

local voice



Don't believe all bad press, PNG is full of surprises

JUST three hours flight north of Rockhampton, something so special is happening that it is almost trite to try to put it into words. That something is the integration of a whole country to a 21st century world. The country of course is Papua New Guinea.



The French lesson with David French

My third visit, I took the opportunity to get beyond Port Moresby, venturing into the highlands to take stock of the situation and to meet the locals.

With Mt Hagen the epicentre of bad press regarding sorcery, murders and payback, what I found was a distinctly tribal community that welcomed us into their villages and loved the interest offered by three long piks (white people – literally “long pig”).

Arriving at Mt Hagen airport we were met by elder Pym Memindi, a number of guides, a cook and an “assistant guide”.

Before long we had almost a bus full, and helped by the language of rugby league and the sharing of some betel nut (just awful), it was pretty clear we were not destined for the pot.

We visited “edgy” markets, saw poverty, walked in villages comprising grass huts and exquisite vegetable plots and talked at a school. The scenery was as spectacular as I have ever been in.

From the semi-trailers coursing through mountain ways to the new gas fields, the tap water provided in the villages, overt Christianity and the belief in the spirits of the dead, the contrasts were intellectual-challenging, jaw drop-

ping and moving, all at the same time.

And amongst this there are many PNG nationals who are working very hard to manage the transition from subsistence to west-ernisation.

Like bows and arrows against lightning, traditional culture must be preserved, while benefits are captured.

Pym is one of those people.

He knows that education and health are critical to his people, and that whites (for all our historical failings) are important in providing resources and knowledge.

So now I am on my way home. It's been an incredible week, and in deference to Pym's efforts I am going to give him a plug.

If you really want to do something different, contact Pym at Magic Mountain Lodge (www.paiyatours.com).

Expect clean holiday shack standard, not five star, some uphill walking, and put in an effort to be interested.

The rewards will speak for themselves.

IT JUST WON'T GO AWAY

■ DREW, CAWARRAL. I have a question 4 Mr Crisafulli whose electorate is in the amalgamated area of Townsville & Thuringowa. As a previous councillor of the area, why did he not listen to the calls for deamalgamation there? Was it because the Boundaries Commissioner did not consider it viable, the same as here & why did the minister intervene here but not there? Also was he influenced by Ludwig, Lancaster & Bruce Young?



David Crisafulli.

It is the people who whinged to turn back the clock to the days when we competed against each other in-

stead of supporting each other are the ones who were not prepared to move on. It appears that the majority of residents in this great region were ready to move forward through amalgamation, but unfortunately not everyone at the coast was ready to move forward. Hence we will all be paying a high price for their lack of foresight for a long time to come.

■ MATT, YPN. Some need to give themselves a swift uppercut and move on along with their continual waffle, de-amalgamation did not put RRC into major debt.

■ ANON. Sorry Alan (TMB 19/4/13) but many of us believe that amalgamation was progress.

it really has me stumped of how you got in this time. People must have very small memories, or have very dark glasses on. Robert the only sensible thing here to do is elect a whole new Council with no previous Council's or Mayors, some one that can run a HUGE Business. Or we are going to be (Doomed).

■ NOT HAPPY JAN. This region cannot afford to lose someone with the talent and the passion for soccer that Joe Fenech possesses, but I'm sure there are plenty who can fill the boards job.

■ ANON, FRENCHVILLE. Hoons take note! The word is out that if you continue to flout the law

with your tyre screeching and noise from your crappy vehicles, then you could face the prospect of witnessing your precious heap of metal being hydraulically crushed into a non-recognised form. But, be grateful for the fact that as your precious machine is being reshaped, you will not be expected to be firmly secured by your seat belt!

■ CC, MARMOR. Australia, a dynamic diverse vast learning scape is being remoulded into a streamlined monologue via the national curricula agenda. However it's an ill wind that doesn't blow someone any good. Parents who relocate outside of family law distance

guidelines can no longer use formal education as an excuse not to share care of children. Severe anomalies between different schools report cards and NAPLAN results would prove that true science aside, educational achievements are invariably the manipulable opinions of an over funded profession.

■ FP, GLENLEE. It's about time the countries with the “coalition of d willing” stop arming the so-called “freedom fighters” in Syria. Chaos will prevail as in Iraq, Libya, Egypt.

■ JD, ROCKY. Give this gay massage stuff a break. Its wrong and the majority of Australia knows it.



QUICK QUIZ

1. Which NZ city hosted the world premiere of *The Hobbit: The Unexpected Journey*?
2. Name the Puerto Rican replacement judge for Keith Urban on *The Voice Australia*.
3. In 2012, a tribunal heard which jockey made a “cold-blooded threat” against a steward?
4. Professor Earl Owen of Sydney was a pioneer in which medical procedure?
5. Which PM said that Australia would defend Britain “to the last man and the last shilling”?

1. Wellington.
2. Ricky Martin.
3. Danny Nicol.
4. (pictured) Microsurgery.
5. Andrew Fisher.



these seats after they do their shopping. Please put them back so they can have their rest.

■ NUFFSAID. No point in voting in fresh new councillors as Rocky region majority has proven time over that political party is much more important than gaining people with necessary skills.

■ DB, YEPP. No matter your opinion of Dominic Doblo, he is certainly an ideas man with the region at heart. Would make a good councillor.

■ HI, GMERE. Robert, South Rockhampton. Mate you couldn't put it any other way, how true it is, and getting worse by the minute. Margaret