



'THE LOCAL VOICE'

NEWSLETTER



IN THIS ISSUE:



DPLGA reassigns officers to provinces

Wutung Border Post facility

Historic Pay Reform for Local Leaders

DPLGA lead RSDP Community Audits

PNG embraces Korea's Saemau Undong (SMU) Model for Rural Development Expansion)

Top: Public Service Minister Hon. Joseph Sungi, MP (third from left) and DPLGA Minister, Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, MP (third from right) officiate the historic moment of putting Ward Councillors on Government payroll.

"HISTORIC MOMENT" - WARD COUNCILLORS ON GOVERNMENT PAYROLL

By Samson Kendeman

In a historic milestone for grassroots governance, in March 2024, the Marape-Rosso Government formally placed 7,277 Local Level Government (LLG) leaders, comprising 6,375 ward councillors and 902 Community Government members from Bougainville, on the Government's Ascender payroll platform for the first time since Independence.

This achievement follows Cabinet Decision 322/2021, recognising and remunerating all elected LLG leaders. Since its rollout in 2024, councillors have received fortnightly salaries of K300, and Deputy Presidents and Mayors receive K350.

"This is more than a paycheck – it's a long-overdue gesture," said Minister for Inter-Government Relations, Soroi Eoe. "For too long, local leaders have served without pay, support, or recognition. Today, we say: your leadership matters."

"The payroll initiative injects K2.5 million into the sub-national economy every fortnight, formalizing over 7,000 jobs and boosting rural cash flow. Minister Eoe highlighted that the move is not only about wages but about restoring dignity and rebuilding the link between government and people.

"Our councillors are the face of government in villages. This reform empowers them to lead with the recognition they deserve," he said.

This shift replaces inconsistent allowances with a transparent, accountable system that strengthens local governance. As part of broader reforms for inclusive development, the Government affirms: no leader, no matter how remote, will be left behind.

When we strengthen our local leaders, we strengthen our nation," said Minister Eoe. "This is their time to lead with pride."



DPLGA REASSIGNS OFFICERS TO PROVINCES

By Samson Kendeman



The Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA) is implementing a new structure to strengthen the social contract between the State and citizens by improving governance at the subnational level.

Secretary Philip Leo announced that one officer from the DPLGA headquarters will be deployed to each of the 20 provinces to provide technical support and ensure systems function effectively. These officers will monitor the regularity of Local-Level Government (LLG) and provincial meetings and ensure leaders and public servants meet their obligations. Responsible staff deployed from the DPLGA Headquarters through their technical support also provides oversight, ensuring strengthened compliance of all operations for District Development Authorities (DDAs), Local-Level Governments (LLGs) and Special Purpose Authorities (SPAs).

Mr. Leo emphasised the legal requirement for provincial governments, district development authorities, and their business arms to report through established channels.

Transparent reporting and compliance with the law are critical for effective service delivery.

The DPLGA will closely monitor this compliance in line with section 187A of the Constitution, the Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments, and other relevant legislation.

This initiative comes in response to widespread governance issues, including infrequent meetings and absentee leadership.

This, he said, is indicative of a systemic issue nationwide that weakens the connection between the State and its people. Leo also highlighted the concerning trend of leaders and public servants frequently being absent from their assigned posts.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WARD RECORDERS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

By Karen-Marie Lillie



DPLGA LLG staff with Ward Recorders in East New Britain

Ward Recorders are key to strengthening local governance in Papua New Guinea by collecting and managing vital community data. Through the Department of Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs' (DPLGA) digitisation of Ward Record Books, accurate information on population, services, and infrastructure now guides local planning and funding. Appointed transparently by their communities, Ward Recorders ensure data is updated, secure, and used to support evidence-based decision-making. This reform underpins the National Framework for Ward Development 2025-2035, enabling wards to drive inclusive development. With reliable data, true progress begins at the village level—ensuring better governance and improved services for all Papua New Guineans.



MINISTER'S MESSAGE



Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP

On behalf of my Ministry and the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA), I extend a warm welcome to all readers of our quarterly newsletter.

Political leadership at the provincial, district, and Local Level Government plays a vital role in providing oversight and ensuring good governance at the sub-national level. It is equally important that communities take ownership of local programs and activities to foster accountability and sustainable development.

Reflecting on the achievements of the first quarter of 2025 under the Marape-Rosso Government, DPLGA has implemented several key government decisions and initiatives. These include the successful passing of the Local-Level Government Administration (Amendment) Bill 2024, which equips us to address governance challenges, enhance service delivery, and rebuild public trust in local leadership.

We have also supported the development of the Ward Development Strategy and collaborated with the Technical Task Team on the formulation of the Decentralization Policy. Notably, we are actively addressing resettlement issues for the communities of Manam and Kadovar Islands.

Significant programs has also been made in strengthening local governance structures. We have established 43 new LLGs and 541 new Wards in the country. These newly created LLGs will participate in the upcoming 2025 LLG Elections, where they will elect their respective LLG heads and Ward Members.

In our continued efforts to improve cross-border relations and security, we have issued Traditional Border Crossing Cards to all five West Coast Border Villages, including Nyukono village. Additionally, we are preparing for the official opening of the long-awaited Wutung Border Post on 16th September, 2025, aligning this historic event with the 50th Anniversary of Papua New Guinea's Independence. This milestone will benefit the people of Wutung and West Sepik Province, while strengthening our bilateral ties with Indonesia.

At this juncture, I urge all provinces to submit their outstanding Annual Provincial Performance Reports (APPR). These reports are mandated under Section 187 (J) of the National Constitution and are essential for Parliamentary Reporting in accordance with Section 119 of the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments (OLPLLG), 1995.

I trust this newsletter will offer valuable insight into the critical role DPLGA plays in Papua New Guinea's public service landscape. With the continued support of our partners and stakeholders, we remain committed to empowering our provinces and districts for a more effective and accountable public service.



(Left - Right): PNG Electoral Commissioner, Mr Simon Sinai, Minister for Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs and Member for Kikori Open, Hon. Soroi Eoe and DPLGA Secretary, Mr Philip Leo speaking during the official issuing of Writs for LLG Elections on 24th April this year.

Inside this issue:

1. DPLGA reassigns officers to provinces (Front Page Story)
2. Minister's Message
3. Secretary's Message
4. Minister Eoe targets Wutung Border Post to Open on Independence Day 2025
5. Provinces urged to champion LLG elections
6. Historic Pay Reform for Local Leaders
7. DPLGA take lead in Community Audits for RSDP's Project Completion Reports
8. IOM presents draft IDP Policy to DPLGA
9. Simbu Province, First to furnish 2024 APPR
10. PNG embraces Korea's Saemaul Undong (SMU) Model for Rural Development expansion
11. Infrastructure Projects take flight in Middle Fly District, Western Province
12. A Legacy of Service: Honoring the Seven Pillars of DPLGA

Editorial Team:

1. Chief Editor - Philip Leo
2. Editor - Samson Kendeman
3. Editorial Team - Cretilda Alokaka & Karen-Marie Lillie
4. Graphics Designer - Karen-Marie Lillie
5. Contributors- Terence Marain, James Agigo

Photo Credits: DPLGA Media & PR Unit

Address:
PO Box 1287, Boroko
Level 5, Morauta Haus, Melanesian Avenue
National Capital District



'THE LOCAL VOICE'

Welcome to the very first quarterly newsletter from the Department of Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs (DPLGA).

As the Secretary, I am delighted to share with you our ongoing efforts to support and strengthen Provincial and Local-level Governments across our beautiful country. At DPLGA, we are dedicated to ensuring these vital levels of government work effectively to serve communities and drive local development.

Since 1949, DPLGA has been at the heart of government, serving as the main connection between the National Government and all Provincial and Local-level Governments. We oversee an impressive network of 20 provinces, one autonomous region, and one nation's capital – covering nearly 7,000 wards and 374 Local-level Governments.

Our department plays a key role in several important committees that shape national policies and programs—for instance, those focused on elections, census, reforms, and many others. By working closely across government, we champion coordinated efforts to improve service delivery and governance where it matters most.

Through our various divisions and their unique functions, we are able to work closely with District Development Authorities (DDA), City Authorities, Special Purpose Authorities (SPAs), respective Provincial Governments and monitor resettlement issues to ensure compliances are met in order to sustain service delivery and government initiatives throughout the country.

Since moving to our new office at Morauta Haus last year (2024), we've made meaningful progress—like bringing Ward Councilors onto the national payroll for the first time, a milestone guided by the Marape-Rosso Government's commitment to fairly remunerate these grassroots leaders.

We've also passed the Mulitaka Resettlement Authority Act 2024, paving the way for vital work to support displaced communities. Meanwhile, the draft Internally Displaced Persons Policy is nearing approval, promising important protections for vulnerable citizens.

Our new departmental structure, recently approved, will soon place dedicated officers in every province, bringing technical expertise directly to the frontlines and ensuring government systems work smoothly for you.

Looking ahead, we anticipate successful LLG elections around the country and wish citizens a fair and peaceful election period. Plus, we're excited to be launching soon the National Framework for Ward Development which is of significance to the country. Internally, with our rebranded DPLGA, reviving national pride and bettering our commitment to serving our people, we're proud to be upgrading infrastructure at the PNG-Indonesia (Wutung) border ahead of our country's 50th Independence Anniversary—a key moment of celebration and progress.

This newsletter captures the heart of our work and commitment to you. We invite you to explore it and stay informed about the programs and policies shaping our nation's future. Together, we all play a part in building stronger, more connected communities.

Thank you for your interest and support. We hope you find this newsletter inspiring and informative.

Wishing you an enjoyable read!

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE



Mr. Philip Leo
Secretary



Department of Provincial and Local-Level Government Affairs Minister Hon. Sorai Eoe and Secretary Philip Leo, leading staff in their dedication service early this year. Leo including staff attending Dedication Service.

DID YOU KNOW?

6,000+ Wards Are Supported Through Local Planning.

DPLGA supports Ward Development Planning across over 6,916 wards—empowering communities to shape their own development priorities at the grassroots level.

DID YOU KNOW?

DPLGA Coordinates Development Across All of PNG

The Department oversees all 22 provincial governments and 96 districts, working through Provincial Governments and District Development Authorities (DDAs) to drive local development.



Office of the Secretary
Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs
PO Box 1287, Boroko
National Capital District
Level 5, Morauta Haus
Melanesian Avenue, Waigani
Landline: 301 1064





MINISTER EOE TARGETS WUTUNG BORDER POST TO OPEN ON INDEPENDENCE DAY 2025

By Samson Kendeman

The Department of Provincial & Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA) targets opening the long-awaited Wutung Border Post on 16th September 2025, coinciding with Papua New Guinea's 50th Independence Anniversary celebrations.

This significant milestone will bring benefits to the people of Wutung and the greater WSP and further strengthen the bond between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

Minister for Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe said: "There is no better time and no better gift to the people of Wutung than to open the long-awaited Wutung Border Post and light up their homes on Independence Day, 2025. This project is a symbol of our commitment to improving the lives of our people and enhancing our relationship with the Republic of Indonesia."

To ensure the successful delivery of this project, an Inter-Agency Border Development Working Committee has been established, chaired by DPLGA Secretary Philip Leo. This committee plays a critical role in coordinating preparations for the opening of the Border Post. It includes representatives from PNG Customs, Immigration and Citizenship Authority (ICA), National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Authority (NAQIA), Department of Works and Highways, Department of Foreign Affairs, National Maritime Safety Authority (NMSA), PNG Defence Force (PNGDF), and Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary.

The PNG Government acknowledges the invaluable support from the people and Government of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as Indonesia's state power company Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN).

Potential improvements in Electricity Service into Wutung village was part of Indonesia's 78th Independence Anniversary gift to the Wutung community reflecting their continued partnership and commitment to border communities.

The Government also appreciates Indonesia's ongoing provision of essential services such as healthcare, telecommunications, and early childhood education to the people of Wutung.

Key progress on the Wutung Border Post development includes:

- **Infrastructure Readiness:** Inspections of facilities and staff housing have been completed, and refurbishments are underway.
- **Water Supply:** The construction of a water reservoir is progressing, with commissioning expected by July 2025.
- **Electricity Connection:** Efforts are ongoing to resolve delays in connecting power from the Indonesian grid to border facilities, schools, and village homes.

A budget of K10 million has been allocated to ensure the project is completed on time, with inter-agency coordination driving progress.

The opening of the Wutung Border Post will not only enhance border management and trade but also deliver critical services to the people of Wutung, improving their quality of life.

On behalf of the Government, Minister Eoe reaffirmed his commitment to delivering this project and thanked all stakeholders, especially the people of Wutung, for their patience and cooperation.

PROVINCES URGED TO CHAMPION 2025 LLG ELECTIONS

By Karen-Marie Lillie



(Left - Right): PNG Electoral Commissioner, Mr Simon Sinai officially handing over one of the first Writs for Wabag Open Electorate to Minister for DPLGA, Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP.

Minister for Provincial and Local Government Affairs, Hon. Soroi Eoe, has called on all Provincial Administrations and Governors to take ownership of the 2025 Local-Level Government (LLG) elections to ensure their smooth and successful delivery.

Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, 24 April, following a high-level meeting with the Prime Minister and Provincial Administrators, Minister Eoe acknowledged that most provinces are prepared to deliver the elections—pending the timely release of funds. He stressed that provinces must treat the LLG elections as a significant provincial event requiring both logistical planning and local financial support.

"The LLGs are the third and closest tier of government to our people," he said. "We must support them fully."

Minister Eoe praised proactive leadership by Gulf Governor Hon. Chris Haiveta, who committed K2 million to the elections, and announced his own contribution of K500,000 as Member for Kikori Open. He emphasized that stronger provincial engagement in the elections would help drive broader governance reforms and service delivery improvements.

With 6,916 ward writs issued and bi-elections planned in four LLGs, the Minister urges local leaders to provide the leadership needed for a credible and inclusive electoral process. He also commended the Electoral Commission for its ongoing support.

As Papua New Guinea works to strengthen democratic governance at the grassroots level, Minister Eoe's message was clear: Provincial Governments must lead the way to ensure their people's voices are heard.





DPLGA TAKE LEAD IN COMMUNITY AUDITS FOR RSDP'S PROJECT COMPLETION REPORTS

By Karen-Marie Lillie

As the Rural Service Delivery Project (RSDP) closes Phase 1 of its implementation across five provinces in PNG, the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs (DPLGA) is focused on ensuring a strong and accountable finish for this flagship program as being one of its top performing programs. As a Community-Driven Development (CDD) initiative, RSDP has embraced a bottom-up approach to rural service delivery—empowering communities to identify, plan, and implement development priorities.

A key part of this approach lies in ensuring transparency and accountability through a series of completion audits. These audits—financial, technical, and social and environmental safeguards—are critical in determining the success and sustainability of the project. To support this effort, 20 DPLGA officers were seconded from their regular duties and trained through internal workshops delivered by the RSDP Project Management Unit (PMU). These officers were then deployed on a 16-day mission across the five RSDP impact provinces: Western, West Sepik, Central, Simbu, and East New Britain.

Their mandate was twofold: to audit completed subprojects and to provide technical support for subprojects still under construction. The field teams were deployed between April and May 2025 and have since returned to headquarters, bringing back valuable insights to guide improvements in the design and implementation of RSDP's next phase.

The collaboration between DPLGA, the World Bank, and the RSDP PMU has been instrumental in planning and executing this critical activity. This partnership demonstrates a shared commitment to improving local governance and rural service delivery by empowering communities and strengthening provincial capacities.



Senior DPLGA staff, Benedict Gaga undergoing Financial Audit for a subproject in Toma-Vunadidir LLG, East New Britain Province last month.

At a recent stakeholder meeting in Port Moresby, Deputy Secretary of DPLGA and Director of Institutional Strengthening and Rural Service Delivery, Mr. Larson Thomas, acknowledged the dedication and hard work of all involved. He extended his appreciation to DPLGA staff, the PMU, and all stakeholders for ensuring that the impact of RSDP is both visible and meaningful for the communities it serves.

"RSDP is one of the most successful projects implemented under DPLGA, and its legacy will be the foundation for future programs," Mr. Thomas said. "With the groundwork now being laid for RSDP-2, we are excited to announce the next set of participating provinces later this year."

As DPLGA and its partners look to scale up the project, the lessons learned from this final phase of RSDP will play a vital role in strengthening future rural development efforts across Papua New Guinea.



IOM PRESENTS DRAFT IDP POLICY TO DPLGA

By Terence Marain

On the 28th of March 2025, the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) presented the draft National Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Policy to the Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) through the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA) after completion of peer review. This policy aims to address both immediate and the long-term needs of people and individuals who are displaced and affected within the borders of our country due to various forms of disasters, conflicts or through developments.

The policy initiative was endorsed in 2015 by the Central Agency Coordination Committee (CACC), and the actual work started in 2017, with DPLGA taking the leading role in developing the policy. The development process of the policy was supported by IOM with other partners dealing with internal displacements in the country. The process involved desktop review and assessments into seventeen (17) selected disaster prone provinces and districts in PNG with extensive consultations nationwide.

DPLGA Secretary Philip Leo stated that a situational analysis through field assessments conducted nationwide revealed significant policy gaps, leading to many displaced citizens lacking access to essential government services to help rebuild their lives. He highlighted the broader impacts of internal displacements, including disconnection of affected people from their communities, cultures, and economic opportunities.

The policy outlines the legislative and integrated support systems to protect and support IDPs to improve their livelihoods in the affected communities. IOM Chief of Mission David Arnold supported the initiative and stated that the policy will now provide a comprehensive framework for an effected and coordinated approach to a long-term support and integration of displaced citizens in the country.



Top Left: Earlier pictures of Internally Displaced People (IDP) in Kadovar, East Sepik Province when the Volcanic Eruption struck in 2018.



Top Right: DPLGA's Terence Marain educating Dandan Care Centre Settlers in Turubu, East Sepik Province about the Government's objectives in addressing issues of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Papua New Guinea.

Below: Photographs of road works to provide accessibility to resettled Manam Islanders in Andarum, Madang. The completion of the pilot access road from Bogja to Andarum in 2023 is a major achievement under the Resettlement Infrastructure/Land-work component of the government's response.



DID YOU KNOW?

DPLGA Leads on the Organic Law for Decentralization.

The Department implements the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-Level Governments, guiding how power and resources are shared between national, provincial, and local authorities.



Above: IOM Chief of Mission, Mr. David Arnold (left) handing over the draft policy on IDP Policy to the Department of Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs Secretary Mr. Philip Leo.

DPLGA's Provincial and Local Level Service Monitoring Authority (PLLSMA) played a vital role in the resettlement of communities displaced by the Manam and Kadovar volcanic eruptions. Through its Policy Analysis & Implementation Division, PLLSMA coordinated the implementation of key government policies, including NEC decisions on emergency response and service delivery to affected areas.

Its Performance Monitoring & Coordination Division worked closely with provinces to ensure essential services—such as health, education, and water—were restored in resettlement sites.

In addition, the Support Services Division brought together Governors, Provincial Administrators, and DDA CEOs through forums and meetings to align local and national priorities, facilitating stronger collaboration during the crisis.

By coordinating across all levels of government and supporting on-the-ground implementation, PLLSMA ensured that displaced families were not only relocated but were also supported to rebuild their lives in safe, service-equipped environments. This response reflects PLLSMA's core mission: enabling resilient, community-focused development.



NO AUDITS CONDUCTED IN PROVINCES FOR NEARLY A DECADE SENIOR OFFICIAL REVEALS.

By Cretilda Alokaka & Kathy John

"Annual audits are not optional—they are constitutional requirements that ensure provinces remain accountable, transparent, and on track with development goals."

– Secretary Philip Leo, Department of Provincial and Local-Level Government Affairs

Enga Provincial Administrator, Mr. Sandis Tsaka officially handing over Enga Province's APPR to DPLGA Secretary, Mr. Philip Leo, witnessed by Mr. Taiyen Mackey, of DPLGA's PLLSMA Performance and Monitoring team.

Enga Provincial Administrator Mr. Sandis Tsaka has revealed that provincial audits have not been conducted for almost a decade.

Speaking during the official handover of Enga's 2024 Annual Provincial Performance Report (APPR) to the Department of Provincial and Local-Level Government Affairs (DPLGA) on Monday 23rd June 2025, Mr. Tsaka stressed the importance of annual audits in guiding provincial development and ensuring effective service delivery.

"The audit reports will show us where we are heading and how far we've come in achieving our development goals," he said, calling on DPLGA to take the lead in reinstating regular audit processes.

DPLGA Secretary Mr. Philip Leo assured Enga Provincial Administrator that the department has commenced dialoguing with Auditor General's office to address this concerns.

Secretary Leo stated that S119, S114 and S113 Provincial Audit Reports are all constitutional requirements that must be completed and submitted to the responsible Minister before April 30 each year for tabling in Parliament.

Leo said these provisions under the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local -level Governments also provide punitive measures in the event of deliberate defiance to these important mandatory requirements.

"DPLGA will not hesitate to enforce these provisions should it be absolutely necessary," he said.

Meanwhile, of the 20 provinces, 14 have submitted their 2024 APPRs. These included East New Britain, Enga Gulf, Jiwaka, Madang, Manus, Milne Bay, New Ireland, Oro, Southern Highlands, Simbu, West New Britain, West Sepik, and West Highlands Province.

Once submitted, the reports will be compiled by DPLGA officers then given to the Minister to be tabled in Parliament.

On May 27th, Minister for Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs Hon. Soro Eoe, presented the APPRs for 2018-2022 in Parliament. This was the third report to be presented since the inception of the Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments in 1995.

According to the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs (DPLGA) and the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments (OLPGLLG), the submission of the Annual Provincial Performance Report (APPR) by Provincial Governments is a legislative and administrative requirement critical for accountable and effective subnational governance.

Importance of Submitting the APPR:

- Accountability and Transparency

The APPR enables provincial governments to demonstrate how public funds, powers, and responsibilities were used throughout the year, ensuring transparency in the delivery of services to citizens.

- Monitoring and Evaluation

The report provides DPLGA and the National Government with essential data to monitor and evaluate the performance of each province, helping to identify gaps, successes, and areas for improvement.

- Compliance with OLPGLLG

The OLPGLLG mandates provincial governments to report on their performance, reinforcing the principle of good governance, compliance with national standards, and lawful delegation of powers.

- Informed Policy and Planning

APPRs contribute to national planning and budgeting processes, enabling evidence-based decisions and better alignment with national development strategies like the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP IV) and Vision 2050.

- Strengthening Decentralization

Timely and accurate APPR submissions help strengthen the decentralization process by reinforcing coordination between national and subnational levels of government.





PAPUA NEW GUINEA EMBRACES KOREA'S SAEMAUL UNDONG (SMU) MODEL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT EXPANSION

By *Cretilda Alokaka and Samson Kendeman*

The Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG), through the Ministry of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs, has taken a bold step to transform rural development across the country by formally adopting Korea's Saemaul Undong (SMU) model. This significant decision, recently endorsed by the National Executive Council (NEC), marks a strategic expansion of a model that has already proven successful during a 13-year pilot in Eastern Highlands Province.

The Saemaul Undong, translated as the "New Village Movement," is a globally recognized rural development model that helped South Korea transition from poverty to prosperity in the aftermath of war. Introduced in the 1970s, SMU is built on the foundational principles of self-help, diligence, and cooperation, empowering communities to take ownership of their development and build sustainable futures from the grassroots level.

Speaking on the announcement, Minister for Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs, Hon. Soroï Marepo Eoe, stated that the government's decision to roll out the model to five additional provinces reflects its confidence in the effectiveness of the community-led approach. "The Saemaul Undong model teaches us that real progress begins when our people take full ownership of their future," said Minister Eoe. "After more than a decade of piloting in Eastern Highlands, we have seen firsthand how this mindset can uplift entire communities."

Minister Eoe emphasized that the model is not merely a development program but a transformational approach that encourages responsibility, cooperation, and innovation at the village level. The nationwide rollout of SMU aligns with PNG's broader national planning frameworks, including Vision 2050, the Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030, and the Medium Term Development Plan IV (MTDP IV). These guiding documents stress the importance of inclusive and sustainable development that empowers rural communities and reduces the urban-rural development gap.

The announcement comes at a symbolic time as the country prepares to celebrate its 50th Independence Anniversary on 16th September 2025. Minister Eoe noted that this golden jubilee offers a chance to reflect on the nation's achievements while also charting a new course forward. "As we celebrate 50 years of independence, the expansion of the SMU model is a reaffirmation of our commitment to nation-building and rural empowerment," he said.

The Minister also credited the Marape-Rosso Government for its visionary leadership and unwavering support for rural development initiatives. He thanked Prime Minister James Marape and Deputy Prime Minister John Rosso for championing policies that put communities at the heart of progress.

The Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA), under Minister Eoe's leadership, has been at the forefront of community-driven efforts such as the Rural Service Delivery Project (RSDP). Like SMU, RSDP has shown how local participation and ownership are crucial to achieving lasting development outcomes.

As implementation begins in the five new provinces, the government will work closely with local authorities, international partners – particularly the Republic of Korea – and communities themselves to ensure the success of this initiative. The SMU model is expected to improve rural infrastructure, enhance livelihoods, and build a stronger, more resilient and self-reliant Papua New Guinea.



"The Saemaul Undong model teaches us that real progress begins when our people take full ownership of their future."

*– Hon. Soroï Marepo Eoe,
Minister for Provincial and Local Level
Government Affairs*

Above: Pictures of villagers in the pilot districts of Eastern Highlands Provinces, implementing the SMU Model in various community-led projects such as farming and poultry.



INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TAKE FLIGHT IN MIDDLE FLY DISTRICT, WESTERN PROVINCE.

By Karen-Marie Lillie

The people of Middle Fly District in Western Province marked a major milestone on 19th March 2025 with the signing of an agreement to launch critical infrastructure development projects under the District Development Authority (DDA) program. Held at Morauta Haus in Port Moresby, the event brought together national and provincial leaders, including Hon. Mason Hewabi (Member for Middle Fly), Hon. Taboi Awi Yoto (Governor of Western Province), senior officials from the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs (DPLGA), the Department of National Planning, and representatives from the contractor CB Engineering.

Acting Deputy Secretary of DPLGA, Joe Warus, emphasized the Department's commitment to strengthening sub-national service delivery, highlighting the need for proper infrastructure to support public servants in remote districts. Hon. Mason Hewabi described the agreement as a historic first step toward establishing Middle Fly's permanent district headquarters, including plans for a three-storey administration building and basic utilities like power and water.

Governor Yoto echoed this optimism, recalling how the district once had basic services but lost them due to decentralization reforms in 1995. He acknowledged the extreme remoteness of Middle Fly, accessible only by air and river, and praised current efforts to reverse decades of neglect. Plans already underway include 25 public servant houses, with upcoming projects such as a police station and hospital.

The signing signifies the beginning of construction and a new era of development for Middle Fly. With strong leadership and backing from the Marape-Rosso Government, the district is poised to become a fully functional and serviced administrative hub, bringing hope and essential services to one of Papua New Guinea's most isolated communities.

Top photograph: The contract being signed by Middle Fly District Procurement Committee Chairman, Petrus Malongim and CB Engineering's April Sumang at Morauta Haus. This historical moment was witnessed by Western Province Governor, Hon. Taboi Awi Yoto and Senior Management Teams from DPLGA and Department of National Planning and Monitoring.



The harsh realities of the residents of Lake Murray LLG in Middle Fly District of Western Province has made them one of the most resilient communities having interacted with the DPLGA through the Rural Service Delivery Project. Currently there are 11 Community-Driven Development projects implemented in the LLG to complement Government services.

DID YOU KNOW?

Promoting Accountability in Government Grants.

DPLGA ensures transparency in how public funds—such as Service Improvement Program (SIP) funds—are used by monitoring provincial and local government spending.

Other similar Rural Developments in PNG...

A TESTAMENT TO DTIP'S IMPACT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

By Samson Kendeman



The Komo LLG Building in Hela Province

The Komo LLG Building in Hela Province is a powerful example of the District Town Improvement Program (DTIP) led by the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA) in 2019-2021. Launched in 2019, DTIP has transformed district headquarters into economic and governance hubs to boost rural development.

The program has delivered 21 infrastructure projects worth K25.5 million, directly addressing service delivery gaps in remote areas. The Komo project reflects this vision—moving from colonial administrative setups to modern facilities that support service delivery to the people.

District towns should have service delivery infrastructures that are operational for people to access basic services.

By promoting partnerships across government, private sector, and communities, DPLGA is leading the way in provincial capacity-building. The Komo LLG Building is more than a structure—it's a foundation for stronger local governance, rural empowerment and brings effective service delivery closer to the people.

FAREWELLING SEVEN LONG SERVING STAFF OF DPLGA

By Samson Kendeman

In a bittersweet ceremony on Tuesday, 15th October 2024, the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA) bid farewell to seven of its most dedicated public servants— whose lives have been etched into the story of Papua New Guinea's progress. For decades, these officers served not merely as civil servants, but as quiet nation-builders, shaping communities, bridging the gaps between the state and its people, and guiding the public service with wisdom, compassion, and steadfast loyalty.

At the heart of the ceremony was a deep current of gratitude—not only from DPLGA Secretary Philip Leo, who commended their invaluable service, but from an entire nation that has been the quiet beneficiary of their life's work.

Late Raphael Kalel: A Kiap's Lasting Legacy

Though absent in body, the spirit of Late Raphael Kalel lingered warmly in the room. Having passed away the previous year, Kalel was more than a public servant—he was a bridge between eras. Once serving as a kiap, he was a witness to the transformation of Papua New Guinea's local governance. Over 54 years, he became a symbol of resilience and dedication, particularly in his role with the Local Level Government & Rural Service Delivery Program. His memory now rests in the lives he touched in the remotest parts of PNG.

Kevin Kenim: Guardian of the Digital Frontier

With 46 years of service, Kevin Kenim navigated the tides of technological evolution. As Director of Information Technology, he transformed the way information flowed through the Department. His vision brought digital strength to the local government system, allowing for more responsive, transparent, and accountable governance. Kevin didn't just retire a director—he left as a pioneer who laid the digital foundations for future public servants.

Toni Rimau: The Eye of Accountability

For Toni Rimau, 38 years in the Performance Monitoring Division meant decades of quietly ensuring that public resources were used wisely and government programs met their targets. His role was often behind the scenes, but his impact was front and center. In every province and community that thrived under good governance, Toni's diligence was present—subtly guiding progress with a watchful, principled eye.

Gabriel Ngat: A Voice in Law and Policy

After 31 years in the Policy and Legal Division, Gabriel Ngat stood proud, describing his career as "fun-filled." Yet, his modesty belied the magnitude of his impact. From assisting provinces during natural disasters to helping carve out the new provinces of Hela and Jiwaka, Gabriel was instrumental in shaping PNG's administrative map. His work touched the very structure of government, ensuring that legal clarity and policy strength formed the foundation of every local institution.

Raymond Kala: A Visionary Architect of Local Government

Raymond Kala's 32-year journey spanned eras of transformation. A key moment in his career came in 1997, when he developed corporate plans for provincial administrations—a move that led to DPLGA's elevation as a Central Agency in 2008. His contributions have not just influenced local governance—they have empowered it. His vision helped transform provincial governments into strong, strategic entities capable of guiding development at the grassroots.

Paul Popna: A Sentinel in Times of Crisis

For 24 years, Paul Popna was a frontline force in the National Disaster Centre. His was a life spent responding to the call of nature's fury—storms, floods, and earthquakes. With calm determination, he helped coordinate responses that saved lives and restored hope. Paul's legacy lies in the safety of communities that weathered storms, often unaware of the steady hand guiding their recovery behind the scenes.

Varimo Saka: The Quiet Defender of Justice

In the Legal Division, Varimo Saka spent 20 years ensuring that laws protected the vulnerable and upheld justice. He might have been the least tenured among the retirees, but his dedication was no less powerful. With quiet resolve, he defended the rights of communities, strengthened legal frameworks, and contributed to building a department grounded in fairness and legality.

As the retirees signed their Deeds of Release, they did not just close a chapter; they completed a legacy. Secretary Philip Leo said it best: "Your services to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea will be legacies for this Department."

Indeed, these seven individuals walked different paths within DPLGA, but their destination was shared—a stronger, more resilient Papua New Guinea. Their stories are not merely endings but beacons, lighting the way for future generations of public servants who will carry forward the torch of service.

As they step into retirement, they leave behind not just memories, but milestones.

Executive staff of DPLGA with the retirees during their official farewell in Port Moresby in December 2024.





Produced by the Department of Provincial and Local-Level Government Affairs
Media & Public Relations Unit
Level 5, Morauta Haus
Melanesian Avenue, Waigani
National Capital District