



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Saturday, April 24th 2021

# **PNG OLYMPIC COMMITTEE CONCERNED WITH THE TAKEOVER OF THE TAURAMA AQUATIC & INDOOR CENTRE**

The PNG Olympic Committee (PNGOC) has, on behalf of the National Sporting Federations (NF's) that it represents, raised its serious concern over the recently announced takeover of the Taurama Aquatic Indoor Centre (TAIC) by the National Control Centre. This decision, announced on April 22 will drastically affect NF operations, their membership bases and athlete training for International events.

The TAIC is one of the key legacies from the 2015 Pacific Games, having been upgraded to a World Class Multi Purpose Sporting Facility for those Games, in which PNG topped the medal table. During the past six years it has become the home and daily training environment for several sports.

The PNGOC fully understands what the country is going through at the present time and recognises the need for sporting facilities such as Rita Flynn, TAIC and the Sir Ignatius Kilage Stadium to be made available to assist in the fight against Covid19. However we believe that this can and should be done after appropriate consultations with venue users so that workable solutions can be found. The decision to commandeer the TAIC for a period of 12 months was made without any consultations or even any timely advice to those affected most. President of the PNGOC Sir John Dawanincura said that this decision will affect each sport differently. "Had sports been consulted then they could have advised the Controller of the implications, so that well thought out and well informed decisions could have been made collaboratively and contingency plans drawn up".

This decision if not reversed will seriously impact our preparations for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games and Commonwealth Games; and 2023 Pacific Games. Athletes must train year in, year out to prepare for major Games added Sir John. Swimming is on the programme for all major Games and they have no alternative venue for training and competition. The PNGOC is also concerned about the potential for preventative care and maintenance of the facility being neglected and indeed damage to the floors.

The PNGOC will be meeting with the Minister as soon as possible to seek better co-operation going forward between PNG Sports Foundation, stakeholders in Sport and the National Control Centre. We would like to see that Sport and physical activity continues and is encouraged under covid protocols as a contributor to the health and well being of individuals and communities.

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