



## Media Release



**For immediate Release**  
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### **TEAM PNG AT THE OPENING CEREMONY**

A whole year later than scheduled, Team PNG proudly walked out into the Opening ceremony, at the Tokyo Olympic Stadium last night (Friday 23 July).

Flag bearers Dika Toua and Morea Baru led the team into a stadium empty of spectators but full of athletes and the ceremony dancers.

The order of the walk out was unusual with countries marching in, according to the Japanese alphabet, which saw Papua New Guinea sandwiched between Bahamas and Bermuda.

Chef de Mission, Tamzin Wardley said the atmosphere was certainly unusual with no cheers as each country was announced but the show went on.

The covid19 related restrictions imposed due to the State of Emergency in Tokyo meant that there were no spectators apart from a few hundred dignitaries representing the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and National Olympic Committees from the 206 nations of the world competing at Tokyo.

Secretary General and IOC Member, Auvita Rapilla was the lone PNG supporter in the stands.

President of the PNG Olympic Committee, Sir John Dawanincura had earlier made a decision not to travel to Tokyo due to the potential health risks he would face.

Wardley stated, “The Games Village had been alive all day with a buzz as athletes collected uniforms, held practice parades down the main street of the village and raced to get home from early training in time for the transport”.

“The ceremony show was low key compared to previous Games but still held all the special Olympic moments with the raising of the Olympic flag, the athletes pledge for a fair and true competition, and the arrival of the Olympic flame.

“The flame had journeyed from its ancestral home in Athens Greece and has travelled across Japan in the recent months”.

“The torch bearers in the stadium included former Japanese athletes, children from across Japan and representatives from the medical profession who have been fighting the COVID pandemic here in Japan”.

“The final torch bearer was Japan’s tennis star and former world number 1, Naomi Osaka who climbed the stairs to a spinning silver ball and lit the flame”.

Team PNG’s [Facebook](#) page will have regular updates of Team PNG in Tokyo.

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