

Celebrating 40 years of independence for PNG

By Ashlee Betteridge
16 September 2015

Today is the 40th anniversary of Papua New Guinea's independence—a significant milestone. There's some great content around the traps to celebrate the day and reflect on PNG's past, present and future. Here's a quick round-up.

- EMTV has created an Independence Day special, with plenty of historical footage, which [is available to watch on YouTube](#) (17 minutes).
- *Foreign Correspondent* aired a must-see episode last night that looked at the work of Australian carpenter-turned-doctor Barry Kirby, who is dedicated to reducing maternal mortality and helping women to deliver their babies safely in Milne Bay. The video is available online [here](#) (transcript forthcoming), or you can catch up on [ABC iView](#) (30 minutes).
- ABC has an interactive timeline of the events leading up to PNG's independence, and issues in the present day, [here](#).
- The Australian has an online [special report](#) on the anniversary. SBS also has a wrap [here](#).
- Radio National [spoke to](#) former PNG MP Carol Kidu and journalist Sean Dorney about the 40th anniversary, reflecting on the Australian relationship (15 mins).
- On *The Conversation*, historian Nicholas Ferns [looks at](#) the Australia-PNG relationship through the 20th century, and in more recent years.
- Former PNG PM Sir Rabbie Namaliu [reflects](#) on four decades of independence in an interview with Radio NZ.
- On the Australia-PNG network, Australian musician David Bridie has [reflected on his relationship with PNG](#) in a three-part series. There's also [a podcast](#) (70 mins) of a panel discussion on the anniversary with three emerging PNG leaders - Serena Sumanop of The Voice, host of *Tanim Graun* Allan Bird, and artist Jeffry Feeger.
- For those in Canberra, the National Film and Sound Archive is celebrating with a *PNG On Screen* series of documentaries and panels—the series is currently midway, with remaining sessions on later this week. Details and bookings [here](#). The National Gallery is also hosting an [exhibition of art from the Sepik River](#), on display until November 1.

- Also for Canberrans, our ANU colleagues at the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia program have been hosting a series of lectures in association with the Canberra PNG Students Association to commemorate the anniversary. The next lecture is tonight (Wednesday 16th) with His Excellency Charles Lepani. More details [here](#). An exhibition at the Menzies Library at ANU will also continue until the end of the year ([details here](#)).
- If you're looking to add some PNG-related novels to your reading list: Tess Newton Cain just [reviewed](#) *Inside the Crocodile: The Papua New Guinea Journals*. Not too long ago, Tess also [reviewed](#) *The Mountain*. I have read (but forgot to review) [Boy He Cry](#) (I very much enjoyed it). Cleo Fleming also wrote on a documentary series looking at [PNG's powerful women](#).
- Today, Stephanie Copus-Campbell writes on [the amazing women of Hela](#).
- From the Devpolicy archives, we have interviews or contributions by [Carol Kidu](#), [Sam Koim](#), [Ume Wainetti](#), [Serena Sumanop](#), [Amanda Donigi](#), [Charles Lepani](#), [Greg Taylor](#) and many others. There's also Andrew Anton Mako's reflections on growing up in rural PNG ([here](#) and [here](#)), Grant Walton's look at the first anthropologist [to visit PNG](#), John Langmore's [reflections](#) on teaching economics at UPNG pre-independence, Carmen Voigt-Graf's [positive experience](#) of settling as an expat in Port Moresby, and [much, much more](#).
- And don't forget, in a few weeks we are hosting an event on gender parity in PNG, in association with the Asia Pacific Professionals Association and PNG High Commission. There's a great panel, bringing together the public and private sectors. [Details here](#). We'll also hear from PNG's Minister for the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, The Honourable Malakai Tabar MP, on [higher education reforms](#).

From all of us at Devpolicy, Happy Independence Day!

(If we missed anything good, let us know in the comments.)

About the author/s

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Ashlee Betteridge was the Manager of the Development Policy Centre until April 2021. She was previously a Research Officer at the centre from 2013-2017. A former journalist, she holds a Master of Public Policy (Development Policy) from ANU and has development experience in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. She now has her own consultancy, Better Things Consulting, and works across several large projects with managing contractors.

Link: <https://devpolicy.org/celebrating-40-years-of-independence-for-png-20150916/>

Date downloaded: 26 April 2024



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