



NEWSLETTER



Minister for Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP, cutting the ribbon to signify launch of the Corporate Plan (2025-2030) held up by Secretary for the Department of Personal Management, Taies Sanson while DPLGA Secretary, Philip Leo looks on.

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MINISTER EOE UNVEILS DEPARTMENT'S REBRANDING IN A TRIPLE LAUNCH CEREMONY

By Samson Kendeman

On Friday 22nd August 2025, the Minister for Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs, Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP, unveiled the Department of Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs' (DPLGA) rebranding during a significant triple-launch ceremony at the Holiday Inn, Port Moresby. The event marked the official launch of the Department's new Corporate Plan (2025-2030), its revised Organizational Structure, and the Rebranding initiative.

Minister Eoe said the triple launch reflects DPLGA's evolution from being Papua New Guinea's first government department to its ongoing role in supporting local and provincial governments. "DPLGA remains dedicated to ensuring that services, resources and development reach the people by strengthening coordination and monitoring mechanisms for improved service delivery," he emphasized.

A major highlight of the restructure is the introduction of a digitalized, ward-based online platform for demographic and socioeconomic data collection. This first-of-its-kind innovation in PNG will provide more accurate information for data-driven planning, resource allocation and accountability at all levels of government.

The rebranding, which features a refreshed logo and modern identity, is intended to improve the Department's visibility, strengthen communication, and foster collaboration with key stakeholders. The new Corporate Plan also introduces 20 province-based positions, boosting DPLGA's capacity to enforce compliance and ensure that resources allocated to service delivery are properly managed.

Minister Eoe said the Department is committed to working with all three levels of government, administrators, sector agencies and service delivery partners while exploring new opportunities to strengthen governance. Currently, DPLGA administers 20 provinces, one special district (NCD), 374 Local-level Governments, and 6,916 wards nationwide.





MINISTRY OF PROVINCIAL AND
LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP
Minister for Provincial and
Local -Level Government Affairs

Independence Message from the Minister

“50 Years of Independence: Honouring the Past, Building the Future Together”

‘THE LOCAL VOICE’

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As the Member for Kikori and Minister for Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs, it is with great pride and joy that I join the people of Papua New Guinea in commemorating our Nation’s 50th Independence Anniversary.

Our founding leaders made the bold, wise, and united decision to declare Papua New Guinea a free and independent nation fifty years ago. Their vision established the groundwork for a sovereign nation based on democracy, peace, and the diversity of our cultures. As we reflect on our journey, we honour the resilience and determination of our people who, through many challenges, have remained steadfast in their commitment to building a stronger Papua New Guinea. This Golden Jubilee is not only a time of celebration, but also a call to renew our collective spirit of nationhood.

We look back to 1975, when PNG gained independence, and reflect on where the country is now. The questions are, where were you? and what were you doing at that time? As we ask these questions, let us be reminded that what we witness today is the result of all of our decisions, both good and bad, for this nation in the last 50 years.

I want you to take a moment to think about what you have personally done for this nation. Is there a cause for celebration? We have all contributed in some way to the development of the nation and its citizens. We have certainly reached a point in history; we are now celebrating 50 years of PNG’s Independence and Democracy. The next 50 years will be defined by how we strengthen our systems of governance, empower our communities, and invest in our young people, who carry the torch of our future. Together, we must continue to work in unity, embracing the values of respect, honesty, and responsibility that define us as Papua New Guineans.

To all the public servants, who are delivering government services and implementing government policies, you make up 1-3 per cent of about 11 million population. Procrastination by public servants has significantly impaired effective and efficient delivery of government services and implementation of government policies. We must replace procrastination with promptness. Effective time management is another area that needs

improvement. Our people are suffering from better access to services and are made to think that government services are not reaching them. We must serve with diligence to change those mindsets going forward in the next 50 years.

The poor state of our country’s infrastructure, health and education systems including law and order is a reflection of how far our government has come. We could have done more in the last 50 years but our attitude might not be right. We are not giving the best to ourselves, for serving this country. It is important to assess and reflect as we celebrate this historic milestone of our country. Recently, we were graced by the presence of Secretary-General António Guterres of the United Nations. His visit was of solidarity to join Papua New Guineans to celebrate 50 years of independence and democracy. His Excellency expressed admiration for the resilience, courage, and determination of Papua New Guineans. He said in the past five decades, we took a profound task: to weave our breathtaking diversity into one country that leaves no one behind. Despite the fact that we have 800-plus languages and many distinct tribes, we became united as one nation, one country. We weaved together a democracy that never existed. This is a very good comment from His Excellency António Guterres which we must embrace in unity.

We have taken over from our forefathers, and our next generation will soon take over from us, to carry this country through for the next 50 years. Let us work on changing our mindsets and the mindsets of others by portraying positive attitudes towards delivery of government services, and implement policies.

The issues of youths remain a critical concern and must not be turned a blind eye on. It is crucial to act now by instilling in youths’ the good moral values, ethics and principles and the ability to be self-reliant in the next 50 years—A shift from expecting government to make things happen to being innovative and self-reliant.

As the Minister responsible in facilitating, coordinating and providing support to strengthen the functions of the Sub-national Governments, I am proud to highlight some of the significant strides made under my leadership.



These include:

1. Integration of LLG (Local Level Government) Leaders into the Government Payroll (2024)

- In March 2024, I spearheaded the historic initiative to include Local-Level Government (LLG) leaders—such as Ward Councillors, Vice-Presidents, and Presidents—into the National Government’s Ascender (Alesco) payroll system for the first time since independence. This initiative placed 6,375 Ward Councillors and 902 community government members (including those from Bougainville) onto the payroll, receiving regular fortnightly payments of K300–K350.
- The move was lauded by Prime Minister James Marape as a critical step toward strengthening grassroots governance and empowering local leaders to better serve communities.

2. Reforming LLG Election Timing (2025)

- In August 2025, I introduced amendments to the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments (OLPGLLG), proposing that LLG elections be held 30 months after national general elections—instead of the previous threemonth interval—to give the Electoral Commission more time to prepare;
- The Bill also included broader reforms: creation of city authorities aligned with single electorates, service delivery partnerships, provincial executive council powers, annual performance reporting, and allocation of development funds to LLGs and Wards

3. Strengthening Governance & Accountability (2025)

- At the launch of the department’s 2025–2030 Corporate Plan in August 2025, I emphasized the importance of making decentralization a lived reality—not just a slogan—and renew the commitment to supporting all tiers of Government: Wards, LLGs, and Provinces.

4. Promoting Compliance through Annual Performance Reporting (2025)

- In June 2025, I presented Parliament with the first consolidated Annual Provincial Governments Performance Report (covering 2018–2022) under the OLPLLG Framework, noting a concerning 27-year gap in reporting. And I outlined the need to make these reports a permanent annual requirement to boost accountability and identify service delivery challenges;
- Measures introduced included relocating staff to provinces, digitizing reporting, and strengthening governance frameworks at Sub-national levels.

5. Encouraging Lawful and Transparent Decentralisation (2025)

- I have been encouraging provincial governments of their obligation under Section 119 of the OLPLLG to submit annual performance reports by June 30, highlighting how noncompliance undermines confidence and accountability. Timely reporting is critical for decentralization progress – a new model under the Organic Law “one size doesn’t fit all”. The model empowers provinces and LLG’s, fixing service delivery failure, reducing over-centralization of the National Government and giving different provinces the autonomy at their own pace.

6. Emphasizing the Value of LLGs & Reforms to Strengthen Them (2025)

- Improvements such as payroll inclusion, future election scheduling (2029), eligibility requirements for Ward leaders (minimum Grade 10, 12, diploma or degree), stricter enforcement (with removal and re-election for absentees), and legislation for Local Level Government Sector Investment Program (LLGSIP) funding are some of the reforms undertaken by DPLGA under my watch to strengthen sub-governance and improve quality.

On this historic occasion, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to every citizen of Papua New Guinea. Let us celebrate this milestone with pride and look forward with hope and confidence to a brighter and prosperous future.



'THE LOCAL VOICE'

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE



Mr. Philip Leo
Secretary

Hello and welcome to the Second Issue of *The Local Voice*.

As we approach the midpoint of the year—and as our country proudly celebrates its 50th Independence Anniversary—I am pleased to share the remarkable progress our Department has made in driving forward decentralization and good governance.

One of our major achievements so far this year has been the rebranding of the Department, which included the launch of our new logo, refreshed visual identity, official website, and most importantly, the Corporate Plan 2025-2030. This Plan sets out our strategic priorities in decentralization, digital innovation and inclusive governance—fitting milestones as we mark 50 years of nationhood and look to the next 50 years of development.

A key highlight has been the Department's new Organizational Structure, featuring the deployment of 20 PLLSMA Officers—one in each province. These officers are now embedded within Provincial Governments, LLGs and State agencies, working to improve compliance, enhance service delivery visibility and reinforce accountability across Papua New Guinea's subnational systems.

We also successfully hosted the 2025 Provincial Administrators and Governors Conference on 28th -29th August at the APEC Haus, Port Moresby.

The Conference reaffirmed our collective commitment to decentralization—not as a distant aspiration, but as a living, people-centered strategy for inclusive development, economic resilience and improved livelihoods.

This is decentralization in action: embedding capacity where it matters most—on the ground, in the provinces and among our people. Of the 30 resolutions endorsed, 11 have already been implemented, while the remaining 19 are progressing steadily, with most nearing completion. The next phase will prioritize legislative amendments, inter-agency coordination, and subnational verification to ensure full delivery.

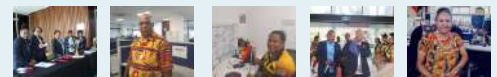
As we celebrate 50 years of independence, we also celebrate the progress we are making together as a Department, a Government and as a Nation.

Thank you once again for your continued support, happy reading and a Happy and Safe Independence Day Celebrations to you all!

Happy 50th Anniversary of Independence!



WE



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

#WeAreDPLGA

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DPLGA HOSTS ANNUAL GOVERNORS CONFERENCE TO STRENGTHEN DECENTRALIZATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

By Samson Kendeman

The Department of Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs (DPLGA) successfully hosted its annual Governors Conference from 28 th -29 th August 2025 at the APEC Haus.

The two-day conference focused on the implementation outcomes of the 2023 Governors' Conference Resolutions, particularly on strengthening decentralization and improving service delivery at the sub-national levels.

Opening the event, Minister for Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs, Hon. Soro Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP, reminded Governors that Cabinet had tasked the Department to implement 30 resolutions within the 2024-2025 period.

"In 2023, you passed 30 resolutions. Cabinet approved them for immediate implementation. One of the most critical was the call to assess PNG's Decentralization journey since 1977 and to develop a National Decentralization Policy Framework—a new provincial government system that meets our development needs for the next 50 years," Minister Eoe said.

To drive this reform, a Terms of Reference was endorsed and the Technical Task Team (TTT) adopted a three-phase approach in assessing PNG's decentralization history and challenges.

Phase One: Historical Review

- The 1974 Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) recommendations
- The 1977 Organic Law on Provincial Governments (18 years in operation)
- The 1995 Organic Law on Provincial Governments & Local-level Governments (30 years in operation)
- The 2014 District Development Authority (DDA) Act

This review revealed persistent systemic issues that continue to hinder effective service delivery.

Phase Two: Assessment of Proposed Organic Laws

The team assessed three past reform proposals:

1. The 2020 CLRC-DPLGA proposal, rejected by Governors in 2019
2. Sir Peter Ipatas' proposal, never tabled in Parliament
3. The New Ireland Autonomy proposal by the late Sir Julius Chan, still pending as a private Member's bill

Phase Three: Recommendations for Reform

Based on past lessons, the team recommends a new decentralization model—constitutionally sound, responsive to modern development needs and ready for national deliberation.

Challenges Identified

The assessment highlighted several obstacles:

- Centralization of powers – funding and decision-making remain concentrated in Waigani, with District Services Improvement Program (DSIP) and Provincial Services Improvement Program (PSIP) funds undermining provincial autonomy.
- Overlap and duplication – The District Development Authority (DDA) Act has blurred responsibilities, causing inefficiency and conflict.
- Evolving development demands – Population growth, urbanization and shifting service needs are outpacing the current governance model.

The Way Forward - Next 50 Years

Reforming the 1995 Organic Law is seen as critical to:

- Strengthen service delivery
- Eliminate duplication of responsibilities
- Improve transparency and accountability
- Empower provinces to build their economies
- Position PNG's governance system to meet future challenges

"This reform is not just administrative—it is transformational," Minister Eoe said. The Technical Task Team, led by Dr. Thomas Webster, presented the findings to Governors as part of the first consultation process. Once consensus is reached, Minister Eoe will present the proposal to Cabinet, begin drafting a new Bill, and return for further consultations to ensure Governors' voices shape the future of intergovernmental relations and provincial autonomy.

Closing the conference, Minister Eoe urged leaders to take bold steps: "Let us not risk another cycle of poor service delivery and weak provincial growth. Let us make bold decisions today—for the better Papua New Guinea."

'THE LOCAL VOICE'



PICTORIALS FROM PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATORS & GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

Top Banner Pictorials from left to right: Governor for Central, Hon. Rufina Peter, Governor for Oro, Hon. Garry Juffa, DPLGA Secretary Mr. Philip Leo, DPLGA Minister Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP and Chief Secretary to the NEC, Mr. Ivan Pomaleu and Master of Ceremony during Governor's Conference, NBC Radio Personality, Mr Douglas Dimagi.



Below, from left to right: DPLGA Minister, Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP, Governor for Simbu, Hon. Noah Kool, MP, Governor for Gulf, Hon. Chris Haiveta, Governor for Southern Highlands, Hon. William Powi, MP, Governor for East New Britain, Hon. Michael Marum, MP.



DPLGA ADVANCES DECENTRALIZATION AGENDA

By Samson Kendeman

The Department of Provincial and Local-Level Government Affairs (DPLGA) has confirmed the successful implementation of eleven (11) out of thirty (30) resolutions passed during the 2023 National Governors' Conference in Lae, marking a significant step forward in Papua New Guinea's decentralization journey.

This milestone was announced by Secretary Mr. Philip Leo during the 2025 Provincial Administrators and Governors Conference, held from 28 th -29 th August at APEC Haus, Port Moresby.

The two-day event brought together Provincial Governors, Administrators, PLLSMA Officers, and senior government officials to review progress on the resolutions and chart the next phase of subnational empowerment.

"The 30 resolutions were designed to transfer financial, administrative and manpower powers to the provinces, in line with the spirit of the 1995 Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-Level Governments.

"While eleven have been fully implemented, the remaining resolutions are progressing steadily, with several requiring legislative amendments to unlock their full potential," Mr. Leo said.

Following the 2023 conference, Cabinet endorsed the resolutions and established a Technical Task Team (TTT), led by Dr. Thomas Webster, to assess the legal and operational viability of each resolution. Their review reaffirmed the need to reform the 1995 Organic Law, citing structural weaknesses that hinder effective service delivery, fiscal autonomy and institutional accountability.

Despite the intent of decentralization, Mr. Leo noted that provinces remain heavily reliant on national programs such as the District Services Improvement Program (DSIP) and Provincial Services Improvement Program (PSIP), which continue to centralize funding and decision-making authority in the hands of Members of Parliament.

No 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.

"True decentralization requires more than policy—it demands political will, legislative reform and administrative restructuring," Mr. Leo said. "Some national agencies have been reluctant to release functions due to entrenched legal provisions, but we are making progress," Secretary Leo stressed.

The Parliamentary Bipartisan Committee, chaired by Hon. Luther Wenge, MP, has been instrumental in supporting legislative amendments and coordinating with the TTT and DPLGA's internal teams.

Key Resolutions Implemented to Date:

1. Appointment of Provincial Administrators – PECs now lead recruitment and appointment, with PSC oversight for compliance.
2. Restructuring of Provincial Administrations – Provinces manage their own structures, recruitment and disciplinary processes.
3. Transfer of Village Courts and Land Mediation – Full administrative control now rests with provinces; DJAG retains standards.
4. PHA Reporting to Provincial Governments – PHAs now report to Provincial Administrators and Provincial Executive Councils.
5. Transfer of Provincial Works Establishments – Road infrastructure responsibilities devolved to provinces.
6. Local-Level Government Autonomy – Amendments passed; LLGs now exercise greater administrative independence.
7. Method of Electing LLG Heads – Act amended to allow both direct and assembly-based elections.
8. Special Purpose Authority – LLG Administration Act amended and certified.
9. Function Assignment Determination – Major powers reassigned; verification underway.
10. Review of DDA Structure and Operations – Legislative amendments before Parliament; second reading completed.
11. Implementation Oversight – National-level implementation phase completed; subnational verification pending. While eleven resolutions have been implemented, the remaining nineteen are at various stages of progress, with most nearing completion. Legislative amendments, inter-agency coordination and subnational verification will be the focus of the next phase.

The 2025 Provincial Administrators and Governors Conference concluded with a renewed commitment to decentralization—not as a distant ideal, but as a living strategy for inclusive development, economic resilience and improved livelihoods.

NCD GOVERNOR'S OFFICE PRESENTS GIFTS AND MERCHANDISE

By Samson Kendeman



NCD Governor's Office Rep presenting Governor's Gifts and Merchandise to the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs staff on 4th September, 2025 at DPLGA office.

The National Capital District, as host city for the Annual Provincial and Governors' Conference held on 28th-29th August 2025, presented merchandise and gifts as tokens of appreciation to the Governors.

Due to late delivery, the merchandise were handed over to the Provincial and Local-level Service Monitoring Authority officials on 4 th September, 2025 within the Department.

Through the Office of the Governor for NCD, Hon. Powes Parkop, LLB, MP, continued support has been shown over the years whenever Port Moresby hosts the Annual Governors' Conference.

The presentation of these items is not the first instance of such kind gestures. The Department of Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs (DPLGA) expresses its sincere gratitude to the NCD Governor's Office for their ongoing support and generosity.



UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING THE NEW DPLGA BRAND THROUGH COMMITMENT AND SERVICE.

By Karen-Marie Lillie



The launch of the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs' (DPLGA) Corporate Plan 2025–2030 was more than the unveiling of a strategic roadmap. It also marked the introduction of the department's rebranded logo, a fresh identity that reflects a renewed sense of purpose in serving Papua New Guinea through public service.

A logo, by itself, is not merely a visual marker. It is a living symbol of shared identity, anchored in cause, purpose, and mission. For DPLGA, this rebrand is not about adopting a new look for appearance's sake—it is about embodying the values and aspirations that unite staff across all levels of government. When ideals are embraced collectively, yet expressed uniquely by one institution, that is when a true brand emerges.

The keynote message shared during the launch resonated clearly: a brand must be lived. It is expressed not only in how an organization looks, but in how its people act, speak, and deliver services. For DPLGA, this truth carries particular weight. As the government's arm at the ward level, the department is tasked with maintaining presence, solidarity, and accountability in some of Papua New Guinea's most remote communities. This is service that requires humility, resilience, and unwavering commitment.

By the close of the launch, there was a tangible sense of connection among staff—an acknowledgment that the brand is more than a logo, but a representation of their collective responsibility as public servants. The Minister for Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs, Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, underscored this point, noting that the rebrand comes at a timely moment. It serves to realign and reposition individuals within the department, strengthening performance and reinforcing DPLGA's role as a core pillar of government.

The rebrand and corporate plan are therefore not just symbolic exercises, but strategic steps towards building a stronger, more responsive, and more trusted department. DPLGA's new identity reminds us that true service is not only delivered through policy but through the lived values of those who carry it out daily in communities across the nation.

This new chapter signals not just a change in design, but a recommitment to purpose—a brand lived through service.



THE DPLGA LOGO EXPLAINED...



Logo

The logo of the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA) is a circular emblem that powerfully blends cultural symbolism with institutional identity.

Key Elements & Symbolism

1. Outer Ring (Golden-Yellow and Orange)

Text: "DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS" in bold black.
Color: The yellow and orange tones symbolise authority, optimism, and national purpose.
Stars and "DPLGA" Label: Positioned at the base in white with stars—this centralises the department's acronym as a strong identifier.

2. Middle Ring (Blue Background with Kundu Drums)

Kundu Drums: These drums encircle the inner core and symbolise communication, tradition, and grassroots mobilisation in PNG culture—echoing DPLGA's core function of connecting government to communities.

3. Central Iconography

Bird of Paradise (Stylized): Represents national pride, freedom, and identity. Its flowing shape suggests motion, leadership, and progress.

Kundu Drum (Foregrounded): A hyper-detailed drum with PNG-inspired patterns and the label "DPLGA" on the body. Positioned as the centerpiece, this illustrates DPLGA's role in amplifying the "voice of the local people" from government to community level.

4. Color Scheme

Blue Tones: Represent peace, community cohesion, and the maritime geography of PNG.
Silver Gradient: Adds a modern and official tone, implying formality and government stature.

OFFICER HEADS TO JAPAN FOR STUDIES

By Samson Kendeman



Above (L-R): DPLGA Secretary Mr. Philip Leo and Ms. Sarah Euling before her departure. Sarah departs for Japan on Tuesday 9th September 2025 and returns after two years of the Masters Program.

Senior officer within the Department's Provincial and Local-Level Services Monitoring Authority (PLLSMA) Performance Monitoring and Coordination Division, Ms. Sarah Euling, has been awarded a prestigious scholarship to pursue further studies in Japan for two years.

Since joining the Department in 2016, Ms. Euling has served with the PLLSMA Division, and with the recent restructure, continues in the role of Senior Coordinator, National Functions.

Over the last eight years, she has been responsible for coordinating performance reporting by provinces as required under the Organic Law on Provincial and Local-Level Governments (1995). Among her notable achievements is the tabling of the Consolidated Summary Report for the Annual Provincial Performance Reports (2018-2022).

"I believe DPLGA is strategically positioned to guide the future of governance systems in Papua New Guinea and I am truly blessed to be part of a team contributing to the development landscape of this country," Ms. Euling said.

She has been awarded the JICA Sustainable Development Goal Global Leadership Scholarship to undertake a Master of Public Policy at the International University of Japan (IUJ). Her studies will focus on monitoring and evaluation models, with the aim of strengthening institutional frameworks for performance reporting through Provincial Coordination Monitoring Committees upon her return.

Ms. Euling expressed deep gratitude to the Secretary, Mr. Philip Leo, the Deputy Secretary, Technical and Corporate Services, Mr. Joseph Warus, Acting Director, Performance Monitoring and Coordination Division, Mr. Herman Mirio and the Human Resource team for their support during the application process.

"I am honored and humbled to be among other public servants who have been awarded this scholarship. I also sincerely thank the Government of Japan through JICA for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," she said.

She further acknowledged the support of her colleagues, family and friends, adding that above all, she gives thanks to God for His blessings and guidance.

'THE LOCAL VOICE'

STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE THROUGH DATA

By Karen-Marie Lillie

As Papua New Guinea prepares for the 50th Independence Celebrations and politics often dominates attention, an equally important reform is underway—the digitisation of Ward Record Books, led by the Department of Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs (DPLGA).

Ward Record Books are more than registers; they capture essential data about communities—population, resources, infrastructure, health, education, and economic activities. For decades, these records were kept manually, often inconsistently or neglected altogether. Without accurate data, wards have struggled to plan or advocate for government support.

DPLGA is now converting these books into digital databases, enabling evidence-based planning, budgeting, and reporting. This reform forms a key part of the National Framework for Ward Development 2025-2035, which aims to strengthen LLG capacity and drive inclusive development nationwide.

The Role of the Ward Recorder

Central to this shift is the Ward Recorder, responsible for maintaining and updating digital records. More than a clerk, the Recorder is the custodian of the community's development story—ensuring information remains reliable, secure, and accessible.

Their core responsibilities include:

- Entering and updating data in both manual and digital records.
- Reporting issues to relevant authorities.
- Safeguarding the ward's record book.

To ensure credibility, Ward Recorders are selected through a transparent, community-led process. The Ward Member convenes a consultation where at least three candidates are nominated. Nominees must:

- Hold a minimum Grade 10 education.
- Reside permanently in the ward.
- Demonstrate sober habits, strong values, and community respect.

Selection is either by appointment or election, overseen by a committee of DPLGA, District Administration, the LLG Manager, and the Ward Member—who cannot influence the outcome. Once endorsed by the LLG Assembly, the appointment is formalised under Section 52 of the Local-level Government Administration Act (1997) and reported to DPLGA for monitoring and accountability. Vacancies, whether through death, resignation, or prolonged absence, must follow the same process.

The Ward Record Book initiative is more than administration—it is a foundation for sustainable development. Reliable, updated data will help communities plan schools, advocate for better health services, improve infrastructure, and attract government and donor funding. Through the National Framework for Ward Development 2025-2035, DPLGA is institutionalising reforms so they endure across leadership changes. Ward Recorders will serve as vital links between local realities and national development goals.

True development begins at the village level. Each record captured is a step toward better governance, stronger communities, and improved livelihoods for all Papua New Guineans.

GOVERNORS ENDORSE QUASI-FEDERAL SYSTEM FOR PNG'S FUTURE

By Kathy John



Above: Dr. Thomas Webster- The Chairman of the Technical Task Team presenting the PNG's Decentralization Framework Policy to the Minister for Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP on Thursday 28th August, 2025 at the APEC House, Port Moresby.

At the 8th Annual Provincial Governors Conference held at APEC Haus in Port Moresby, governors unanimously endorsed a proposal for a quasi-federal system of decentralised government in Papua New Guinea.

The proposal was presented by the Technical Task Team (TTT) and chaired by Minister for Provincial and Local-Level Government Affairs, Hon. Soroi Marepo Eoe, CMG, MP. The Minister stressed the importance of building, rebuilding, and strengthening institutions, systems, and processes.

"Fifty years on, this is a turning point," Minister Eoe said. "Frequent changes have diverted us in the wrong direction, but today we have realigned for the next 50 years. This proposal is sound in design, long-term in view, and must be nurtured to evolve and grow."

The proposed system introduces two levels of government—National and Provincial—with a new Organic Law on Provincial Government replacing the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-Level Governments (1995) and the 2014 District Development Authority (DDA) Act. Provinces will be granted greater autonomy while retaining a strong national government. Local-Level Governments will be determined by provinces, with emphasis on economic growth centres managed by municipal authorities and private-sector organisations.

Under the framework, the National Government will retain powers over areas of national interest such as:

- central banking and currency
- customs, defence, firearms control
- foreign relations, international trade, civil aviation, and shipping
- telecommunications, migration, and quarantine
- legislation required to amend or implement the Constitution

All other functions, such as education, health, provincial GST, motor vehicle registration, and road fees, will primarily rest with the provinces. National laws will prevail until replaced by provincial acts. National departments—including health, education, agriculture, and forestry—will retain only policy and monitoring functions, with operational activities transferred to provinces. Shared responsibilities will apply in some sectors, such as policing and corrective institutions.

Each province will develop its own constitution and establish a Provincial Assembly led by a Speaker and an Executive Government headed by a Premier. The Assembly will legislate, set policy, elect the executive, and ensure accountability.

A unified public service will remain, but provinces will have powers to recruit staff and determine remuneration within national policy guidelines. Provincial administrators will be appointed by the provincial government after vetting by a national agency.

Financial arrangements will include functional grants, salaries, and Service Improvement Program (SIP) funds packaged as block grants, released quarterly. Provinces will also access the national development budget and strengthen GST collection mechanisms.

The National Economic and Fiscal Commission (NEFC) will oversee equitable revenue distribution, monitor fiscal transfers, and ensure fair financial arrangements.

Intergovernmental Relations

A Premiers Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, will strengthen cooperation between national and provincial governments. National ministers in key portfolios such as health and education will hold regular consultative forums with provincial ministers.

The proposed Decentralisation Authority, a constitutional body, will coordinate and oversee implementation of the new organic law. It will also monitor, investigate, and prosecute corruption or abuse of decentralisation policies at the provincial and local levels. Disputes between governments will first be addressed through informal negotiation and mediation, with arbitration as a last resort.

Review and Reform Basis

The proposal draws on intensive reviews of the Constitutional Planning Committee Report, the 1977 and 1995 decentralisation provisions, and past decentralisation laws, alongside findings from the Constitutional Law Reform Commission, the Ipatas Report, the New Ireland Proposals, and Bougainville's autonomy arrangements.

According to the TTT, past reforms were never fully implemented. The new system seeks to correct misalignments and establish a more effective framework for the next 50 years.

The Technical Task Team

The TTT was formed in 2023 to draft the National Decentralisation Policy ahead of PNG's 50th Independence Anniversary. Members include:

- Dr. Orovu Sepoe – Political science academic and consultant
- Mr. Mathew Tamutai, ML – Senior legal adviser and recently nominated King's Counsel
- Mr. Clant Alok – Former provincial administrator and adviser
- Mr. Joe Cajetan – Accountant, consultant, and former provincial administrator
- Dr. Thomas Webster – Team leader, academic, and former NRI Director

3RD QUARTER IN PICTURES...





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