

## **Speech**

### **Launch of the Master of Economic and Public Policy, and the PNG Electoral Results Database**

**Date: 10am, 16 March 2017**

**Venue: UPNG Lecture Theatre**

**Speaker: His Excellency Bruce Davis, Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea**

Thank you Mr Gorea.

And thank you Professor Mellam for hosting us here at the University of Papua New Guinea.

I also acknowledge our partners in the Pacific Leadership and Governance Precinct from the PNG Government, the UPNG School of Business and Public Policy, the Australian National University and other institutions.

Thank you, Professor Kavanamur and Secretary Kali for your ongoing support.

Thank you also to Professor Pillai, Executive Dean of the School of Business and Public Policy and the entire faculty, whose hard work that has led to this day.

Finally, thank you to Dr Wood from the Australian National University – whose dedication has seen the creation of the Electoral Results Database.

[Pause]

It is great to be back at UPNG today to launch the new Master of Economic and Public Policy, and the PNG Electoral Results Database.

I want to congratulate the University of Papua New Guinea, the School of Business and Public Policy and the Australian National University on these two important initiatives.

They have been made possible by the partnership between these institutions.

The University of Papua New Guinea has a long history of association and collaboration with Australian universities.

It is important that we look for opportunities to extend this engagement throughout the country, working with more PNG and Australian institutions and ensuring that this will have leadership benefits - recognises the strong support for Minister Temu and Secretary Kali.

The tradition of partnership continues today at UPNG through the Pacific Leadership and Governance Precinct.

The Precinct is a partnership between PNG and the Australian Government to develop ethical and capable leaders that can shape this country's future.

In many ways, the Precinct partnership between UPNG and ANU is a symbol of the modern partnership between our two nations.

The ANU academics here are part of the UPNG team, working shoulder to shoulder with School of Business and Public Policy staff.

They teach economics and public policy subjects to hundreds of students each year, and assist with curricula development, capacity development, and research agendas.

This partnership is supporting the school to become a research hub, enabling academics and students to contribute to the nation's understanding of the challenges and opportunities it faces.

[Pause]

In recent years UPNG's School of Business has renewed its focus on economics and public policy.

With the support of the Precinct, the School is on the way to becoming a regional centre of excellence in these important disciplines.

The launch of the Master of Economic and Public Policy is another step in this direction.

It will bring through graduates that have the skills and leadership capabilities to contribute to PNG's economic growth.

It will develop professionals with great technical ability, who can develop and implement effective policy in the national interest.

Economic and public policy are areas of critical importance to any nation's future prosperity.

The policy decisions made by governments have significant impacts on economic development, social development and the delivery of services to the people.

UPNG was the country's first university and one that has continued to play an important role in educating the leaders of the nation.

Wingti, Namaliu, Morauta, O'Neill, Lepani, Eri – these are just a handful of the great names that have come through UPNG and gone on to shape the nation's future.

The Master of Economic and Public Policy will continue this tradition of producing high-quality graduates – technically skilled and capable leaders that can apply these qualities in a way that is relevant to PNG.

[Pause]

This new program also comes as the School of Business and Public Policy prepares to enter a new era.

In 2019, the School will move in to a new building, being delivered under the Pacific Leadership and Governance Precinct partnership.

This building will provide students and staff with a modern space for learning, discussion and research.

The School is also in the process of finalising a new five-year strategy that will ensure there is a strong academic and research program in place to make the most of the new infrastructure.

The new strategy will cement School's place as one of the emerging schools of business and public policy in the Asia-Pacific region.

[Pause]

Strong and effective policy always has its foundations in a good evidence-base.

The ANU-UPNG partnership has proven to be a great boost for research that can inform public policy.

The ANU Development Policy Centre's Electoral Results Database is a great product of this partnership

This tool has been made possible through a decade of commitment and hard work by Dr Terrence Wood, and his collaboration with the PNG Electoral Commission.

The PNG Electoral Results Database is comprehensive source of information on elections in PNG, which presents data in a way that is easy to understand and free for all to use.

The Database maps the country's 111 Provincial and Open constituencies and lets people see information on voting patterns – year-by-year, seat-by-seat and candidate-by-candidate

It also preserves PNG's electoral history, which will be an invaluable tool for researchers and the public.

The theme of the 2017 General Elections in Papua New Guinea is: "Your choice, protect our democracy."

A good understanding of voting patterns and trends can help in the management of elections.

It can also demonstrate to people the importance of using their vote.

[Pause]

Thank you all once again for inviting me here today to the launch these two very significant initiatives.

To the course participants, I encourage you to extend yourself in this new post-graduate program and seek to implement this experience as leaders and experts.

A special thank you to all of those involved in the ANU-UPNG Precinct partnership.

Your work has made the Master of Economic and Public Policy, and the PNG Electoral Results Database possible.

This partnership will continue to have a great impact on the students here – who will shape the policy of the future.