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John Tierney and Mike Henry rip off Aitutaki landowners

Business partners John Tierney and Mike Henry self styled opportunist entrepreneurs and favoured friends of the Cook Islands Party Government have been taken to task by the Land Division of the Cook Islands High Court in Aitutaki.

Ever since pocketing \$600,000 for his receivership fees related to the winding up of the failed Mangaian pineapple winery in 1992 Tierney has been involved in numerous dubious financial schemes that have earned him the appropriate nick name of 'weasel'. Incidentally the legal fees at the time were about \$10,000 but Tierney had no hesitation in crafting his bill to account for the remaining funds which equates to nearly \$2million in present terms.

Should the Cook Islands second richest man Tierney and Henry contest these comments this writer will happily list a time line of Tierney and his clone Mike Henry's trail of dubious business and commercial ventures. In recent times the pair had formed an energy renewal consultancy in order to be in the donor aid funding stream. In November 2012 Minister of Finance Mark Brown selected the duo to accompany him on a weeklong investment mission to Papua New Guinea, included with the Cook Islands delegation was a Fijian based businessman Stan Hancock an associate of Tierney.

Earlier this year Hancock visited Aitutaki and excited people there with a multimillion dollar development vision, both Tierney and Henry were in the mix of casting that dream which failed to attract investors and later fizzed out.

Hancock was a director along with Tierney of the Little Polynesian Resort until they along with the Resort's manager go the sack due to a substantial

amount of money being unaccounted for.

Victims of Tierney and Henry's latest business deal are the Aitutaki landowners of over six acres of prime beach front land in Amuri. Being the Lessee along with their wives under Are Tamanu Villas Limited they failed to meet rental payments of \$105,000.

An Order of the Court made on 7 October 2015 fixed the capital value of the land as at 1 August 2009 at \$450,000. Rental is 5% per annum.

After the Lessee refused to comply with the final judgment the landowners were dismayed to learn there were no Director's guarantees, they were then angered on discovering there were no registered assets.

What they did find was Are Tamanu Villas Limited was a shell company and an empty one at that, the only asset was their own land with 10 years left on the lease. The land had been used as security to fund the next door accommodation Tamanu Beach. Over \$600,000 had been borrowed using the six acre plus block as security.

The proprietors of Maungaru 41 and Kamuu 69 Incorporation then proceeded with a notice of forfeit.

Mrs Tina Browne, who acted for the lessee company when the CV review was heard, now indicates that she has no further instructions.

Rather than comply with the Court order Tierney and Henry wound up the Lessee Company unashamedly cheating the landowners out of \$105,000 excluding interest.

Landowners now make the assumption that the lessee company has no assets and that they are unlikely to ever be paid, but are somewhat consoled that they have their property back years before the lease would have otherwise come to the end of its term.

- George Pitt



John Tierney: trusting landowners strike back



Mike Henry: Front man for John Tierney



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To: **Are Tamanu Villas Limited** a duly incorporated company having its registered office at Tamanu Beach Resort, Aitutaki
And to: **Michael Henry, Kuraono Henry, John Tierney and Anne Tierney**
And to: **Westpac Banking Corporation**
And to: **All persons** having any interest in the property described below.

NOTICE OF FORFEIT

TAKE NOTICE that I, TEUIRA KA, Secretary of the Committee of Management of **THE PROPRIETORS OF MAUNGARUA 41 AND KAMUU 69 INCORPORATION** (the Incorporation), the owner of **ALL** that parcel of land containing **6 ACRES 3 ROODS 20 - PERCHES (6a-3r-20p)** of land more or less situated on the island of **AITUTAKI** in the Cook Islands and being **ALL** of the land named by the High Court **MAUNGARUA SECTION 41 ANAUNGA** and comprised in a Freehold Order made by the said Court on the 5th October 1921 which said land is more particularly delineated and described in the plan deposited in the Office of the Chief Surveyor at Rarotonga under Plan 1994 and which land was on the 25th day of June 1969 leased by **THE LANDOWNERS** to **FREDERICK PHILIP OLSEN** for a term of 60 years, and by diverse deeds is now vested in **ARETAMANU VILLAS LIMITED** as Lessee, have on behalf the Incorporation this day the 5th day of November 2015 re-entered upon the said land, posted with this notice, and re-taken possession of **ALL** of the land for the reason that:

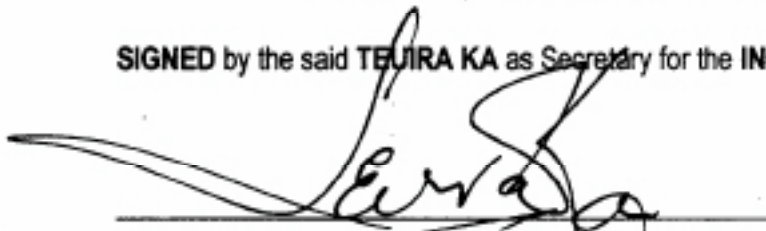
The Lessee has failed to meet the rental payments due as a result of an Order of the Court made on 7th October 2015 fixing the capital value of the Land as at 1st August 2009 at \$450,000:

(i)	01.08.09 thru 31.07.10	\$22,500.00
(ii)	01.08.10 thru 31.07.11	\$22,500.00
(iii)	01.08.11 thru 31.07.12	\$22,500.00
(iv)	01.08.12 thru 31.07.13	\$22,500.00
(v)	01.08.13 thru 31.07.14	\$22,500.00

being a total of \$112,500.00 less the \$7,500.00 previously paid in total for the above annual periods, resulting in a net payment now due, and unpaid, of:


\$105,000.00 (One Hundred Five Thousand Dollars and no Cents)

SIGNED by the said **TEUIRA KA** as Secretary for the **INCORPORATION**

 this 5th day of November 2015

Received by: **DAVE COLLIER**

Date: **5/11/15**

Signed by: 

Time: **1:53pm**

Gross debt grows by \$4.1 million and further blow out expected

By Charles Pitt

Variations in currency exchange rates have blown out our gross debt by \$4.1 million to \$113 million according to government's December 2015 Half Yearly Economic Update.

The blow out was not unexpected, having been predicted in the last Update. Predictions are, the blow out to our gross debt will reach \$8million in the 2016 year.

Despite these blow outs, our current net debt (26%), after reserves are taken into consideration, will still be within the Financial Responsibility Ratio (FFR) for debt against GDP (35%).

However, next year government is expected to exceed the FFR for debt servicing (5% of GDP). However, this is not considered to be a concern as internationally our FFR is considered quite low and the ADB has suggested it be lifted to 10%.

Of more urgent concern is the need for stronger revenue growth and it is predicted that when the time comes to carry out maintenance on the major projects under construction now, we may have to borrow heavily. If revenue growth is weak, MFEM warns some reduction in operating costs will be required and that may mean reductions in personnel.

Below are some key parts from the Update as applies to government debt.

7 CROWN DEBT AND NET WORTH

7.1 Gross Debt owed by the Crown

Total gross debt owed by the Crown as at 30 June 2016 is now estimated to be \$113.1 million, a variance of \$4.0 million from the 2015/16 Budget. Table 7.1 Reconciliation on 2015/16 Loan Movement shows the movement was due to the drawdown of new loans of \$15.6 million, and also changes in the

exchange rate, with all major trading currencies appreciating against the New Zealand dollar (NZD).

The renewable energy project is also expected to commence the drawdown of the \$12.98 million ADB loan towards the end of 2015/16 (during the construction phase of the project).

The cause for this unfavourable movement in exchange rate (in terms of outstanding debt) from 2014/15 to 2015/16 was a 16.3 per cent appreciation of the US dollar (USD) against the NZD, a 21.0 per cent appreciation of the Chinese Renminbi (RMB), a 15.1 per cent appreciation of the Special Drawing Right (SDR), and a 1.0 per cent appreciation of the Euro (EUR).

7.4 Status of Government Loans

Table 7.3 Status of Government loans estimated at 30 June 2015 shows that the total amount drawn down to 30 June 2016 is \$113.07 million, which includes \$3.245 million of the \$12.980 million loan from the ADB for Southern Group renewable energy project.

The draw-down of the remainder of this loan will increase gross debt to a peak of \$118.7 million by 30 June 2017.

7.6 Net Debt

The Cook Islands has adopted a conservative approach towards the definition of net debt and is in a low debt position when compared internationally.

The internationally accepted definition of net debt is total gross debt (all public sector debt and currency on issue) less total financial assets corresponding to those debt instruments (this means like for like, for example cash). Under this definition the Cook Islands net debt position would be only \$76.9 million or 21.0 per cent of GDP in 2015/16.

Gross Debt + Currency on Issue = (\$113.1 million) + (\$4.1 million) = (\$117.2 million)

Less

Financial Assets (Cash reserves and Loan Repayment Fund) = (\$40.2 million)

Net Debt = (\$76.9million)

International comparisons of net debt are made on the basis of the international definition of net debt. On this basis the Cook Islands has one of the lower debt profiles in the Pacific including Australia and New Zealand.

However for the purpose of prudent fiscal management, the Cook Islands excludes cash reserves and currency issued from the net debt definition. For the purposes of this Chapter, 'Net Debt' in the Cook Islands is equivalent to total gross debt net of the LRF (the difference between the total gross debt and monies held in the LRF).

Net debt under this more conservative definition is estimated to be \$95.9 million (26.1 per cent of GDP) by the end of June 2016, an increase of \$3.7 million since the 2015/16 Budget.

7.7 Crown Debt Sensitivity Analysis

The largest risk to the Crown's ultimate debt liability is the long term level of the NZD against the currencies in which the Crown's loans are denominated. The sensitivity analysis demonstrates the impact of a 10 per cent appreciation or depreciation in the NZD to determine the impact on the gross borrowings and the debt servicing cost.

If the NZD/USD exchange rate was to depreciate by 10 per cent, gross Crown debt as at the end of the June 2016 year would increase by an estimated \$8.8 million.

If the NZD depreciated by 10 per cent, this would reduce the opportunity for further borrowings and increase the Crown's debt servicing costs to unsustainable levels.

The impact of the 10 per cent increase or decrease on

debt servicing cost is relatively consistent to the impact on gross debts. Any decision to commit to further borrowings should be assessed carefully due to the sensitivity of the NZD.

7.8 Fiscal Debt Responsibility Ratios

Government is well within its fiscal responsibility ratio threshold of 35 per cent net Crown debt to GDP. However, the commitment for debt servicing to remain under 5 per cent of total revenue will be breached across most of the forward estimates.

7.9 Long term debt projections

Current expectations of expanding operational budgets cannot coexist with the recent levels of capital spending. At some point in the future, either capital or operational spending will need to be scaled back to match revenue growth.

An important consideration is the health of the cash reserve. The recent capital spending has diminished the capital reserve by investing in major infrastructure. Cash reserves should recover over the medium term if now new major initiatives are planned that involve the use of the Government cash reserve.

Of particular risk are the renewable energy projects in the Pa Enua. Combined, the northern and southern projects have cost as much as Te Mato Vai, but attracted little attention due to the use of donor grant funding.

However, while the initial investment from the Cook Islands Government has only been the \$12.98 million ADB loan, the replacement costs for the systems over future decades will be much higher. If not managed correctly, the Government will not have sufficient reserves to replace such a system in 10 to 15 years' time, and may have to rely on larger loans to fund the replacement capital.

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Our Frontpage model



Our frontpage model this week's Herald Issue 798 is the beautiful Ake Turaki Check out our website www.ciherald.co.ck and facebook page: www.facebook.com/ciherald

Excuses at top level not acceptable

By Charles Pitt

Recent reports by Constitutional lawyer Alex Frame and PERCA have revealed an unsatisfactory trend at the senior level of our civil service.

Senior public servants are offering up excuses for their shortcomings.

As John Scott pointed out in his recent article on the Alex Frame legal opinion, Frame's criticism of Neves actions in relation to government's breach of the Constitutional limitations on expenditure, were softened with Neves now claiming his interpretation was incorrect...an honest mistake.

As Scott pointed out, Neves did not have to make an interpretation of the law. That is the job for a trained lawyer. In other words, the legal team in Crown Law.

From the PERCA letter of 5 September 2015 to the PM, regarding Pacific Schooners, it is disclosed that there ought to have been a better assessment of the risks on the part of government but this did not happen.

Following the PERCA letter of 4 September 2015 to Richard Neves, regarding the Pearl Authority expenditure of \$70,000 the CEO admitted not seeking a tender waiver earlier.

In the PERCA letter of 18 July 2015 to the PM, regarding conflict of interest over the awarding of an IT contract by MMR, there is the revelation that the HOM was not aware that a member of his MMR staff was a Director and majority shareholder of the company making the successful tender.

In all cases mentioned above, the failures should not have occurred. It also begs the question who was providing advice to the HOMs/CEO?

A certain degree of inattention, sloppiness, ignorance might be expected from staff at a lower level due to inexperience or lack of training but at the highest level, where the buck stops, there is no excuse.

Sloppiness has also crept into the highest level at parliament.

This paper once pointed to spelling errors in documents being tabled in the House by Ministers. One Minister, the Finance Minister laughed one occasion off as "typos," nothing to get too serious about. That is not the point here. The point is, at parliamentary level, no mistakes are acceptable.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

The staff of the Herald wish all readers a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

This is our last issue for 2015 and the Herald will be back on 6 January 2016.

Please have an enjoyable time with family and friends and remember to be safe, do not drink and drive and keep your speed down. It's a small island and we get to where we are going eventually. Why rush?

Remember it's a time for giving. Be generous of spirit and kind of heart. Go about in peace and remember what this time of year is all about. The birth of the Saviour who has carried the sins of the world for over 2,000 years.



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SPC and International Seabed Authority sign MOU



Officials from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Republic of the Marshall Islands, SPC, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, and USA at the MOU signing ceremony in Kingston, Jamaica



SPC Chief Geoscientist, Dr Kifile Kahsai (left) signs the MOU with ISA Secretariat-General, Nii A. Odunton (right) (July 2015)

The Pacific Community (SPC) and the International Seabed Authority (ISA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 20 July 2015, during the ISA's 21st annual session in Jamaica.

The MOU expresses the mutual commitments of SPC and ISA in developing regional and national frameworks that support the interests of both organisation's Pacific member states. This includes their efforts to regulate and manage deep sea mineral activities in ocean areas beyond national jurisdiction; conducting marine

scientific research and analysis results; and participating in capacity-building initiatives and sharing seabed resources information.

Established in 1994 under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the ISA is responsible for the development and implementation of global rules, regulations and procedures for the exploration and extraction of seabed mineral resources; as well as the protection of the seafloor environment beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

University of Hawai'i DSM interns share study experiences



Ms Alanna Smith (left) and Ms Esetelelita Fulivai sorting macrofauna in the lab.

In collaboration with the University of Hawai'i, the DSM Project offered a three-month training opportunity to two Pacific Island nationals, Ms Esetelelita Fulivai from the Geology Division of the Ministry of Lands, Survey, Natural Resources in Tonga, and Ms Alanna Smith from the Te Ipukarea Society in the Cook Islands.

Based at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa from late August to mid-December 2015, the internship placement offers training in the techniques for conducting environment baseline studies and biodiversity evaluation of deep sea manganese nodule ecosystems.

The interns work in the laboratory of Dr Craig Smith, an international expert in marine benthic ecology, gaining technical experience in sorting and analysing macrofaunal samples and megafaunal photo surveys taken from the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone in the East Pacific.

"It is quite an opportunity to be here as I have learned a lot from Dr Smith's professional team, mostly about animals in the deep sea. I am also taking part in the course. It is amazing to learn how organisms survive at the bottom of the sea with little light and energy compared to shallow waters. The skills I am learning, techniques used to collect samples and sorting of animals, could be applied to other environments too. I cannot wait to apply what I have experienced here when I go back to my home country," Ms Fulivai said.

"We had a complete hands-on approach, sorting macrofaunal assemblages from two different deep sea habitats. The macrofauna we have come across to date includes polychaete worms, tanaid, and isopod crustaceans and bivalve molluscs amongst a number of other species, which are unique to the deep sea. The sorting of deep sea samples and identifying them, will enable us to gain a better

understanding of deep sea diversity and potential environmental impacts of human activities. Being able to see what actually is living at these varied depths along with their influences has been fascinating. The sorting of macrofauna is a rather labour intensive task, taking up a lot of time as we have to make sure we don't miss any animals from the debris. I'm enjoying my working days within the lab and it is always exciting to see a new animal that I haven't come across," Ms Smith said.

Aside from sorting macrofauna within the lab, the two interns have started a Deep-Sea Biology course at the university where they will gain a better academic overview of the biology and ecology of deep-sea organisms and communities. Topics to be learnt in this course include benthic-pelagic coupling, depth zonation, energetics, diversity, adaptations, hydrothermal vents, seamounts, abyssal plains, deep-sea resource extraction and global climate change.



Dr Craig Smith (Middle) with his postgraduate class

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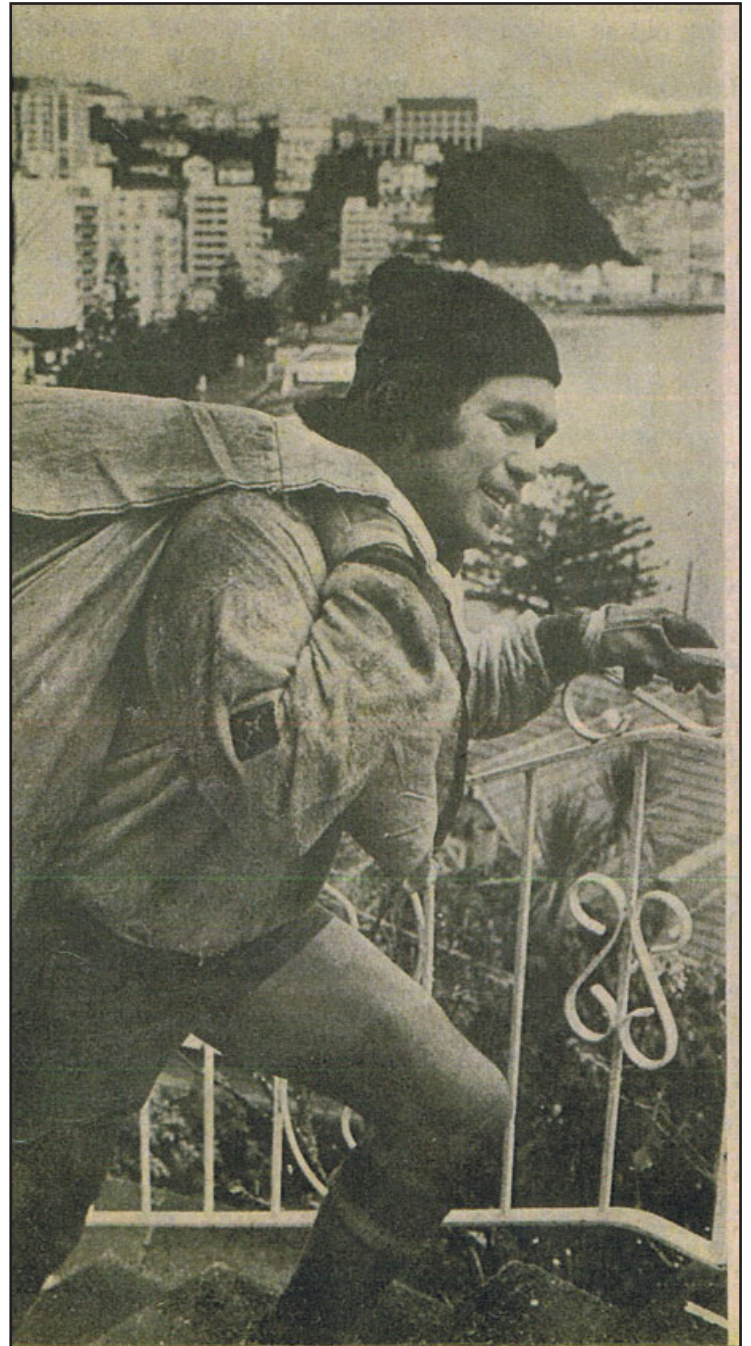


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What a load of rubbish!



By Charles Pitt

Vakatini Ariki's former life as a dustman (rubbish collector) in Wellington during the 1970's has caught up with him. Above is a photo of a much younger Joseph Vakatini which featured in the NZ Women's Weekly issue of 5 September 1977.

A story by the magazine's staff writer Vicky Hamilton covered the work of Wellington's 80 rubbish collectors. Joe, a driver of one of the refuse trucks, was photographed against the backdrop of Oriental Bay on a clear morning carrying a load up some steep steps. At that time, Joe's day began at 7am and ended about 3.30pm. He was physically fit and needed to be to negotiate Wellington's steep hills.



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A beautiful environment with friendly people and co-workers who became family

London lawyer Amelia Ponton speaks about her stay on Rarotonga

By Norma Ngatamariki

From the hustle and bustle of London to the laidback tropics of the Cook Islands, no one can argue that Amelia Ponton has most certainly made quite the transition. Although she is no stranger to international travel, Amelia has firm roots within the South Pacific as her mother is Tuvaluan and her father is Scottish. She also grew up in Fiji for nine years before she moved to Australia for tertiary studies, completing her Masters in London with a thesis in Deep Sea Minerals Law.

Amelia was posted to Rarotonga, assuming the position of Deep Sea Mineral (DSM) Project Lawyer for a total of six months funded by the SPC-EU Deep Sea Minerals Project based in Fiji. While here she has undertaken a number of activities, such as drafting tender documentation and guidelines, creating advisory board regulations, giving legal advice and reporting to the Seabed Minerals Authority as well as attending numerous meetings under the supervision of the Commissioner. "From these meetings, I got a fair idea on how the Cook Islands plans to manage its marine space, which is a difficult task considering all

the various maritime interests involved," she says.

Amelia also got the opportunity to collaborate with other divisions, such as the National Environment Service and the Business Trade and Investment Board, which gave her the opportunity to broaden her perspective. "It also taught me to be more adaptable and it gave me hands-on experience with the technical aspects involved in the deep sea minerals industry."

Growing up in the Pacific, Amelia did notice some subtle differences when she went overseas to study. At the age of seventeen, she was still undecided as to what she wanted to pursue in a career, but discovered that she had a real affinity for English. "I liked writing and structuring essays, so I guess that was my starting point." She did a Bachelors in Law and Cultural Sociology, which taught her the necessary skills for reading and analysing information, public speaking and time management. "Growing up in Fiji, or anywhere in the Pacific for that matter, you learn to respect the authoritative figures within your community by not questioning them," she shares. "I had to overcome that and

learn how to speak up and voice my opinion. Now, I'm a lot more vocal!" she laughs.

Amelia encourages other Pacific Islanders who are studying overseas to recognise their own potential and to have confidence. "Don't be intimidated by the more developed countries," she says. "You've got something to offer to the world as well."

But when she wasn't sitting in her office, writing out policies or giving legal advice, Amelia was usually out and about making the most of her stay. When asked what she got up to during her downtime, she laughs and says, "The question you should be asking is: What didn't I get up to?" Amelia had a schedule which would put most tourists to shame, as she tackled climbing the mountain peaks of Te Manga and Te Kou, flew a plane on a scenic flight (with supervision, of course), night-time diving, joined a social paddling team, attended Ura Fitness classes and even played in the Rugby Sevens! Just to name a few. "I enjoyed every minute of it!" she says.

Amelia has gained valuable experience throughout the duration of her stay, which has taken a toll on her professional and personal life in a completely positive way. "It's been a learning



Amelia Ponton
curve," she exclaims. "I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to work on projects that will have a lasting effect and in such a beautiful environment with friendly people and co-workers who became family."

When asked what three essentials she would take on a deserted island, Amelia did ponder a bit. "I guess it would have to be good music, a book and pen as well as a friend for good company."

Amelia departed Rarotonga on Saturday morning to spend Christmas and New Years in Fiji before returning to London.

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QR confronted with intervention choices

The Queen's Representative in the Cook Islands is, on Her Majesty's behalf, the protector of parliamentary democracy and the guardian of the Constitution.

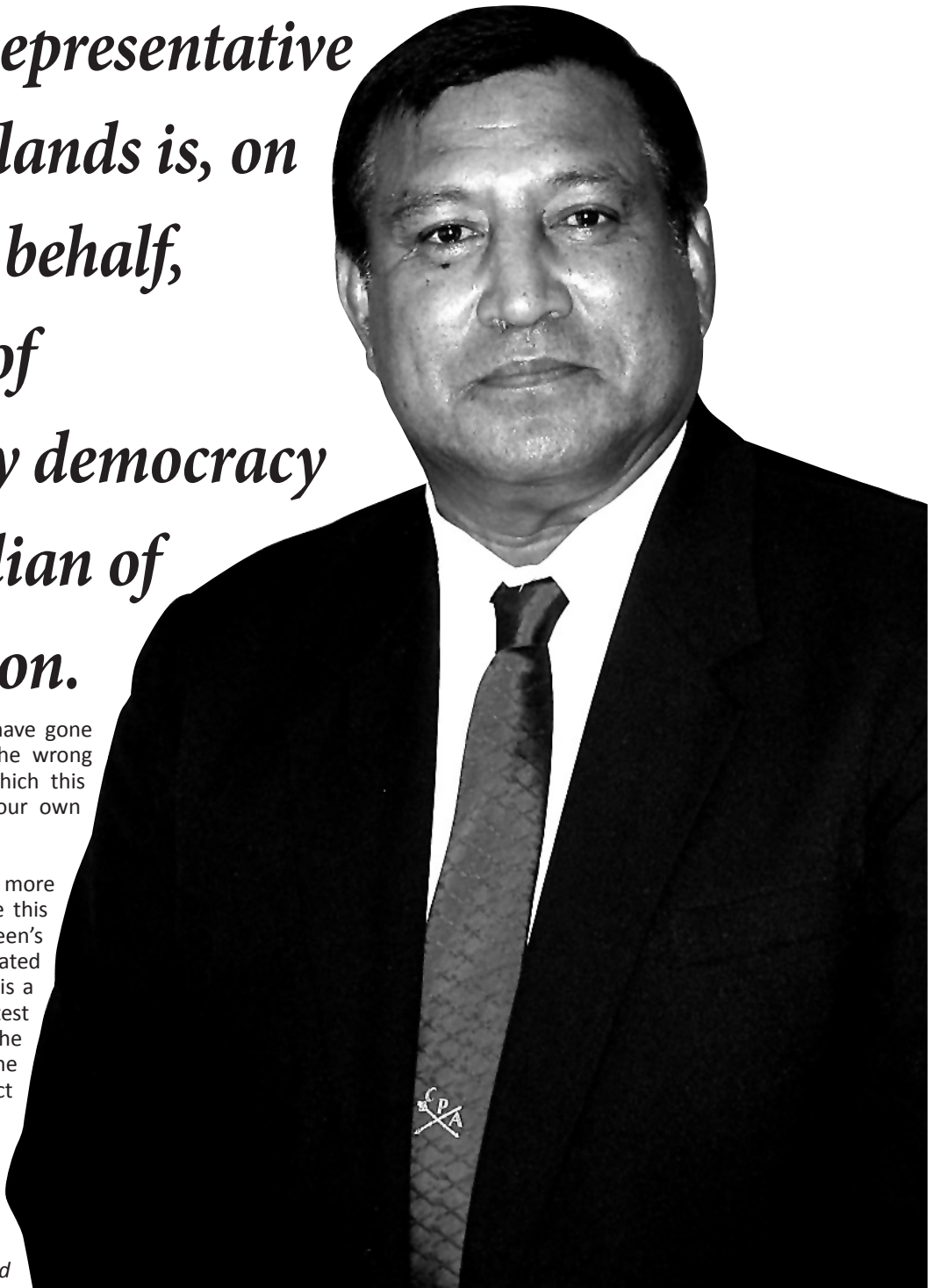
Just as Nauru, Vanuatu and Fiji have gone into the history books for all the wrong reasons so the Cook Islands, which this same Cook Islands Party pioneered our own ignominy in 1978, is doing it again.

Unlike my previous letter which dealt more with the malfeasance of the Executive this letter concerns the role of the Queen's Representative. Being a dedicated monarchical constitutionalist makes this a difficult letter to write. I have the greatest respect for our Head of State and the office of Her representative here in the Cook Islands. It is because of that respect that I have to sound some warnings.

Lesson from Australia

Sir Phillip Game, Governor of New South Wales who, in 1932, dismissed Premier Lang said in his message to Lang-

I feel it is my bounden duty to remind you at once that you derive your authority
continued next page



QR Tom Marsters: Must blow the whistle on Political abuses

from His Majesty, through me, and that I cannot possibly allow the Crown to be placed in the position of breaking the law of the land. (Game to Lang 12 May 1932)

and then again on 13 May My position is that if my Ministers are unable to carry on essential service without breaking the law, my plain duty is to endeavour to obtain Ministers who feel able to do so.

As I have already pointed out to you in my letter of the 12th instant, it is impossible for me to put the Crown in a position of being a party to an illegal action.

Reserve powers

The Queen's Representative role in our polity is largely determined by the Constitution. There are only a few areas where discretion operates (termination of the appointment of the Prime Minister in certain circumstances, dissolution of Parliament to name just two) but beyond the written provisions are some unwritten powers, seldom used, which we call reserve powers.

I first mentioned reserve powers in my piece in the Herald on 30 September this year on the subject of Government's mismanagement of the public revenues when I suggested the QR should consider invoking these powers to call Parliament together if not just to test the confidence of the government which was clearly in doubt, but to consider a resolution authorising a complete auditing of government finances preferably by the more independent and unbiased NZ Audit Office because of the unlawful mismanagement which was attending upon it. It never happened of course because at the end of the day the QR would have taken his instructions, as he should, in normal circumstances, from his Ministers.

However these were no normal circumstances as I shall proceed to explain. The QR had unwittingly allowed himself to be drawn into a situation which Governor Game was similarly confronted by but firmly repudiated. Governor Game would have no part of any arrangement which would have him place the Crown in the invidious position of being a party to an illegal action.

Unfortunately, the Cook Islands Party Government has, in its contempt for parliamentary control over the public purse, and its misguided belief that it could manipulate with impunity both the law and it seems the Queen's Representative to its own ends and by avoiding any accounting to Parliament, has placed the Queen's Representative in exactly that position which he should, in my view with smarter, better law abiding advisers, have been at pains to avoid.

The Executive Council comprises Cabinet and the Queen's Representative. During the 2014-15 financial year the Executive Council sat and approved a considerable

of the basic principles that underpin the invocation of reserve powers and that is the rule of law. Unfortunately, in exposing its own vulnerability to charges of illegal behaviour, the Executive is taking the Queen's Representative along with it.

In her 2012 public lecture on the subject, The Unrecognised Reserve Powers, Anne Twomey, Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Sydney identified three underlying principles to the use of reserve powers:

- Responsibility
- The Rule of Law
- Necessity

My focus in this letter is the second of these two principles and in this context Anne

It is all very relevant. Government's own constitutional adviser's opinion, albeit tainted by improper influence, still leaves us with the very clear conclusion that the Constitution has been breached; that constitutional limits have been exceeded. In addition, the transfer between votes, although not stated unequivocally as such, was certainly unlawful as was the payment by the Financial Secretary to Pacific Schooners Ltd. It could therefore be claimed that these conclusions are uncontestable and do not require further judicial attention unless of course Government intended to challenge the opinion of its own adviser. In the same uncontestable category could be placed the failure to obey the Constitution when it came to audited accounts and statements of unauthorised expenditure. The Financial Secretary admitted as much on radio that this was the position. The Constitution is clear. No Court pronouncement could really make it any clearer therefore none should be required (however see QR choices below).

Anne Twomey went on to say: *One vital aspect of 'the rule of law' is that the executive is subject to the law and to the Constitution. As the Privy Council has noted, 'the rule of law requires that those exercising public power should do so lawfully' and 'in accordance with the Constitution'. This applies not only to Ministers but also to the Governor-General (read QR) From colonial times, vice-regal representatives were obliged to obey the law. Alpheus Todd quoting from an 1870 despatch from the Colonial Secretary to the Governor of NSW, noted that if the law requires the Governor to do one thing, and the Governor's Ministers advise to act contrary to the law, it is the Governor's 'plain duty to obey the law, and it would be idle to object that such obedience was unconstitutional for the Governor is himself a branch of the legislature'.*

Sir Ellis Clarke, who was successively Governor-General and then first President of Trinidad and Tobago, strongly adhered to this view. He stated:

Provided that he is satisfied as continued next page

Despite official information requests and demands from the Ombudsman to deliver up details of those approvals the Executive has so far refused to do so compounding the conviction that it not only was aware of its illegal actions but also its determination to hide them.

number of questionable financial instruments which purported to authorise expenditure of public funds beyond or outside parliamentary authority. Despite official information requests and demands from the Ombudsman to deliver up details of those approvals the Executive has so far refused to do so compounding the conviction that it not only was aware of its illegal actions but also its determination to hide them.

This unyielding stance, while consistent with Government's failure also to comply with the constitutional requirement of annually presenting audited accounts to Parliament, along with a statement of unauthorised expenditure for four years now, underscores the CIP Government's absolute and flagrant disregard for one

Twomey had this to say on that -

It potentially supports the dismissal of a Prime Minister who persists in serious breaches of the law or the Constitution. It also would potentially permit a Governor-General to decline to act upon advice to commit a manifest breach of the Constitution or of a law. However the application of this principle is often tempered by another principle, the separation of powers and the role of the judiciary in determining legality. Where the judiciary may not determine legality, because the matter is not justiciable, or where the breach of the law is both serious and uncontestable or uncontested, then an exercise of a reserve power to reject advice or to seek new advisers, may be warranted.

How does this relate to what is happening here?

a matter of law that he has the power to do something, the President must exercise that power in accordance with ministerial advice. Such advice cannot, however, endow the President with a power denied him by law. One must ascertain the legal competence of the act contemplated, and if it exists, then how the power is exercised is a matter for ministerial advice. If what is advised is not intra vires, the advice must be rejected for no advice, including that of the Attorney-General can render legal that which is, advice apart, ultra vires.

Protector and Guardian

The Queen's Representative here in the Cook Islands is, on Her Majesty's behalf, supposed to be both the protector of parliamentary democracy and the guardian of the Constitution but what protection or guardianship is there when the Executive prevails upon the Queen's Representative to participate, either knowingly or unknowingly, in actions which are destructive of those roles? And we should be reminded also of his oath of office in which he swears to uphold the dignity of the office and to carry out his duties in accordance with the Constitution and the law.

The examples and quotations above deal only with situations where one or the other of the QR or PM steps out of line. They do not contemplate a situation where both players are involved in illegal acts. What redress then is available to the citizens of this country when this occurs?

How can the reserve powers be invoked when the person to exercise them is a party to the abuse?

If the Executive alone were the guilty party it would be within the competence of the Queen's Representative to dismiss the administration of Henry Puna and seek new advisers. There would be enough justification. The Cook Islands Party Government is in breach of the Constitution on several counts of disobedience to it when it comes to its reporting responsibilities to Parliament and while denying Parliament such vital information as would be contained in audited accounts and unauthorised expenditure statements over several years uses a fictitious procedure to further circumvent Parliament's scrutiny of its spending and exceeds the constitutional limit on such spending in doing so.

Testing the legality

You know what is disappointing about this matter? Although I am not one, we have in the Cook Islands over 50 registered law practitioners and while I have levelled this criticism before I do so again now but more forcefully. Where are these people when the ship of state is heading uncontrollably towards the rocks?. The QR, like myself, is not a lawyer however his Secretary is as is his wife and notably the Prime Minister, also Attorney General, who took the Ministry of Culture transfer to Executive Council. Where is their guidance? Where is their advice? As for the rest of the legal fraternity is it so covered or intimidated or self-serving, so powerless that its members are fearful, or influenced or compromised to the point that they shrink from taking a public stand? One seldom if ever reads anything from its members unless it involves a pecuniary interest or a client's affairs. Do they not care more

continued next page



PM Henry Puna: A law unto himself?

for the nurturing here of a society and polity of which we could all be proud; for sound, democratic institutions, free from corruption and all the other machinations evident when countries go bad. We have here all the opportunity for making the Cook Islands the envy of the Pacific. Is that not a goal worth working towards?

Recently a constitutional opinion was sought with a far more limited scope than would assist the QR in the circumstances in which he now finds himself. He is a party in a fictitious procedure which is alleged to have unlawfully breached the MFEM Act and the Constitution. The criticism of the 1932 Lang administration dismissal by Governor Game and the 1975 dismissal by Governor-General Kerr of the Whitlam administration centred upon either not resorting to the Courts to determine illegality in the former case or seeking advice from the Justices in the latter when those same people were needed to have been uncompromised in the event that the dispute were taken before them. It is by no means certain that obtaining expert opinion nor consulting with the local independent bar (assuming it existed) would satisfy potential critics if any irrevocable dismissal action, or dissolution, were taken without prior argument before the Courts and it is for this very correct reason the QR should not be seeking any advice from the Chief Justice or other members of the Judiciary. So what are the choices?

Three choices

As I see it the Queen's Representative has three choices.

First choice-Reconvene Parliament

The first is to invoke his reserve powers and to immediately reconvene Parliament to consider two issues. Does the administration of Henry Puna command the confidence of the majority in the House and is it constitutionally entitled to continue to govern and qualified to be his adviser? There has been a no confidence motion on the Order Paper now for a considerable time which the Government is avoiding

and there is precedent for this alone being sufficient cause for the Queen's Representative to bring Parliament together to determine whether the present Executive should continue to advise him. Then there is the question of legality of the Executive Council procedure and the decisions taken therein. These need to be resolved and while the Democratic Party Opposition has been speaking of a Judicial Review such action, and delay, could and should be avoided and fast tracked if that were possible. There is an opportunity for the QR, within our statutes (s.3 Judicature Act) to do that by reference

If the Queen's Representative is for any reason reluctant to take the easy route proposed in the first choice, or is frustrated there by Government in a way which would make a judicial pronouncement unlikely in the short term, then he would need to face taking another decision.

to the High Court and from there, as has been the practice, removal to the Court of Appeal to determine any question as to the interpretation of the Constitution but, being dependent upon the advice of the Prime Minister, and that being unlikely to be forthcoming in the circumstances, would necessitate him seeking from Parliament an overriding resolution authorising that application. The result of these proceedings would naturally affect the second choice but if the resolution were refused because of Government opposition (which position it might foolishly elect) so the second choice would become so much more obvious.

Second choice-Disassociation and dismissal

If the Queen's Representative is for any reason reluctant to take the easy route proposed in

the first choice, or is frustrated there by Government in a way which would make a judicial pronouncement unlikely in the short term, then he would need to face taking another decision. He would firstly need to seek such independent legal advice as was available as to whether he should disassociate himself from all Executive Council decisions which have improperly authorised unauthorised expenditure. If he should establish that to his satisfaction then he should dismiss his present advisers (the Henry Puna led Government) and seek new advisers. If he is unable then

to choose an alternate Prime Minister who can command the confidence of a majority in Parliament then he should dissolve Parliament and call for a general election. At the same time he should forward an apology to Her Majesty for allowing himself to have been led astray by his previous advisers and compromising the impartiality of Her Majesty's representative and advising Her of the action he has taken to restore faith in Her representative.

Third choice more painful
If the QR is unable to countenance either of the foregoing then the only other option I am suggesting is more painful and will bring the present incumbent hard up against the realities of his office. While his loyalties to his Cook Islands Party origins have been obvious for all to see he

would now be confronted by the need to decide whether they surmounted those he owes to Her Majesty. He might opt to do nothing but that could prove fatal because such a decision could result in his own dismissal. How would that be possible one might question when the Prime Minister is usually the only person who could initiate that but would be unlikely to do so in circumstances where they remained partners in unlawful activity?

Letters Patent

By the Letters Patent of 1983 Her Majesty declared the Governor-General of New Zealand Her representative over the Realm of New Zealand which Realm includes the self-governing state of the Cook Islands. Those same Letters Patent acknowledged that different persons may be appointed to represent Her Majesty in any part of Her Realm which would have been a recognition that we had our own representative and other parts of the Realm may in future also. This would, however, in no way derogate from the New Zealand Governor-General's overarching role nor his access, or responsibility to Her Majesty to report on any matters affecting Her Realm and it is this I am now proposing.

The New Zealand High Commission in Rarotonga should report this opinion to the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade with a view to bringing it to the attention of the NZ Governor-General and thence to the Palace. In so doing it should include my letter published in the Cook Islands Herald of 16 December 2015 and Dr Frame's legal opinion which would provide the required background to this sordid affair and in seeking any advice of a constitutional nature should look further afield than the advice that has been obtained thus far.

In closing what we desperately need here in the Cook Islands is a cultural shift which recognises that the *rule of law* is not a hackneyed phrase; that decent standards are preferred and that honesty and integrity are not weaknesses.

John M Scott



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Small Pacific States benefit from Marine Research Training in Korea



Marino Wichman (centre) aboard the Training Ship Kaya

By Norma Ngatamariki

On Monday the Herald spoke with Marino Wichman, who has just recently returned from a training course which took place in Busan, Republic of Korea.

Wichman, a GIS Specialist with the Seabed Minerals Authority, said attending the week long training course was an enlightening experience. The course was courtesy of Korea Maritime Institute (KMI) in collaboration with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (DOALAS) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (IOC-UNESCO).

The main objective of this course was to train 13 representatives from Pacific Small Island Developing States in the importance of marine scientific research, legislation regarding such research and how to better manage our marine resources. Dorothy Solomona, Director of the Pearl Support Division at the Ministry of Marine Resources also participated.

"The training revolved around how countries can better promote and utilise marine scientific research within their

sovereign waters and the importance such activity falls in line with the international Laws of the Sea," Wichman says. It was also an opportunity to revise current legislation relating to marine science within the region.

One aspect of the training course which appealed to Wichman was the ARGO Project. As a tech-savvy expert, he was quite taken with this particular advancement in technology. According to Wichman, the ARGO project is currently centred around 4000 cylinder-like devices, weighing up to 20kgs each and measuring up to about a metre in height. These devices operate to depths of 2000 meters and measure water profile temperature and salinity. The devices are set to freely float in ocean currents and often enter EEZ waters all over the world. The devices will then collect the data and transmit the information back to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) headquarters in America, which is used for the day to day weather predictions around the globe. One problem that was encountered was the issue of ownership of the data, in accordance to the different sovereign rights. "Some

countries did not wish for such data to be observed by other parties," Wichman says. "In such cases NOAA were obligated to turn off sensors on their device as it passed through a particular states' sovereign waters, should the state not want them on."

The training course also consisted of other activities, such as presentations and a field trip in which the representatives visited a Korean research vessel. The participants received a tour and got to see the various inputs within the vessel. "To operate the vessel for a single day costs approximately \$70,000," says Wichman.

Wichman also mentioned that the Cook Islands is well ahead of their fellow Pacific island neighbours, in terms of drafting legislation with regards to marine scientific research, which was duly noted in one of their presentations. "The Cook Islands has a template in which other Pacific islands are more than welcome to follow and adopt according to their own needs." Our nation is also one of the first Pacific islands to have Lagoon Day, which is entirely dedicated to the educating of our younger generation about our lagoons.

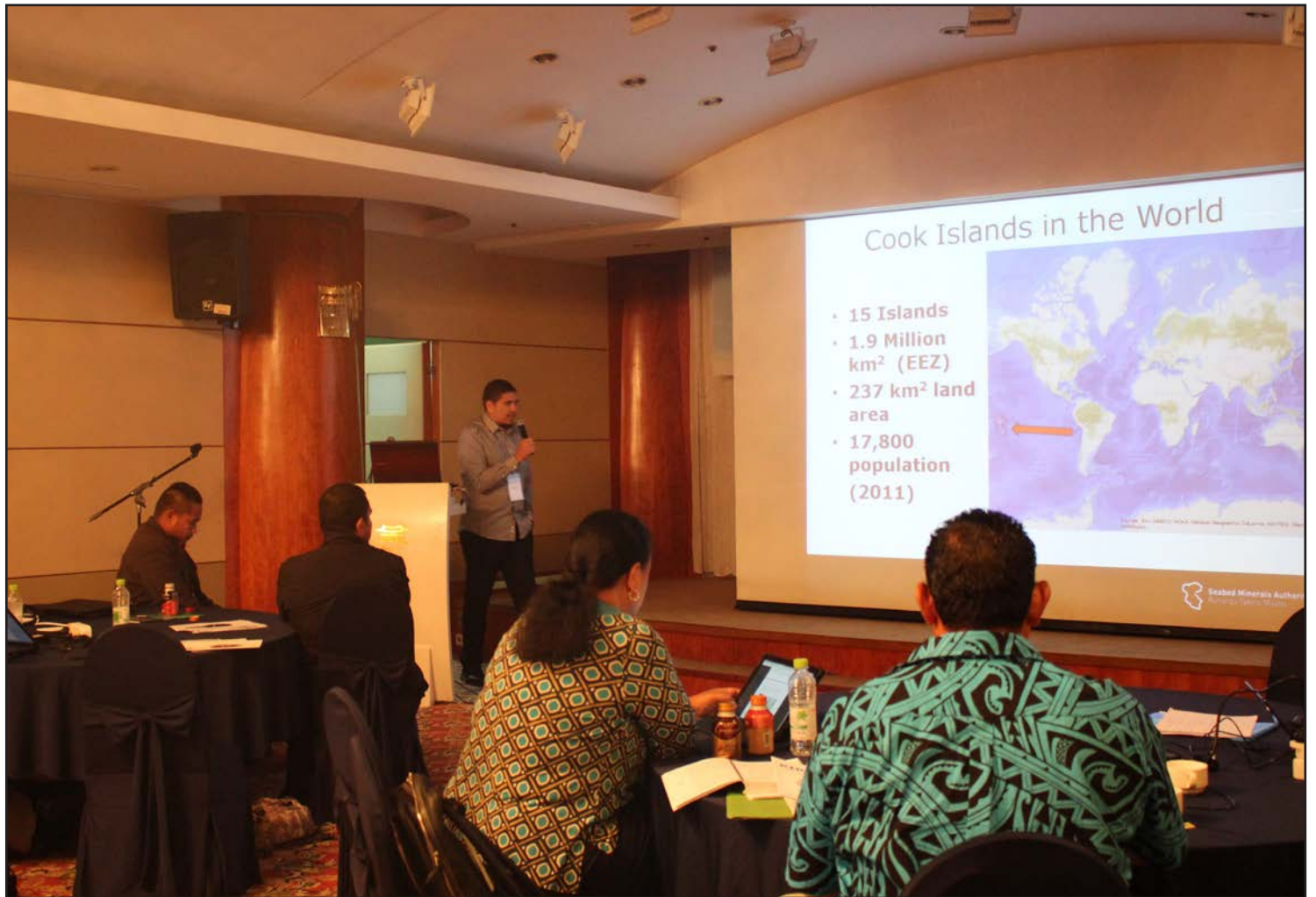
The Cook Islands has also caught the attention of the

NOAA, which has invested their interest within the Northern Group. "After much discussion, it was noted that the Northern Group lacks the necessary awareness and resources of marine science but more so the sciences in general," Wichman comments. "NOAA has made a point to look at offering resources and possibly visiting the Northern Group and help educate school students."

Dorothy Solomona, Director of the Pearl Support Division at the Ministry of Marine Resources, also supports the notion that marine scientific research conducted within our country is of the utmost importance. "We have an affinity to it and therefore would want to target good development opportunities for the benefit of the country," she says. "As a country, we need to know what developments we need to improve and therefore advocate for research in these areas. Solomona also comments on how we, as a country, need to keep track of our research and implement intellectual property rights so that it may be beneficial for us.

Wichman plans to use all the skills obtained from the training course and put them to good use in the development of our national seabed minerals sector.

Small Pacific States benefit from Marine Research Training in Korea



Marino Wichman at the training workshop in Korea delivering his presentation on progress with seabed minerals developments in the Cook Islands

Christmas is upon us!

By Norma Ngatamariki

Yaaas! As the title of my story so adequately states, it's almost that time of the year. Almost everybody has returned home from overseas to celebrate the festive season. 2015 has been, without a doubt, an action-packed year for our lovely little island, with the Miss Cook Islands pageant, the 50th Te Maeva Nui Anniversary as well as the Miss Pacific Islands pageant. So, to top it all off, Christmas is just around the corner and everybody is getting into that Christmas spirit of giving and enjoying.

Although, if I'm going to be totally honest, I haven't given that much thought on what to do for Christmas. Oh, I'll do all the usual

things, like baking a few cakes and giving them out as Christmas gifts. But beyond that, I still don't have a clue. My family and I will probably eat out again this year, just to minimise the amount of dishes I have to clean. I have my sights on The Islander. Last year, they put on a pretty mean buffet for Christmas lunch all for the reasonable price of \$30 per person. Hopefully, it's still at that price.

I know some of you adults out there will agree that preparing for Christmas is a hassle. It just requires a whole lot of money, time and patience. I haven't even started shopping for my baking goodies yet and I feel broke already! (*Hopeless sigh. The things I do for the people I care about) The closest thing I've

done to Christmas shopping is buying the little Christmas cards and even then, I was reluctant to part with my hard-earned money (Even if it was just \$2.60. Call me stingy, I don't care) I am looking forward to baking though, as I haven't had the opportunity to do so while I was in New Zealand.

I saw something on Facebook (credit to one of my mates), which is so relatable. As you get older and someone asks you what you want for Christmas. No longer do you answer, "Oh lots of money would be nice, a Toyota Hilux" etc. Sometimes you have to go much deeper than that. When someone asks you that question, you respond with "A sense of purpose, financial security, a career, a love life,

alcohol, naps, oh and some new jandals would be nice."

So after all the baking and the eating, I'll head back home and just chill with the folks. I might even have a drink with them this year. I reckon the real action will happen during the mid-afternoon hours, where scores of people drink into the night time, laughing and singing. But please, people, take great care when driving on the roads! Arrange for a sober driver if you're planning on getting real wasted. Don't risk your life or anybody else's for that matter. We don't want to hear anymore tragedies. On a happier note, spend quality time with your family and relax. Don't think about work. Have a safe Christmas, everyone!

It's simple. If we can't change our economic system, our number's up

It's the great taboo of our age – and the inability to discuss the pursuit of perpetual growth will prove humanity's undoing

*By George Monbiot
The Guardian, 27 May 2014*

Let us imagine that in 3030BC the total possessions of the people of Egypt filled one cubic metre. Let us propose that these possessions grew by 4.5% a year. How big would that stash have been by the Battle of Actium in 30BC? This is the calculation performed by the investment banker Jeremy Grantham.

Go on, take a guess. Ten times the size of the pyramids? All the sand in the Sahara? The Atlantic ocean? The volume of the planet? A little more? It's 2.5 billion billion solar systems.

It does not take you long, pondering this outcome, to reach the paradoxical position that salvation lies in collapse.

To succeed is to destroy ourselves. To fail is to destroy ourselves. That is the bind we have created. Ignore if you must climate change, biodiversity collapse, the depletion of water, soil, minerals, oil; even if all these issues miraculously vanished, the mathematics of compound growth make continuity impossible.

Economic growth is an artifact of the use of fossil fuels.

Before large amounts of coal were extracted, every upswing in industrial production would be met with a downswing in agricultural production, as the charcoal or horse power required by industry reduced the land available for growing food. Every prior industrial revolution collapsed, as growth could not be sustained. But coal broke this cycle and enabled – for a few hundred years – the phenomenon we now call sustained growth.

It was neither capitalism nor communism that made possible

the progress and pathologies (total war, the unprecedented concentration of global wealth, planetary destruction) of the modern age. It was coal, followed by oil and gas. The meta-trend, the mother narrative, is carbon-fuelled expansion. Our ideologies are mere subplots. Now, with the accessible reserves exhausted, we must ransack the hidden corners of the planet to sustain our impossible proposition.

On Friday, a few days after scientists announced that the collapse of the west Antarctic ice sheet is now inevitable, the Ecuadorean government decided to allow oil drilling in the heart of the Yasuni national park. It had made an offer to other governments: if they gave it half the value of the oil in that part of the park, it would leave the stuff in the ground. You could see this as either blackmail or fair trade. Ecuador is poor its oil deposits are rich. Why, the government argued, should it leave them untouched without compensation when everyone else is drilling down to the inner circle of hell? It asked for \$3.6bn and received \$13m. The result is that Petroamazonas, a company with a colourful record of destruction and spills, will now enter one of the most biodiverse places on the planet, in which a hectare of rainforest is said to contain more species than exist in the entire continent of North America.

The UK oil firm Soco is now hoping to penetrate Africa's oldest national park, Virunga, in the Democratic Republic of Congo; one of the last strongholds of the mountain gorilla and the okapi, of chimpanzees and forest elephants. In Britain,

where a possible 4.4 billion barrels of shale oil has just been identified in the south-east, the government fantasizes about turning the leafy suburbs into a new Niger delta. To this end it's changing the trespass laws to enable drilling without consent and offering lavish bribes to local people. These new reserves solve nothing. They do not end our hunger for resources; they exacerbate it.

The trajectory of compound growth shows that the scouring of the planet has only just begun. As the volume of the global economy expands, everywhere that contains something concentrated, unusual, precious, will be sought out and exploited, its resources extracted and dispersed, the world's diverse and differentiated marvels reduced to the same grey stubble.

Some people try to solve the impossible equation with the myth of dematerialisation: the claim that as processes become more efficient and gadgets are miniaturised, we use, in aggregate, fewer materials. There is no sign that this is happening. Iron ore production has risen 180% in 10 years. The trade body Forest Industries tells us that "global paper consumption is at a record high level and it will continue to grow." If, in the digital age, we won't reduce even our consumption of paper, what hope is there for other commodities?

Look at the lives of the super-rich, who set the pace for global consumption. Are their yachts getting smaller? Their houses? Their artworks? Their purchase of rare woods, rare fish, rare stone? Those with the means buy ever bigger houses to store the growing stash of stuff they

will not live long enough to use. By unremarked accretions, ever more of the surface of the planet is used to extract, manufacture and store things we don't need. Perhaps it's unsurprising that fantasies about colonising space – which tell us we can export our problems instead of solving them – have resurfaced.

As the philosopher Michael Rowan points out, the inevitabilities of compound growth mean that if last year's predicted global growth rate for 2014 (3.1%) is sustained, even if we miraculously reduced the consumption of raw materials by 90%, we delay the inevitable by just 75 years. Efficiency solves nothing while growth continues.

The inescapable failure of a society built upon growth and its destruction of the Earth's living systems are the overwhelming facts of our existence. As a result, they are mentioned almost nowhere. They are the 21st century's great taboo, the subjects guaranteed to alienate your friends and neighbours. We live as if trapped inside a Sunday supplement: obsessed with fame, fashion and the three dreary staples of middle-class conversation: recipes, renovations and resorts. Anything but the topic that demands our attention.

Statements of the bleeding obvious, the outcomes of basic arithmetic, are treated as exotic and unpardonable distractions, while the impossible proposition by which we live is regarded as so sane and normal and unremarkable that it isn't worthy of mention. That's how you measure the depth of this problem: by our inability even to discuss it.

Le Jour de Dan Est Arrivé

By Tavita

The top four teams playing rugby on French territory happen to be playing each other this weekend.

Current leaders of the French Top 14, Clermont face fourth place Racing-Metro 92 and second placed Toulouse take on third placed Toulon in another epic between the two greatest rivals in Northern Hemisphere rugby.

Wow!

What a weekend.....

Or, at least, it would have been thirty years ago

Oh, mon dieu, those were the days!

Remember 1986, or thereabouts? A season when our local lads, champions of the Mini-Games, we were visited by the champions of mighty France?

Stade Toulousain.

They were coached by the one of the greatest full backs ever to play for France.

Pierre Villepreux.

At his side, as his assistant, was without doubt, the greatest loose forward ever to play for France.

Jean-Pierre Rives, born and bred in Toulouse.

They came over on a tour of the Pacific which started in Tahiti where they crushed the opposition by over 90 points.

But they didn't do quite the same at the new Tereora Stadium. In fact, it started fairly evenly.

"It was only in the second half that they realised that they up against something different from Tahiti. Then their forwards took over and they ran out fairly comfortable winners."

Both teams were totally local. But, even more significantly, Toulouse were totally French.

Nothing could be more exciting back then.

France was a great national rugby team.

They presented an

alternative vision of how to play rugby.

It was how they defeated the All Blacks in 1986 in Nantes.

Wayne Shelford, the All Black No. 8, who got several teeth removed and was knocked out cold during the game, claimed the vision was brought on by a few little pills which happened to be part of the French preparations on the day.

Whatever!

One thing was undoubtedly true.

France were something special and we were hosting their champions.

I was secretary of our union at the time and my wife and I were given the task of looking after them because we both spoke French.....

....and that was the language all French players spoke then, especially all the players who played for Stade Toulousain. The Champions of France.

But enough of bygone memories. This is 2015.

ON TO TODAY

It's round eleven of the most expensive, highly controversial club leagues in the world coming up.

The Top14.

It still takes place on French territory.

The same territory that used to feature Frenchmen playing rugby in their own unique and passionate style.

Territory nowadays, however, that offers a very different kind of French rugby.

Across the fourteen teams on display, over the last couple of years' it has featured nearly three hundred foreign players from twenty five countries other than France, mostly former international reps in the fading stages of their careers.

It has also involved a number of French extras who formed part of the most wretched French team in ever in World Cup history.

As the well-known Irish

rugby journalist, Ian Moriarty, wrote a couple of years ago.

"Has there ever been such a large disconnect between France's club teams and the international side they are supposed to serve?"

A couple of years ago, the answer may have been debatable.

Today, nearly three years on, the question is no longer rhetorical.

It's a fact.

The Top 14 has nothing whatever to do with French national rugby.

Dan Carter, now turning out for Racing-Metro 92, may politely talk the talk about the "pressure" of playing in France.

But he was more honest in his interview with the Daily Telegraph. It is nothing to do with French rugby, he said .It

was all to do with the money.

And who can blame him. A million bucks a year. In the twilight of his illustrious career, it is reported.

And the same goes for his fellow "Nouvelles Zealandais" - Ali Williams, Chris Masoe, and Joe Rococoko who join him and "légende irlandais", coach Ronan O'Gara, and the latest Toulon recruit Ma'a Nonu, and all the dozens of others. .

"Français" to the core for a season and then another contract. Vive les sponsors. Vive la television.

Meanwhile, French rugby? O my Villepreux! My Jean-Pierre Rives!

The wreckage of national rugby prepares for Japan 2019.

"Allons enfants de la patrie.... Le jour des Carters est arrivé".

Christmas & New Year Opening Hours



	<p><i>Christmas Eve Set Menu</i></p> <p>December 24th, 2015</p> <p><i>Closed on Dec 25th 2015–Jan 4th 2016</i></p>
	<p>Asian Tapas in the Tuk Tuk bar Or Asian Dinner Menu</p> <p><i>Closed on Dec 25th, 26th & 27th 2015</i></p>
	<p>AT LA CASITA FOR DELICIOUS MEXICAN MENU & PIZZAS</p> <p><i>Closed Dec 25th 2015, Closed Dec 31st 2015 & Closed Jan 1st 2016</i></p>

Call us for bookings on **26487** or email: tamarind@oyster.net.ck

PUBLIC NOTICES



INTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE HOURS

The Ministry of Internal Affairs will be closed from 25 December 2015 and reopen for normal duties on 5 January 2016. Limited welfare services and town cleaning services will be available from 28 – 31 December 2015. The Minister and Secretary of Internal Affairs wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Prosperous New Year.



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT SERVICE
TU'ANGA TAPOROPORO
COOK ISLANDS

FESTIVE SEASON OFFICE CLOSURE

The public is hereby advised that the National Environment Service office will be operating this festive season at the following times:

Wed 23rd Dec: 8am-4pm
Thurs 24th Dec: 8am – 1pm
Fri 25th Dec: CLOSED – Merry Christmas
Mon 28th Dec: CLOSED Tues 29th Dec: 8am – 1pm Wed 30th Dec: 8am – 1pm Thurs 31st Dec: 8am-1pm
Fri 1st Jan: CLOSED – Happy New Year
Mon 4th Jan: CLOSED
Tues 5th Jan: 8am-1pm Wed 6th Jan: 8am – 1pm Thurs 7th Jan: 8am – 1pm Fri 8th Jan: 8am – 1pm

The office will resume normal working hours on Monday 11th January 2016.

Please take note of these times and a kind reminder that no permits will be issued outside these hours.

For urgent matters, please contact the following people:

Vavia Tangatataia mob 55500
Phillip Strickland mob 55316
Ina Kamana mob 55506
Louisa Karika 70778

The National Environment Service wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Mr. Joseph Bridger
DIRECTOR

AKAMEITAKI'ANGA

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the hardworking "Woman of the Month" committee for supporting my nomination, the sponsors for their recognition of the work of our vaine tini, friends and family whose gifts and kind words of encouragement will be remembered for a lifetime. My Family, Pa Metua and my faith in God are cornerstones that have shaped who I am and for this I am truly grateful. During this festive season, let us be thankful for the daily blessings in our lives and wish you all a joyous Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Te Atua te Aroa no tatou katoatoa. Ake Lousie Utanga and family. (Woman of the Month for December).

TENDER



**MINISTRY OF FINANCE
AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT
GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS**

**Request for Proposal for Evaluation Services
– Air NZ Underwrite**

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) seeks suitable companies, groups or individuals to submit a tender for the provision of evaluation services concerning the underwriting of direct air services between Sydney and Rarotonga, and Los Angeles and Rarotonga. This evaluation will contain two components, and interested parties are invited to submit proposals for one or both components. The first component is a Financial and Contract Review of the existing contract (requiring technical aviation industry analysis), while the second component will be an Economic, Social and Environmental Review of the underwrite agreement and the associated costs and benefits to the Cook Islands.

For further information in regards to the Request for Proposal for Evaluation Services – Air New Zealand Underwrite, including the tender documents please visit:

<http://procurement.gov.ck/current-tenders>

Or the MFEM website:
<http://www.mfem.gov.ck>

Or contact: Mr Tristan Metcalfe
Email: <mailto:tristan.metcalfe@cookislands.gov.ck>
Phone: +682 29511 ext 8314
Tenders Close: 3pm Friday 22 January 2016

PUBLIC NOTICE



CLOSURE NOTICE

Ministry of Cultural Development would like to advise that the office will be closed for the festive season from Thursday 24th December 2015 and will reopen on Tuesday 5th January 2016.

On behalf of Secretary, Anthony Turua and staff we wish you all a Merry Christmas and an enjoyable, safe and prosperous New Year.

For any enquiries during this period please contact the Secretary, Anthony Turua on 55546

EAT LESS
MOVE MORE
HEART FOUNDATION

What the stable & our heart have in common *(Luke 2v.1-7)*

Encouragement Column

With Senior Pastor John Tangi

By Senior Pastor John Tangi

Soon we will be celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For this article of encouragement I want us to look at "What the Stable in which Jesus was born and our Hearts have in common." A Stable is a place where animals live. It is dirty, stinks and is noisy. Yet Mary gave birth to Jesus in this place. The birth of Jesus means little or nothing to us if He has not been born in our hearts. Now let us look at what the Stable and our Hearts have in common.

1. BOTH ARE PLACES WHERE GOD HAS CHOSEN FOR HIS SON TO ENTER. God made the choice of where Jesus was to be born. Micah 5v.2 is a prophecy of where Jesus is to be born. It reads "Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah. But the Lord will choose one of your people to rule the nation – someone whose family goes back to ancient times." Again, Galatians 4v.4-5 reads ".God sent His Son, and a woman gave birth to Him...so He could set us free from the law, and we could become God's children." God has also chosen our hearts, for His Son Jesus to dwell in. Ephesians 3v.17 reads "...Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. Stand firm and be deeply rooted in His love."

2. BOTH ARE PLACES THAT ARE UNWORTHY OF DIVINE ROYALTY. The stable is a dirty place; it's a dark place, and a defiled place, so as our hearts. Jeremiah 17v.9 reads

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..." It is because of our deceitfulness, our unworthiness that Jesus was born in the stable to show us of the extent of God's love for you and I. Remember that the birth of Christ means little or nothing at all, unless He is born in our hearts. When Jesus was born in the stable, no one cleaned the stable, or remove all the dirt and the filth, or even chase the animals out, Mary gave birth to Jesus the way the stable was – dirty and unclean. Jesus was born in a dirty stable. God wanted His Son Jesus to be born in our stable, our hearts the way we are.

3. BOTH ARE PLACES THAT GOD HAS CHOSEN FOR THE BIRTH OF HIS SON. The birth of Jesus was a spiritual birth. Just as Jesus was born of the Spirit, so the Holy Spirit wants to birth Jesus Christ in our hearts. The birth of Jesus Christ is what made all the difference in the stable and He can make all the difference in our lives when He is born in our hearts. II Corinthians 5v.17 reads "Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new." Has Christ been born in your heart?

4. BOTH ARE PLACES FROM WHICH GOD HAS CHOSEN TO REVEAL HIS SON. The greatest witness of Jesus is the witness from our hearts. Through the stable, people know Jesus Christ. Through our hearts others will know that Jesus is alive in us. If Jesus is to be

revealed to the world it will be through our stables.

5. BOTH ARE PLACES THROUGH WHICH GOD DESIRES TO REACH A LOST WORLD. The stable was the gateway of God to reach the world. Amazingly, God also chooses a stable for you and I to reach the world.

May the peace and joy of God be with you during this Christmas and New Year period. May God bless you. Te Atua te arua.



PARLIAMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS
PUBLIC NOTICE
FAMILY LAW BILL SELECT
COMMITTEE

SUBMISSIONS CLOSING DATE EXTENSION:

The Public is hereby advised that the closing date for receiving both written and oral submissions has now been extended to Friday 29 January 2016, at 4pm. This is due to the high interest shown by the public on Rarotonga and the need for the physical presence of the Family Law Bill Select Committee in the Pa Enuu. Please ensure to address your submissions to; Mr. John Tangi, Clerk of Parliament, Nikao Rarotonga.

AKATUKE-ANGA I TE TUATAU E TOPIRI IAI TE AU TATA'ANGA MANAKO:

Te akakite iatu nei ki te katoatoa e, kua akatere iatu te ra e topiri iai te arikianga i te au manako tata'anga e pera te au manako ka tuatua va'a ua ia, ki te Varaire ra 29 no Tianuare 2016, i te ora 4 i te avatea ai. Te tumu no teia akatukeanga, koia oki no te inangaro o te iti-tangata i Rarotonga nei kia marama ratou, e pera te anoano maata kia tae te Kumiti Takake no te Ture Tamanako no te Kopu'tangata ki te Pa Enuu. Tuku mai i ta kotou au tamanakoanga kia; Mr. John Tangi, Clerk of Parliament, Nikao, Rarotonga.

John Tangi
Clerk

Te pae o te oraanga i Asia nei

“Living the life in Asia Brunei Darusalem”

Re'ta no Asia nei

By *Pai Toko*

Toku tae mai anga ki teia enua pakau ei tikae te vera I konei. Iaku rae aiteite te ora 'anga I konei mei to tatou enua rae.

Inara kua tāravake taku tamanako anga. Te pae o te ture I konei akaturi tikae te iti tangata I ta ratou ture.

Teia tetai aiteanga Mei te au vaine katoatoa rae. Kare okotai vaine Asia Brunei Darussalem nei e a'ao kakau taka mei te 'pikinie' na te reo papa'a ei. Me kore piripou poto.

E akamori tikae te vaine I to ratou kopapa I Asia nei. Me kua anau ia koe I Asia Brunei nei ka akamori koe I te ture o konei. Kare e ngai inū'inū tamataora I konei e kare e toa e oko kava ana I konei e te oko ava'ava.

Akamori tikae te iti tangata I Brunei nei I to ratou 'sultan'. Ite ra anau anga o te ariki kua 'invite' ere aia te iti tangata kia aere mai ki tona kainga koia oki te 'palace' kai'kai e oti kua oake te ariki tetai pakau aroa na te iti tangata.

Te ora anga o teia iti tangata Asia enua 'aū. Te ture ua ate te

iti tangata I konei e akarongo ana te akaoro I runga I te mataāra ete pāka uatu ki tetai ngai uatu ki runga ite mataāra noatu e ka ārai te mataāra.

Te uianga I konei te mataora nei au I toku noo anga I konei. Te pauanga I tena uianga manga ua. Taku pakau e reka ana au I konei e māma te ka'i e tetai pakau uatu I roto ite toa. Te penitini e rima ngauru rae tene ite rita. Tetai au ngai ere kare ratou e kite I tetai uatu reo. No reira oki e aka rare te autara kia ratou I taau pakau ka inangaro.

Te ora anga o teia iti tangata rare, okooko, ūmome taī ete tipoti. Kare koe e kite I tetai tangata uatu no vao mai ito ratou enua e rare ana ki roto nei I to ratou enua. Tākita'I uatu te tangata no vao nei e rare ana ki teia enua. Pakau ei tikae te ture I konei me topa koe ite ture araauri te noo. Me'e tane akaipoipo koe noo vaine ou akou koe araauri te noo.

No reira au itetai taime e maaraana ana au I toku enua anau.

I roto i te reo parataini e 'there's no place like home'.



Tennis Fever

By *Teherenui Koteka*

The week before last, I had the privilege of attending the Waikato Bay Junior Xmas Tennis Tournament. Why did I travel all the way to Waikato to observe a tennis tournament you ask? I'll tell you why, my little sister Tiamai Koteka participates in this particular tournament annually. However this year is the first year I have accompanied her, as a matter of fact this is the first time I have ever witnessed my sister play in an actual tournament. That might sound odd since my sister has played tennis for about six years, but fate has never been kind enough to let me watch her until now.

On many occasions I have travelled to watch my sister play

but something always gets in the way. For example in 2011 when I travelled to New Zealand to watch her play my flight was delayed and she was forced to depart for Hamilton without me. Last year when I travelled to the Manea Games to watch her play her game was held back and I missed the opportunity to watch her win the under 18's women's division.

This year it has truly been a privilege to watch her play because I have never seen her compete for something she truly wants as she does in tennis. On Monday the 7th of December my sister played the 8th seed in the New Zealand under 16 division. A feeling of pride swarmed my body as I witnessed her triumph over her

opponent. She played valiantly and although there were moments where she felt as though she would not win, she held her head up and kept her mind strong. Her game ended with a score of 5-9 in favour of my sister.

Later that day my sister challenged a girl ranked number 4 in the New Zealand under 14's division. Sadly she did not progress to the next round of the cup but I was still incredibly proud of her. In this case her lack of training this year got the better of her and her opponent emerged triumphant. However not all hope was lost because on Tuesday my sister had the chance to compete for the Constellation category, the top 16 players of the tournament.

Unfortunately on this day my sister was unwell but that did not stop her from participating in the tournament.

I can honestly say that I have never been more proud of my sister than I was that day. Although she felt sick, she showed the true will of a champion by dragging herself onto the court. Unfortunately before the day's end her sickness got the better of her. However as the day drew to an end I was content with the fact that my sister ranked in the top twelve players of her age group. After this training experience my sister will return to Rarotonga with a much more 'can-do' attitude and will begin training for whatever next year brings. Great job Tia!

An early morning riser turned on TV and was horrified that Vaka TV was broadcasting a movie that was very sexually graphic with plenty of nudity and explicit sexual acts as well as the continuous use of the 'F' word. Is this a regular occurrence to cater to a specific audience? What's the Chief Censor doing?



The Airport Authority staff are crowing about the best ever Christmas party they have ever had. Under the direction of a new Chairman every one of the 116 staff members received a \$300 cash bonus and for those in management of some sorts they received an extra \$100 Christmas hamper. Senior long term staff gave rousing speeches of gratitude and support to Father Christmas Super Brown, his Board members and CEO. It seems these Unity Building Events are not going to be held once a year at Christmas, staff say morale has never been higher. Word is there is going to be some new developments to our tourism gateway and there is excitement about the arrival of Jet Star in the New Year.



Gossip that the Islands fattest Rooster T. C for Cash is about to buy the for sale Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa is just that, gossip. It seems TOA's Potter is being credited with starting that one.



Close inspection of the Chinese machinery still parked at Te Atakura park next to the OPM reveals a buildup of rust on the machinery! Well that's to be expected if you leave machinery out in the open subject to rain and salt spray. And



word is why was the MP Moaner Ah —Oh —Knee put in charge of the Chinese machinery sent to Aitutaki when the other two Aitutaki MPs could have looked after their own machines.



Whisper is the QR is pacing round in circles a tad fidgety and upset he did not get a Quad bike. Government is now urgently requesting a suitable Quad bike from China. There will be three seats added for the QR's wife, Secretary and Aide de Comp. It is possible the QR will insist on his Quad bike accompanying him on all outer island trips. Government will make the Patrol Boat available for the purpose.



Motorist complains of local MP riding his quad bike on the road at slow speed, holding up traffic. The main point is, these quad bikes should not be on the road at all. They are not designed for road use. They are designed to be used on all terrains from farm land to dirt tracks not tar sealed public roads. This is why they are called ATVs—all terrain vehicles and have large tyres. When are our police going to wake up? Police should

have warned the MPs not to use these bikes on the roads. They should be used in off road places like plantations. Get them off the road before there is a serious accident!



How is the community going to stop hoons from speeding on their bikes? These hoons choose to take no notice of authority and speed around when no-one is looking! There has been a report of a biker going at high speed while standing on the seat! Find this man quickly as he should be in a circus performing as a clown on a bike!



Oh dear chooks! Captain's log of the vessel SS Daily had the ship headed north for the special celebration to mark the first premier Sir Albert Nicholas! Hang on, Sir Albert who? No wonder that boat is struggling to avoid the reef!



According to a PERCA report, CEO of the Pearl Authority offered the explanation that \$70,000 was spent to feature our pearls at a NZ fashion show supposedly at the "top end of the market." The top end of what? The top end is not in NZ, any

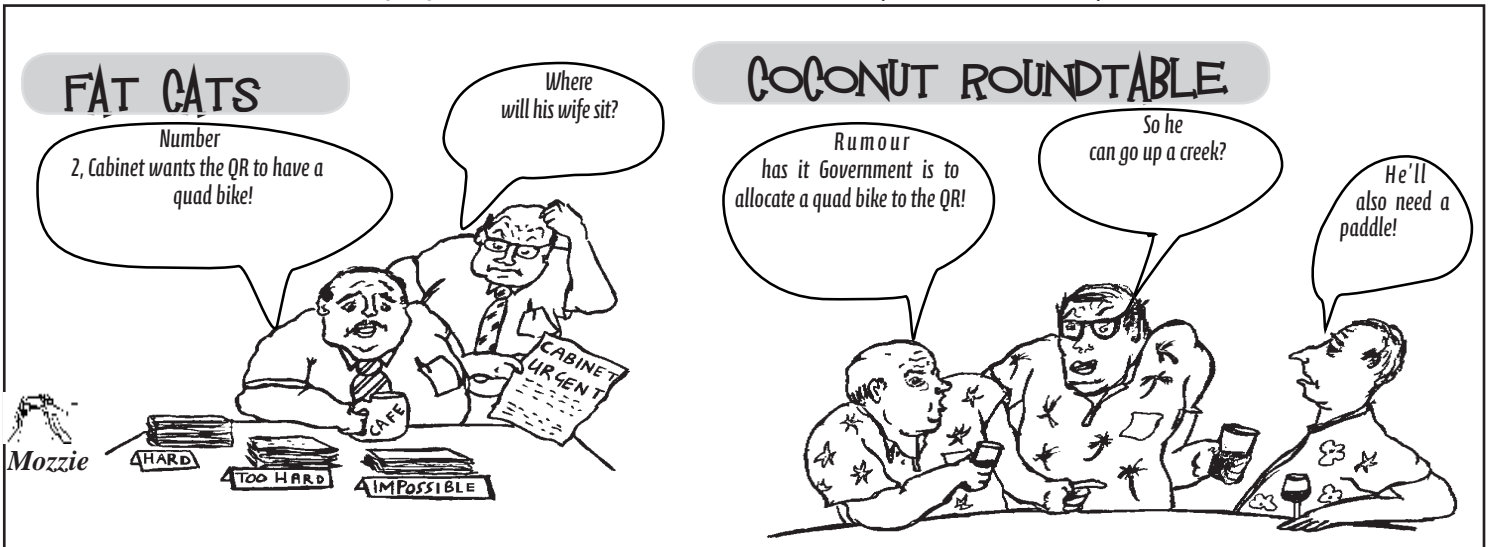
chimpanzee with Alzheimer's knows that! The top end is in Europe and the USA. In other words, London, Paris, Milan, Beverley Hills, Bel Air, Rodeo Drive, Santa Monica, New York. Better still, pay a top actress \$100,000 to wear our pearls on the red carpet at the next Oscars. Get with the programme Pearl Authority. For the sake of our pearl industry, wake your ideas up! You too PM, you're a pearl farmer! There needs to be a PERCA investigation into the way our pearls are being marketed.



How come the MMR staff member whose company benefitted from a \$40,000 plus IT contract is not facing charges under the "Secret Commissions Act?" The staff member was a director and major shareholder of the company which gained the tender, the staff member was also on the tender committee. Remember when Ed Drollet's accountancy firm won a job for government and poor Ed ended up in prison after being charged under the Secret Commissions Act? And where is the Public Service Commissioner? He's overseas!



Word is not all CIP stalwarts are singing the same tune in the outer islands. In the outer islands the grass roots are concerned about dwindling tuna stocks because of purse seine fishing in the north. They want it stopped. But our globetrotting PM needs the fishing license fees from purse seiners to fund his extensive overseas travel. No amount of explaining by the PM is going to pacify the northerners and all northern CIP MPs my find themselves turfed out come the next elections. After all, when the boats and planes don't come, northerners can turn to fish for their food but if there's no fish, what then?



PUBLIC NOTICE



FESTIVE SEASON TRADING HOURS

Te Aponga Uira will close for the Christmas and New Year holidays from **1pm Thursday 24th December 2015** and will re-open for normal operations at **8am on Wednesday 6th January 2016**.

Customers seeking new power connections or connection of approved solar installations before Christmas will need to have completed administration work (application, inspections, etc) by 4.30pm **Monday 21st December 2015**.

During the holidays, the following services will be available:

1. **24 hour** fault services remain available **7 days** a week throughout the festive period; call **25 257** for this service.
2. Receipting of electricity **payments only** on your accounts will be available at the Tutakimoa Office on the **29th, 30th and 31st December 2015** and **5th January 2016** between the hours of **9am and 12 noon**.

"Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year"

TENDER



**COOK ISLANDS MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA)**

Review of the Cook Islands Mathematics Curriculum Document

Expressions of Interest are being sought from qualified and experienced professionalstowork with the Ministry of Education to facilitate the review of the current Mathematics Curriculum to ensure it meets the intentions and requirements of the new Cook Islands Curriculum Framework 2015, the goals of the Cook Islands Education Master Plan (CIEMP) and social sector goals of the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP).

Terms of Reference for this work is available from theMinistry of Education or atwww.education.gov.ck.

Expressions of Interestwith relevant documentation should be received by the Ministryno later than Friday 8th January 2016, addressed to:

Director - Human Resources Management
CI Ministry of Education
PO Box 97
Rarotonga
Cook Islands
Ph (682) 29357, Fax (682) 28357 or email: vacancy@education.gov.ck

TENDERS



**COOK ISLANDS MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN TEACHING**

Cook Islanders with formal qualifications and/or experience in the following key areas, who wish to become primary or secondary teachers are invited to submit an application to undertake a two or three year teacher training program to start in 2016.

Applicants must have a demonstrated passion and willingness to work with students, be able to undertake tertiary studies through USP and/or be able to teach to NCEA.

The following are the secondary teaching subjects or combination of subjects required for tertiary study:

English, Maori, Social Sciences, Sciences, Mathematics, Technology, Commerce, the Arts and Education.

Applications close Thursday 31st December, 2015

Application forms are available from the Ministry or the website at: www.education.gov.ck . Send completed forms with cover letter and CV to:

Director - HRM Division
Ministry of Education
PO Box 97
Rarotonga
Cook Islands
Ph (682) 29357, Fax (682) 28357 or email vacancy@education.gov.ck



ATIU WATER UPGRADE PROJECT (PHASE 1)

Tender OPM/REDD-03/2015

Supply and Delivery of Water Pipes and Fittings

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is seeking tender submissions from reputable manufacturers/suppliers for the supply and delivery CIF of PE water pipes and fittings for the Atiu Water Upgrade Project (Phase 1).

The full tender document is available on the website www.procurement.gov.ck. Those who download the tender document from the website must register their interest with the REDD's office in writing (email sufficient).

All enquiries must be directed to the Project Engineer Ngateina Rani, Renewable Energy Development Division (REDD), OPM, Telephone +682 25494 Ext 7024, Mobile +682 54433 or Email ngateina.rani@cookislands.gov.ck.

This tender closes at 1.00pm on Monday 11 January 2016 (local time). All tender submissions must be deposited in the tender box located at the REDD's office, OPM, Avarua, Rarotonga, Cook Islands. Electronic tender submissions will not be accepted.

PUBLIC NOTICES



**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,
BTIB & NES**

The support office for Minister Turepu wishes to advise that during the festive period we will have minimal staff in attendance for urgent or emergency situations only from 24 to the 31st Dec 2015. Contact can be made on the following phone numbers – PH: 29030, mb -55335 or mb: 51102 during this time.

Normal Office hours will resume on Tuesday 05th of January 2016.

Minister Turepu and staff would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous Happy New Year in 2016.



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
FESTIVE SEASON HOURS**

The Ministry of Education will close for the festive season on December 24 and will reopen on January 5 2016.

Should you have any urgent inquiries please contact:

Terangi Charlie +68253299

Gail Townsend: +68254071

Robert Matheson: +68254701

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Thank you to all for your support in educating our young people in 2015.



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

The public is hereby advised that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be closed for Christmas and New Year holidays from Wednesday 23 December and will re-open for normal operations on Wednesday, 13 January 2016. For urgent enquiries do contact Frances Valoa (55260).

On behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister & Staff we wish you all a Merry Xmas and Prosperous New Year.

KIA MANUIA.

New Hope Church

Parekura Conference Centre

Inspirational messages to uplift and empower you

Sunday at 10.30am

PUBLIC NOTICES



The Office of the Prime Minister wishes to advise the public that the following days will be observed as public holidays in respect of Christmas and the New Year as stipulated under the Public Holidays Act 1999.

Friday, 25th December 2015 – Christmas Day 2015
Monday, 28th December 2015, in lieu of Saturday, 26th
December 2015 – Boxing Day 2015

&

Friday, 1st January 2016 – New Years Day 2016
Monday, 4th January 2016, in lieu of Saturday, 2nd January
2016 – Day after New Year 2016

The Office also wishes to advise that it will be close on the mentioned dates, but will operate as normal outside of the public holidays.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to the people of the Cook Islands from the

Prime Minister, Chief of Staff and all the staff of the Office of the Prime Minister

Kia Mataora, Kia Au E Kia Manuia no te Kiritimiti e te Mataiti Ou

Kia Orana, Te Atua Te Aroa



Business Trade Investment Board

Cook Islands

The Business Trade Investment Board (BTIB) would like to advise the public that our office will be closed for the festive season from Friday 25th December 2015 and will re-open on Tuesday 5th January 2016.

On behalf of our Minister, Board members and staff we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and an enjoyable, safe and prosperous New Year. For any enquiries during the holiday season please contact the CEO Teariki Vakalalabure Ph (+682) 58799.



PUBLIC NOTICE

The Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC) will be closed from 4pm Thursday 24th December 2015 to Monday 4th January 2016.

Normal office hours will resume from 8am Tuesday 5th January 2016.

For urgent matters, please call the Chief Executive Officer - Daphne Ringi on mobile: +682 53301.

The Public Service Commissioner and staff would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

VACANCIES



Pacific Resort
HOTEL GROUP

**PACIFIC RESORT HOTEL GROUP
A GREAT PLACE TO WORK...**

We are currently seeking the following for our properties in Rarotonga & Aitutaki:

- Executive Chef (Aitutaki)
- Executive Sous Chef (Aitutaki)
- Sous Chef (Rarotonga)
- Chefs de Partie (Rarotonga & Aitutaki)
- Demi Chef (Rarotonga)
- F&B Operations Manager (Aitutaki)
- Maître D' (Rarotonga)
- Landscaping Manager (Aitutaki)
- Qualified Builder (Rarotonga)
- Guest Services Supervisor (Rarotonga)
- Spa Therapist (Rarotonga)
- Wait & Bar Staff
- Housekeeping Staff

We are always on the lookout for talented individuals interested in a career in the tourism industry. If you want to be part of a high performing team then feel free to visit one of our resorts in person to complete an employment application form.

To apply : email – work@pacificresort.com

SITUATIONS VACANT

CARPENTERS - LABOURERS

Tel: 23 415

Landholdings LTD

FISH PROCESSORS - GENERAL HANDS

Tel: 23415

Ocean Fresh Ltd

PUBLIC NOTICE



CHRISTMAS OFFICE HOURS

The Cook Islands National Superannuation Fund

Office will be closed on the following days

Tuesday 29 December

Wednesday 30 December

Thursday 31 December

The Office will return to normal business hours

From 5 January 2016

The Board, Management, and Staff would like to
Take this opportunity to wish all our employers and

Members a very Merry Christmas and

Happy New Year

For any queries please contact the CINSF office on:
Phone 25515 or Email: enquiry@superfund.gov.ck

PUBLIC NOTICES

**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS-23RD DEC 2015 FROM
THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS**

Kia Orana kotou e te hiti tangata Kuki Airani katoatoa i te Aroha Korereka e te Mahanahana o to tatou Metua Atua tei akono meitaki e te hakakiki mai ia tatou ki tona ara au ki katoa.

It is indeed with the greatest pleasure and honour that I extend to each and every individual in our Paradise the warmest, safest and happiest Christmas as we enter a Prosperous New Year, 2016.

As we anticipate the day of the birth of Christ, may we recognize, glorify and give thanks to the Lord for the many blessings that he has bestowed on each of us every day of our lives.

We must also take time to think of those who are suffering around the world as well as our very own families who are in deep sorrow for the loss of their loved ones and we ask for their hearts to be touched by the Almighty.

We take this time to thank all our working partners from the government, private sector, business sector, NGO and Civil Society that includes the Parliament Chaplain Reverend Papa Aratangi and the new Chaplain Reverend Oirua Rasmussen.

It is in the spirit of this festive season that I convey to you a Merry Christmas and a God blessed New Year from myself, all my staff members and our respective families.

Te Atua te aroa.

Hon Niki Rattle

Speaker of Parliament



DRIVE CAREFULLY ALONG AVATIU VALLEY

We advise people that our contractors are continuing to work on the TAU new Power House project throughout Christmas and New Year, except on statutory holidays.

This means heavy vehicles, plant and machinery may be manoeuvring or parked on the roadside and there may be loose gravel and debris on the road from time to time.

To reduce the possibility of accidents, we ask that tourists and people using the Avatiu Valley road drive slowly and with care whenever approaching or passing the entrance to the power station.



**OFFICE OF THE LEADER
OF THE OPPOSITION
OFFICE HOURS – SEASON 2015**

The Office will be closed at 12 noon on Thursday 24th December 2015 and will resume normal business on Tuesday 5th January 2016.

For urgent matters, please call Edward Drollet (mob-52884) or Rosita Taikakara (mob-55713)

The Leader of the Opposition and would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.