



NEW ZEALAND PAPUA NEW GUINEA BUSINESS COUNCIL

May 2008

New Zealand Papua New Guinea Business Council AGM

The New Zealand Papua New Guinea Business Council are holding their AGM on Friday 18 July.

Following this year's AGM there will be a presentation from Gilbert Ullrich, Chairman of the New Zealand Pacific Business Council. Gilbert will speak on the strengthening of ties between the Business Councils and across the Pacific.

Date: Friday 18 July
Time: From 12.30pm
Venue: The Crowne Plaza
Cost: TBA

For more information please email katebrabant@chamber.co.nz

PNG SIGNS MILITARY TRAINING PACT WITH CHINA

Concern over shift from Western assistance PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, May 19, 2008) – The Papua New Guinea Defence Force will benefit under a military agreement signed with China recently [according to PNG Defense Minister Bob Dadae]. Under the agreement signed by PNG Defence Minister Bob Dadae and his Chinese counterpart, Papua New Guineans will undergo military studies in China over two to three years. Mr Dadae said the Taurama military hospital will be refurbished and expanded as part of the Chinese assistance. He said Chinese officials would be in PNG next month to officiate at the start of the Taurama project. Mr Dadae also secured agreement for the Chinese military to provide training for officers in technical fields. [PIR editor's note: According to Radio New Zealand International, the agreement has raised concerns in PNG, where military training and assistance has historically come from Western nations.

PNG WOOS MINING COMPANIES AT CANADA CONVENTION Largest gathering of prospectors in world

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, March 13, 2008) - Papua New Guinea's mineral exploration and development was on display last week to potential investors from all over the world at the 76th Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada convention. The annual Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) convention is the largest gathering of its kind in the world and a delegation from PNG comprising both industry and government officials were in Toronto, Canada. Vice Minister for Mining, Ano Pala led the delegation who showcased PNG's mineral and exploration potential during the convention. "I am excited by the prospects and opportunities that are available to PNG as a preferred destination for mining and exploration which was evident when many prospective investors showed interest during PNG's exhibition," Mr. Pala said. He said the PNG exhibition booth has enjoyed a steady flow of delegates who have expressed a genuine request for additional information. "We held a number of one-on-one discussions during the convention with both current and potential investors and I am confident that a number of these potential investors will be coming to PNG this year to take up our offer," Pala said.





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PNG TO REVIEW \$10 WEEK MINIMUM WAGE

Last review reduced minimum wage

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National, March 19, 2008) – Papua New Guinea's minimum wage of PGK26.95 [US\$10 per week] will be reviewed soon as a result of cabinet's decision to set up a 2008 Minimum Wages Determination Board. Acting Prime Minister Dr Puka Temu announced yesterday that cabinet has endorsed and approved the terms of reference (TOR) for the establishment of the board. He said the board would review and determine the current fixation policy and minimum wages. [PIR editor's note: A wage review board in 2001 reportedly recommended a minimum wage hike to 60.42 kina per week (about US\$18) but the proposal – which would have been the first minimum wage hike since 1992 - was overturned by former Prime Minister Mekere Morauta. Several days later, according to the World Socialist Web Site, the media revealed that Morauta and his ministers, together with all members of parliament and senior officials, were receiving salary increases of 60 percent to 100 percent under a decision by the Salaries and Remuneration Commission.] Dr Temu said since the 1992 determination expired in 1995, there had been no new minimum wages determination.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO CHARGE LEVY ON GOLD EXPORTS Small-scale miners hit with 0.25 percent levy

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, March 19, 2008) – Alluvial gold miners fear they will not be paid well for their precious metal as the Mineral Resources Authority (MRA) in Papua New Guinea starts imposing an export levy on alluvial gold exporters. [PIR editor's note: Alluvial mining refers to small-scale mining, often involving hydraulics such as panning for gold.] The MRA in its notice in the media said it would start charging 0.25 per cent levy on all alluvial gold export shipments starting on Monday. Alluvial miners who wanted to remain as a group with no named spokesman said they feared the charges would be passed down to them and they would not be paid well. MRA in a notice approved by managing director Kepas Wali said the levy would be charged on the value of gold approved for export by the Bank of Papua New Guinea and all gold exporters would be invoiced by the Mineral Resources Authority. He said the 0.25 per cent levy would be based on the total value of each shipment as calculated on the morning spot price quoted on the London Metal Exchange.

PNG KINA APPRECIATES AGAINST U.S. DOLLAR Shows continuing weakness of U.S. currency

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National, March 29, 2008) – Papua New Guinea's currency has appreciated against the US dollar, from US\$0.3525 at the end of last year to US\$0.3565 as at March 20 this year, Bank of Papua New Guinea governor Wilson Kamit said. In a media statement released yesterday, Mr Kamit said the appreciation of the kina against the US dollar, an increase by US\$0.004, reflects the continued weakness of the US dollar against all major currencies, combined with the bank's intervention to support the foreign exchange market with the supply of foreign currency. "Aggressive interest rate cuts from the Federal Reserve led to the further weakening of the US dollar," he said. However, the kina depreciated against the Australian dollar from A\$0.3999 at the beginning of 2008 to A\$0.3902 on the 20th of March 2008. The depreciation of the kina against the Australian dollar stems from the





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weakening of the US dollar against the major currencies. Bank of PNG also released the December 2007 Quarterly Economic Bulletin (QEB) which presented an overview of financial and economic developments last year and developments since last December.

\$10 BILLION GAS PROJECT MOVES AHEAD IN PNG *Will supply a third of Asia's energy needs*
PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, April 9, 2008) - Partners in the Papua New Guinea's liquid natural gas (LNG) project are starting project execution planning on the US\$10 billion (PGK28 billion) venture. The project will see 10 trillion cubic feet of gas and 250 million barrels of liquids extracted and processed through a 6.3 million tons a year liquefaction facility near Port Moresby. "This is the largest private sector investment ever pursued in PNG and will double its GDP (gross domestic product) with benefits being royalties and job creation for landowners," ExxonMobil Development Company vice president of established areas projects, Alan Hirshberg, told an oil and gas conference in Perth yesterday. He said liquefied natural gas (LNG), with its relatively low carbon emissions, would supply about one third of Asia's energy needs by 2030. He said that no fossil fuel will grow faster than natural gas between now and 2030. By then, it will account for almost a quarter of global energy demand, up from 20 percent today, Mr Hirshberg said. Gas demand for power generation will grow at 2.2 percent annually, while demand in commercial, residential and industrial sectors is expected to grow at just under 1.5 percent per year, he said. Demand in excess of local production will primarily be met by LNG supply. By 2030, overall LNG demand will triple by 2030 and the regional distribution will change significantly. In 2000, the LNG business was still primarily Asian focused, much like it had been for the previous 30 years. But as a result of their increasing dependence on gas imports, the American and European LNG demand will combine to surpass Asia by 2015.

PNG LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS APPROVED Polling to begin May 17

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National, April 9, 2008) - Writs for the local level government (LLG) elections will be issued next Thursday. Polling will begin on May 17. Electoral Commissioner Andrew Trawen confirmed yesterday that Parliament had passed section 34 of the Organic Law on provincial and local level governments (Amendment) allowing for the LLG elections to be held within 12 months after the return of writs for the national elections. Parliament yesterday voted unanimously (82-0) in favor of the amendments. Before the vote was taken, Inter-Government Relations Minister Joe Pomat had explained to Parliament that according to the original law, LLG elections were to be within three months after the date of the issuing of writs of the national elections.

CHINESE WORKERS SNEAKING INTO PNG IN CONTAINERS

Lawmaker says they are bound for Ramu nickel mine
PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, April 14, 2008) – Illegal Chinese immigrants are allegedly entering the country in large numbers in shipping containers bound for the Ramu nickel mine. The ships coming from China carrying equipment for the Ramu nickel mine reportedly go straight to Basamuk Bay where the illegal migrants are off-loaded in large





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shipping containers. These illegal migrants were then reportedly doing jobs which locals could do and pushing the local landowners out of job opportunities in the mine. This was revealed by Rai Coast Member Niuro Toko Sapia on Friday when he briefly raised it during Grievance Debate in Parliament. "Not only illegal migrants are entering the country but also foreign viruses and diseases are also being brought into the country," Mr Sapia said later, outside Parliament. Mr Sapia, who said the nickel mine was a positive and enormous development and huge contribution to the country's economy, said the allegation of illegal Chinese migrants in the country represented the failure of government departments to execute their duties. "I wonder whether the people at the Internal Revenue Commission and the customs and quarantine divisions are checking these ships entering the country from overseas," Mr Sapia asked. He said the ships that came in from China did not anchor at the Madang wharf for checks but instead were going straight to Basamuk Bay where all the mining equipment was being off-loaded, among them the alleged illegal migrants.

FAILED PNG GAS PROJECT COSTS COUNTRY \$47 MILLION Government wary of future losses

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, April 16, 2008) – The State spent PGK126 million (US\$47.1 million) on the abandoned PNG Gas Project which it cannot recoup. And more millions were spent on the PNG Gas office that was established and tasked with negotiating benefits on behalf of the State with potential financiers and partners. This is stated in a brief prepared for Minister for Petroleum and Energy William Duma who has been advised against repeating the same mistakes with the upcoming liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in the country. While the State is preparing to seek financial assistance to fund its equity in the LNG projects, the brief states the Ministry of (Petroleum and) Energy was committed to develop safeguards to avoid a repetition of the financial and environmental losses seen in many natural resource projects over past decades. This includes the terminated PNG to Australia gas pipeline project, which delayed development of PNG's gas resources by over a decade. The department will undertake a review before cabinet approves any transactions in relation to the LNG projects so once the partners commit to the project, they would be liable to the State if they abandoned the project.

PNG'S RAMU NICKEL MINE TO DUMP TAILINGS IN SEA Company says waste will be "neutralized"

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, April 16, 2008) –Ramu NiCO Management Company, the operator of the Ramu nickel and cobalt mine, has promised not to endanger any environment or marine life with its proposed deep sea tailings placement (DSTP). A company spokesman said that the deep sea tailings discharge was not submarine marine tailings, while submarine tailing discharge system usually discharged the tailing into the shallow sea water. [PIR editor's note: Ramu NiCO Management Company is the subsidiary of China Metallurgical Group Corporation (MCC)] "That is not the way we are proposing to do it," the spokesman said. "The Ramu tailing solid will firstly be neutralised and stabilised before disposal and soluble metals will be precipitated. This process has been verified by positive test results. After neutralization the tailings will be discharged into a canyon 150 metres under the sea level,





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which is 70 metres below the deepest measured zone of sunlight (euphotic zone); 50 metres below the zone in which upwelling can occur and 30 metres below the deepest measure surface mixed layer of the ocean." The company has spent up to PGK3.6 million [US\$1.3 million] on the Ramu environment study in the past two years.

MARSHALL ISLANDS, PNG TO SUPPORT TURKEY'S UN BID Representatives of 16 Pacific nations invited to Istanbul

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia, April 17, 2008) – Papua New Guinea and the Marshall Islands have confirmed they will support Turkey's bid to sit on the United Nations' Security Council next year. Pacific Correspondent Campbell Cooney reports that Turkey needs the support of the 192 member states of the United Nations' General Assembly, to win a non permanent seat on its Security council for two years, starting in 2009. Last week Turkey welcomed the representatives of 16 Pacific Island nations to Istanbul. The Turkish government said it wanted to strengthen relationships with the region. After the meeting, Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan, says a majority of the countries in attendance pledged their support to its Security Council bid. Papua New Guinea Foreign Minister Sam Habal says his government is one of them. The Foreign Minister of the Marshall Islands Tony De Brum says his country will do the same. "They're the only ones who have asked us for support," Mr De Brum said. The Turkish government's also indicated it's keen to provide financial assistance to the region.

PNG GOVERNMENT BLOCKS DIGICEL NETWORK ACCESS *Move effectively sidelines the Caribbean competitor*

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National, April 18, 2008) – The Papua New Guinea Government yesterday used its numerical strength to pass amendments to the Telecommunications Act.

Effectively, the law removes the international gateway that [Caribbean] company, Digicel, has been operating for thousands of users.

Minister for Information and Communication Patrick Tammur introduced the amendments which, he claimed, were important steps in reforming the communication sector's approach to competition.

According to Mr Tammur, the law will achieve four objectives:

- Clarifying the scope of rights reserved to general carriers and mobile carriers;
- Strengthening the interconnection regime;
- Providing new class licensing regime; and
- Reducing regulatory uncertainty and risk of legal disputes.

"For the State-owned Telikom PNG, as the only licensed general carrier, the amendments make clear that international gateway rights are exclusive rights for a general carrier," he said. He said





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the Bill strengthens the interconnection regime (in order) to achieve early interconnection between carrier networks. The minister said it also provides a new class licensing regime to allow the development of private networks with appropriate regulation.

Telikom is to retain its exclusive rights to install and maintain reserve links. He said the law makes clear that mobile carriers may use physical cabling to connect network elements in connection with the supply of mobile services.

Crying foul over the restriction, Opposition leader Sir Mekere Morauta said there was no justification in the so-called staged competition. He said it will not benefit the people of this country; taking away private companies' rights. He said it created a monopoly for Telikom and will force Digicel to close part of its network. "Our people want that service; why force it to close." He said the amendments would result in high prices and poor service.

"Why remove the benefits of competition when people are already enjoying them," Sir Mekere said. "The Government wants not only to provide service but ownership, which is not in the national interest. This Government wants to be a regulator and participant. This Government wants to be a referee and a player, which will end up with one thing 'a massive conflict of interest'," Sir Mekere said.

PNG wants AusAID funding better spent

22 APRIL 2008 PORT MORESBY (Pacnews) ----- The Papua New Guinea Government (PNG) will push for the \$A360 million (US\$339 million) in annual AusAID funding to the Pacific nation to be better spent when ministers from Australia and PNG meet on Wednesday.

PNG Foreign Affairs Minister Sam Abal said the current spending was ineffective and the money would be better spent on infrastructure like roads, wharves and bridges.

A high-level delegation of Australian ministers, led by Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith, flies into the PNG resort town of Madang on Tuesday for talks with their counterparts that will further cement a new era in Australian-PNG relations. Mr Abal said ineffectual AusAID spending would be raised by PNG officials at the one-day Australia-PNG ministerial forum. The \$A360 million a year of AusAID money for PNG must be better spent, he said. "It's a lot of money and we thank the Australian government for it, but let's put it where it's needed," he said. Mr Abal said too much AusAID money was "boomerang aid", aid that Australia gives to PNG but actually benefits AusAID agencies and staff, and was not working. "It's not that they are abusing it ... but the people of Australia have a right to ask where is the money going? "PNG as recipient are also asking where is the money," he said. Australia currently gives \$A355 million (US\$334 million) a year through AusAID. It will give close to \$A400 million (US\$377 million) next year, after Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced additional funding during bilateral talks with his counterpart Michael Somare, held on the sidelines of the United Nations climate change conference in December. Mr Smith heads the Australian delegation that extends the Rudd government's Pacific fence-mending agenda after relations in the region soured under the previous Howard government over PNG's involvement in helping disgraced former Solomon Islands attorney general Julian Moti evade an Australian extradition attempt. Mr Smith, parliamentary secretary for Pacific island affairs Duncan Kerr, Environment Minister Peter Garrett, Climate Change Minister Penny Wong and other key players arrive in Madang Tuesday afternoon for all-day talks on Wednesday. Mr Smith is expected to make a bilateral announcement on the Kokoda Track, part of which is under threat by PNG landowners wanting an Australian





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company's mining proposal to go ahead on the site where 600 diggers died fighting Japanese troops during World War II. The Coral Triangle Initiative is expected to step up a notch after talks between leaders at the UN climate change conference in Bali moved to protect coral and marine life in the Coral Sea.

Australia pledges development commitment to PNG, new study looks at effects of overseas defence postings

23 APRIL 2008 MADANG (Pacnews) ----- Australian foreign minister Stephen Smith has told Papua New Guinea (PNG) that Australia is committed to its long-term development, *reports ABC Online*. Mr Smith is leading an Australian delegation to a ministerial meeting between the two countries in Madang. He responded to opening remarks by his Papua New Guinea counterpart by highlighting Australia's commitment to PNG. "We have a responsibility to give a helping hand to countries in our region who need that development assistance," he said. PNG ministers say they would like to see Australia's multi-million dollar aid package directed to what they call impact projects, such as the construction of wharfs and roads to improve economic development. Both countries are expected to sign off on several agreements this afternoon. Meanwhile, Darwin defence workers who were posted to East Timor or Bougainville in Papua New Guinea are being asked to take part in a study of returned Australian troops. The Centre for Military and Veteran Health project is the largest of its kind undertaken in Australia, comparing the mental and physical state of 12,500 troops - with half having been posted to either East Timor or Papua New Guinea. The head of the Deployment Health Surveillance Programme Professor Susan Treloar said they are looking for any medical side effects that may be connected with people back from overseas postings. "Psychological factors and diseases, it's quite broad ranging, but we really want to pick up quickly whether there are any health problems that look as though they are going to be associated with these locations or operations." She said the results of the study would have a big impact on how current and future defence force missions are managed. "The results are really important, not just for themselves and for current members of the ADF, but for future members and also people separate from the ADF. "There will be longer term health outcomes that maybe important and we need to know about those."PNS

Australia asks PNG for seasonal workers plan

24 APRIL 2008 MADANG (Pacnews) ----- Australia has invited the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Government to submit a detailed proposal on a scheme that could allow its workers to take up temporary jobs in Australia, *reports The Age*. Pacific nations have been pressing Australia to allow their citizens to do seasonal work in Australia. Canberra has said it would evaluate the outcome of a Pacific workers program operating in New Zealand, and hopes to make a decision by August. Australian Foreign Affairs minister Stephen Smith, who was in the resort town of Madang for talks with PNG ministers, said PNG had been invited to outline its vision for the scheme. "We want to make a decision on the general issue in time for the (Pacific) Leaders Forum meeting in Nuie in August," Mr Smith told reporters. "It will certainly help us if we get a formal detail proposition from the PNG government." Mr Smith said his PNG counterpart Sam Abal had raised the issue during Wednesday's Australia-PNG ministerial forum, and during





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previous bilateral talks. Earlier this week, the Australian Workers Union threw its support behind calls for a seasonal workers programme. AWU national secretary Paul Howes said there was a crippling labour shortage in some areas of the economy, and his union did not want to stand in the way of a solution. Unions have traditionally opposed the idea. "I think it's important that our aid program to the South Pacific is more than just sending bucketloads of cash over to those islands," Mr Howes told *ABC radio*. . . . PNS (ENDS)

REPORT DOCUMENTS ILLEGAL LOGGING IN PNG

Prime Minister Somare has vested interest in industry

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, April 24, 2008) –An Australian report into the illegal timber trade in the Asia-Pacific region states Papua New Guinea is one of the main exporters of illegal timber. The 160-page report also states some companies and politicians, including Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare, have vested interest in the logging industry. The report by the Australian Criminology Institute contains findings revenue from illegal timber exports was used to finance human rights abuses, coups and rogue regimes. The report states as much as 70 to 90 per cent of logging in PNG, the second largest exporter of tropical logs after Malaysia, is illegal and is often done by large international companies. [PIR editor's note: Schloenhardt's report, *The Illegal Trade in Timber and Timber Products in the Asia-Pacific Region*, is on page 107 of the .PDF report.] "Given the scale of illegal logging in PNG, it is estimated that timber resources will be depleted in 10 years if logging continues at the present rate," the report by the University of Queensland senior lecturer Andreas Schloenhardt, states. PNG produces about 2.3 million cubic metres of tropical logs each year and about two million cubic metres of this is exported.

PNG'S SOMARE URGED TO PUT FOOT DOWN ON CORRUPTION

Auditor says finance department out of control WELLINGTON, New Zealand (Radio New Zealand International, May 4, 2008) – The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael Somare, is being asked to take responsibility for the corruption and poor governance issues dogging all government agencies in PNG. The Auditor General, George Sulliman, has reported that records are not being kept, huge sums of money have been misappropriated and there is no control exerted by the Department of Finance. Transparency International's PNG secretary, Richard Kassman, says the report vindicates what they and other bodies have been saying for years. He says the Prime Minister and his Cabinet need to lead the way in ensuring that systems are properly followed. "The Prime Minister must take ownership at very senior level and ensure, and discipline his Ministers accordingly, and then they discipline their departmental heads accordingly. The systems are there and the people know what to do, but now you have come through where the corruption is systemic and systematic." Late last month the Prime Minister shut down a commission of inquiry into corruption within the Department of Finance, but re-instituted it four days later, following a public outcry.





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PNG VILLAGE GETS CONNECTED TO HIGH SPEED INTERNET Project funded by Australian agency

AusAID PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, May 2, 2008) – Excitement is raging throughout a rural village in the country after receiving news more than 2,500 of its people will be connected to the rest of the world this weekend through Internet. Gaire village, about an hour's drive from Port Moresby, on Saturday will see the launch of the Rural Internet Connectivity System (RICS), which is part of the Pacific RICS project aimed at unlocking the economic power of rural communities in the region. The launching will mean people will have access to high-speed Internet access and radio as part of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community initiative. The project is locally co-ordinated by Papua New Guinea Radiocommunication and Telecommunication Technical Authority (PANGTEL), Communication and Information Ministry and Telikom PNG Limited. [PIR editor's note: The Rural Internet Connectivity System will utilise a new VSAT hub and improved regional satellite coverage as a result of the AMC23 satellite, to provide access for remote communities in the PICs. It is hoped that the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) sites will benefit from the RICs programme.]

KOREAN FIRM TO PRODUCE ETHANOL IN NEW IRELAND

Some 49,000 acres of cassava involved PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, May 1, 2008) – The multi-million-kina cassava ethanol project in New Ireland Province was launched on Monday by Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare. The launching went ahead despite differences between the Kavieng District and the Provincial Government over the National Government-driven project. During the launching, Sir Michael said his government wanted to bring development to the rural areas for the betterment of the people. The project will be established by a Korean developer known as Changhae Tapioka PNG, which will use up 20,000 hectares [49,421 acres] of land at Kaut covering Putput, Tome and Lokono areas. The Korean company which has been producing ethanol from starch for the last 50 years has subsidiaries in Australia and other countries. The company's first pilot project is in Rigo in the Central Province. They will replicate the pilot project's model in Kavieng to produce ethanol for biofuel. Sir Michael arrived on Monday morning to officiate at the event while Minister for Fisheries Ben Semri and Agriculture and Livestock Minister John Hickey arrived the day before to settle outstanding land issues with the people of Kaut before the launching. New Ireland Governor Sir Julius Chan was not present during the launching but was represented by his protocol officer John Malisa.

AUS-PNG Sign Framework for Bilateral Cooperation in Tourism

Papua New Guinea and Australia have signed a framework for bilateral cooperation in tourism. The 3-year agreement was signed in Madang by PNG Culture & Tourism Minister Hon. Charles Abel and his Australian counterpart Hon. Martin Ferguson AM MP following the PNG-Australia Ministerial Forum recently. Among others, the framework will provide opportunities for greater cooperation and collaboration between the two countries in the tourism sector. These will include areas such as sustainable tourism development, management and promotion of special interests tourism, and promoting a positive environment for improved trade and investment and sustainable development. (Source: PNG TPA Garamut Newsletter - May 2008)





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BUSINESS COUNCIL

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Papua New Guinea National Tourism Conference

After 12 years since the first National Tourism Conference in 1996, the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority will again host the 5th conference in Madang on November 17 & 18, 2008. It is a domestic bi-annual tourism event for [Papua New Guinea](#) which attracts participants nationwide from industry partners and stakeholders to meet, review and discuss tourism development, achievements and shortfalls of the last decade with a view to finding a positive way forward for the tourism industry. (Source: PNG TPA Garamut Newsletter - May 2008)

Mount Hagen Show 2009

[Trans Niugini Tours](#) are pleased to announce that the 2009 programs for the famous Mount Hagen Sing Sing Festival in Papua New Guinea are now available on their web site: www.pngtours.com. The company has been successfully promoting this 'Once in a lifetime experience' for over 20 years now. Guests will be able to experience something that is only available in Papua New Guinea and is an experience definitely to tell friends and family about. Visit their website www.pngtours.com for more information.



PNG PUBLIC WORKERS OFFERED MORTGAGE LOANS

Government offers 7.2 percent interest over 40 years PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, May 14, 2008) - Public servants seeking home loans will have a PGK80,000 [US\$30,000] head start. The loans will be subsidized by the Government under the Public Service Housing Scheme. And as icing on the cake they will have 40 years to repay the loan. This was revealed by the Public Service Minister Peter O'Neill in Parliament yesterday when answering a series of questions from Kairuku-Hiri MP Paru Aihi. Mr. O'Neill told Parliament the Government's contribution of PGK80 million has been "parked" with the Bank South Pacific and the bank will add another PGK120 million [US\$46 million] to provide for the scheme. He said public servants who benefit from the scheme will have 40 years to repay the loan at 7.2 percent and should the parent die, the children can take the responsibility. O'Neill said this was the best deal by any standards and the first of its kind. Outside Parliament, he said other banks can be expected to make similar offers to compete with this arrangement. The Minister said for the first time, the Government had taken ownership of the welfare of public servants in addressing one of their major concerns.

