



TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL (PNG) INC
Lokua Avenue, Boroko, Section 54 Lot 31
PO Box 591 Port Moresby, NCD Phone 323 7517/4917 Fax 323 4317
E-mail: yvonne.ngutlick@transparencypng.org.pg
Website: www.transparencypng.org.pg

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PNG Needs Right To Information (RTI) Law to Address Public-Sector Corruption

Friday 27th September 2019, Port Moresby – A new report by Transparency International Papua New Guinea (TIPNG) has shown that the public are unable to access documents from Government Departments because there is no existing law to enforce the public's Right to Information (RTI). At the launch of the *Our Right To Know, Their Duty Tell* Report, to mark the International Day for Universal Access To Information, TIPNG called for the Marape-Steven Government to prioritise the RTI Law as a means for citizens to stop public-sector corruption.

"TIPNG surveyed 24 agencies in 2018-19 and found that for over-the-counter information requests, 90% of the time agencies would not provide any of the following 4 documents; current corporate plan, recent speech by the head of the agency, most recent audited financial report or most recent report with public statistics," said Mr. Yuambari Haihuie, TIPNG's Deputy Director - Policy & Advocacy, "This is deeply concerning because it means there is a pervasive culture of secrecy, the result being that citizens are unable to check on what our public-sector bodies are doing with our money."

"A noteworthy finding is that 54% of the agencies that wouldn't give the information in person, already had it uploaded on their website, which means that there is a break-down in the process of giving information to the public. Bear in mind that for over 40 years there hasn't been an RTI Policy or Law, even though Section 51 of our National Constitution gives us the right," said Mr. Haihuie at the launch of the Report, "The good news is that the government has already committed to drafting an RTI Law through the Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan 2018-2020, which was endorsed by cabinet in NEC Decision No. 323/2018, however the challenge is now to ensure that we put in place an effective law that empowers Papua New Guineans to demand accountability from all public offices and office-holders."

TIPNG in the *Our Right To Know, Their Duty To Tell* Report calls for the establishment of an Information Commission to assist the public with requests for information from Government Departments. This independent commission will exist to ensure that the RTI Law, once it is drafted and enacted, is fully operational with a clear process for obtaining public information, and penalties for agencies or individuals that do not provide information. TIPNG recommends the Government look at successful models such as the RTI frameworks of Sri Lanka and Vanuatu.

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Authorised by:
Arianne Kassman
Executive Director

Media contact:
Yvonne Ngutlick
Deputy Director - Communications

What is TIPNG?

TIPNG is a member of Transparency International a global anti corruption movement committed to fighting corruption. TIPNG is an independent organization in PNG known as a Chapter of the international movement. The PNG chapter advocates against corruption and promotes transparency, good governance, honesty and accountability both in private and public sector dealings. TIPNG tries to assist strengthen the integrity systems of our country such as the police, the parliament, the public services and the judiciary.