



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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P.9

45th Independence
Celebrations
in Rzeszow, Poland



WHAT TO EXPECT INSIDE

PLUS MANY MORE...

3 Higher Education Reforms Signal
Generational Change

6 DHERST's Internal Quality
Assurance TVET Review

11 Milestones in the Progress of
Higher Education in PNG



Foreword from the **MINISTER**

Higher Education, Research,
Science and Technology

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN THE REALITY AND THE PROMISE OF A BETTER FUTURE: This October 2020 edition of the Newsletter celebrates the passage through the Parliament of the Higher Education Reform Bills Package on 27th August 2020 paving the way for significant reforms in the governance, management and quality of higher and technical education in Papua New Guinea.

GENERATIONAL CHANGE: In my address to the Parliament I paid tribute to the Marape-Basil Government's support to the Higher Education Sector in Papua New Guinea and thanked the Prime Minister's for his personal support in securing the most significant generational change in the Higher Education system of Papua New Guinea. In the Parliament I also acknowledged my predecessor, the Hon. Pila Niningi and former Prime Minister the Hon. Peter O'Neill for their vision and commitment in initiating the fundamental Reforms now in place for the benefit of PNG for many decades to come.

ACHIEVING QUALITY, RELEVANCE AND GREATER ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION: Higher education plays a critical role in our country's social and economic development. For Papua New Guinea to become globally competitive, we must ensure that higher and technical education is equally accessible to all students and is of a quality and relevance to meet economic and local needs. At the same time we must be relevant and responsive to regional and global demands. The passage of enabling legislation provides the framework and foundations for the Marape-Basil Government to implement the directions of NEC Decision 25/2017 for reforming, transforming and unifying the Higher Education System in Papua New Guinea.

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN THE REALITY AND THE PROMISE OF A BETTER FUTURE: The Parliamentary passage of the reforms has secured the law. We must now secure the promise and the reality of a better future across the education sector as a whole and for all Papua New Guineans coming through primary levels to secondary and for those continuing to technical and tertiary education. With the enabling legislation now in place, the Marape-Basil government will continue its deep commitment to policies for changing the landscape of higher education sector in Papua New Guinea. These 'green shoot' policies for transition and change are already in place for:

- offering hope and support to our young people, many of whom thought a higher education was beyond them due to the ever-increasing high costs;
- securing transparent, reliable and affordable funding to the higher education institutions and converting the previously fragmented government funding systems for institutional types into a single coherent funding model;
- linking sector policies, plans and budgets in coherent and predictable ways that support efficient sector coordination and institutional governance;
- making a sustainable difference in teacher education for the benefit of our children coming through the primary grades;
- changing the face of education access, education delivery and education quality, both on and off campus throughout Papua New Guinea;
- achieving significant improvements in regulation and quality assurance that develop and protect quality - that most precious commodity for any of our Higher Education Institutions.

There is a long way to go. The law has been secured and now we must transition to the promise and the reality of a better future.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY AND BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR: Papua New Guineans are very experienced in overcoming adversity. Our people are very resilient. Through many generations of knowledge and experience we have toughened and honed our resilience through hardship and adversity. From the outset of the pandemic threat of COVID-19 the higher education sector in 2020 has been quick to respond.

The level of innovation and resilience shown at each HEI has been remarkable. A few weeks ago the Government was considering the magnitude of the issues at stake if the higher education institutions were forced to make a premature closure. After full consultation with the leaders, staff and students of our higher education institutions, I am very pleased that together we have been able to demonstrate the type of innovation and resilience needed to complete the 2020 academic year, a decision strongly endorsed by all HEIs.

COVID-19 has important lessons for all of us, far beyond the challenge in overcoming the adversity of mere health pandemic. Working together, within and across the sector, the higher education reforms now available to us provide a pathway for building the resilience of the sector. Over time that resilience is honed and strengthened through greater access and opportunity, improving quality; and aligning our institutions closely to the needs and relevance of Papua New Guinea's social and economic sectors.

I trust you will enjoy the contents of this edition of the Newsletter.

May God Bless Papua New Guinea.

Hon. Nick Kuman MP
Minister Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology



Higher Education Reforms Signal Generational Change

HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS PASSED BY NATIONAL PARLIAMENT

The National Parliament has cleared the way for significant reforms to the higher and technical education sector in PNG with the passing of the Higher Education Reform Bill Package on 27th August 2020. The legislation formally commenced on 27th August 2020. A key element of the legislation will be the transfer of most higher education institutions (teachers' colleges, technical colleges, nursing colleges, agricultural colleges) to oversight by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology and DHERST. Institutions that are substantially funded by the State will come under new governance arrangements aimed at strengthening their Governing Councils. New planning and reporting requirements will mean that these institutions will have a clear road map as to the Government's ex-

pectations in relation to service delivery and how they their performance will be assessed. The ongoing development and roll-out of the National Higher and Technical Education Management Information System will help institutions provide transparent up-to-date data that will enable quality planning and policy making at the national level.

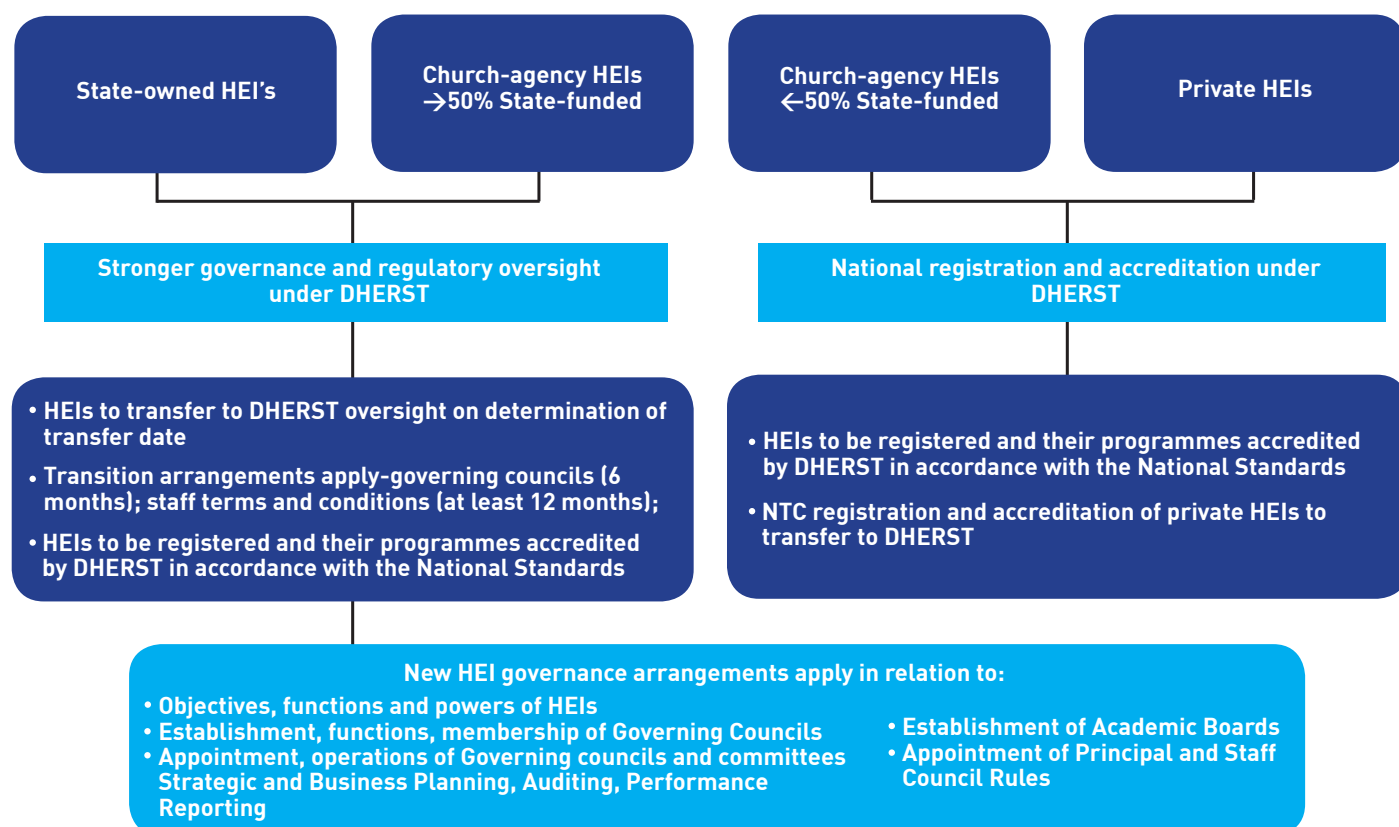
REFORMING, TRANSFORMING & UNIFYING THE SECTOR

Building stronger links with industry, business, professional associations and donors is a cornerstone of the reforms with the development of demand-driven National Curriculum and National Training Packages being a priority. The long-standing alliance between the State and Church agencies and their institutions will continue and be strengthened. Registration and accreditation processes will be centralised under DHERST with

the transfer of NTC registration and accreditation functions for private training institutions.

TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the reforms and particularly the transfer of institutions to DHERST regulatory oversight will take place over the next few years as institutions are prepared for transfer and budgetary arrangements settled in accordance with the Higher and Technical Education Sector Plan and Budget (2021 – 2025). Transfer dates will be determined by the Minister and published in the National Gazette. Transfer of the NTC's registration and accreditation functions will over the next 12 months as DHERST and the NTC finalise transition arrangements. Existing NTC registration of private training institutions shall remain valid as these arrangements are finalised.





Long-standing relationship between Church Agency institutions and Government

A STRONG & LASTING ALLIANCE

The Christian Churches have long played a key and central role in the delivery of higher education in Papua New Guinea. From the highlands to the coast and across the PNG islands, churches have been instrumental in providing higher education services in technical education, teacher training and nursing; providing training in locations where the State has not been able to. Indeed, the State and churches have worked hand-in-hand in providing these services to the public. With the commencement of the Higher Education Reform Package it is important to note that this long-standing relationship with government will be maintained and strengthened. Church-owned higher education institutions will continue to retain their unique and essential nature as independently church-owned and operated institutions. Indeed, this status is reinforced by amendments to

the Higher Education (General Provisions) Act, 2014 (HEGPA) which specifically provide for the operation of church-agency institutions and ensure that education agencies continue to have a leading role in matters of planning, governance and day-to-day operations.

RECOGNITION OF CHURCH AGENCIES UNDER THE ACT

In recognition of church-agency institutions, the HEGPA has been amended to ensure that DHERST and the National Higher and Technical Education Board recognize the following in all matters under the Act:

- The right of parents and citizens to obtain the education they wish for their children;
- The desirability for diversity of educational methods subject to the maintenance of national standards
- The right to define, develop and preserve the identity and character of institutions

of a particular nature provided the distinctions do not discriminate on the basis of race, colour or other non-acceptable criteria in a democratic society

- The central role of Christian Principles in Papua New Guinean Society.

As church agencies transition to operations under DHERST, existing funding or other forms of State support shall remain in place until any new arrangements are negotiated. The amended HEGPA provides for a process of negotiation in relation to the nature and levels of State support.

These negotiations must recognise the contribution that education agencies have made (and continue to make) to the development of higher education in PNG. Any new negotiated arrangements must be referred by the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology to the National Executive Council for approval.

SMOOTH TRANSITION TO NEW ARRANGEMENTS

Whilst many things will remain the same, there will be some changes aimed at improving the overall governance and operation of institutions to which the State provides substantial support. For example, for church-agency institutions receiving more than 50% of their annual funding (including teachers' salaries) from the State, there are new governance, planning and reporting requirements. These requirements (similar to those applying to State-owned institutions) recognise the national importance of these institutions.

DHERST will be working closely with education agencies and their institutions to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements and to build upon the strong and lasting alliance between the State and churches that has served PNG so well over many years.





Sector Wide Planning & Budgeting for Higher Education

A COHERENT SECTOR WIDE FUNDING MODEL 2021 -2025

Supporting the planned reform of the higher education system in Papua New Guinea, NEC Decision NG179/2019 approved DHERST's transition to a five year Higher and Technical Education Sector Plan and Budget (2021-2025). The transition includes the phased movement from the current five disparate funding systems (universities, teacher colleges, nursing colleges, technical and business colleges; and miscellaneous colleges) to a single coherent sector wide funding system.

In preparation for the 2021 Budget, DHERST, Planning, Treasury and Finance are already mapping to the new standardised Chart of Accounts for each Higher Education Program within the Higher Education sector. The mapping makes provision for the transfer (at the appropriate time) of specified higher education funding allocations from other Agencies to DHERST as directed by NEC Decision NG25/2017. DHERST contin-

ues to work closely with key central agencies, Treasury and Planning, on the five-year sector plan and budget processes with the goal of securing greater reliability of HEI funding as a fundamental improving management and governance from a funding perspective. There is still much work to be done in this regard as the five-year sector plan and budget processes evolve.

AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, EQUITABLE AND TRANSPARENT GRANT FUNDING

COVID 19 has presented many challenges for the 2021 Budget planning and beyond. Subject to Central Government core funding availability, the funding relationship between DHERST and HEI's will be underpinned by an affordable, equitable and transparent funding model for all post-secondary institutions. When fully established the funding model will assess the relative funding position of institutions for existing and new resource levels across five categories of Grants viz: Base Grants; Institutional Factors Grants; Innovation Grants;

Incentivised Performance Grants; and Research Grants. Equitable funding formulae for each of the Grants components will be negotiated via HEI Funding Agreements. Prior to transitioning to the full implementation of the sector-wide funding model a preferred funding model will be distributed for broad consultations with all sector stakeholders. The final funding model agreed will be phased in over a period of 5 years with the intention that no institution will receive less nominal funding in Year 1 of the phasing (commencing 2021) than it received in the year immediately prior to passage of the reform legislation (2020).

INCENTIVISED FUNDING LINKED TO HEI PERFORMANCE

When fully implemented the sector wide funding model, developed in consultation with all HEI stakeholders will provide incentives for good governance and management. The generic performance indicators for each HE Program include:

- Enrolments Growth – annual compound growth in enrolment ratios across each HE sub-sector
- Enrollee to Graduate trends - improving trendline conversion of enrollees to graduates
- Quality Assurance - satisfactory external quality assurance audits.
- Gender - steady improvement in the balance of male and female enrolment and graduation ratios.
- Demonstrated improvement in the quality of management and governance on key indicators

Changes for achieving a more coherent and reliable funding model for Higher Education were originally proposed in DHERST's publication: Financing of Higher Education in Papua New Guinea, 2011 to 2019. Trends and Issues. If you would like to know more about sector funding, the report is available via the following link to the DHERST website.





DHERST's Internal Quality Assurance TVET Review

DHERST PREPARING FOR EDUCATION QUALITY AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (EQAP) STANDARDS ACCREDITATION

DHERST has conducted an internal review of their QA systems for TVET in readiness for the transition of HEIs to DHERST. The review was conducted against the Education Quality and Assessment Program (EQAP) Standards for Accrediting Agencies. There are nine Standards and fifty-two outcomes that an accrediting agency will be assessed against to be accredited through EQAP as an accrediting agency.

Once accredited, DHERST will apply to have the (new) National Qualifications and the (new) National Training Packages registered on the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS).

The Standards will be used as one of a number of internal review tools for DHERST to analyse and review their current QA systems and processes, identify opportunities for continual improvement in

the systems and develop the necessary tools, documents or processes to improve the QA systems for TVET.

PNG HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Ongoing work is required to develop and support the nascent PNG Higher and Technical Education Quality Assurance Framework. It is anticipated that the following documents will be endorsed by NSDA and approved by NHTEB at their respective next meetings:

- National Standards for Training Packages 2020 (draft)
- National Training Package Products Policy 2020 (draft)
- Training Package Development and Approval Process 2020 (draft)
- Industry Skills Groups (ISG) Operating Framework (draft)
- Industry Skills Groups (ISG) Terms of Reference (draft)
- National Standards for Higher Education Institu-

tional Registration, TVET Guidelines, 2020 (draft)

The DHERST internal quality review process, the findings of the review and continual improvement of the QA systems will also contribute to improving the QA systems in HEI's by providing information, documents and templates in the 2020 TVET Guidelines to support HEI in meeting the National Standards for Higher Education Institutional Registration (2017).

QUALITY A KEY DRIVER UNDERPINNING HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION REFORM

Improving Quality is a key objective in Reforming, Transforming and Unifying the Higher Education System in PNG. As the Industry Skills Regulator, DHERST is preparing its participation in the EQAP review to ensure that as the Skills Regulator, their quality assurance system is continually improving and that there is strong internal commitment to quality before applying similar standards to stakeholders. As Hon. Minister Kuman stated in

DHERST June 2020 Newsletter, together, all stakeholders can contribute to,



significant improvements in Regulation and Quality Assurance of the sector that develop and protect the most precious commodity of our Higher Education Institutions: QUALITY...quality that meets national standards, social sector and industry relevance; and benchmarked international good practice





Universities combating COVID-19

Congratulations to all Higher Education Institutions in formulating and implementing response plans to deal with the unfolding pandemic situation. As the Minister's says in his foreword message, the level of innovation and resilience shown at each HEI has been remarkable. Responding to the pandemic has been a challenging experience. More than ever, people have been reminded of the importance of looking out for and caring for each other; and for safe-guarding the continuity of learning in our institutions. The information below contains brief reporting extracts from four of our Universities. Experiences from other HEI's will be featured in following editions of the Newsletter.

UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA:

We have learned that it pays to be proactive, flexible, and pragmatic. Fortunately, Papua New Guinea had the advantage of observing overseas countries as they struggled with the emerging health threat which Covid-19 was imposing on the world. Our response was to immediately adopt a proactive approach, as the most feasible solution. But what would "proactivity" look like? Even though we seemed to have the advantage of time, our initial decision was to urgently scope measures for **learning and business continuity** and major incident planning. By the third week of February, we had our Covid-19 Business Continuity Plan in place. Our early preparations included appointing and convening a Covid-19 Emergency Management Committee (CEMC), chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. Our proactive planning enabled the procurement of essential PPE, and the introduction of sanitising and cleansing plans which included the participation of our residential students. Our communications plan also had to respond to the conditions which were changing almost daily. We also began implementing plans for health education, and health service approaches to testing, isolating contacts and creating quarantine zones. Daily messaging was commu-



UPNG Students adhering to COVID-19 measures imposed.

nicated to both staff and students to stay informed about what was happening at both the national and institutional levels. As circumstances changed and evolved on a daily basis, we were flexible - the soul-mate of flexibility was pragmatism. Since the first Lockdown, we have had to be pragmatic to **accommodate the needs of more than 2,300 residential students**, reschedule our Academic Year, introduce social distancing measures in both work and learning spaces, install hand-washing facilities for personal hygiene, enhance our campus security, adapt to the introduction of **blended learning and assessment**. The blended learning requirements created a real shift in our operations as the majority of our staff had to rapidly adapt to the requirements of the delivering their courses through online modalities. This posed additional challenges at first but, with time and appropriate training, staff and students adapted well to the **blended learning and assessment approach**. It is now being institutionalised

into the University and in time will become an integral part of the university operations.

PACIFIC ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY:

From the outset the University appointed a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Committee to assess the situation and provide guidance to the PAU Community. The Committee communicated to students and staff on the protective measures that remain valid now: the use of face masks; temperature checks at the main entrance; social distancing in classrooms, dining hall, main church, and office space; and hand sanitizer facilities available throughout the campus. The two weeks of the first lockdown was utilized constructively with two weeks of solid Moodle training for our lecturers. Every lecturer attended and took the time to develop their online courses. The approach trialed the online learning platform (Moodle) a week before the resumption date, 27 April. The result was very positive. Students came with

their own smart devices. **Innovate learning approaches have been very successful** and will continue to enhance on campus learning as well as online learning delivery. Many Parents and Guardians have lost jobs and Sponsoring entities have suffered financially. Many may not be able to pay outstanding fees on schedule.

The full extent of the financial impact of COVID-19 is still unfolding. We have also experienced increased dining hall costs to comply with few numbers of students attending the dining hall at any one time in compliance with social distancing requirements. Similarly transportation costs have doubled the number of buses during the restricted times. We have not been able to have our visiting expatriate lecturers on the ground. We have kept them on the payroll and utilized extra resources to meet the gap. The Pacific Adventist University has not laid off any employees.



Universities combating COVID-19 (contd)



Divine Word University staff in compliance with imposed COVID-19 measures.

UNIVERSITY OF GOROKA: The UOG Covid-19 Mitigation Report contains all relevant measures and activities taken to address and mitigate Covid-19 at UOG. The actions taken applied to all staff members and their families, students (residential and non-residential) as well as the villages and settlements surrounding UOG. Seventy per cent (70%) of UOG students reside at the surrounding village and community locations so **it was vital to include the surrounding communities in our response planning.** The UOG Covid-19 Emergency Response Team (CERT) is made up of academic and non-academic staff members, and Buildings & Estates Division, Security Division, Students Welfare Division, Transport Division and Student sub-wardens. CERT applied all relevant health instructions and information from the World

Health Organization (WHO), National Covid-19 Coordination Centre, DHERST, UOG Management, EHP Provincial Organizing Committee; and the Clinical pathways on Covid-19 (developed by Dr. John Tonar). Throughout the lockdown period, most non-residential **students experienced financial insecurity** because their sponsors, parents, and guardians were unable to support them financially due to the countrywide lockdown. Sponsors, especially villagers, self-employed sponsors, low income earners who were laid off work could not raise the money for the scholars. Lockdown activities were comprehensive and successfully implemented. First Semester learning and assessment was successfully completed and we are well into completing learning inputs for the 2020 academic year. This has been a great achievement and a

huge collaborative effort. Despite the lifting of the State of Emergency (SOE), UOG has continued to maintain its preparedness status in case we faced any Covid-19 related cases. The Covid-19 pandemic has provided us with challenges and strategies to respond to any future pandemics. We will continue to adhere to the GoPNG, DHERST, Provincial Covid-19 Committee and UOG Management instructions and directives.

These are critical to achieving positive outcomes for our students, patrons and stakeholders.

DIVINE WORD UNIVERSITY: DWU established a comprehensive pandemic response across five Provinces and six campuses – Madang Campus, Rabaul Campus (2), Wewak Campus, Tabubil and Port Moresby Distance Learning

Centre. At the DWU Madang Campus our senior management team met with staff from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences to make a comprehensive list of necessary PPE equipment which we ordered from China. There was great excitement and some relief when the order arrived safely a month later. **The lockdown period inspired us to move to higher levels of online teaching and learning.** Students already on campus for flexible learning courses continued with their classes. Future courses in flexible learning however would be limited to those that could be run entirely online or through distance learning. All efforts were used to continue classes online via Moodle LMS. To date there have been no known active cases of the Coronavirus in Madang. This is not entirely reassuring however as there has been very little testing. As a precaution we are seeking ways to obtain additional PPE if the pandemic risk continues into next year. At the DWU Wewak Campus **internet access for students and the staff was doubled** from 750MB to 1.5 GB and a Google Classroom was set up for students with each lecturer uploading their lessons online. Health and Hygiene Practices were stepped up. Student's temperature was checked at the entrance gate. Clinic staff from Boram Hospital and our nursing students from the Campus assisted. We installed water tanks for each classroom. The DWU Flexible Learning Centre in Port Moresby reduced class sizes to less than 20, an average of 15 students per class. No one was allowed on campus unless she or he were wearing a mask. New hand washing facilities were installed at the entrance to the buildings. The DWU Tabubil Campus went into lockdown in March and is still closed due to OTML using part of the Campus facilities as a quarantine centre.

The pandemic has enriched our appreciation of both our on-campus and off-campus life and brought us closer together. We have learned innovative ways to respond.



Digital Education tablets improving Teacher Education in the Primary Teacher Colleges



Professor Tano, President of the University of Electro-Communications, conducts the formal handover of the tablets to PNG's Interim Ambassador to Japan, Mr Samson Yambon.

On Tuesday, 11 August, 2020, the splendid interior of the Embassy of Papua New Guinea in Tokyo provided a fitting setting for the symbolic handover of 4,000 reconditioned Samsung tablets that are, as reported in the June 2020 issue of the DHERST Newsletter, destined for use in the primary

teacher colleges of our country.

Professor Tano, President of the University of Electro-Communications, representing the SMILE Tablet Project, accompanied by his colleague Professor Ishigaki, the project leader, made the formal donation of the

tablets, explaining that they had been generously provided by Video Research Ltd of Japan. Professor Tano went on to thank the Gakko Toshio Company and its CEO, Mr Serizawa, for installing digital education content on each of the machines. This company has already been instrumental in supporting the development of standards based mathematics and science textbooks for use in PNG primary schools.

Mr Hiroharu Hashi, Chairman of the Japan Papua New Guinea Association, and a former Ambassador to PNG, then expressed his gratitude to the University and Video Research Ltd for their efforts, reminding his listeners of the close ties between PNG and Japan and also of the importance of the younger generation of Papua New Guineans to the future.

In reply, the Chargé d'Affaires and PNG's interim Ambassador to Japan, Mr Samson Yambon, highlighted the

Government's policy of using ICT as a tool to expand internet access across the country. Noting that the donation has largely been facilitated by Mr Akinori Ito, Director of the Port Moresby Branch of the Japan Papua New Guinea Association, and DHERST, Mr Yambon was clear that the tablets will be indispensable in the drive to improve teacher education in the primary colleges. Expressing his thanks on behalf of the Government of Papua New Guinea to the University, Video Research Ltd and the Gakko Toshio Company, the Ambassador acknowledged the importance of the SMILE project and the strong and secure relationship between the two countries.

It is expected that the tablets will be shipped from Japan in a matter of weeks to arrive in Port Moresby in October, when DHERST will make the necessary arrangements to ensure their safe delivery to the primary teacher colleges.

45th Independence Celebrations in Rzeszow, Poland

Staff from the first cohort of Western Pacific University concluded their week's celebration of Independence Day on Saturday, 19th of September. In typical Papua New Guinean Independence Day fashion, the Independence vibe began a week before the actual 45th Independence Day. The celebrations started with a photoshoot midweek with the cohort, as well as colleagues and acquaintances from the city, who gathered together to mark the day with a photoshoot in PNG colours, which included ladies in their meri blouses and a few in traditional attires.

On the 19th of September, the Independence Day was officially celebrated with a small *kaikai* of traditional meals, prepared by the Cohort and fellow PNG students from Warsaw who were invited as



well. The day was also shared with friends from University of Information Technology as

part of their engagement with the community and showcase of PNG culture. As they say,

home can be far but it is always close in our hearts. We love our homeland, PNG.



Western Pacific University A 21st Century University

The Western Pacific University is an historic first for Papua New Guinea and the Region; and testimony to DHERST's commitment to the roll-out of the i-PNG networking strategy of closely linked higher education institutions providing access and quality through digital education service delivery. The construction of the first phase of WPU is near completion and Papua New Guinea's first fully digitalised University plans to open for 240 student enrolments in 2021.

The University's Motto is *Pro Deo et Patria*

'For God and Country'. This motto inspires Western Pacific University and its academic community to serve both God and Papua New Guinea.

The University's Vision

Western Pacific University aspires to advance knowledge through research and technical education, be the leader in technology, innovate industries, thus serving society by graduating conscientious and productive global citizens.

The University's Mission

Our mission statements will implement Western Pacific University's vision. Hence, our mission seeks to contribute to the advancement of humanity through:

- Embracing ICT technology into research, learning and teaching;
- Making commitment to the quality in the academic disciplines of science, engineering and technology;
- Working with industries to ensure our educational programs and training are applicable to industry and the professions;
- Aligning our research and education with the National Vision, with appropriate national and economic priorities in the context of global economic

trends;

- Becoming an Academic Community where minds are challenged, and lives are changed through quality leadership and innovation; and
- Making a commitment to unity, service to each other our staff and students, our partners and communities while maintaining our core values and high standards of ethical conduct.

The University's Logo



The logo symbolises an open mind that explores new knowledge to invent the future. The logo therefore has no frames. Inside the logo, the University's motto is inserted: *Pro Deo et Patria*.

The bird of paradise and colours are a vital University identifier. The Blue and Gold, encompass the unifying brand across a very culturally diverse country. In this way, the University aspires to be a unifying factor, embracing the diversity of the country.

The colour blue relates to technology, efficiency and long-lasting results, reinforcing the concepts and values that a technological university wants to convey. It inspires the univer-

Planned Enrolment of 240 students for the Foundation Year commencing 2021

sity to challenge the status quo and to show that through research, quality of education and knowledge creation "the sky is the limit", pushing innovations beyond established boundaries.

The second colour is gold, represents the University's emphasis on the quality in everything it does to achieve prestige and high standards.

The Foundation Year Program is a compulsory course of study for students seeking entry into a Bachelors' program at Western Pacific University. The aim is to provide students with the foundational academic knowledge and skills required to successfully complete further study via online, blended and face-to-face delivery. After the Foundation Year students will enrol to one of the following academic programs for three years.

Total number of Graduates; 1200 by 2040

- Foundation Year – one full year commencing 2021
- International Business Management (BA) - 6 semesters (3 years)
- E-Business and Digital Marketing (BA) - 6 semesters (3 years)
- Computer Science (Engineering BA, Computer Science) – 7 Semesters

The Academic programs are outlined below

Foundation Year: WPU Foundation year, is year-long introductory program designed to help students develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence for a fully-fledged three-year undergraduate degree. Also referred to as gateway degrees or 'year zero' programs, foundation year is integrated into degree programs. Those students who complete a foundation year are required to enter into their chosen degree. Foundation year plays an essential part in helping students adjust to academic and cultural life. Studying at a university is exciting and can open up a world of opportunities, but it is also a huge com-

mitment and can be an overwhelming experience for even the most confident academic adventurers. Foundation year gives students a vital opportunity to improve their communication skills before starting full degree studies, without the added pressure that comes with starting a three-year undergraduate degree.

International Business Management:

The modern business environment becomes increasingly international. The International Business Management program equips Students with the tools, techniques, and concepts necessary to analyze and understand how international business is conducted and how companies and countries can thrive in today's global marketplace. The program of studies concentrates on the realities of managerial experience in both the public and private sectors. It covers theory as well as practice leading to the solution of managerial problems in the international context. Students will be able to combine their studies of management with a particular focus on global business issues, allowing them to acquire critical and analytical skills, along with a wide range of cross-cultural, communication and team-working skills, which will be directly transferable to the workplace whatever career they choose to follow. They will develop their ability to question and critically assess international business issues to find innovative solutions.

E-Business and Digital

Marketing: The modern business environment works under the new rules. Internet and social media became an integral part of the successful marketing. E-business & Digital Marketing program includes theoretical and practical knowledge which combine studies of management with ways of efficient use possibilities of Internet. Students will acquire skills, which let them manage in public and private sectors, by use



Aerial view of Western Pacific University.

communication and team-work and find innovative options and solutions in every career and workplace they choose.

Computer Science

Engineering : The undergraduate study program in Computer Science is adapted to the needs of computer and IT

services market and the use of information technology in the operation of any business, public administration institutions, health care units or non-governmental institutions. It prepares IT management specialists for positions in innovative organizations implementing the latest IT concepts. The

programs focuses on practical courses, workshops, trainings and internships, so that graduates have high qualifications in the area of analysis and improvement of business processes, effective project team building and successful IT implementations and are prepared to find satisfying work

in businesses utilizing modern computer technologies. The obtained degree will allow graduates to acquaint students with the work of a computer specialist, software developer and the processes of generating, converting and transferring data using specific tools (software and hardware).

Early Milestones in PNG Higher Education

Higher Education in Pre-Independence PNG

Over the decade prior to Independence a number of specialty colleges were established during the 1960's run by government and church agencies. By 1970, Papua New Guinea had more than ten Teachers' Colleges. Three of the larger Teacher Colleges were located in Port Moresby, Madang, and Goroka. Two National (Government) Universities, UPNG and UOT were established prior to 1970 and the following timeline provides a brief narrative snapshot of some of the early pre-Independence milestones.



University of Papua New Guinea campus in 1965.

- 1963: Visiting United Nations Mission to Papua New Guinea - the visiting UN mission urged the Australian Colonial Administration to establish institutions of higher education in the then Territory of Papua New Guinea.
- 1964: Appointment of the Currie Commission - in response to the UN Mission, the Currie Commission was directed to investigate the establishment of higher education in Papua and New Guinea.
- 1964: PNG Administrative College established - the PNG Administrative College (ADCOL) was established to train Papua New Guineans for administrative and clerical work in the Public Service.
- 1965: University of Papua New Guinea - the country's first University was established in Port Moresby, the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).
- 1966: Institute of Higher Technical Education - the Institute of Higher Technical Education was first established in Port Moresby and later moved to Lae as a result of public objections to having both of the country's higher education institutions located in the National Capital District.
- 1967: University of Technology - the Institute of Higher Technical Education became the Papua New Guinea University of Technology awarding its first Diplomas to graduating students in 1971.
- 1970: First Degree Graduates from UPNG - the first University student cohort graduated from University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).
- 1975: First Degree Graduates from UOT - the Papua New Guinea University of Technology (UOT) awarded its first Degrees to graduating students.



Since Independence - Developments in Higher Education 1976-2020

- **1976 at Independence:** Papua New Guinea had two fledgling national Universities producing graduates and a provincial network of Teacher Education Colleges supplying Graduate Teachers to primary and secondary schools throughout Papua New Guinea. The Universities were administered under their own Act and the Teacher Colleges were administered by the Department of Education.
- **1983: Establishment of the PNG Commission of Higher Education and the Office of Higher Education (OHE)** - the Commission (and OHE) was established by an Act of Parliament mainly to oversight and administer the tertiary scholarship scheme (TESAS). The oversight portfolio increased over time from a tertiary scholarships-clearing house to encompass Higher education policy development, quality assurance, national accreditation and increased responsibilities for higher education planning and project management.
- **1990: National Higher Education Plan** - the National Higher Education Plan of 1990 sought to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of higher education. The plan proposed merging institutions and transferring programs to reduce duplicate services. Education officials also pushed for a uniform accreditation policy requiring higher education programs to conform to national qualifications.
- **1997: Divine Word University (DWU) transitions from Institute to University status** - from humble beginnings as a Secondary High School in the 1960's, then an Institute offering business, journalism and communication arts Diplomas, DWU became the first private National University in Papua New Guinea, formally established by governing legislation under the Divine Word University Act (1999). As a multi-discipline, multi-campus University, DWU has long espoused a special Charter for the professional and leadership development of women in PNG.
- **1997: Pacific Adventist University (PAU) transitions from College to University status.** The advent of PAU's governing legislation under the Pacific Adventist University Act, (1997) brought the number of National Universities to four – two private and two public.
- **1997: Establishment of the Universities Vice Chancellor's Committee** - with four (4) and soon to be five (5) National Universities established, the University Vice Chancellor's Committee played a significant role in the leadership and future planning of higher education in Papua New Guinea.
- **1997: University of Goroka independently established** - the University of Goroka grew originally from a primary teachers' college established in 1965. In 1967, it became a secondary teachers' college, and in 1992, a campus of the University of Papua New Guinea. In January 1997, the campus was independently established as the University of Goroka under an Act of Parliament.
- **2006: PNG Academic and Research Network (PNG-ARNet) Early beginnings of the Digital Age** - In May 2006 the PNG ARNET was launched by then Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael Somare - a pilot project at Divine Word University to access Broad-band Internet via satellite technology. Just fourteen years later, the digital age is about to transform higher education in PNG.
- **2009: The University of Natural Resources and Environment and Environment (UNRE)** - UNRE's beginnings grew from seeds planted 5 decades earlier with the establishment in 1965 of the Vudal Agricultural College (VAC). In 1992, VAC was merged with Papua New Guinea University of Technology. Five years later in 1997, the college became the University of Vudal, an autonomous higher education institution through an Act of Parliament. In 1999 a four-year Bachelor of Tropical Agriculture degree programme was introduced and certificate programs phased out. The full name change to UNRE formally occurred in 2009, marking the transition to a multi-disciplined University, a development process that took place between 2005-2009.
- **2010: The Namaliu-Garnaut Papua New Guinea Universities Review** - the Review reported that "in 2009 the inflation adjusted public funding per student made available for the universities was about one-fourteenth of the level in the early years of independence." A core recommendation of the 2010 Review was to stop the real funding decline and gradually turn it around into real growth aligned with the meeting of performance indicators; and only slowly growing student numbers, so as to support improvements in the rapid declines in quality. However, the real slide in funding has continued.
- **2013: Western Pacific University (WPU)** - the first digital education institution in PNG
WPU was established by governing legislation under the Western Pacific University Act (2013). Construction of WPU is near completion and Papua New Guinea's first fully digitalised University plans to open for 240 student enrolments in 2021. WPU is an historic first for Papua New Guinea and the Region; and testimony to DHERST's commitment to the roll-out of the i-PNG networking strategy of closely linked higher education institutions providing access and quality through digital education service delivery.
- **2014: The Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014 (HEGPA 2014)** - the HEGPA was passed by the Parliament on 15 May 2014. The HEGPA has been in operation since its certification on 30th October 2014 and establishes a robust quality assurance system for higher education institutions; conditions for improving sector coordination and funding. The HEGPA laid the foundations for greater accountability from higher education institutions to government under the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology.
- **2017:** Calls for the long overdue reform of the higher education system had gathered momentum. NEC Decision 25/2017 directed the reformation, transformation & unification of the higher education system in Papua New Guinea.
- **2020:** on 27th August, the passage through the Parliament of the Higher Education Reform Bills Package paves the way for significant reforms in the governance, management and quality of higher and technical education in Papua New Guinea.

The next edition of the DHERST Newsletter will provide an update on recent major NEC Decisions and policy initiatives for the upcoming transition and reform, shaping the next half-century of Higher Education in Papua New Guinea.

