Minister's Foreword and Season's Greetings

Reforming, transforming and unifying the higher education sector

In 2018 there are many reasons to thank the O’Neill-Abel government for its continuing support for the Higher Education Sector in Papua New Guinea. Higher Education plays a critical role in Papua New Guinea’s social and economic development. If PNG is to become globally competitive we need to ensure that higher education is accessible to all students and is of quality and relevance to meet economic and local needs, and at the same time relevant and responsive to global demands.

Reforming, transforming and unifying the higher education sector in Papua New Guinea aims to energise and unlock the minds and potential of young people to bring about brighter economic prospects; the implementation of national objectives addressing the needs of the labour market; preparing our people for 21st century skills and innovating new industries responsive to global economic shifts and demands. These are some of the key strategic objectives of my Department as specified in the Higher and Technical Education Strategic Implementation Plan (2017-2038).

The key strategy approved by the NEC (25/2017) to reform, transform and unify the higher education system is the transfer of all higher education institutions offering post-secondary education from the Department of Education and other Government Agencies to the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST). This includes all Technical, Business, Teaching, Nursing and many other specialist higher and technical institutions including Agriculture and Maritime.

Throughout 2018 much has been achieved in laying foundations for the legal, policy and regulatory frameworks required to deliver on the promise of a higher education sector - accessible to all, meeting economic and local needs; and meeting national and international quality standards. DHERST is working with the Public Sector Organisational Reform Team (PSORT) to develop the most effective model to implement these reforms.

Early reform progress has come from positive collaboration between key education stakeholders. I congratulate the leadership and dedicated staff of my Department (DHERST) and the Department of Education (DOE) for the progress made in the various Technical Working Groups, including positive engagement with representatives from the Church Education Agencies. Collaboration with key stakeholders has accelerated planning for the transition of the Teachers' Colleges and TVET Colleges from NDOE to DHERST. In 2019 reform priorities will focus on establishing the National Skills Development Agency within DHERST, forging strong linkages between Government, Industry and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

As you prepare for the upcoming Holiday season I trust this Newsletter provides you with some interesting news and information about the higher and technical education and reform. I take this opportunity to give thanks to our Donors and all Stakeholders for our progress in 2018. I wish you and your families across the wider education community, in Papua New Guinea and internationally, a very joyful Christmas and a Blessed New Year in 2019.

May God Bless Papua New Guinea

Hon. Minister Pila Niningi, LLB, MP
Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
A key feature of the reform is to centralise the regulatory and administrative oversight of all higher and technical education institutions to DHERST to reform, transform and unify the higher education system in Papua New Guinea.

In PNG there are around 50 public and church agency institutions providing programmes in a diverse range of areas critical to our economic and social development. We have our universities training our future doctors, lawyers, scientists, and economists. Our technical and business colleges, teachers’ colleges and nursing colleges support our industries, schools and hospitals. We also have specialist colleges providing training in maritime studies, agriculture, fisheries, policing, correctional services, fire-fighting, legal practice, defence and public sector leadership and governance.

There are also over 150 private training institutions providing training in management, computer studies, hospitality, tourism and many other areas. Currently, regulation and administration of these institutions is fragmented across many Departments and agencies. The Government’s signature policy, the Higher and Technical Education Strategic Implementation Plan (2017 – 2038) aims to deliver a whole-of-government approach to guide the development of the private training institutions and to ensure the quality of their programmes. NEC Decision 25/2017 provides for the transition of regulatory oversight of higher education to DHERST and will mean:

- quality assurance by DHERST in accordance with the Higher Education (General Provisions) Act, 2014
- one national standard - the PNG National Qualifications Framework
- a funding model directed to national skills priority areas
- infrastructure and upgrading proposals assessed and implemented in accordance with national targeted development needs
- central agency responsibility for curriculum development and delivery
It is critical that the framework be put in place is well thought out, sustainable and able to deliver quality improvements to the delivery of training.

The reform is not something to be rushed. The stakes are too high for that.

DHERST is working with the Government’s Public Sector Organisational Reform Team (PSORT) and other stakeholders to design the framework for the transition. The process has many elements, involving many Departments, agencies and institutions. Important policy matters currently being worked through include:

- balancing institutional independence with appropriate regulatory oversight;
- ensuring governing bodies have sensible and rigorous appointment processes resulting in committed members with strong skills (eg. business, financial, governance);
- developing a new and stronger partnership with church agencies and their institutions to build upon their long history of service to the PNG community;
- developing staffing policies for institutions to ensure they can attract the best trainers and academic staff, both nationally and internationally;
- Ensuring that transition arrangements for institution staff and any Departmental or agency staff is well communicated and implemented in a fair and respectful way.

As you can see, this is a huge challenge. We will be keeping you updated on progress through this regular Newsletter.

Our Vision

“To facilitate and serve developments in the Papua New Guinea Higher and Technical Education Sector for economic, social growth and nation building”.

Left: The DHERST Team and premises, receiving a special blessing from His Excellency, Cardinal John Ribat, earlier this year.
Reforming, Transforming and Unifying the Higher and Technical Education System in PNG

NEC Directives

1. All higher and technical education institutions to transfer to DHERST
2. PNG National Qualifications Framework and Higher & Technical Education Strategic Implementation Plan (2017 – 2038) endorsed
3. DHERST to implement strategies in Plan including establishment of National Skills Development Agency
4. Establishment of Regional Centres of Excellence
5. All recommendations for TVET reform in TVET Needs Analysis Study Report (2011) to be implemented
6. Standards-based DipT & BEd curriculum to be implemented in all Teachers’ Colleges
7. Annual budget funding allocated through DHERST to implement reform strategies

Institutions

Universities
TVET & Business Colleges
Teachers Colleges
Nursing Colleges
Other Speciality Colleges

Policy & Decision Making

Quality Delivery & Industry Standards

Reform Outcomes

1. Empowered institutions under DHERST regulatory oversight
2. Strengthened arrangements for church agency institutions
3. Compliance with PNG National Qualifications Framework
4. National Skills Development Agency
5. Strong industry and private sector engagement
6. Targeted funding and infrastructure development
7. Upskilling of educators in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
Higher Education institutions impacted by NEC Decision 25/2017

### Universities
- The University of Papua New Guinea
- PNG University of Technology
- University of Natural Resources and Environment (Rabaul)
- University of Goroka
- Western Pacific University (under construction)
- Divine Word University (private)
- Pacific Adventist University (private)

Note: These institutions are already part of the Ministry for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology

### TVET & Business Colleges
- Port Moresby Technical College
- Bougainville Technical College
- Madang Technical College
- Mt Hagen Technical College
- Goroka Technical College
- PNG National Polytechnic Institute
- Port Moresby Business College
- Kokopo Business College
- West New Britain Technical College
- Western Province Technical College
- Don Bosco Technical Institute
- Sonoma Adventist College
- Christian Leaders’ Training College

### Teachers’ Colleges
- Balob Teachers’ College
- Dauli Teachers’ College
- Enga Teachers’ College
- Gaulim Teachers’ College
- Holy Trinity Teachers’ College
- Madang Teachers’ College
- Melanesia Nazarene Teachers’ College
- PNG Education Institute
- Rabaul Campus of DWU (Kabaleo)
- Sacred Heart Teachers’ College
- St. Benedict’s Campus of DWU (Kaindi)
- St Peter Chanel College
- Simbu Teachers’ College
- Sonoma Adventist College, Campus of PAU

### Nursing Colleges
- Lae School of Nursing
- Mendi School of Nursing
- Highlands Regional School of Nursing
- Enga School of Nursing
- West New Britain School of Nursing
- Arawa School of Nursing
- Lutheran School of Nursing (Church Agency)
- Nazarene School of Nursing (Church Agency)
- St Barnabas School of Nursing (Church Agency)

### Speciality Colleges
- Highlands Agricultural College
- PNG Maritime College Madang
- National Fisheries College
- PNG Fire Services Training College
- PNG Defence Force Training College
- PNG Defence Academy (Lae)
- Police Training College (Bomana)
- Corrective Services Training College
- Legal Training Institute
- Pacific Institute of Leadership and Governance

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**Private training institutions registered by the National Training Council under the National Training Council Act, 1991**

There are currently over 150 private training institutions offering certificate and diploma programmes registered or in the process of registration by the National Training Council under the National Training Council Act, 1991. In accordance with NEC Decision 25/2017 and subsequent directives, the registration and accreditation function for these institutions is to transfer to DHERST to align with existing powers under the HEGPA. This will ensure that a single agency is responsible for the quality assurance of all institutions—both public and private. The NTC Act will be amended to remove the registration and accreditation functions that will transfer to DHERST.
Papua New Guinea’s primary teacher colleges occupy a very special place in the education landscape, preparing their graduates to take on the challenge of delivering the curriculum in remote and urban settings, often with minimal resources in overcrowded classrooms.

The majority of these colleges were established by the church agencies, some several decades ago. Characteristically, all colleges endeavour to instil professionalism, commitment and a strong sense of purpose alongside the intricacies of pedagogy and the acquisition of knowledge.

The teacher education curriculum represents the connection between pedagogy and knowledge and needs regular updating to meet changing demands and new developments in learning and teaching.

A new standards based teacher education curriculum to support the introduction of a four year pre-service Bachelor of Education (Primary) and a related three year Diploma in Teaching is at the heart of the Government of Papua New Guinea’s plans to improve the overall quality of primary education.

Capacity building and resourcing will begin in the colleges in 2019, with teaching commencing in 2020.

At the same time, the primary teacher colleges are being transferred from the jurisdiction of the Department of Education to the Department for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology to comply with the Government’s wish to unify the higher education sector.

In this period of reform, the two Departments have established a Teacher Colleges’ Technical Working Group to facilitate the transfer from one Ministry to another. This group comprises officers from both the DOE and DHERST, together with representatives from the Church Agencies, the Teaching Services Commission, the PNG Teachers’ Association and UPNG.

Members of the Technical Working Group are committed to achieving the best outcomes for all concerned and will regularly share developments with stakeholders and the wider public.
Unification of the Primary Teacher College Sector and transfer of the Primary Teacher Colleges to DHERST

Eight Strategic Projects as planned by the Teacher Colleges Technical Working Group. These projects will be rolled out over the next 5 years

1. Creation of the Policy and Legal Framework
   The primary teacher colleges will transfer from the jurisdiction of the Department of Education to the Department for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology and when policies have been agreed and supporting legislation comes into effect. This will then create the enabling environment for the transition to take place.

2. Implementation of the BEd (Primary)/DipT
   A key aspect of the reform process is the implementation in all teacher colleges of the pre-service Bachelor of Education (Primary) and Diploma in Teaching (BEd/DipT) first published in 2014 and already being delivered in three colleges. In the wake of the Outcomes Based Education Exit Report of 2013 that recommended a return to a basic three year diploma for primary teachers, this is a four year degree programme designed to improve further the quality of initial teacher education and to align it with the standards based curriculum now being taught in primary schools. The programme has been approved by the National Higher and Technical Education Board.

3. Curriculum Review of the current BEd/DipT
   The pre-service BEd/DipT has been in use for almost five years and will be reviewed every fifth year to ensure that its core content is relevant and up-to-date in terms of international best practice. The degree will be reviewed in 2019, coinciding with its introduction to state, provincial and agency colleges. DHERST will lead on this review, that will in all probability focus on Y1 of the programme, taking each of the successive years in turn until the entire core content has been examined and, where necessary revised to meet changing practice and the outcomes of new research in teacher education.
   Lecturer upskilling in the core content of the degree, for example in maths, science and English, is already under consideration.

4. Strengthen College and System Leadership
   A key outcome of transferring the Teachers’ Colleges to DHERST is to create a framework that ensures that the Colleges have strong and effective governing bodies.
   Governing bodies work best with enthusiastic members with a varied skill base. Colleges will seek members with expertise in educational matters, governance, management and finance to ensure they operate at a high level and provide quality education. The process for the appointment of governing body members is being developed as part of Project 1.
   Quality Assurance and inspection of the colleges will together drive up standards of learning and teaching.
   As part of the transition process, extensive capacity development will be tailored to the needs of governors, principals, deputy principals and subject leaders.

5. Appointments to the teacher colleges
   Teachers’ Colleges operate most effectively when they have strong leadership and committed well-trained staff. To achieve this, Colleges need to be able to attract the best leaders and teachers.
   A key outcome of transferring the Teachers’ Colleges to DHERST is to develop a framework that will Colleges to attract and retain the best national and international staff.
   The process for the appointment of Principals and College staff is part of the work being undertaken in Project 1.

6. Transfer of Staff to DHERST
   The DOE, in the shape of its Teacher Education Division, has over many decades, nurtured the development of primary teacher education in Papua New Guinea.
   The considerable experience that exists in matters concerning, for example the curriculum, inspection and the operation of the colleges is rightly acknowledged by the Teacher Colleges’ Technical Working Group.
   As and when the transition process is facilitated by the enabling legislation necessary to propose the transfer of staff from the DOE to DHERST, careful account will be taken of existing skills and expertise in the Teacher Education Division that will be needed as the colleges become an integral part of the higher education system.

7. Centres of Excellence
   The Government of Papua New Guinea is committed to the creation of Centres of Excellence in Technical Education, reflected not only in NEC Decision 25/2017 but also in the DHERST Higher and Technical Education Plan that runs from 2017 – 2038.
   Similarly, Teacher Colleges that meet the necessary criteria will become eligible for recognition as Centres of Excellence. These criteria include sustained performance at the highest levels in quality of leadership; governance; strategic planning; financial stability; lecturer qualification and competence; delivery of the teacher education curriculum; student outcomes and, importantly, the ability to perform at a high level as a centre of professional development for serving teachers.
   DHERST will lead on the identification of eligible colleges once the transition process is completed.

8. Unification of the Primary Teacher College Sector
   A fundamental requirement of the NEC Decision 25/2017 is that primary teacher colleges are unified within the higher education sector under the auspices of DHERST.
   This process represents a major national change project that relies heavily on the goodwill and understanding of many actors, not least government officials, college leaders and their staff but also current and future generations of students inspired to become professional educators who will serve in the primary sector.
   The impetus behind this transition process and its associated reforms is directly related to the improvement of learning and teaching in primary schools and thus the life chances and entitlements for every child.
   It is often said that the quality of an education system is only as good as the quality of its teachers. The Teacher Colleges’ Technical Working Group is united in its endeavour to provide a framework for the future within which primary teacher education is of a uniformly high standard wherever it is delivered.
Safeguarding the quality and reputation of higher and technical education and training in PNG.

Supporting higher and technical education institutions to meet regulatory requirements and obligations towards students

A Quality Framework for Higher and Technical Education - customised for each sub-sector

To ensure quality assurance activities are applied systematically across all higher education institutions (HEIs) DHERST is developing a Higher and Technical Education Quality Framework for implementation in 2019.

This Framework will take into consideration the sectoral differences between higher education institutions and is therefore aimed at a tailored approach to the regulation of the various sub-sectors of higher and technical education institutions.

Once approved by the NHTEB the Framework will be placed on the DHERST website and provide a consistent approach to the management of quality assurance activities across the sector; the implementation of a quality assurance schedule for higher education institutions; communication of regulatory requirements to higher education institutions; and dissemination of information across the sector.

DHERST's Quality Assurance Division (QAD) is embracing the challenges that lie ahead in the reformation, transformation and unification of the higher education sector. The Division is working towards ensuring that all higher and technical education students receive the education and training that will prepare them to enter the workforce, as 21st century citizens of Papua New Guinea. To achieve this, QAD has commenced the roll out of a number of regulatory and quality assurance activities designed to ensure that higher education institutions provide quality education that meets, respectively, the National Standards for Higher Education Institutional Registration, National Standards for Higher Education Programme Accreditation and the Papua New Guinea National Qualifications Framework. In 2018 QAD quality assurance activities included:

- second round quality assurance reviews of universities;
- pilot registration and program accreditation;
- information sessions relating to the National Standards and the Qualifications Framework;
- advisory site visits to institutions, and
- consultation with other government stakeholders for the transfer of functions.

The transition and reform change process will take time. It will be challenging. Our children’s future and their children’s future is worth the effort.
DHERST is currently in the process of developing an Instrument for establishing and implementing the NSDA: its objectives, functions, membership composition, structures, policies and procedures.

The Agency will have a wide range of functions, several of which will include:

- overseeing and strengthening the quality, relevance, consistency and outcomes of TVET programs in PNG
- ensuring TVET activities are demand-driven, based on the most current labour market data and meet the needs of PNG citizens and industry
- facilitating the identification and removal of entry barriers to currently disadvantaged individuals and groups and ensuring principles of gender equity and social inclusion of citizens with a disability are included in the policies and procedures of all TVET institutions
- developing, approving, publishing and monitoring the implementation of a National Skills Development Plan and TVET initiatives
- approving, in compliance with the PNGNQF, the development of formal pathways between approved national certificate, diploma and advanced diploma courses delivered by registered TVET institutions and other higher education courses, particularly University diplomas and degrees
- ensuring that National Training Packages, the National Higher Education Standards and related TVET Guidelines are compatible with and have been registered with the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS)

The draft Instrument for establishing the National Skills Development Agency will be available for stakeholder consultation early 2019.

Highlands Agricultural College in Western Highlands Province was established in 1973 and is PNG’s leading institution for agricultural studies. Currently, the College is a Unit of the Agriculture Education & Training Branch of the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) and one of the first institutions to work on transitioning to a new regulatory framework incorporating the unified model of one PNG National Qualifications Framework (Insert PNGNQF model).

With the support of the DAL Top Management, including Director Training, Mrs Cecilia Kagena, a Technical Working Group has been formed and is working on the legal, policy and administrative processes needed to transition the College. This coalition partnership between DAL and DHERST will be one of many formed during the reform process.

Improvements in agricultural output is a priority of PNG’s primary development plans including Vision 2050 and the Medium-Term Development Plans. To achieve this, PNG needs to strong educational institutions. The transition of the College to DHERST will increase the capacity of the College to deliver quality agriculture-related courses. It is essential that the college work with and for the benefit of PNG’s developing agricultural industries.

DAL will also continue to provide agricultural policy input through appropriate governance arrangements. The College is closely working with DHERST to update current curriculum and expand the range of industry relevant courses. College infrastructure, including teaching facilities and dormitories, will also be upgraded.

Paul Kil, DAL’s Chief Education Officer has been working with DHERST to help set the path for the transition.

There have been several visits by senior DHERST officers, including Acting Secretary Prof Fr Jan Czuba, to assess the College’s readiness for transition and to consider infrastructure priorities.

“The transition of the College to DHERST will see significant improvements in all aspects of the College’s operations”, says Mr Kil. “It is a very exciting time for the College and the wider agricultural sector to ensure a close match between educational outcomes and industry needs.”
DHERST has pioneered some ambitious real-time online systems innovations in three of the Department’s core functions:

- facilitating a common selection system for all Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)
- verifying the common selection criteria against each HEI program and student eligibility
- digital processing for national scholarship awards to school leavers for the academic year

In 2018, DHERST introduced the National Online Application System (NOAS) to improve data efficiency, transparency and student accountability. NOAS facilitates transparent and efficient common admissions into the sector’s Higher Education Institutions (HEI).

NOAS is an electronic translation of the conventional paper-based school leaver form (SLF), grade 12 school leavers must complete for tertiary admission in the next year. NOAS replaces the paper-based SLF process and as such complements the National Online Selection System (NOSS). Using NOAS, students can now select 5 HEI programs and backup their choices based on their subject combinations. NOAS interrelation with NOSS enables students to view updated HEI program requirements before applying for tertiary admissions.

DHERST maintains continual communication and collaboration with key agencies including the Department of Education, provincial guidance officers, patrons and students. School and provincial team visits have been instrumental in addressing critical challenges as well as providing deeper awareness of the roles of NOAS and NOSS in the higher education sector. Below is an account from a provincial team visit.

Steven Matainaho, DHERST Deputy Secretary Operations, presented at the 7th APEC Conference on Cooperation in Higher Education in Vladivostok, Russia on “Education in the Digital Era: Challenges and Opportunities”.

Steven presented Papua New Guinea’s experience in going online with the National Online Application and Selection System for Grade 12 School Leavers. The early results are promising including the consequential transformational impact on other Government Services and particularly eCommerce in.

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Papua New Guinea National Qualifications Framework (PNGNQF) was developed in response to the emerging needs of learners of different age groups. Papua New Guinea’s education system has a number of independent sub-systems that are mostly detached from each other, leading to fragmented education and limited opportunities for learners.

PNGNQF provides answers to hopes and aspirations of many people who wanted in the past to continue their studies, but the system of education did not have a structure in place to facilitate such an academic progress. The PNGNQF assists each learner in achieving her or his life’s hopes. Hence, they do not have to repeat units/subjects matters needlessly, and there is greater efficiency in the way periods of training are treated.

The aim of DHERST is that the PNGNQF will help to eliminate these obstacles. Only under these circumstances, will it be possible to ensure the acceptance and credibility of PNG’s qualifications to function as a PNG academic currency on national and international labor markets.

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