



# The Niu Briten Drum

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## POL welcomes CEO, the New Ireland Way



NBPOL CEO Mohd Azlan Shah gets a traditional welcome by a New Ireland Chief during his maiden visit to Poliamba in March

Coming out in full force, Poliamba employees welcomed NBPOL CEO Mohd Azlan Shah in style when he visited Poliamba and the New Ireland operations in March. As is accustomed to New Ireland, a Maimai (Chief) welcomed Shah to Poliamba Head Office with admin and support service staff looking on in a blistering New Ireland sun. The Maimai received the CEO in a traditional procession

that includes placing a Mis necklace (New Ireland traditional shell money) around Shah's neck which is a show of acceptance and gratitude to NBPOL and POL for providing a means of sustenance to people within the catchment area of company operations. The CEO's stay at Poliamba lasted three days and comprised site visits and meetings with executive staff before his return to Kimbe.

## Tree planting in West New Britain marks Somare Day, recognises his legacy



West New Britain (WNB) organised a tree planting program on February 26 2022 to mark Late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare's 1st death anniversary. Somare was the founding father and the first Prime Minister of PNG in 1975.

Somare had been part of the political landscape and development of the country until his demise on February 26 2021. He was instrumental in speaking out on behalf of small Pacific Island nations on

the effects of climate change including international efforts which led to the formation of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations.

In recognition of Late Somare's efforts, 42 trees were planted in WNB, consisting of coconut, rubber, eucalyptus, mango and ibizia, palms and other fruit trees. The program was initiated by Sustainable & Quality Management Department, and involved Engineering, Lands, Legal, Mosa Club and Mosa Golf Course.



## CEO's Message



**Mohd Azlan Shah**  
**CEO, NBPOL**

I trust that all employees have taken the opportunity to spend time with family and friends over the Easter and Ramadan breaks and are looking ahead to a productive year.

CPO prices remain high and the outlook for 2022 is favourable, though we should not forget that these favourable prices come with a human cost as a result of disease and conflict around the world.

Of course, our business operations cannot directly address these situations, but we will continue to play our part in generating food products that feed the world's population.

While domestic and international conditions may change, plantation agriculture and associated smallholders provide a stable base of employment and revenue to many countries around the world.

It is noteworthy that NBPOL holds a commanding position in both employment figures and export revenues in both PNG and the Solomon Islands.

Faced with ongoing geopolitical tension in the Solomon Islands, and an

upcoming General Election in PNG, NBPOL will always remain neutral and independent from political issues.

Our role to the nations we operate in, and to our employees, is to provide a place of employment free of fear and favour that sustainably produces high quality agricultural products.

As employees of NBPOL, we must all act to ensure that the company retains this neutrality. All individuals are free to exercise their political choices, but this cannot include the use of company resources or time.

While neutral, we do respect the role of politicians in leading a nation and NBPOL senior management and myself are saddened by the sudden loss of late Honourable Sam Basil, Member of Parliament for Bulolo.

While I will not speculate on the cause of the vehicle collision, his passing is a stark reminder to us all to take care on the roads.

Against a background of international and national events, our agricultural and milling operations continue forwards. Of particular note, the 2022 sugar season at RAIL has officially started on May 16; PNG's 40th sugar crush! Ramu Sugar was envisioned, and continues to operate, as a flagship of PNG agricultural production and self-sufficiency.

On a less positive note, NBPOL has been prominent on social media in recent days following an unfortunate CPO spill at Kimbe Bulk Terminal. Fantastic team effort from WNB has swung into action to minimise any environmental damage.

As a responsible company we are in close communication with government agencies and cooperating in their investigations into the incident. This is a regrettable reminder of how any lapse in operational procedures can have significant economic and reputational consequences for the NBPOL brand.

I wish you all a safe and productive month.



*The 2022 sugar season at RAIL officially commenced on May 16; which also marked PNG's 40th sugar crush! More stories and pictures in the next edition.*

## Lab services give promising results during audit

The New Britain Laboratory Services (NBLS) facility in West New Britain is managed by the Sustainability & Quality Management Department (SQM).

The NBLS went through an external audit, undertaken by PNG National Institute of Standards and Technology (NISIT) from April 5-6 2022.

To ensure smooth running of laboratory accreditation and audit processes, all team members contributed with required tasks, with anticipated results achieved.

The audit covered both lab quality management documents and technical competence. Each analyst was tested on their scientific knowledge on different methods and they were all deemed competent by WNB's technical assessors - Chief Chemist and Principal Microbiologist.

All findings will be closed with feedback provided back to NISIT.

NBLS is the only lab in PNG to have already transited into the 2017 version of ISO Standard 17025. Recommendations on this transition were provided and will be verified in the next scheduled audit.



*WNB Lab Superintendent Joyce Dujambi (left) with Ok Tedi Chief Chemist Nou Ako at the New Britain Laboratory recently*

## SQM auditing goes digital, first training at MBE



*MBE SQM Manager Sarah Ekali (left) and her team displaying the newly acquired iAuditor tool for internal audits*

Milne Bay Estates' SQM team was privileged to be the first in undertaking training on a new internal auditing system, iAuditor, from March 30 to April 1.

The initiative is highly valuable for continuous improvements in the quality of management systems when working across geographical, functional and cultural boundaries; especially in tapping into vast opportunities presented by technological advancement.

The three-day training was on audit processes, audit scheduling, inspection, reporting, capturing of issues, actioning, workplace communication, insights and data, building workflows, and integration with other tools.

The participants were thankful, saying iAuditor will enable them to generate reports instantly soon after completing inspections; much better than the traditional approach (getting back to office and typing out everything into a report).

Using the iAuditor app also means paper-less auditing; no more printing of

30-40 audit checklists, and saving of ink, power, time and cost.

The app also empowers users, who spend most of their time out in the fields, to do more than one inspection with reports extracted instantly.

Moreover, issues like environmental damage or social disturbance, once spotted in the field, can be reported right away to responsible focal points or the management using the iAudit safety culture's QR scanning code. The iAudit app combines with the web platform, iAuditor, and provides visibility and insights to help raise safety and quality standards across organizations.

Technology adoption, the cost of producing capital goods, and per capita income growth may be inextricably linked. As a result, to compete in today's global economy, companies must learn how to quickly leverage new technologies to ensure that their workforces remain competitive and MBE is acting along that ideology, says MBE SQM Manager Sarah Ekali.



## CEO visits sugarcane fields in Ramu



*RAIL General Manager, Ruari Macwilliam (left), discusses a point on sugarcane nursery management for sugarcane production with NBPOL CEO Mohd Azlan Shah and team during a field tour of Ramu Sugarcane Estates*

NBPOL CEO Mohd Azlan Shah made a tour of the sugarcane fields in Ramu when visiting RAIL at the end of March. The CEO was accompanied by Head of Transformation and newly appointed General Manager for Poliamba, Nik Maziah Nik Mustapha; Head of Human Resources Azmey Ghazali; and Senior Manager, Mechanization and Special Projects, Mohmd Hayril Mohd Rapi.

The field visit was hosted by the RAIL Sugarcane Agriculture and Sugarcane Research teams, led by Sugarcane Agriculture Manager, Samuel Jayakumar.

The visitors were impressed with the different activities, from early season planting and covered sugarcane nursery management to harvesting of sugarcane billets for seed cane (see *Dami Digest on how sugarcane is propagated*), mechanized planting of seed cane in commercial fields, and early stage crop husbandry (weed control and fertilization).

They were also able to see some of the different varieties of sugarcane growing in the fields. There are currently 12 different

varieties making up the bulk of commercial production.

Also highlighted was the role of Ramu Research Services (RAIL R&D) in supporting production, which includes the various facets of agronomy and varietal selection; entomology and plant pathology; and how these different sections all work together to ensure the ongoing sustainable production of sugarcane at Ramu.

The Sugarcane Agronomy and Variety Selection team demonstrated hand-planting of sugarcane (as is usually done for research trials), and in-field presentations were given by Sugarcane Agronomist Onsy Ure, Entomologist Lawrence Kikitam, and Plant Pathologist Leka Tom.

The group also visited a plant pathology trial to inspect some of the different diseases that can be found in sugarcane at Ramu, as well as examining a demonstration on insect pests and beneficial insects used as biocontrol agents.

Sugarcane from Ramu is manufactured into PNG's favourite sugar - Ramu Sugar!



A Sime Darby Plantation Company

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*In next month's issue*

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## DAMI DIGEST

with Dr Marnie Light

### How is sugarcane propagated for planting of new fields of sugarcane?

Unlike oil palm, sugarcane is propagated vegetatively by taking “cuttings” from a parent plant.

These cuttings are then planted in the ground to produce a new crop of sugarcane plant. This first crop that grows from planted stalks (i.e. **seed cane**) is often called **plant cane**.

Commercial sugarcane nurseries (fields planted with sugarcane especially for use as seed cane) undergo strict inspections to ensure that the stalks are free of any diseases.

After growing for about six months, the stalks are cut into sections called **billets**, and used as planting materials.

Each billet may have 2-3 **eye buds**, each of which should produce a new sugarcane plant.



**LEFT:** A sugarcane eye bud – this is where a new sugarcane plant will develop from (it is like a little seed)!

**RIGHT:** Sugarcane billets laid in a furrow for the propagation of a new field of sugarcane.

## Stakeholders call for a proper review of OPIC Act



NBPOL Company Secretary Teup Goledu (left), Talasea MP Francis Maneke and HOP SQM Manager Benjamin Osa during an OPIC review meeting

The PNG Government has commenced an undertaking to review the Oil Palm Industry Corporation (OPIC) Act of 1992 early this year with a series of stakeholder consultations conducted in Kimbe, Lae and Port Moresby. The OPIC Act is the legislative framework for OPIC, the agency largely responsible for oil palm extension services in PNG.

The review process also proposes for the establishment of a new authority to be known as PNG Oil Palm Industry Authority, replacing OPIC, with a focus on enhanced regulation.

While the initiative was widely viewed as timely, key industry players voiced their concerns that the whole exercise be done properly in a more transparent and consultative manner. Among them were Palm Oil Producers Association of PNG (POPA), NBPOL and Hargy Oil Palms Limited.

POPA Chairman Robert Nilkare said, in consultation with village oil palm, land settlement scheme and independent estate growers; they support a review in principle. However he said the manner in which OPIC management and the Office of the

Minister for Agriculture have adopted to expedite this review is unacceptable.

Nilkare said majority of industry players were unaware that a review was being done. POPA has therefore suggested the following steps:

- Appointment of the full OPIC Board (there was no Board for 18 months) in accordance with the OPIC Act.
- OPIC Board to take instructions from the Minister for Agriculture to undertake a review as part of Government policy intervention.
- Government policy agenda on the development of oil palm must be presented to industry participants.
- The OPIC Board and Oil palm industry players will then develop the Terms of Reference, which will form the basis of the consultation process.
- The OPIC Board will short-list and recommend to the Minister for Agriculture an independent organization, acceptable to all parties including donors, to manage the consultation and review process to ensure all stakeholders are fairly represented.



## PNG CEPA's National Ozone Unit conducts training on compliance and refrigeration at MBE



*MBE VWS Assistant Manager Joerd Dimla taking part in a practical session of the CEPA training on compliance and refrigeration in Alotau*

Milne Bay Estates (MBE) was invited as one of the stakeholders in Milne Bay Province to attend a workshop on April 6 and training during April 7-8 2022 at Masurina Lodge in Alotau.

The event was facilitated by the National Ozone Unit of the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority (CEPA). MBE was represented by SQM, Construction and Workshop departments. The theoretical sessions covered the following:

- Impacts substances have to the ozone layer and climate change
- Timeline for phasing out of CFC, etc. and use of natural refrigerates
- International agreements relating to ozone protection that PNG has ratified
- PNG's position in addressing the issue of ozone depleting substances
- Changes in legal and other requirements to ensure compliance to these requirements
- Best practices in refrigeration work for refrigeration mechanics

In the practical session, participants took part in actual hands-on activities on best practices such as how to install, refill and service refrigerants, with major focus on recovering and storing the used gases.

Latest equipment were also on display and used as part of the practical.

The participants also discussed ways on how they as organizations could do to prepare for future changes.

PNG is a signatory to the Vienna Convention for the protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substance.

The country has therefore agreed to eliminate the use of these substances and is rolling out workshops and trainings through CEPA as the implementing government agency to prepare stakeholders prior to the actual implementation of phasing out of these substances.

## Kintakui proposed as new development site for WNB

West New Britain has been considering a new site for development at Kintakui, the tip of Williamuez Peninsular, New Britain island. A joint field inspection was made in February by Smallholders Affairs, Lands & Mini Estates, Sustainability Department, Lolokoru Estate and PNG Oil Palm Research Association (PNG OPRA).

The objective was to confirm field data for the final write-up of a soils report for the proposed oil palm development project.

It has been a long wait for the Kintakui community, but they say it is worth waiting and everyone is determined for oil palm development on their land. One thing everyone knows is that the development will enable sustainable income, support education and improve livelihoods.

The soils report is being finalised by PNG OPRA, and will be released soon. The Kintakui community has gone through all the processes of New Planting Procedure; and anticipating the arrival of machinery for land preparation and oil palm planting.



*WNB employees meeting with Kintakui elders to start the project*



## WNB assists landslide communities in Talasea



*WNB team led by Steven Raphael visits and presents goods to leaders of Sihuru Village, one of the villages affected by landslides in January*

Some 25 homes were completely destroyed with over 1,000 people affected in the Bagum region of Talasea District early this year. These happened when a large avalanche of mud boulders and uprooted trees accompanied by debris came down from Mt Bagum, at around 5am on January 19.

Through its Corporate Social Responsibilities, WNB sent a team to the Bagum region 10 days later for a quick assessment on the impacts and how best NBPOL could assist the affected villagers.

The impacts of the landslides were severe on the structures and overall landscape but there were no fatalities. Food gardens and water sources were washed away. Good portion of cash crops mainly cocoa and copra were lost. The two badly affected villages were Sihuru and Harongo while the surrounding villages of Bagum and Minda had food gardens and water sources destroyed.

Based on the assessment report, the WNB Bagum Mercy Team was strategic in the kind of assistance it provided. Donations were sought and received from plantations and from officers at Mosa main site.

Families also came with donations. The Lands team led by Lillian Holland obtained quotes and procured critical tools and other household restorative items.

On Saturday March 5, a WNB team led by Coordinator of Tax Credit and Community Projects Steven Raphael and Councilor of Ward # 9 Hon Richard Gala went through each impacted village by boat and delivered the items to assist with the immediate needs of the affected population.

The reception by villagers was warm and overwhelming. All four village chiefs were moved upon receiving the items and made emotional response on behalf of their people to NBPOL.

### bulletin

#### Conflict of Interest (COI) - Family Members and Close Personal Relationships

COI - Series 2

While COI - Series 1 focused on dealings with suppliers, COI - Series 2 will focus on COI involving family members or a close personal relationship with a Director or an Employee of the Group.

The following is an example of a COI scenario that should be declared in the COI Declaration form:

Mr H is a Manager of Estate ABC. He recommends his nephew to be hired by Contractor DEF as a contract worker at Sime Darby Plantation (SDP).

Note: Contractor DEF is responsible for supplying workers for SDP, including Estate ABC.



Mr H is in a situation of conflict when he uses his influence and position as an Estate Manager in recommending his family member to be employed at one of SDP's operating units.

A Director or an Employee shall not hire or recommend prospective employees, exert influence over hiring decisions of prospective employees, or influence management's decision over any family members associated with the Group.

Family members of Directors or Employees may be hired as employees or consultants only if the appointment is based on qualification, performance, skills and experience, and in accordance with the Group's hiring policies and procedures.

For further details, please refer to the COBC Handbook or COBC Videos on SDP [SharePoint](#)

If you have questions on COI, channel them to [cobc@sime-darbyplantation.com](mailto:cobc@sime-darbyplantation.com)



April/May 2022 in PICTURES



Part of the West New Britain team which gathered as early as 6am on February 26 2022 to participate in tree planting in remembrance of PNG's Founding Father Late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare



RAIL GM Ruari Macwilliam and part of his team posing with NBPOL Group CEO, Mohd Azlan Shah and his visiting delegation during a sugarcane field tour at Ramu at the end of March



New intake of Graduate Engineer Mill cadets (currently assigned to Mill Cadet OJT at Gusap Mill and Erap Mill in RAIL) graduating with their Bachelor of Engineering degrees at Unitech in Lae on April 8



RAIL SQM Manager George Samson (right), MBE SQM Manageress Sarah Ekali and members of MBE SQM team after an iAuditor Training in Alotau in early April



Technical Services Section of Ramu Research Services (RAIL R&D) bids Alice Tine (TSS Supervisor) a fond farewell just before her transfer to Dami Oil Palm Research Station in late March



A balance in the spiritual, physical and mental development of a child is important during growth hence children from Togulo plantation in WNB have been through an empowerment program