



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PNGOC 2020 Year In Review

As we close in on the final days of 2020 we are reminded of the uncertainty that lies ahead due to the global impacts of the COVID19 pandemic. As an event-based, non-profit organisation, non-government organisation, we are only beginning to comprehend the far-reaching consequences of the corona virus.

2020 was an Olympic Year, of which Team PNG was supposed to attend the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games scheduled in July. However, as the global spread of the virus became more eminent, a historic decision was made by the International Olympic Committee to postpone the games to 2021. This was done in order to safeguard the health of the athlete and hundreds and thousands of people involved in the games.

This meant Team PNG athletes vying to qualify for the Olympics had to adapt to the postponement of the Olympic Games and re-adjust their plans and focus to 2021.

The Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee (PNGOC) is a values-based organisation. What this means is that we embody our values in our everyday actions. Our values of Honesty, Excellence, Respect and Openness have been our moral compass throughout the duration of the current strategic plan (2016 – 2020), which quite coincidentally ends this month.

The organisation commenced its review of its current strategic plan during the downtime afforded from the global pandemic, which resulted in a drafted documentation to be shared with our member national federations and stakeholders for further feedback prior to the finalisation of a new Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2024 term. Also being developed is the Team PNG Games Strategic Plan. Both documents are essential for our future operations as we evaluate the successes and shortcomings of this period with the future in mind.

We were fortunate enough to hold our Annual General Assembly in June, in the midst of the lifting of the restrictions. A limited number of attendees were required as per venue and government restrictions for public gatherings. 2020 was an important year for the PNGOC, which saw the election of new PNGOC Executive. We respectively farewelled Sydney Yates, Tamzin Wardley, Mel Donald and Emma Waiwai who have been corner stones of the PNGOC Executive for a large part of three decades.

On the same note, the changing of the guard saw the inclusion of Olympian Iammo Launa as Female Vice President, Tony Green as Senior Vice President and Kila Dick as Male Vice President whilst Michael Henao was elected Chairman of Fundraising and Faye Zina-Lalo re-elected as the Legal Advisor and Sir John Dawanincura maintaining his position as President for one final term. In September this year we also welcomed the appointment of new Treasurer Peter Davani.

PNGOC and National Federations participated in various technical workshops throughout the year finalising the new National Sports Policy (NSP). It was imperative that the PNGOC and the National Federations while sharing Team PNGs' improving performance as a national effort with valued Government support, also sought reforms in ensuring Government support is guaranteed in the National Sports Policy 2020 - 2050. It is our confident hope that as the NSP 2020 - 2050 is rolled out Team PNG

continues to excel as both the PNGOC and NFs steadfastly work in concert with the Government to advance sport and develop our people and nation through sport.

A one-week Olympic Camp was held in Goroka at the National Sports Institute (NSI) from October 25th to November 02nd 2020. The camp was made possible through the funding support of the PacificAus Sports Partnership Program which brought together 30 targeted athletes and coaches based in PNG from Athletics, Boxing, Rugby 7s, Shooting, Table Tennis, Tennis and Weightlifting that are still vying to qualify for the Tokyo Olympic Games. Sailing is the only sport to have secured two spots for Team PNG in the Men's Laser and Women's Laser Radial events. Teariki Numa and Rose-Lee Numa are the athletes to have secured the spots after claiming the second Oceania quota at the Oceania Sailing Championships held earlier in the year.

Topics covered at the week-long camp included athlete screening and testing, high performance nutrition, anti-doping, athlete safeguarding, the prevention of the manipulation of competition, mental skills through sports psychologist Dr. Stephanie Harahan, basic first aid and strapping, goal setting and an athlete forum. Most days were intense with early morning gym sessions followed by educational seminars and practicals. There was also an element of fun with community visits to East Goroka Primary School, the University of Goroka, Mount Sion, Mountain Honey and the famed heights of Daulo Pass.

Athletes and officials were given the opportunity to fine tune their current training programs and preparations through the assistance of High Performance Sports PNG Strength and Conditioning Coaches as well as the travelling medical team in Dr. Kapua Kapua and Dr. Ivan Ravu. With the delay in the games, athletes were also given the opportunity to refine their existing games targets and refocus their objectives before the festive season commences.

The SP Sports awards was launched in early February 2020 with SP Brewery, however, with the increasing risks brought on by COVID and the enactment of the restriction protocols, the Organising Committee had to cancel the event for the first time in its 28 year existence. It was agreed that the future SP Sports awards consider the nominees for efforts in 2019 and 2020.

Likewise, the Trukai Fun Run, which is an annual fundraising event on the PNGOC calendar, was also postponed to next year due to the prevailing climate and uncertainty brought about by the global pandemic. Being a not for profit organisation, we rely heavily on our fundraising events such as the Trukai Fun Run to raise much needed funds to help send Team PNG to compete overseas, be that the Olympics, Commonwealth or Pacific Games.

In the final week of November we held the Team PNG Athlete Ambassador Program, known as the HEROes training program. The acronym HERO stems from the core PNGOC values which are Honesty, Excellence, Respect and Openness.

The training program attracted a total of 31 participants from 17 different sports, which also included para-sports. Providing the training week and opportunity to our athletes is valuable as it focuses on areas such as career transitioning, leadership development, values identification and development, goal setting, public speaking, athlete safeguarding, gender equality, gender based violence and sport for development programs.

Thanks to our partner ExxonMobil PNG, we were able to deliver and make an impact through such a significant program to equip our athletes for the everyday challenges in life. Athletes should not only be seen as role models in their respective sporting arena but also in their communities.

Lae Golf Club was the first destination to kick start our fundraising efforts on October 11th as part of the Prime Ministers Golf Challenge amidst the lifting of the restrictions. A total of 36 teams registered and participated, which was a record turnout of teams for this event in Lae.

Port Moresby turned up in numbers for the Primes Ministers Golf Challenge on October 30th as 57 teams registered and participated, the largest ever and a record for the event. Prime Minister James Marape teed off the proceedings and also participated with the PM's Team in what was a much needed fundraising boost for Team PNG.

Champions of 2020, Melson Trading from Mount Hagen who quite surprisingly were the first ever dual Lae and Port Moresby Champions for the Prime Ministers Golf Challenge.

To mark Olympic Day in June 2020 this year, the PNGOC and Australian High Commission, through High Commissioner Jon Philp, announced a new partnership that will give PNG athletes world-class preparation in their bid to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. The support of \$250,000 brings the PNG-Australia Sports cooperation to a new level, and we are truly indebted to the support shown by the Australian Government. Australia and PNG have a strong history of partnership throughout the years, and we are thankful for their support of our Olympic dreams.

Sport is one of the most powerful platforms for promoting gender equality and for empowering women and girls. With this in mind, the Gender Equity Commission of the PNGOC planned and delivered a series of workshops, which was made possible through Olympic Solidarity World Programmes Grant, to raise awareness on the concept on gender equality and engage in advocacy so that together we all can stand up against gender based violence. Workshops were delivered in Lae, Port Moresby and Goroka.

The delivery of educational courses, through the Oceania Sports Education Program (OSEP) had a much needed boost with the movement to an online platform. This new platform allowed for National Federations to complete available OSEP courses online at their own pace. Traditional face to face deliveries were restricted until the latter part of 2020.

The primary purpose of these training courses is to share available content and knowledge, build on the existing capacities of coaches, athletes and administrators and address common community issues such as gender equity and gender based violence which has been another issue prevalent within all forms of media in PNG and abroad.

In September, briefings were held with National Federations on the new Justification Committee (JC) timelines where NFs were required to justify their sport for 2023 Pacific Games three (3) years out from the Games, and justify their sport and officials for the 2022 Commonwealth Games and Pacific Mini Games. Tokyo Olympic sports were also required to justify their targeted athletes and officials. JC Meetings with each sport were held from 28th September to 2nd October.

The Athletes Commission of the PNGOC was active in 2020 delivering forums in Lae and Goroka. Their role is important in advising the athletes on important topics such as athlete safeguarding, athlete well-being, and how the Athletes Commission can help athletes overall. The Athletes Commission's work is vital in informing the PNGOC about the current and potential issues that are affecting our athletes so that together we can work on addressing them with their respective National Federations.

The Athlete Forums also provided the opportunity to look at the Athletes Commission Charter and Strategic Plan and gather feedback from the participating athletes in the different regions to ensure that the current activities of the Commission is relevant to the athletes and aligns with that of the PNGOC.

We are continually learning and adapting with the changes under the new normal operating business requirements. A lot of our in-face meetings and workshops were conducted virtually in 2020.

It was pleasing to see and hear about the experiences from our international colleagues through our participation in online webinars, workshops, annual general meetings and other various meetings. The PNGOC was fortunate to participate in Pacific Connect Virtual Dialogue in November thanks to the International Centre for Democratic Partnerships. The dialogue allowed participating Pacific Island nations to talk about current issues in Sports and how these issues can be addressed with the technologies of today.

Other notable mentions were the training opportunities afforded through online webinars and workshops for our prospective Tokyo bound athletes from the International Olympic Committee.

Locally, we are able to see, hear and attend some of our sporting member's annual general meetings. Member National Federations (NF) were able to host their annual general meetings using online platforms to report to their members on their NF activities, whilst others were fortunate to hold a small

meeting within the established COVID19 protocols. It was certainly pleasing to see and hear about the willingness of members to conduct their AGMs despite the current circumstances.

The Olympic Values Education Program is an outreach program run by athletes who have undertaken the HEROes ambassador training program. The program enables athletes to travel to other cities and provinces and provide educational and interactive awareness raising programs on the Olympic Values of Excellence, Friendship and Respect to the younger people and their communities. Areas visited in 2020 included, Goroka, Kikori, and Lae.

Our last major event for 2020 that we successfully held at the Port Moresby Arts Theatre was the 6th PNG Sports Hall of Fame. This year's inductees were Takale Tuna, from Athletics, and inductee number 18; Wavala Kali, also from Athletics, and inductee number 19; and the late Robert Stewart, from Shooting, who was inductee number 20.

Present at the event was the Minister for Higher Education & Sports, Honourable Wesley Raminai, who conveyed the importance of sports being a powerful vehicle that can inspire and unite Papua New Guinea.

Despite the event filled back end of 2020, it was imperative that we finished the year by closing off with the Hall of Fame as we felt it was our duty to maintain and honour, and preserve the sporting achievements of those who excelled and represented Papua New Guinea in the past by giving them the recognition and in the process inspiring the current and next generation of Team PNG athletes.

The majority of our programs, events and goals for 2020 would not have been achieved without the great support from our family of sponsors including Trukai Industries, Air Niugini, Capital Insurance, ExxonMobil PNG, SP Brewery, Brian Bell Group, The National, Coral Sea Hotels, IBSU, Theodist, Blue 7 Team, Media Partners and Trophy Haus. What has been a difficult period in 2020, we were fortunate to maintain the majority of our sponsors intact. Even more resounding was their commitment to back Team PNG and the PNGOC in 2021. Their commitment to supporting Team PNG is truly immeasurable and is a reflection of the strong relationship built over the many shared years together.

We were also blessed to have Brian Bell Group and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the PacificAus Sports Program join us in 2020 with their support towards Team PNG and its preparations for the Tokyo Olympics.

On behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of the PNGOC we would like to wish our sponsors, partners, national federations and stakeholders a very merry Christmas and we look forward to their continued support in championing the efforts of Team PNG in 2021.