Unit 42. The Papua New Guinea Style: Unity in Diversity

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After reading this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify key points in Papua New Guinea’s political history
- Describe the influence of foreign visitors and migrants on the politics and culture of PNG
- Describe the structure of PNG’s government
This unit on "My nation: My government" looks at several attempts to govern Papua New Guinea during the German, British, Australian, Dutch and Japanese colonial era and in the post-World War II period when Australia governed prior to independence.

**Brief timeline of Papua New Guinea's Political History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1880s</td>
<td>800 or more separate ethnic and language groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Annexations - Britain (southeast) and Germany (northeast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-1921</td>
<td>Australia takes over former British New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Australia given Mandate for former German new Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-45</td>
<td>Military control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>First Local Government Council established representing 3500 people. By 1969 there were 144 councils representing 86.5% of the population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>House of Assembly opens with first indigenous representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>2nd House of Assembly- increased indigenous representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Papua and New Guinea changed to Papua New Guinea – adopted the national emblem, flag and national day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>December 1 - Self Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>September 16 – Independence</td>
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</table>

**The Period before European Contact**

The political life of most Papua New Guinean village peoples evolved around a `Big man’. He was a man who had the ability to gather enough wealth, magical and ritual powers, and ability to establish a network of relationships. All authority was with the `Big man’. These small groups or societies had their own political, economic aims, language and laws.

The Big man’s main role was to facilitate activities seen to be beneficial to the group and to resolve issues by discussion and compromise. One way in which the `Big Man’ exercised influence was by distributing food to all members of the group, in particular pigs. Wealth was judged by the pigs and food a man’s wife, or wives, could produce.

Another important leadership responsibility was to negotiate relationships with neighbouring communities usually by wedlock or trade, or if necessary by war. The `big man’ was usually a powerful and well respected warrior but also took responsibility as a peace maker between warring clans.
A few societies in PNG had a hereditary chiefly system (like those in Polynesia). In some societies the big man system and the chiefly system existed together.

There were several million people in PNG but they did not have a common language, religion, traditions or central government. The people were generally suspicious and hostile towards each other and later towards intruders like the ‘dimdim’ (whiteman). There was no united opposition when the first Europeans arrived.

The Dutch, Germans and British found it very difficult to effectively impose central control over all the people. Even in the 21st century some communities still have their traditional ‘Big Man’ with more power and authority than the national, provincial or local politicians.

### Questions and Activities

1. Think about the type of traditional political system your community. Is there a ‘big man’ system or the chiefly system, or a mixture of both. Describe the system of authority in your community (only use one or two sentences)
2. Who has the most power in your community?
3. Discuss your answers with other members of the class. How do they differ? How are they similar?
4. On a table with 2 columns list the advantages and disadvantages of the Big Man and Chief systems

### The Arrival of foreigners; Asian Visitors

Up to the sixteenth century, Malay raiding parties captured coastal people, probably from the east but particularly in the west of the island of New Guinea, to be sold as slaves for rowing trading and pirate ships. These raiding parties took Bird of Paradise feathers, turtle shell, and beche-de-mer to other parts of Asia. No known Asian settlements were established but some minor Asian influences were established in the west.

### Europeans: Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, English and French

In 1526 Jorge de Meneses, A Portuguese, sailed close to the west coast of the main island and called it ‘Ilhas dos Papuas’, Island of the Papuans. ‘Papua’ came from a Malay word meaning frizzy-haired. In 1545, the Spanish explorer Inigo Ortiz de Retes saw part of the north coast of the main island and called it ‘Nueva Guinea’ (New Guinea) because he thought it looked like Guinea in Africa. The Dutch Captain Jan Cartenz sailed along the south coast in 1623 and saw ice covered mountains (later named Mt Carztenz).
In the eighteenth century English and French ships began to visit the region. In 1700, William Dampier was sent by Britain to chart the east coast of Australia and New Guinea. He sighted New Britain and New Ireland to the east, and a number of islands to the north coast of New Guinea. Other English explorers who contributed to European knowledge of these coasts included Philip Carteret in 1767, James Cook who sailed past the south coast in 1770 followed by the survey expeditions of Blackwood, Yule, Owen and Moresby. French explorers included Louis de Bougainville in 1768 and Antoine d'Entrecasteaux in 1792. Many of the place names bestowed by European explorers still appear on maps of Papua New Guinea.

The huge island with a mountainous interior and some snow covered peaks, remained largely unknown to the outside world well into the 20th century. Most of the coast and the outline of the island were known by the middle of the 19th century but with huge swamps and coastal plains, and with lower slopes of rugged ridges and valleys covered with dense forests and bush, meant progress across the terrain was always slow. The interior of New Guinea retained most of its secrets for nearly another hundred years after the coast had been mapped.

**Foreign Intrusion in the Nineteenth Century**

Foreign intrusion during the nineteenth century continued as scientists and adventurers, traders and missionaries, and the German and British governments showed increasing interest in the region. Some Europeans are known to have lived for long periods on islands to the south and east of the New Guinea mainland. Some came by accident and some others by choice; an unknown number disappeared without trace.

The most influential contact in the early nineteenth century was that of the traders. Passing ships traded with the coastal villagers for food, wood and water. Following the founding of the British settlement in New South Wales in 1788 shipping routes from Australia to Asia passed through Melanesian waters. Traders came for sandalwood, cedar, copra and beche-de-mer and to dive for pearls and pearl shells.

Towards the end of the 19th century companies based in Australia, Britain, France and Germany were formed to operate in Papua New Guinea and other Pacific Islands. The German company J C Godeffr and during oy and Sons was an example while in German New Guinea a trading company was established by Thomas Farrell and his part-Samoan wife Emma Coe Forsayth. They had arrived to manage the Godeffroy’s trading station in 1878 and established their own company in 1880.

**The Missions**
The first mission station was established by French Marist Catholics in 1847. Following several other unsuccessful attempts, the Mission of the Sacred Heart finally established Catholic communities in New Guinea in 1882 and in Papua in 1885. The first permanent Protestant missions were established by the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1874, and the Methodist mission in 1875. The first German Lutheran mission was not established until 1886.

**Formal Control by European Powers**

Beyond the area of contact, this European activity had no impression on the political power of chiefs and Big Men. However, in 1883 the British colony of Queensland boldly sent an official to Port Moresby to annex the southern half of the island on behalf of Britain. Britain refused to accept Queensland’s action. Britain would not add the territory to its empire unless the Australian colonies agreed to pay the costs of administration. The Australian colonies accepted this provision in 1884 and Britain annexed the south eastern part of PNG.

Meanwhile the German government was interested in the north eastern section of the island for strategic and economic reasons. On November 3, 1884 the north east section of the island of New Guinea was declared a German protectorate. On November 6, the south east section of the island was declared a British protectorate. In 1824, the western half of the island had become a Dutch colony.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions and Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>5. Draw a time line showing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) the arrival of explorers and traders</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) the arrival of the missionaries and the administrators</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) the beginning of colonial annexation.</td>
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**Colonial Governments**

Professor John Waiko, from Binandere on the north coast of Papua argues that “Although the motives for the establishment of the colonies were different, neither colonial power consulted the people when making decisions which affected their land and lives”. *(J Waiko, A History of Papua New Guinea, 1992)*

On the 6th November 1884, the British flag was hoisted in Port Moresby. The ceremonies of flag-raising and the reading of the proclamation were repeated at various places along the coast. It was known as British New Guinea. Britain simply wanted to keep other European powers out of the
region in order to protect its Australian colonies. Britain made it a protectorate rather than a colony because Britain did not want to incur too much expense in occupying the coast and then unmapped interior.

The first administrator Major-General Sir Peter Scratchley saw his job as protecting the lives of New Guineans. Scratchley insisted that the European idea of peace and order was adhered to. In 1887, William Macgregor became the administrator and during his ten years he brought about considerable changes. He established an Executive and Legislative Council (with European members) and divided the region into four districts: Western, Central, Eastern and South Eastern, each with its headquarters and European Resident Magistrate. He created an armed Papuan constabulary and sent out patrols to explore Papua and teach people about the rule of law.

In 1888, laws were made prohibiting Papuans from selling any of their land to Europeans, except to the government. In the areas of health and education Macgregor did very little, leaving much of the work to missionaries.

When Australia federated as a new nation they agreed in 1901 to govern British New Guinea but they were not prepared to take control right away because of the expense involved. Finally, after debates in parliament from 1901 to 1906, British New Guinea became the Australian Territory of Territory of Papua, or just Papua.

Hubert Murray became the first Australian Lieutenant-Governor in 1908. Murray enforced a long list of discriminatory legislation. For example, a Papuan on a street or in a public place could not behave in a threatening, abusive, insulting or disrespectful manner towards any European. A Papuan could not attend entertainment with a European. A Papuan could not wear clothes above the waist unless he belonged to a special group such as a mission or had a permit. The European community wanted these privileges as protection against a people whom they thought of as ‘primitive’.

Between 1987 and 1914, Murray continued to lay down policies which hoped to attract European planters and investors to Papua. But the number of Europeans coming to develop the country was disappointingly low.

After the First World War, Murray turned his attentions to helping Papuans. A good example of his change in policies was the passing the Native Taxation Ordinance in 1918, both designed to protect the Papuan people. These policies angered Europeans planters and traders who wanted development to be in the hands of Europeans. Despite opposition, Murray’s control of Papua continued for 33 years until his death in 1940.

**Questions and Activities**
5. What was the main motive behind Britain’s interest in Papua?

6. When did Australia take control of Papua?

7. Who was responsible for public health and education?

8. List three policies a government might introduce if they wanted to support Europeans, and three policies they might do to support Papuans.

9. List three policies the Australian administration might do if they had a policy on “economic development” in Papua

In German New Guinea

In 1884, the German flag was hoisted in German possessions in the north eastern part of the main island, New Britain and New Ireland, the Duke of York group and Bougainville. The New Guinea ‘Kompagnie’ controlled New Guinea until 1889. The German Government took over until 1914. Germany wanted to develop New Guinea using its resources and the people as cheap labour so coastal lands were taken from landowners and villagers were hired as labourers.

In 1896, Albert Hahl became the administrator of German New Guinea, and he began a policy of protecting native rights. He set land aside for the indigenous people. Local people helped to build roads and Hall appointed New Guineans as luluais and tultuls, minor officials at the village level.

In 1899, power passed from the New Guinea Company to the German Government. With the help of an armed police force and, at times, the German Navy they expanded control of the coastal regions. It was a “plantation economy” and many labourers had to be employed. Labour regulations were often ignored and flogging was a common form of punishment. Many labourers ran away.

The German presence in New Guinea ended when an Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force captured and took control of German New Guinea in 1914. A military administration took over the control until May 9, 1921 when New Guinea was handed over to Australia as a mandated territory under the League of Nations.

When Australia took over the government of New Guinea from Germany, only a small part of the territory was actually under government control. The Germans had established authority only in areas where plantations had been established. Australia continued a system of administration similar to that of the Germans.
Early forms of Local government

In every village a *luluai* and a *tultul* was appointed by the government. As in German times, a *luluai* were responsible for keeping good order in their villages; the *tultuls* were their assistants. As in German times, the government usually appointed the village ‘big man’ as *luluai*. Sometimes the villagers put forward as *luluai* someone who was not the real leader in the village.

In some areas *luluais* had authority over several villages. These “paramount *luluais***” were given a silver-headed stick and were paid a small salary by the government. The minor *luluais* and the paramount *luluais* took their orders from patrol officers who visited the villages from time to time. The territory was divided into seven districts, three on the mainland, and four in the islands.

From 1921 to 1942, Papua and New Guinea were governed separately. There was little contact between the Mandated Territory and Papua. The public service was recruited separately for each territory. It was an offence for a native to cross the border between Papua and New Guinea without permission. *Pidgin* was the common language of New Guinea, and *police Motu* in Papua. After 1921, both territories cam under Australian laws and this produced some similarities in government and the law.

During the Second World War, the two territories were governed together by a military administration called ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit). After the war, New Guinea became a Trust Territory under the United Nations to be administered by Australia. The Trust Territory of New Guinea and the Australian Territory of Papua were then joined in an administrative union with a single legislature. This was the beginning of a single government for all of eastern New Guinea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions and Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. What was the main motive behind the German presence in New Guinea?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Study the quotations below and answer these questions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) What was the “white mans burden”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Why did Australians think they were a “father”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Is a hit on the ear or kick acceptable – is this punishment better than whipping or jail?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Who said it ….Match the following names with the quotes below

(i) John Murphy (a government official)
(ii) Norman Sandford (a planter)
(iii) Sir Horace Niall (a District Commissioner and first Speaker of the House of Assembly)

**Quote 1**
You sort of had a bit of a feeling, you know, the white man’s burden and things like that. Extend colonial influence. Doing some good for Australia, doing some good for the people at the same time.

**Quote 2**
A stern, but living father, this is what we liked to think of ourselves anyhow.

**Quote 3**
It was well known that we caught them a swift clout across the ear if they did something wrong. We also applied the boot.

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**Local Governments, the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly**

Up to 1950, apart from some coastal districts, most Papua New Guineans ruled themselves and had little contact with European forms of government. The first local government councils were established in 1950. The main role of local government councils was to provide a link between the villagers and the administration in Port Moresby and to introduce European law. 109 local councils were established between 1950 and 1965, mostly after 1960. The rapid expansion of local government councils after 1960 was associated with the opening up of the highlands. The eighty-nine councils in place in 1965, covered approximately one million people.

From 1951 to 1961, the legislative Council offered advice to the Governor. The contribution of the few Papua New Guineans appointed to the Legislative Council was very limited because they lacked western education and skill in speaking the English language. The Council debates were conducted only in English.
Following United Nations criticism about the slow pace of development, in 1964, a House of Assembly with nominated and elected members replaced the Legislative Council. There were ten nominated members of parliament, and fifty-four elected members. While most of the PNG members of the 1964 House of Assembly had little experience in parliamentary procedure, they had won a popular, democratic election in their own communities. In 1968, the second national elections were held for the House of Assembly. Six political parties contested the election. The most important of these was the Pangu party with ten elected members led by Michael Somare.

House Assembly Elections

Every citizen in the Territory was given the chance to vote in the General elections for the House of Assembly. This meant a great many villages had to be visited, and the method of voting carefully explained in advance to the people. The candidates for election to the House of Assembly made speeches to the people: most claimed they would work for their home areas and look after the interests of New Guinea as a whole. As many villagers were unable to mark their ballot papers, they whispered their choices to election officials; the vote was thus kept secret, as in all democratic countries. Voting was not compulsory, but 70 per cent of the Territory’s population voted. This showed that even remote villages were being drawn into a sense of participation in national politics.

Self Government and Independence

Self government meant an elected Papua New Guinean government with all powers except those concerning foreign affairs, defence, and the legal system. These powers were to be handed over by Australia when Papua New Guinea achieved complete independence. Some coastal people demanded immediate self-government. However, many highlanders, represented by the United Party, advocated postponing self-government indefinitely. Highlanders were afraid that following self-government the country would be dominated by the better educated coastal elite.

In spite of opposition from the highlands people the move towards self-government gathered momentum. Following the report of a Select Committee on Constitutional Development in 1971, the name Territory of Papua and New Guinea was changed to just Papua New Guinea, and a national flag and emblem was adopted.

In 1972, in the third national election for the House of Assembly, three major parties fielded candidates; the United Party represented the highlands conservative elements, the People’s Progress Party was committed to supporting business enterprise, and the Pangu Party claimed to represent the interests of the people as a whole.

In April, a coalition government was formed between the People’s Progress Party and Pangu. The coalition was in favour of early self-government. One of its first tasks was to establish a timetable for self-government.
In June 1972, Chief Minister Michael Somare declared in the House of Assembly that constitutional change was necessary if the country was to have full internal self-government by December 1973. When a motion was put, 54 members voted in favour for early self-government and 34 voted against. The House of Assembly agreed on December 1st 1973 to proceed towards full self-government and independence.

The House of Assembly chose 16 September 1975 as Independence Day, and on August 15 the constitution was finally adopted. It provided for a national parliament elected by universal suffrage. The Queen of the United Kingdom was Head of State represented by a Governor General. The Prime Minister was the chief executive officer of the government and the head of the National Executive Council. Power over foreign affairs and defence was transferred from the Australian government to the Papua New Guinean government after the adoption of the constitution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Ayes</th>
<th>Noes</th>
<th>Absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NG Islands</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG Mainland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 42.2. Table showing voting by Members of Parliament on self-government according to regions: June 1972.*

**Getting the Numbers - PNG style**

In the 1972 elections there were 102 seats in the House of Assembly. The conservative, anti-independence United Party won 42. Somare’s Pangu Pati won 24. The United Party was sure it would form the next government, but Pangu Pati expertly put together a coalition. Iambakey Okuk; a MP from the highlands region played a key role in forming the government that took the country into self-government and independence.

Here is Iambakey Okuk’s own version of how it was done, taken from an address to some University students in 1982:
‘We went and greased up one bloke (an MP) called Kaibelt Diria.’ (In Pidgin grisim’ or ‘to grease’ means to trick somebody into doing something by flattery or lies.)  ‘Kaibelt Diria was a deputy leader for the United Party.  And, you know, we told him: “Papa, the Australian Government has already announced that Somare is to become the first Prime Minister.”  And he says: “WHAT!”  And we said: “Yeah.  They announced it on the radio that we have already got the number and we’re forming a government.  But we don’t have enough Highlanders and we want to give some ministries to some people”.  So we said, “But Papa, there is only a few of us and we are still young and we are looking for some elders to take the important positions.”  ‘And he said: “Yeah?  Wait, wait .. OK!  We go now!”  And we said: “Look, hang on, hang on, it’s OK.  The position won’t run away.  You’ll get it.  But you must also bring another five or something like that.”  “Oh, that’s no problem,” he said.  ‘I’ll bring seven!’  So he brought back seven people (newly elected MPs) so we made the number.  This is how Somare claims he got self-government.

Okuk said.  ‘But we did the dirty job which you don’t know.  I had to tell lies to my old father who had more pigs and more wives than Somare, you know.  Many, many wives - many, many pigs.  Big coffee plantation – more things than Somare, myself or Chan put together.  Anyway, the poor guy, we greased him so he had to come and become a minister.”’

We made him the Minister for … Telephones!


Questions and Activities

See the story above to answer the following questions

- If each MP represented 30,000 voters, which of the four regions do you think had the largest population in 1972?
- Why do you think the highlanders opposed the move to self-government?
- Samoa gained independence in 1962.  Why did it take Papua New Guinea another 13 years to become independent?
- During a debate in the September 1972 sitting of House of Assembly on self-government, Anton Parao, a young Highlander of the United Party said: “I do not want to see the white colonial government handed to a black colonial government just for the sake of a minority group such as Michael Somare’s government”.  Prime Minister Michael Somare’s reply was direct and simple: “It is high time that the people of this country held their heads high … and have pride in their country. If not now, when?”
- What do you think Anton Parao meant when he said; “I do not want to see the white colonial government handed to a black colonial government …?”  Explain this in a single sentence.
Post Independence Period

Papua New Guinea adopted a Westminster style parliament and democratic system of government. But this has changed into a system which is unique to Papua New Guinea.

The parliamentary democracy in PNG has its own ways and practices which are not the same as found in other parts of the world that practice the Westminster system of government. For example, governments can change during Parliamentary sittings and not just during elections. On the floor of the parliament, between elections, political parties are constantly being formed or dissolved as members change sides.

Parliamentarians in PNG regard themselves more as leaders of their local people (who voted for them), rather than as representatives serving a national government. This is very similar to the traditional 'big men' leadership among autonomous tribal groups. The majority of people live in their villages in rural areas where the traditional 'big man' is still the most important person in the village. The people still identify themselves more with their own ethnic groups, speak their own language, uphold and respect their own laws and traditions. The central government is remote and it does not affect village lives in the same way it does in urban areas of the PNG. As most voters live outside urban areas, this means most politicians are from rural areas.

Political parties in PNG are not very strong. People vote for a candidate because he is a relative or somebody they know (only 3 women have ever won a seat in an election). Voters vote for the person not for political parties and the general belief is that anybody can win. In PNG, over fifty per cent of members lose their seats each national election.

From September 1975 to July 1999 Papua New Guinea had six Prime Ministers and constantly changing loyalties to political parties. Why was there such a high turnover? The answer is that the parliamentary system has evolved into a modern version of a competitive 'big man' system and politicians compete at the local level, and sees themselves not as 'leaders of the nation' but as representatives of their own people and language group.

Prime Ministers of Papua New Guinea since Independence (1975)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prime Minister</th>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(ii)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pius Wingti</td>
<td>November 1985 – July 1988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabbie Namaliu (later Sir Rabbie)</td>
<td>July 1988 – August 1992</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Skate</td>
<td>August 1997 – July 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir Mekere Morauta</td>
<td>From July 1999</td>
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**Provincial and Local Level Governments**

During the colonial period Australia established a highly centralised system of administration. After Independence the national government saw the need for involving the people more in the local decision making and running of their region. As a result a law was passed in 1977 to divide powers between the national and provincial governments. This created a number of provincial governments. The national government retained the overall power to intervene, suspend, or even abolish the provincial governments.

Within six years, in 1983, there were widespread claims of corruption and financial incompetence. There provincial governments had not shared power or passed down responsibility (and funds) to their smaller, local community councils (called Local Level Government). For most people, the provincial, and even the local level councils were remote and still something foreign.

A new law for Provincial and Local Level Governments was passed by National Parliament in 1995. It introduced important changes to the powers, structures, roles and responsibilities of all levels of Government: national, provincial, district and local. This new law replaced the 1977 law on Provincial governments.

In 1997, a nationwide election was conducted for the first time to elect representatives to the national parliament, provincial and local level governments. The Presidents of the Local Level Governments then became members of Provincial government and of other decision-making bodies at the local and provincial levels.
Under the reformed system, the Provincial Governments were composed of the elected Members of the National Parliament (MPs) and the Presidents of the Local Level Governments from that province. This new system gave local representatives more decision-making powers.

The reforms were aimed at improving the system of government, by:

- improving the delivery of services, particularly in the rural areas;
- increasing participation in Government at the community and local levels;
- decentralising powers and responsibilities to local levels;
- increasing funding to local governments;
- relocating public servants from urban centres to districts and stations nearer the rural people;
- decreasing the number of elected politicians;
- reducing mismanagement and misuse of funds.

Papua New Guinea had inherited a Westminster style parliament and a democratic system of government but had now changed the system to suit their own needs.

In 1983 there was a debate on raising the salaries of the parliamentarians (edited extracts).

'I face transport problems so I always travel by PMV (Public Motor Vehicle) like ordinary people,' a highlander MP told the parliament. ‘No one knows whether I am an elected member of parliament or not. The dust usually covers my face and even the people travelling in the same PMV cannot recognise me. I have nothing which will show other people I am a member'.

Another highlander MP added ... ‘Everybody wants to see me because I am the Deputy Prime Minister. I have to paint a good picture in public … I represent 60,000 people from my electorate. They come to my house every time I go home. They expect something all the time’.

Another highland MP said, “if people see us travelling in taxis or PMVs, they are going to wonder what has gone wrong with the system. He is supposed to be travelling in a VIP car because he is a big man. I am ashamed because of this. When the people elect me to parliament, they think I own the Bank of PNG. People demand you buy them motor vehicles or give them money because they have been your campaign managers or cast their votes in your favour. They demand you produce K10 000 and buy them a car … people have this kind of mentality that when we become MPs, we inherit wealth”.

The Opposition Leader, came straight to the point. ‘At the moment, with the little salaries, we have the problem of members trying to become Ministers just so they can
earn more. We are opening the door to bribery and corruption so I feel an increase is very much justified.


Questions and Activities

17. Who would you vote for – list these from first choice (1) to last choice (6).

(i) [ ] Always travels in a PMV.
(ii) [ ] Always gives K10000 or a car to his people back home.
(iii) [ ] Has magical powers and catch, fish, make rain.
(iv) [ ] Always gives a party when he goes home.
(v) [ ] Kills 5 pigs and always contributes the most money at ceremonies.
(vi) [ ] Drives about in a big black car.

18. Write a list of qualities which you think are necessary for good leadership. Make a class list from all the answers. Which three leadership qualities do you think are most important? Make a class tally to find out the opinion of the class as whole.