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# Evaluation of New Zealand's Country Programme in PNG

## Part II: Development Context

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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## 2. Development Context

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### 2.1. Introduction

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the most populous and culturally diverse of the Pacific island nations, with a population of approximately 7.7 million speaking over 800 languages. More than 80 percent of the population live in rural areas, many organised in tribal and language groups<sup>1</sup>.

PNG faces several critical development challenges, including achieving and maintaining fiscal sustainability, redressing income inequality, gender equity and family and gender based violence, enhancing the business environment and bolstering the private sector, overcoming poor levels of governance, improving the health and wellbeing of its citizens and mitigating the impacts of climate change. The PNG Government's "National Strategy for Responsible Sustainable Development" (StaRs), adopted in 2014, addresses these challenges by promoting a development trajectory based on shared prosperity. StaRs comprises 21 principles based on three pillars of ecological, economic and social sustainability<sup>2</sup>.

In 2015, PNG's Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.516 placed it in the low human development category, ranking 154<sup>th</sup> out of 188 countries and territories<sup>3</sup>. This score represented an increase in value by 0.156 since 1990, but a step down from the country's 2014 rank of 153<sup>rd</sup><sup>4</sup>.

Although PNG made some advances in respect to the Millennium Development Goals, the country was unable to achieve any of them in their entirety. While PNG's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita increased by 76.3% between 1990 and 2015<sup>5</sup>, the national poverty rate increased from 37.5% in 1996 to 39.9% in 2009<sup>6</sup>. PNG's level of income inequality is currently the highest across the Asia-Pacific region. Between 1990 and 2015, PNG's life expectancy at birth increased by 7.2 years and the infant mortality rate fell from 82 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 47.3 in 2013<sup>7</sup>. PNG's mean years of schooling increased by 2 years between 1990 and 2015, and expected years of schooling increased by 5.2 years<sup>8</sup>.

### 2.2. Gender Inequality

PNG faces significant society-wide challenges in the area of gender equality. PNG presently ranks 154 from 188 countries on the Gender Inequality Index (GII)<sup>9</sup>, one place above Zimbabwe. The GI measures inequality in three areas: economic status, human development and empowerment. PNG performs poorly in each of these areas. With regards to women's economic status, PNG ranks 125 of the 128 countries on this index. GNI per capita for women is US\$ 2,362 compared to US\$ 3,047 for men<sup>10</sup>. On Human development, only 8.8 per cent of women over the age of 25 have any secondary education (compared to 14.7 per cent for men). There are fewer girls than boys in all levels of the education system, and this disparity increases dramatically with age<sup>11</sup>. With regards to political participation, there are presently no female MPs in the 111 seat parliament<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of National Planning and Monitoring, Government of PNG (2015) Summary Report for Papua New Guinea: Millennium Development Goals 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Department of National Planning and Monitoring, Government of PNG (2014) National Strategy for Responsible Sustainable Development for Papua New Guinea.

<sup>3</sup> UNDP (2016) Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone.

<sup>4</sup> UNDP (2016) Human Development Report 2016, Briefing Note for countries on the 2016 Human Development Report: Papua New Guinea.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2015) Making IT Happen: Technology, Finance and Statistics for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

<sup>7</sup> Department of National Planning and Monitoring, Government of PNG (2015) Summary Report for Papua New Guinea: Millennium Development Goals 2015.

<sup>8</sup> UNDP (2016) Human Development Report 2016, Briefing Note for countries on the 2016 Human Development Report: Papua New Guinea.

<sup>9</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>

<sup>10</sup> (2011 PPP\$)

<sup>11</sup> Edwards, J. (2015) Gender and Education Assessment, Papua New Guinea: A review of the literature on girls and education. Report prepared for the Australian High Commission, Papua New Guinea and the Education Capacity Development Facility (managed by GRM International)

<sup>12</sup> This is down from three in the previous parliament. 167 women contested seats in the recent election compared to 3000 men.

While there are formal protections for women in areas such as family protection, equal inheritance, the right to vote, and eligibility for political representation, socio-cultural and customary issues militate against the realisation of these rights. Customary marriages are common across the country and can involve child brides taken as wives in polygamous relationships – 21.3 per cent of women are married by the age of 18, and 2 per cent are married by the age of 15<sup>13</sup>. The government of PNG faces significant challenges in enforcing protections in this area<sup>14</sup>. Gender based violence (GBV) is committed with impunity across the country. Approximately two-thirds of women have been subjected to domestic violence – a figure that reaches almost 100 per cent in parts of the Highlands<sup>15</sup>. A UNDP study found that 62 per cent of male Papua New Guineans reported committing rape against a woman or girl during their lifetime<sup>16</sup>. As domestic violence is seen as a private affair, issues are usually settled through local customary channels and typically involve the payment of compensation to the male relatives of victims. There is very little support for women who have been subjected to domestic violence.

In response to these significant challenges there has been increasing momentum within GoPNG and society more generally to address GBV and broader gender equality issues. Addressing GBV is identified as a priority in the PNG Vision 2050 and the government established the Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC) in 2002 to assist with addressing GBV issues in a more coordinated and strategic manner. As a result of the FSVAC's efforts the Department of Health has established 15 Family Support Centres (FSCs) in thirteen provinces<sup>17</sup>. The Royal PNG Constabulary has also established 24 Family and Sexual Violence Units across the country. Over 150 government and non-government services providers now support survivors of GBV<sup>18</sup>. However, there has been limited documentation about the quality of these services. The recent death of the high profile journalist Rosalyn Albaniel Evara has sparked a national debate around the issue of violence against women<sup>19</sup>.

## 2.3. Economic Context

After an extended economic recession in the second half of the 1990s, PNG has experienced strong economic growth. The development of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) sector and the increase in prices for gold, copper and oil drove sharp surges in economic growth rates from 2007 to 2015. The LNG sector continues to grow albeit at a slower rate due, in part, to depressed oil prices and the global expansion of LNG supplies.

As a resource-dependent economy, the trajectory of PNG's GDP has followed global commodity prices. PNG experienced an average annual growth rate of 9.6% between 2012 and 2015<sup>20</sup>. However, reflecting the steep drop in global commodity prices, PNG's GDP growth slowed sharply in 2016 falling to a rate of 2% (see Figure 2.1)<sup>21</sup>. This rate is expected to increase to 2.4% in 2018<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/papuang\\_statistics.html](https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/papuang_statistics.html)

<sup>14</sup> US Department of State (2013), p.6

<sup>15</sup> Amnesty International (2010)

<sup>16</sup> UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UN Volunteers (2013), p.2

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF PNG (2016) Evaluation of Family Support Centres in PNG

<sup>18</sup> Child Fund – Family and Sexual Violence Service Provider Directory for Papua New Guinea

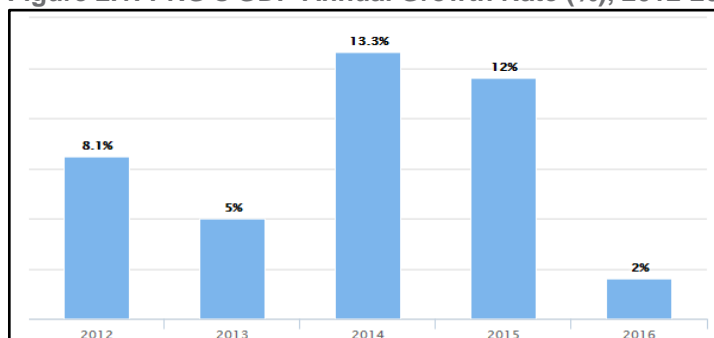
<sup>19</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/25/death-of-papua-new-guinea-journalist-sparks-national-debate-about-domestic-violence>

<sup>20</sup> IMF (2017) Papua New Guinea: 2016 Article IV Consultation – Press Release and Staff Report.

<sup>21</sup> Government of Papua New Guinea (2017) National Budget Speech 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Government of Papua New Guinea (2018) National Budget, Volume 1.

**Figure 2.1: PNG's GDP Annual Growth Rate (%), 2012-2016**

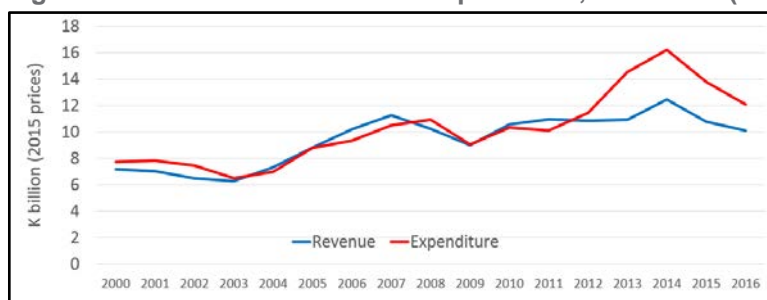


Source: ADB (2016) Papua New Guinea: Economy, <https://www.adb.org/countries/papua-new-guinea/economy#tabs-0-0>

PNG's current economic landscape reflects the paradox inherent in a resource dependent economy. Impressive GDP growth has disguised entrenched problems in the broader, non-resource economy. These problems include reduced agricultural productivity due to 'Dutch Disease' style impacts and drought, low administrative capacity across all levels of government, and a shrinking tax base. The curtailment of expenditure on capital projects due to the decline in global commodity prices, coupled with the PNG Government's fiscal constraints, has adversely affected growth in the non-resource sector<sup>23</sup>. A typical manifestation of the 'resource curse', employment in the non-resource sector declined by 4% from June 2016 to June 2017, of the back of a 4.4% in the previous 12 months<sup>24</sup>.

Prudent public financial management is critical to ensure economic sustainability and resilience in the face of further decreases in commodity prices. Acting on the imperative for budget repair due to the shortfall in revenue in the first half of 2016, the PNG Government approved the 2016 Supplementary Budget to bridge the gap between expenditure and revenue levels (see Figure 2.2a). The Supplementary Budget was estimated to offset approximately half of the projected PGK 3.1 billion deficit<sup>25</sup>. This was slated to be achieved principally through expenditure cuts and higher revenues from state-owned enterprises and statutory authority dividends and asset sales<sup>26</sup>. A sovereign bond issuance of PGK640 million is expected in 2018 to assist in financing the deficit, after failure to issue in 2017<sup>27</sup>.

**Figure 2.2a: PNG's Revenue and Expenditure, 2001-2016 (PGK billion)**



Source: Howes, S & Fox, R (2016) PNG's Resource Boom: A Fiscal Retrospective, Development Policy Centre, Australian National University.

The recent and projected fall in revenue and expenditure to GDP reduces the government's ability to provide basic services and to invest in reforms and infrastructure to stimulate future growth. The projected fall in expenditure as a share of GDP to below 20 per cent is the lowest level in over 30 years (Figure 2.2b), and well below the long-term average of approximately 32 per cent<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> World Bank (2017) East Asia Pacific Economic Update, April 2017: Sustaining Resilience.

<sup>24</sup> Government of PNG (2017) 2017 National Budget: Volume 1.

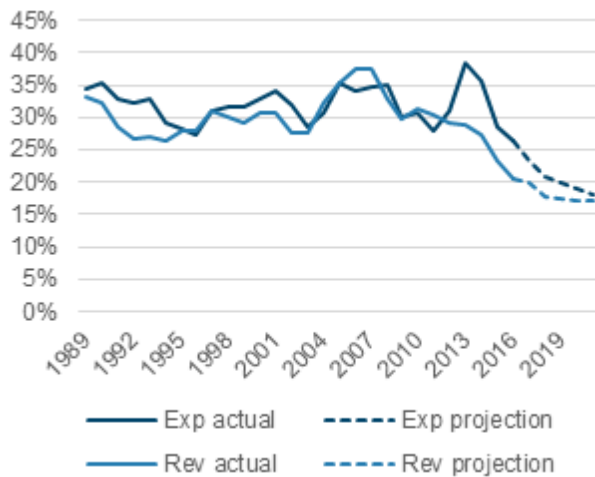
<sup>25</sup> IMF (2017) Papua New Guinea: 2016 Article IV Consultation – Press Release and Staff Report.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> D. Osborne and R. Harden (2017) Economic Analysis of PNG, Lowy Institute, Sydney

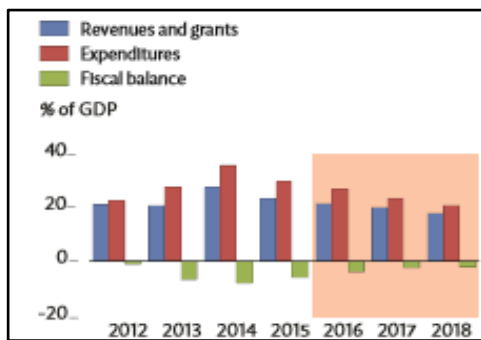
**Figure 2.2b: Revenue and expenditure (share of GDP)**



Source: Osborne, D., and Harden, R., (2017) Economic Analysis of PNG, Lowy Institute, Sydney

In 2018, total revenue is projected to be PGK12,731.0million, up from PGK10,979.2 million in 2017<sup>29</sup>. This projection represents the first substantial increase, if realised, since 2014<sup>30</sup>.

**Figure 2.3: PNG's Revenue, Expenditure and Fiscal Balance (% of GDP)**



Source: ADB, Asian Development Outlook 2017: Transcending the Middle-Income Challenge

A critical challenge for PNG's development is transforming resource revenues into shared prosperity. Approximately 85% of PNG's population inhabit rural areas, practising subsistence farming and informal small-scale cash cropping, and do not reap the benefits from PNG's natural resource windfalls<sup>31</sup>. (A compelling argument for New Zealand's investment's in the agriculture sector.) In many resource rich countries revenues from extractive industries have been growing as a share of total revenue, making these countries more dependent on these narrow revenue streams. The issue of the resource curse and in particular Dutch Disease is an important consideration. If these effects are experienced then countries are likely to suffer reduced growth in their non-resource economies, as has been the case in PNG, making revenues from the extractives sector even more important to sustain in order to maintain and grow public expenditure levels (Acosta 2013:2). In addition, resource revenues are transient in time and there is a limited window in which to capture for the application to improving development outcomes.

PNG's Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF), established through the passing of the *Organic Law on the Sovereign Wealth Fund* in 2015, is an important instrument for managing revenues and increasing transparency. The SWF will comprise two funds, namely the Stabilisation Fund and the Savings Fund. The Stabilisation Fund will house tax revenues from mining and petroleum projects and these

<sup>29</sup> Government of PNG (2017) 2017 National Budget: Volume 1.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Bourke, M & Harwood, T (2009) Food and Agriculture in PNG, Australian National University E Press.

revenues will be available for draw down to support budgetary expenditure<sup>32</sup>. Excess revenue from the Stabilisation Fund will be deposited into the Savings Fund along with dividends from equity in projects held by the State. The IMF has called for the SWF to swiftly commence operations for PNG's macroeconomic stability<sup>33</sup>. The World Bank is providing operational and technical support to the SWF Secretariat starting in 2017.

While PNG's primary exports have comprised minerals, including oil, gold and copper, PNG also exports substantial quantities of wood, coffee, tea, cocoa and fish<sup>34</sup>. PNG's 2016 current account surplus of 7.45% of GDP was down from 10.07% in 2015 with both imports and exports in decline<sup>35</sup>. Although there are new mining projects in the pipeline, investing to increase the diversification of exports is crucial to reduce the impact of external shocks<sup>36</sup>.

Structural reform is required to remove barriers to the development of PNG's private sector. In the World Bank's 2016 "ease of doing business" aggregate rankings, PNG placed 119<sup>th</sup> out of 190 countries<sup>37</sup>. The most commonly cited constraints to private sector expansion and productivity include practices of the informal sector, customary land title which applies across almost 97% of PNG's land<sup>38</sup>, political instability, corruption and crime<sup>39</sup>. PNG's weak infrastructure further constrains the development of the private sector. In 2012, only 18% of the population had access to electricity, with access much lower in rural areas. There has also been a problematic strengthening of already entrenched private sector interests at the expense of new entrants. Finally, PNG's shallow financial sector presents an obstacle to private sector development. In 2013, PNG's ratio of domestic private credit to GDP of 35% was well below the average for many comparable countries<sup>40</sup>. Also, on average, foreign investors have repatriated more profits out of the country than have made new investments in PNG. The negative effect of the low quantity of international finance into Papua New Guinea over the past five years is compounded because a large proportion of investments have been in existing firms and/or projects (merger and acquisitions) rather than in new (greenfield) projects. FDI in the form of merger and acquisitions is typically less beneficial than greenfield FDI, as it is less likely to lead to innovation, technological transfer, and the creation of new industries<sup>41</sup>.

PNG's economy is plagued by high levels of corruption. In 2016, Transparency International ranked PNG 136<sup>th</sup> out of 176 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index<sup>42</sup>. Papua New Guinea police recently reported that more than USD470 million in public funds disappeared in 2016 due to corruption and fraud<sup>43</sup>. PNG's decision to become a member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in 2014 represented a significant step in the fight against corruption, however further reform is necessary to improve weak monitoring systems and low levels of compliance to ensure that EITI membership is not merely tokenistic. PNG's 2014 EITI Report revealed that out of the 27 revenue streams from PNG's extractive sector, only corporate income tax and dividends are recorded in the national budget<sup>44</sup>.

Roaming is further entrenched in PNG as numerous foreign companies have used numerous methods to sign land deals under the PNG Government's Special Agriculture and Business Leases (SABLs) scheme, ostensibly established to support small-scale agricultural projects. A total of 5.5 million hectares have been leased through the scheme to foreign companies for logging and oil palm

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<sup>32</sup> Department of Treasury, Government of PNG (2017) Sovereign Wealth Fund. Accessed on 05/05/17: [http://www.treasury.gov.pg/html/public\\_debt/swf.htm](http://www.treasury.gov.pg/html/public_debt/swf.htm). Osborne, D. (2015) Review of Legislation establishing the Sovereign Wealth Fund in Papua New Guinea, Issues Paper 16, National Research Institute, Port Moresby.

<sup>33</sup> IMF (2017) Papua New Guinea: 2016 Article IV Consultation – Press Release and Staff Report.

<sup>34</sup> Batten, A. (2013) Papua New Guinea Exports: Trends and development impacts. Accessed on 06/05/17: [https://crawford.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/events/attachments/2013-10/png\\_update\\_session\\_3\\_-\\_aaron\\_batten\\_-\\_pngs\\_evolution\\_trade\\_and\\_investment\\_flows.pdf](https://crawford.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/events/attachments/2013-10/png_update_session_3_-_aaron_batten_-_pngs_evolution_trade_and_investment_flows.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Devpolicy PNG Budget Database (accessed 17 July 2017).

<sup>36</sup> Basnett, Y. (2016) PNG's Macroeconomic Outlook: Strategies for Exiting the Boom and Bust Cycle. Accessed on 05/05/17: [http://devpolicy.org/Events/2016/PNG-Update/1a\\_Basnett.pdf](http://devpolicy.org/Events/2016/PNG-Update/1a_Basnett.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> World Bank (2017) Doing Business 2017: Equal Opportunity for All.

<sup>38</sup> IMF (2015) Papua New Guinea: Selected Issues.

<sup>39</sup> World Bank (2017) East Asia Pacific Economic Update, April 2017: Sustaining Resilience

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Philipp Harms and Pierre-Guillaume Méon, "Good and Bad FDI: The Growth Effects of Greenfield Investments and Mergers and Acquisitions in Developing Countries", Working Paper CEB No 14-021, August 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Transparency International (2017) Corruption Perceptions Index. Accessed on 07/05/17: [http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption\\_perceptions\\_index\\_2016](http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016)

<sup>43</sup> Radio New Zealand (2017) PNG losing more than \$US470m a year to fraud. Accessed on 07/05/17: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/330369/png-losing-more-than-%24us470m-a-year-to-fraud>.

<sup>44</sup> PNG Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (2014) Papua New Guinea Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Report 2014.

plantations in violation of PNG’s laws which protect customary land title<sup>45</sup>. These “land-grabs” have resulted in the destruction of local livelihoods, customs and the environment. In the lead up to the 2017 elections, Prime Minister O’Neil confirmed that all SABLs are illegal and will be cancelled<sup>46</sup>. However, the same announcement was made in 2013 without any consequent action.

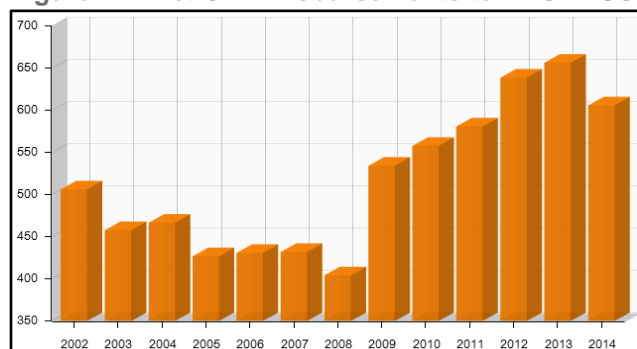
Macroeconomic reform is rendered difficult due to PNG’s political landscape which, since the country’s independence in 1975, has been characterised by party fragmentation, powerful vested interests and unwillingness by politicians to ‘rock the boat’. PNG appears to suffer from short-termism and patronage in decision-making, which has resulted in the prioritisation of policies focusing on quick wins, growing already robust industries, sectors and provinces. This has occurred, very noticeably, in Port Moresby and the resource rich enclaves.

PNG is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and many of PNG’s islands and coastal areas face the threat of inundation due to rising sea levels. According to a 2013 ADB report entitled “Economics of Climate Change in the Pacific”, PNG will suffer the greatest economic impact from climate change in the Pacific region, with costs estimated to reach 15.2% of the country’s GDP by 2100<sup>47</sup>. PNG’s 2015-2016 drought, which affected approximately 3 million people, evinced that the threats posed by climate change are imminent and require immediate mitigation. The drought critically undermined food and water security and resulted in the temporary closure of the Ok Tedi mine.

## 2.4. Development Assistance

On average across the period 2012-2014, PNG was the largest recipient of aid in Oceania based on net Official Development Assistance (ODA) receipts<sup>48</sup>. Net ODA disbursements to PNG increased from USD506 million (USD90 per capita) to USD605 million (approximately USD82 per capita) between 2002 and 2014 (see Figure 2.4). The vast majority is received in the form of grants, with a small proportion comprising gross loans<sup>49</sup>.

**Figure 2.4: Net ODA Disbursements to PNG in USD millions (2002-2014)**



Source: Aidflows, partnership between OECD, World Bank, ADB and the Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.aidflows.org/>

### 2.4.1. Donor funded sectors/activities

The Government of Australia is the principal bilateral donor to PNG (see Figure 2.5). However, the Turnbull Government’s May budget announcement of an aid freeze for two years from mid-2018 raises uncertainty over future commitments<sup>50</sup>. This uncertainty is compounded by PNG’s request in March 2017 that Australia convert its total aid funding to direct budgetary support<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> The Oakland Institute (2017) Taking on the logging pirates: Land defenders in Papua New Guinea speak out!

<sup>46</sup> PNG Daily News (2017) All SABLs Unlawful. Accessed on 07/05/17: <https://pngdailynews.com/2017/03/14/all-sabls-unlawful/>.

<sup>47</sup> ADB (2013) The Economics of Climate Change in the Pacific.

<sup>48</sup> OECD (2016) Development Aid at a Glance: Statistics by Region (Oceania).

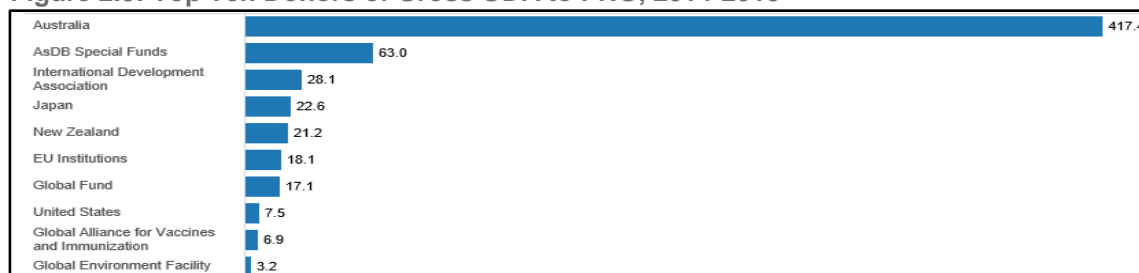
<sup>49</sup> See: <http://www.aidflows.org/>.

<sup>50</sup> ABC News (2017) Australia’s generosity in question after foreign aid budget cuts. Accessed on 10/05/17: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/programs/pacific-beat/2017-05-10/australias-generosity-in-question-after-foreign-aid-budget-cuts/8513196>.

<sup>51</sup> Brisbane Times (2017) PNG wants Australia to fund schools, hospitals and infrastructure. Accessed on 09/05/17: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/png-wants-australia-to-fund-schools-hospitals-and-infrastructure-20170309-guujhu.html>.



**Figure 2.5: Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA to PNG, 2014-2015**



Source: OECD DAC Database

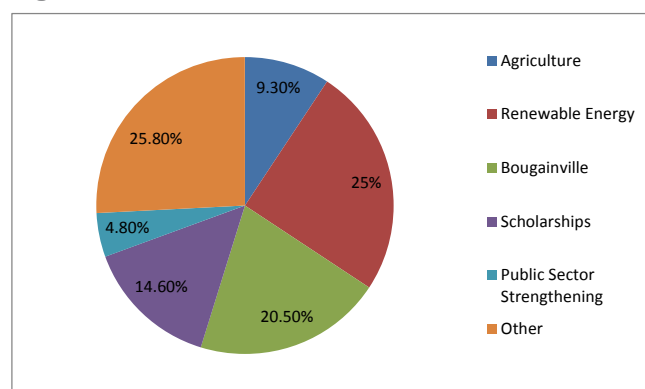
### 2.4.2. New Zealand's aid programme

New Zealand has a long history as a trusted partner to PNG. PNG is New Zealand's second largest Pacific trading partner with NZD221.4 million in total trade in goods in 2014. Since 2012, New Zealand realigned its aid to PNG to focus on economic growth with a proposed 65% increase in bilateral aid between 2015/16 and 2017/8.

The Joint Commitment for Development signed in 2015 between the Governments of New Zealand and PNG for the period 2015-2018 establishes that New Zealand's development cooperation in PNG concentrates on increasing economic and food security benefits from agriculture, expanding access to affordable and sustainable clean energy, strengthening law and justice systems especially in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, providing scholarships for study in New Zealand, strengthening economic governance in the public sector and building partnerships in order to deliver sustainable development<sup>52</sup>.

According to MFAT's PNG Programme data, New Zealand's 2016/17 aid budget for PNG totalled NZD37.1 million, allocated according to the priorities set out in the Joint Commitment for Development (see Figure 2.6). The Government of New Zealand has committed 70 million in bilateral aid to PNG between 2015 and 2018, of which NZD70 million is bilateral funding<sup>53</sup>.

**Figure 2.6: Sectoral Allocation of New Zealand's Total Aid Programme in PNG in 2016 (%)**



Source: MFAT

Consistent with well-established aid effectiveness principles, New Zealand's development cooperation ought to continue to align with PNG's own initiatives and agenda for sustainable economic development. For example, while only in its infancy, MFAT's Fresh Produce Supply Chain Investments project has made progress in increasing the participation of smallholder farmers in agricultural value chains who are reaping increasing returns on their produce<sup>54</sup>. Similarly, the Bougainville Community Policing Programme is a partnership between the New Zealand Police and Bougainville Police Service aimed at improving community safety. This support is crucial, especially in light of the Bougainville Referendum on its future political status slated for 2019.

<sup>52</sup> Government of New Zealand and Government of PNG (2015) Joint Commitment for Development: New Zealand and Papua New Guinea 2015-2018.

<sup>53</sup> MFAT, PNG Programme Analysis for IDG Strategic Plan.

<sup>54</sup> MFAT, New Zealand-PNG Joint Commitment for Development 2015-2018, 2016 Annual Report.

A critical issue for the evaluation to address in determining the strategic direction of New Zealand's future engagement in PNG is how optimally to assist the country to ensure development for shared prosperity.



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