

Shadow minister queries bill

SHADOW Mining, Environment, Conservation and Climate Change Minister James Donald has branded the National Gold Corporation Bill “shady and questionable”, telling the Government to explain it to the people.

“I have never heard of a Government trying to pass legislation to validate a deal they have already signed on behalf of the State,” Donald said.

“Good governance and parliamentary practices don’t (allow) signing a massive deal on behalf of the State and then running to Parliament to validate it.”

Donald said the Government owed the people an explanation.

“It is clearly a reflection of the mismanagement and hastiness of Prime Minister James Marape to tie the independent State of Papua New Guinea down to a deal before ensuring the necessary legislation and policy framework are in order before doing so,” he said.

No comment could be obtained from the Government on Tuesday.

Donald said the Government failed in its duty to provide clear and transparent information on the Bill that could have huge implications for the country if enacted.

He questioned Marape whether he had read and understood the shareholders agreement signed in 2021 at Government House.

He claimed that much of that agreement benefited the company and not the country.

“The deal will kill the mining industry – plain and simple,” Donald said.

“No wonder our mining industry leaders, experts and businesses are not coming out in support of this Bill because they know it is a bad deal for the country, but don’t want to burst Marape’s bubble.”

He urged the people of PNG to exercise their democratic right and question their respective MPs on their stand on the Bill.



Australian high commissioner John Feakes (fifth from left) and Bougainville President Ishmael Toroama with Autonomous Bougainville Government, PNG Power Limited and high commission officials. – Picture supplied

Reliable electricity source to boost Arawa

RESIDENTS of Arawa will benefit from a reliable electricity source when the renewable energy upgrades are completed next year, including the Autonomous Region of Bougainville’s commercial-scale solar farm with battery storage.

To mark the project’s halfway point, Australian high commissioner John Feakes joined Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) President Ishmael Toroama on a tour of the power station upgrades.

“Australia is committed to improving access to energy in Bougainville and is supporting the

ABG’s economic development and energy goals,” Feakes said.

“The solar panels are already providing power to Arawa.

“Once fully completed in 2025, this project will further improve power supply for local businesses and enhance many facets of people’s lives, including health and education, and increasing safety and security, especially for women and girls.”

The K18.8 million renewable energy upgrades in Arawa are being implemented in two stages. The first stage is a small solar plant at PNG Power Limited’s existing power station that, as of

March this year, has begun supplying power to Arawa.

The second stage will be a larger solar farm with a battery energy storage system at a new site that PNG Power acquired in 2023, with assistance from the ABG.

Once completed, the upgrades will reduce the reliance on diesel fuel, and will cut carbon emissions by 1,800 tonnes of carbon dioxide in the first year.

The renewable energy upgrades in Arawa are part of Australia’s support for provincial power stations in Papua New Guinea, which also includes plans to upgrade Buka’s power station.

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Kokoda authority prioritised

THE Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) is an important tourism product that has the potential to be a catalyst for development, says Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Isi Henry Leonard.

During Tuesday’s swearing-in of KTA’s management committee, he said it was vital to see a board in place.

“Let’s work through this board by engaging the provincial government, the local level government, and the landowners so that the country can benefit,” Leonard said.

Nine board members were sworn in, with Koiari landowner representative Jack Deia appointed as the chairman and Tourism Promotion Authority chief executive officer Eric

Mossman Uvovo as the vice-chairman.

KTA acting chief executive officer Julius Wargirai said there used to be only two landowner representatives, but now there are six.

“It would be more meaningful if more people are involved. We will achieve the true meaning of tourism when the locals participate. They are the key drivers of success of the Kokoda Track,” he said.

Leonard said: “In tourism, Papua New Guinea has so much to offer.”

Provincial and Local Level Affairs Department secretary Philip Leo said KTA was one of 14 Special Purpose Authorities in PNG.

Lawyers encouraged to promote, uphold justice

LAWYERS in Papua New Guinea are obliged to promote and uphold justice and the rule of law, says Commonwealth Lawyers Association council member for PNG David Denniston.

Denniston said the association had supported the march for the rule of law organised by lawyers last Friday in Port Moresby, as it raised awareness on the difference an improved rule of law could make to the quality of life in the country.

“Every person has the right to the full protection of the law, by the Supreme Court or National Court, by its own initiative or on the application by the law officers of PNG,” he said.

Denniston said the march last week placed the PNG Law Society where it should be – as an instrument for the rule of law.

He said an independent and organised legal profession was an essential

component in the protection of the rule of law.

“The world justice project’s evidence-based research, as published in its Rule of law Index, shows that effective rule of law reduces corruption, combats poverty and disease, and protects people from injustice,” Denniston said.

“Discussions are being held in PNG this year to extend the index to PNG and the other countries in the Pacific.”

Denniston said the rule of law concerned everyone and that everyone had a responsibility to it, especially those in government offices.

He added that government officers were expected to apply the principles of good administrative decision-making in a timely manner and follow the law when performing their duties.