition our government introduce "user pays." Our government, being asleep at the time accepted this arrangement without any consultation with the people who are going to have to pay. Where was the public announcement of this condition imposed by the Kiwis? Talk about lack of transparency and holding a nation to "ransom." China seems to have no "strings" attached to their end of the deal. It is the Kiwi lot that are pulling the strings!



Local, amateur, wannabe economist mutters that the PNG money men stand to reap a tidy windfall out of their purchase of an Aussie bank! Kiwis make up most of the visitors and those with no affiliation to any of the Aussie banks, are charged a \$7 fee for transactions. With the PNG bankers in town, those Kiwi visitors with Westie accounts will now be hammered with transaction fees. Kiwi visitors with ties to the Westie bank back home will now either arrive with and carry oodles of cash about to save on transaction fees or spend less in retail outlets if using their bank cards. All this is welcomed by the petty thief club who are licking their lips at the prospect of

more tourist cash lying about.



Needing \$13,000 to attend singing lessons in the southern reaches of the land of the long white cloud, our first genuine Opera contender raised \$9,000 from the radio-thon last Friday. A great result no thanks to an education funding system which does not recognize the "arts" as a legitimate expense item! Philistines! When our singer tours the world later as one of the "greats" lets see if government comes crawling and groveling for some recognition for aiding a great talent! Fat chance!



Already two phases of the moon into the New Year and the \$74,000 man with \$500,000 in his pocket for the 50th bash is yet to spend a penny! There's a giant moth in his pocket with a firm grip on the lolly!

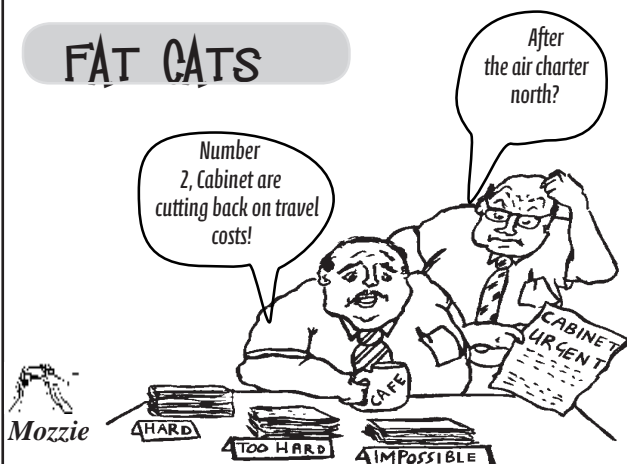


Interesting to gawk at old Kiwi film footage and hear the speech mumbled by the dapper NZ Prime Minister Kiwi Keith Holyoake in September 1965 when the Kiwiland mob ducked over for the aftermath of the first elections which included some nibbles and dancing. The blow hard said quite clearly, in his usual toffee nosed, Pommie accented, waffling way, "You are all NZ citizens, entitled to all the entitlements of a NZ citizen!" Oh yeah? Include the NZ pension does it? Interesting to see how latter day NZ politicians have shoved us aside into what they call the "Realm of NZ" paddock!



Seems the report of the Chinese toys being at Heta & Co out west, was not accurate! The toys were nowhere near there! It appears there were some technical problems interpreting the taro jungle tom toms!

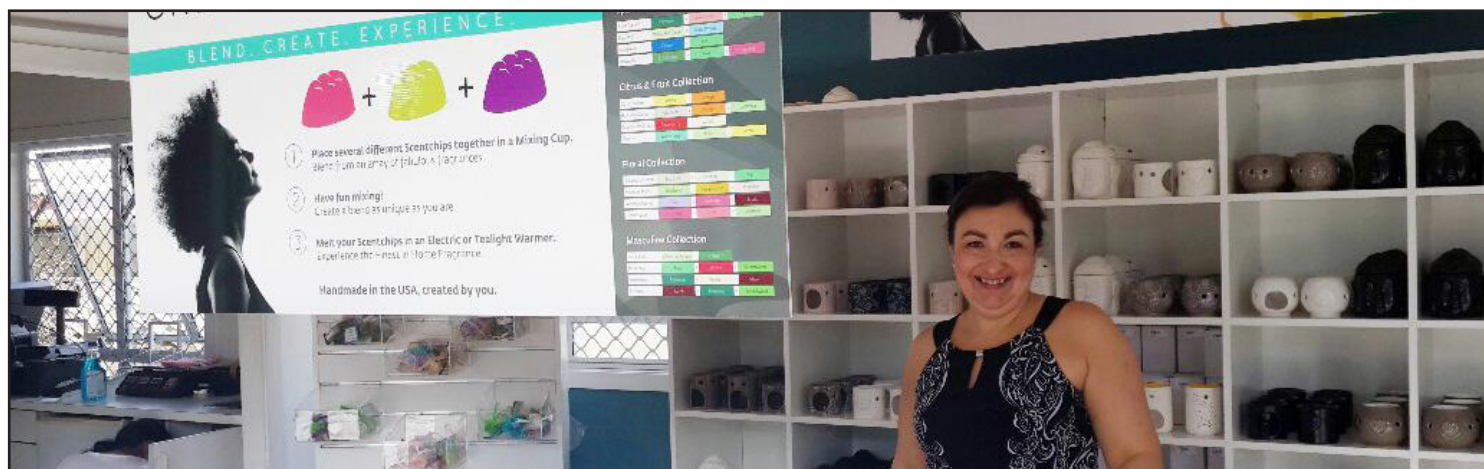
FAT CATS



COCONUT ROUNDTABLE



The Goodlife arrives



By Haley-Rose McNabb

The Goodlife is a store that has only been running for a few months now and is located next to id.ck fashion selling amazing products that are great for your health and well being. The Goodlife has an ideal product that is called scent chips. Allowing customers to be as funky and creative as they want, The Goodlife lets you mix any of the many smelling scent chips together and create your very own fragrance or on

the other hand but the already mixed ones. The scent chips can be used for freshening cars, houses, rooms and wherever you may please. Tatiana Burns the owner of The Goodlife says that she wanted to have a fun product that would appeal to human senses and the environment. As well as the scent chips, The Goodlife also has a wide range of 100% natural and organic products under the brand name of Dr.

Organics, which are imported all the way from the U.K. These organic products range from multivitamins, external body care and many types of oils such as Tea Tree, Lavender, Moroccan argon, Virgin Coconut and Aloe Vera. The Goodlife is very popular and has already been sold out of something's with its affordable prices of the 100% natural and organic products that help you achieve that perfection skin.

News Briefs *By TeRiu Woonton*

Cook Islands student awarded \$20,000 scholarship

Fifteen year old, year 12 student of One Tree Hill College in Auckland, Rahui Mosby of Cook Islands connection through her mother's side who is from Aitutaki, received an endorsement with excellence overall in NCEA Level 2 and in English, mathematics, and physics. Course endorsements provides recognition for students who perform exceptionally well in individual courses. Rose Maurangi, Rahu's aunty, visited Radio Cook Islands this morning, proud to share her niece's achievement, saying she attended Avarua School for 2 years before going to One Tree Hill and it was just last year, she was here, under her aunties wing. Mosby's story, was published in an edition of last month's New Zealand Herald, and says the One Tree Hill Principal said Rahui, an outstanding young lady who has a very bright future ahead of her, deserved all her success. Rahui, who will be her schools Deputy Head Girl this year, plans to study engineering and law at University, but thinks she will ultimately pursue engineering as a course. Mosby has received a \$20,000 scholarship to which-ever university she wishes to attend and Ministry of Education NZ have also paid for her fare to come back to Rarotonga this year for a holiday. Next up for the 15 year old is to prepare a speech, to which she will conduct for ANZAC day in Wellington in April.

Ura Fitness going live

For the first time ever, Topshape will be hosting their Ura Fitness Class LIVE! The class will take place on Friday 13th Feb at 4pm at Staircase Restaurant and Bar. The WESTside band "Yes Please" made up of well known drummers and musicians, Katu, Tiko, Pania and Tupou will be serenading the audience with spectacular live drums. Participants are asked to follow the theme and wear red. As part of the package, and a belated xmas and new year gathering for the ura ura ladies, the bar will be open with happy hour prices and complimentary bar snacks. Entry to next Fridays ura fitness event is \$10.

14 teams enter Te Maeva Nui

The Te Maeva Nui celebrations this year are set to take place from the 23rd of July to the 07th August, with 14 teams set to compete; 5 from the Northern Group, 5 from the Southern Group and 4 from Rarotonga. This year's special theme is 'Te Korona O Toku Matakeinanga' – 'A Crown of my Community'. The theme encourages us to reflect upon monumental events that have occurred throughout the eras and how it has impacted on our culture, tribes and communities. The purpose of the theme is identify and celebrate something considered to be a crowning glory of our nation, or something special to our traditional communities. This year, Ministry of Culture will be selling sets of souvenir posters, which displays past Te Maeva Nui performances, and past significant events, for the public to purchase, a cost for the posters has not yet been confirmed.

TENDER



**INFRASTRUCTURE
COOK ISLANDS**
Te Tango Angaanga o te Kuki Airani



**SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF ATIU CRUSHER
PLANT CONTRACT NO. C15/01**

Infrastructure Cook Islands (ICI) on behalf of Atiu Island Government seeks tender proposals from Contractors for the Supply and Installation of Atiu Crusher Plant, Cook Islands.

A copy of the Tender Document including specifications can be collected during work hours from ICI office in Arorangi. A non-refundable deposit of NZ\$200 will be required before the tender document is issued.

Tenders close at 3pm on Monday, 16th February 2015, and must be submitted to the ICI Office in Arorangi and in accordance with the specific requirements of the Tender Document. Tenders must be submitted in hard copy format in two (2) separate envelopes marked accordingly, Envelope 1 or 2, labelled "CONFIDENTIAL" and addressed to:

The Secretary Infrastructure Cook Islands Arorangi
Cook Islands

and subsequent markings below to include the following:
Tenderers name and address, contact person and details;
Contract number and title; and Closing time and date.

All Enquiries to be directed to: Solomona Solomona
Contact Officer

Email: solomona.solomona@ici.gov.ck

Phone: +682 20321

VACANCY



VACANCY – COMMERCIAL MANAGER

This is a Senior Professional position, reporting to the CEO. The Commercial Manager will be responsible for:

- Overseeing TAU's commercial needs, manage corporate associations, and recognise business opportunities.
- Provide strategic commercial management of TAU's transition to 100% renewable energy, including management of power purchase agreements, renewable energy CapEx and financing.
- Utilizing attained knowledge of business law and accounting practices to verify, oversee and approve commercial agreements and documentation.
- Must have previous corporate management experience, or have been in charge of strategic planning, or headed departments that handle corporate relationships.

A full job description can be uplifted from the office of Te Aponga Uira, P.O. Box 112, Rarotonga, Cook Islands or by contacting Bettina Akania on (682) 20054 or email bakania@electricity.co.ck.

Applications close 3:00 p.m. Monday, 9th February 2015

PUBLIC NOTICE

Cook Islands Jobs

The Cook Island's premier Jobs Website
www.cookislandsjobs.com

This week's top vacancies available on Cook Islands Jobs as at 03/02/15

- **Demi Chef – Edgewater Resort (Rarotonga)**
- **Store Manager – idCK (Rarotonga)**
- **Compliance Officer- Bank of the Cook Islands (Rarotonga)**
- **Housemaid – Edgewater (Rarotonga)**

To view full job descriptions and to apply for any of these roles, please visit www.cookislandsjobs.com today.



Japan
Fund for
Poverty
Reduction

WELFARE DATABASE

The Ministry of Internal Affairs through the ADB-JFPR project seeks the service of an IT Consultant.

Applications are invited for a suitable qualified person in Information Programming to revise and develop the current Welfare database to enable the division to administer the Cook Islands Welfare Payments and provide accurate information to its stakeholders.

The successful applicant must have a broad experience with programming and designing of database. To provide a similar operational project that's been completed.

Written applications including CV should be addressed to the Secretary of Ministry of Internal Affairs, PO Box 98, Tupapa, Rarotonga or email eva.mapu@cookislands.gov.ck or ngatuaiane.maui@cookislands.gov.ck for more information

Applications close 4pm, Monday 09th February 2015.

VACNCIES



Business Trade Investment Board
Cook Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Business Trade and Investment Board advises that the selling of food through outlets or directly to the public is an activity reserved only for Cook Islanders. Non Cook Islanders are prohibited from carrying on business by selling food unless if approved by the BTIB Board. For enquiries contact the Monitoring & Compliance Officer on 24 - 296 or email charlie.rani@cookislands.gov.ck

EAT LESS MOVE MORE

HEART FOUNDATION

Avatea and Nikao School ECE students were excited



Avatea and Nikao School ECE students were excited to be reunited with school friends and back in class as they completed their first day of term one on Monday. A mere stone's throw from the former school grounds, students are now located in the Pokoinu Hall which has undergone some minor refurbishment in readiness for the children. Apii Nikao ECE teacher, Mary Tafale, was pleased to see so many 3 and 4 year old students return to class.

A tour of the Pokoinu Hall premises showed students were comfortably accommodated in the new learning area with the final decorating touch and class equipment installed over the weekend. The new school grounds host a spacious indoor area for students' learning with a covered outdoor lunch bay and a large fenced play area that was immediately put to full use by the excited students

"The first day has turned out well," says Apii Nikao teacher Mary Tafale.

"We had 24 students who attended this morning and as you can see, the first day is wrapping up well."

Still within close proximity to the former school grounds parents have responded well to the new ECE premises and Ms Tafale is encouraging all parents to become involved with the Apii Potiki unit. She is sending out an open invitation to join them, "I encourage parents to come and visit us because this is our community's school," says Tafale.

