



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Fencing aims to establish in PNG**

You have seen it portrayed in swashbuckling movies and watched athletes battle it out at the Olympics, now you have the chance to be a part of the exciting sport of Fencing in Papua New Guinea.

Fencing is being introduced to the country by the Oceania Fencing Confederation (OFC) with the aim of establishing a national body for the sport.

President of Oceania Fencing Confederation, Helen Smith and OFC Development Officer, Leon Thomas are currently in Port Moresby to promote the sport and garner support from the Olympic Committee, other interested parties and the community.

Smith said their aim is to have eight countries joining and participating in Fencing in Oceania. Seven countries including Samoa and New Zealand are already members and they hoping to make PNG a member as well.

“Papua New Guinea is a sport-loving country, there is good sports leadership through the PNG Olympic Committee and you have good athletes that can be developed,” Smith said.

The OFC delegates held a public meeting with interested people at the office of the PNG Olympic Committee on Tuesday evening and outlined the different programmes and possibilities of establishing and developing the sport in PNG.

Smith said fencing is a combat sport that originated from traditional sword fighting and duels in Europe and appeals to imagination through its dramatic and theatrical influences.

She said while PNG did not have such a history or culture in traditional sword fighting, the people have the physical, mental and emotional capabilities that can be coached into the developing the required skills and techniques.

As an individual sport, Fencing offers more medal for countries at international events and there are many categories for all ages.

“We want to identify interested people to form an interim committee for the National Federation, start slow and grow step by step.

“We will develop athletes and coaches as well as referees and officials to run the programmes here,” Smith said.

Secretary General of the PNG Olympic Committee, Auvita Rapilla said they are happy to support the development of new sports and are looking forward to the establishment of Fencing in the country.

“Fencing has a long and proud tradition with the Olympic Committee and we are happy to support Fencing and will be here to provide any advice in helping to establish it,” Rapilla said.

She also encouraged interested people to be part of the new sport by taking up different roles and help develop it.

“Sport in PNG is driven by volunteers and their passion is the lifeline for sport in this country. It would be great to see people come forward to be part of this new sport,” Rapilla said.

While Fencing is coming to PNG for the first time, it is not a new sport. Fencing is one of few sports that have part of the Olympic Games since its inception in 1896. In fact, founder of the modern Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin and current President of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach were fencers.

The team also held a coaching clinic for students at the Port Moresby International School on Wednesday and will have another meeting on Thursday before leaving the country.

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