



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2021 YEAR IN REVIEW: A year of overcoming the pandemic's new set of challenges of living within and adhering to the 'Niupela Pasin'.

The Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee (PNGOC) commemorated 60 years of existence and milestone in orchestrating sports development on 02nd of August 2021, since being formally established in 1961.

It was a year of disruptions, delays and challenges as COVID-19 continued to dampen athlete preparations, sporting activities and events. This included the planned 60th milestone formal celebrations and other PNGOC fundraising events.

This was while the global attention was zoomed in on Tokyo for the postponed Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games, officially the Games of the XXXII Olympiad and known as the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

The Tokyo 2020 Games was held from 23 July to 8 August 2021 in Tokyo, Japan with COVID precision protocols and countermeasures provided by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Tokyo Games Coordination Committee and the Host Organising Committee. This was done as a commitment and resolution to have the games within the "new normal" in 2021.

Despite the challenges as a direct result of the global pandemic, we are grateful for the support from our family of corporate partners' and stakeholders including the Australian Olympic Committee and the Australian Government through its PacificAus Sports program. Their support enabled PNGOC and PNG to send a Team PNG contingent of 8 athletes and 11 officials led by Chef de Mission Tamzin Wardley, to Tokyo, this year.

Amongst the eight athletes, five athletes made their Olympic debut as they joined an elite list of athletes to have donned the red, black and gold at an Olympic Games. The five athletes of Rellie Kaputin (Athletics), John Ume (Boxing), Ryan Maskelyne (Swimming), Rose-Lee Numa (Sailing) and Teariki Numa (Sailing) became proud Olympians as they endeavoured to achieve their individual targets as they came up against the world's best athletes within their sport.

Highlights of the Games included Morea Baru finishing tenth in the men's 61kg, Rellie Kaputin finishing in the top 20 in the Women's Long Jump, Ryan Maskelyne breaking the national record and his personal best in the 200m Breaststroke event. Judith Meauri won her heat in the Women's 50m Freestyle, John Ume fought valiantly in the Men's 63kg event against the Australian that went on to win Australia's first Boxing medal in over 30 years and sibling sailors of Rose-Lee and Teariki Numa sailed valiantly on the water. Dika Toua becoming the first female Weightlifter to lift at five Olympic Games. Dika also created

similar and parallel history when she became the first and youngest female at the tender age of 16-years to participate when the sport was introduced during the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

The preparations for the athletes were severely hampered due to the pandemic as the athletes and their respective coaches improvised, persevered and had to be flexible with their respective plans to ensure their athletes were prepared as best as possible under the current circumstances.

PNGOC was able to secure additional sponsorships and forged new working partnerships with Jacks of PNG, with the supply and design of the Team PNG Walkout Wear to the Tokyo Games, Brian Bell Group with their "B the Best" Olympic Campaign; CPL Vouchers for Team PNG; and the National Gaming Control Board (NGCB) and Kumul Consolidated Holdings Limited (KCHL) provided much needed support to assist the PNGOC with sending Team PNG to Tokyo.

PNGOC developed its performance strategy for Team PNG to achieve its vision of becoming the best performing Pacific nation at all major multi-sport Games it competes in from 2021 through to 2024. The performance strategy has eighteen programs focused on five key areas including support to targeted elites athletes, performance based standards, development pathways, elite performance expertise and the formation of Team PNG's Performance Partnership.

Team PNG's selection policies for athletes and officials were also updated to reflect the current circumstances which saw PNGOC board endorse the changes of making COVID-19 vaccination mandatory to be part of Team PNG. With international travel only allowing vaccinated individuals to travel, it was a necessary step to take in order to minimise travel difficulties and to safeguard the athletes and officials that will be part of Team PNG for future Games.

The formation of Team PNG's performance partnership was the priority of the strategy that saw key stakeholders come together towards achieving Team PNG's vision of being the best performing Pacific nation. The first meeting of the partnership saw the presenting of Team PNG's Performance Strategy to the Minister for Sports, Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Hon Wesley Raminai, PNGSF Executive Director, Albert Veratau along with National Sports Institute and High Performance Sport PNG. The partnership also includes representatives from the National Federations.

Kumul Consolidated Holdings Ltd came on board to collaborate with PNGOC to assist with funding support to implement Team PNG's Performance Strategy, which has seen initial support provided to several National Federation's with domestic competitions within their high performance plans. Athletics PNG was one of the first NFs to receive support through the strategy and KCH which saw them run their National Championships in Kimbe in early December.

The annual review of the MoU between PNG Olympic Committee and the PNG Sports Foundation saw it take place in November where both organisations were able to review the collaboration of its respective areas of cooperation. The review was an important part of PNGOC and PNGSF's commitment of ensuring it was ready to assist with the implementation of the recently developed National Sports Policy that was launched in early December.

The releasing of the National Sports Policy comes as a major boost for all key stakeholders in the sporting arena as they look towards providing better support to National Federations and its athletes and coaches.

As a non-government organisation (NGO), the PNGOC is indebted to the continued commitment and partnership from its family of corporate partners, despite the new challenges imposed by the coronavirus to the economy and businesses in the country. Our family of Corporate Partners in 2021 included; Kumul Consolidated Holdings; PacificAus Sports; National Gaming Control Board; Trukai Industries Ltd, Brian Bell Group; SP Brewery Ltd; The National; ExxonMobil PNG Ltd; Coral Seas Hotels; IBS University; Theodist; CPL Group; Media Partners; Trophy Haus; Jacks PNG and Blue7 Team.

Marred by lockdowns again in 2021, PNGOC was not able to stage its two main fundraising activities under the banners of the long running annual Trukai Fun Run (TFR) for the second consecutive year since 2020 and the Prime Minister's Corporate Golf Challenge in 2021.

These fundraisers provide much needed support for Team PNG to the multi-sport games, as well as funding to other essential activities undertaken by the PNGOC to strengthen its member National Federations and their athletes and officials.

While the annual Trukai Fun Run was not possible this year, the close and good working partnership with Trukai Industries Ltd saw collaborated and coordinated sales of the T-shirts which enabled a total of 25,000 T-shirts sold within a period of just under 3 months, before the Tokyo Games. PNGOC extends its gratitude to the organisations and individuals that supported with the purchasing of t-shirts despite the event not going ahead.

The PNGOC held its Annual General Assembly in June where Teqball PNG was the latest sport to be added to PNGOC's membership list. The newly formed sport was elected in as a new affiliated National Federation (NF) to bring the total number of NFs to 40 members.

Our Games & Programs Division was able to hold and achieve some of its set events in 2021 with the delivery of a range of activities together with the support of our partners. These included the OSEP Community Coach & Official, Sport in Community Administration and Gender Equity Workshops in June in Port Moresby, and the Oceania Sport Education Program (OSEP) Consultation workshops in 3 provinces including online sessions and our Athlete HERO training in September.

Whilst a planned soccer tournament under the Kicks 4 Kokoda partnership between the Kokoda Track Foundation and Grassroots Soccer did not take place due to the Niupla Pasin but postponed to February of 2022, other components of the partnership proceeded in Kokoda and Buna villages in Oro Province. The program uses sport for development to empower adolescents, increase health-seeking behaviors and promote gender equality while strengthening passion for sport.

In addition, the PNGOC with the support of ExxonMobil PNG was also able to commemorate the Olympic Week with the rest of the Olympic Movement when restrictions were lifted in June where some of the newly introduced sports were on the sports menu, for students from the 8 selected primary schools within NCD to learn and try, keeping in line with the 3 Pillars of Olympic Day "Learn, Move and Discover".

Under the Athlete Excellence Program, IBSUniversity increased the number of scholarships for Team PNG athletes to take up studies with the IBS College of TVET and IBSU enabling our athletes with formal certification in their chosen field for life after sport. An extremely important partnership for Team PNG which we are grateful for.

With social distancing now practiced and going virtual is preferred, we acknowledge the Board, management and Staff of EMTV for partnering with us to air the first Team PNG Virtual Farewell, prior to the Tokyo games, as most of the athletes and their coaches/ managers were based overseas.

We also thank and acknowledge the support of major sponsor SP Brewery and support sponsors in delivering the 28th edition of the SP Sports Awards, a virtual first in 2021 which was held to recognise achievements in 2019 and 2020.

2022 looks to be another busy year commencing with the Queens Baton scheduled to visit Papua New Guinea from 29th to 31st January 2022 as it makes its journey around the Commonwealth as a prelude to the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. The PNGOC is expected to make announcements in early January on where the Queens Baton Relay will visit as it continues on its journeys across 90km of the 71 Commonwealth Nations and Territories before arriving in Birmingham, before the Games in July.

Team PNG will participate in two Games in 2022, the Pacific Mini Games in Saipan, Northern Marianas from 17 – 25 June; and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, UK from 27 July to 7 August 2022.

We look forward to your continued support of Team PNG to inspire and unite Papua New Guinea through sporting excellence and success when our athletes take on the events stage!

PNGOC wishes everyone a peaceful, safe and joyful Christmas and wonderful New Year celebrations.

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