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Are MPs for the people?

Transparency International PNG Inc (TIPNG) says it is immoral that the elected representatives of the people in Parliament seem to be putting their personal interest before that of their constituents.

TIPNG says the foremost concern of all representatives should be the delivery of services to their constituents, not themselves.

TIPNG hopes the review produced by the parliamentary salaries and remuneration committee has been thorough in its review of the salary and allowance levels recommended for our parliamentarians. Given the sensitive nature of the issue TI is asking Parliament to publicise the process of consultation and comparative studies undertaken by the committee. Given the hardships the public are facing it would be the right thing to do for our leaders to demonstrate to their electorates how and why these recommendations have been made. How comprehensive was the review and who were the members on the committee.

“While I understand some of the methods of calculating allowances, such as the motor vehicle allowance, needed to be updated, it is no wonder the public are crying foul as once again it seems there are two sets of standards. When the parliamentarians want a salary review it seems to be automatic, however when our nurses, teachers, policemen want a salary review it takes 10 years” said Peter Aitsi Chair of TI PNG.

If our politicians are truly concerned about the good of the community then why aren't they finding out why the cost of living is so high? Is it a simple case of limited supply of houses and or land, or significant increases in population, is it due to the impact of a deteriorating law and order situation or is it because of the presence of mining and petroleum companies and donor organisations that is pushing the cost of housing up.

It is right for the public to ask, what role if any does the ICCC have in the control or monitoring of housing prices and rentals. The good minister for public service well knows the skyrocketing cost of real estate in Port Moresby. It is not just the politicians who are suffering it is all of the public, including many in the public and private sector workers who now are forced to live in settlements.

TIPNG says the general increase in the costs of goods and services is no basis for MPs to raise their allowances while the people of PNG unanimously suffer the pinch of rising costs. TIPNG believes parliamentarians must learn to tighten their belts like everyone else.

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