



COFFEE INDUSTRY CORPORATION LTD

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UK buyers visit PNG coffee industry



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MISSION STATEMENT

To provide enabling regulatory environment and facilitate the industry's development through research, extension, information sharing and market development services to bring better financial returns to the coffee value chain actors.

COVER PHOTO:

Visiting UK coffee buyers with CIC staff during their visit to the Niugini Coffee Tea & Spice Co. Ltd warehouse in Lae, Morobe Province.

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UK buyers visit coffee industry in PNG

A delegation of 10 coffee buyers from the United Kingdom recently completed a successful visit to 19 coffee business houses and producers in five provinces in the country.

The visit was made possible through the UK Trade Partnership Program (UKTP), supported by the British High Commission, and facilitated by the Coffee Industry Corporation Ltd (CICL).

From May 24 to 30, the team visited exporters, coffee mills, plantations, farmers, and freight forwarders in the PNG coffee industry to familiarize themselves with the industry’s set up, farming practices, production levels, processing methods and export logistics.

The visit commenced in Mt Hagen and continued onto Jiwaka, Simbu, Goroka and ended in Lae, Morobe Province.

British High Commissioner, H.E. Anne Macro accompanied the visiting UK coffee buyers on the trip from Goroka to Lae.

“We are very pleased that we have a large delegation that visited the PNG coffee industry. Some of them have already bought coffee from PNG and others are new. International Trade Centre (ITC) is a trade program. We fund ITC to work with a number of different sectors, including coffee, cocoa, and other specialty food products.

Ms Macro said they have been a number of producers that the program has sponsored over the years to go to world trade shows in London and other places. She said that with this visit she hopes for more close partnerships and collaborations between PNG and the UK in the coffee space.

CICL overseas representative, Mick Wheeler said the objective of this mission was to introduce UK buyers to

exporters in PNG, facilitate long term business partnerships between UK buyers and producers/exporters in PNG, facilitate exports of coffee beans from PNG, provide advice on quality, productive capacity and quality improvement and advise PNG producers on demand in UK and market requirements and expectations.

UKTP Programme Manager Jarmila Sarda said the program has been operating in PNG since 2019, and is funded by the UK and implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) based in Geneva. She said the program's mandate is to help Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) increase their competitiveness and accompany them through international markets. "This is the first time our program has brought a coffee delegation to PNG. We have brought 10 UK importers and roasters with an objective to find new origins, make them discover PNG coffee, and hopefully start a journey which will help them to increase the trade links between PNG and England."

Sarda said the team have had wonderful encounters during the visit, meeting with exporters, producers, and farmers. "It has been an experience of a lifetime for all people concerned. I am hoping we can bring in more UK buyers to this country and together make the coffee industry grow further," she said.

Among the group of buyers and roasters was Tim Smith from Johnson Brothers Coffee. Johnson Brothers Coffee is a long established family business in Northern Ireland and they have been in the coffee roasting business since 1913. "We source about 400 tonnes of coffee every year and 50 tonnes of which comes from PNG. From this trip, I plan to go back and raise the profile of PNG coffee, to tell the story and talk to our customers about the challenges the farmers face every day and how PNG can continue to raise the quality of coffee that they create. With the visit to the exporters, I hope to be able to collaborate and give recommendations on what we want from the market and what we need for our customers as well," he said.



Colin Smith of Smith's Coffee Company in the UK during their visit to the CIC head office in Goroka.

"This is the first time I have ever been to an origin country. From visiting the cooperatives and farmers and listening to their stories and hearing their challenges, it really puts into perspective a few things for me. When we look at the exporter's point of view, the quality of PNG coffee is fantastic with lots of different levels and grades that we can choose from."

Managing Director of Smith's coffee company in the UK, Colin Smith also shared his sentiments from the recent visit. "We are a roaster and we roast about 8 tonnes a week of a variety of different coffees. We don't specialize in any particular coffee, but we like to have big range of different coffee so our clients can try different origins, flavours and concepts of coffee. We also blend some PNG coffee in order to match the bigger market in the restaurant and hotel trade. From this visiting group, most are importers in the UK. A roaster

Continued from pages 2 and 3...

like myself cannot import a container so getting direct from a farm or from an area or from a mill is very difficult. Only way is to have links from the mills and from people who bring bulk into the UK. Now that we have left the EU, it costs a lot of money to bring stuff from the EU into the UK. It helps when we can find a link through a particular company and others who are already importers and they can see the need to bring in coffee from PNG. Smith said if PNG coffee can come into a larger market with a good Y- grade then they can split it up and bring it to roasters like himself.

CICL Chief Operations Officer Steven Tuma highlighted that between 2023 and 2024, the volume of PNG coffee exported to the UK has increased from 3, 826 bags to 4, 928 bags, indicating an increase of 29% generating a revenue of K8.7 million in the duration of the two years. He said it was a busy week hosting the visiting UK buyers to see an overview of the PNG coffee industry, and hopes for better cooperation and partnership going forward.



UK coffee buyers visit the CICL Lae Exports Office, Express Freight Management warehouse and New Guinea Highlands Coffee Exports Office.





Hatavile coffee receives export license

Hatavile Coffee Ltd (HCL) in Wantrifu village of Daulo District, Eastern Highlands Province reached a milestone achievement when it was presented its coffee export license by the CICL on Thursday, May 15, 2025.

The license was presented by CICL-PACD Project Manager, Potaisa Hombunaka, and CICL Senior Coffee Inspector, Frank Waipi, to HCL General Manager, Philip Timbie.

Timbie said this comes after years of hard work and assistance from the CICL's Productive Partnerships in Agriculture Project (CICL-PPAP) and now PACD, CICL, his community, coffee suppliers, family and his Korean business partner, Mr BJ Choi.

"When we started doing coffee work, we were selling green bean locally from our 50-hectare coffee plantation here at Hatavile, but I wanted to go an extra mile, so we worked hard to improve production and most importantly quality", said Timbie.

The support to rehabilitate his coffee factory and plantation did not take an easy path. A lot of sacrifice, dedication and resources had to be put in to bring it to what it is today- to be granted an export license as a national is a milestone achievement for Timbie and his Wantrifu community.

World Bank Senior Agriculture Specialist and PACD Task Team Leader, Allan Oliver who was present to witness the license presentation said such stories brought hope and showed that with the right support from the industry and development partners, it was pleasing to see a community such as Wantrifu receive its export license.

"If you can do it, I think we can do it in any community in PNG. With the right support, the right infrastructure, the right people in the industry to support you, and if it is the industry's vision to grow the coffee industry, then it is possible. I am very proud to witness you and your partner's achievement today. For the bank, it is a success story. It is a good story to tell," Oliver said.

CICL-PACD Project Manager, Potaisa Hombunaka, said it is time to show politicians and everyone in the industry that we can export coffee from our hauslain. "We can export coffee from Hatavile! We do not need to be in towns and cities to export coffee. At PACD, a good number of them are coming up and will export coffee soon," he said.

Hombunaka highlighted that the reality in the coffee industry is that 90 percent of exporters are Papua New Guineans and 10% of them are multinational companies, however, 10% of multi-national companies export 80% of coffee while 90% of Papua New Guineans export 20%.

"We must change that landscape, and change has started, and within 10 years, there will be more Papua New Guinean exporters exporting. Coffee exporting is not rocket science. It can be exported from rural settings

Continued from page 5....

and not in towns only. The growers need to benefit more from the industry. It belongs to the growers, the resource owners.”

CICL Senior Coffee Inspector Frank Waipi said Timbie started as a grower with his 50 ha coffee plantation. He was building his coffee warehouse when I started doing inspections at his setup. “During my initial inspections, I submitted a full report to my supervisor. However, the license application was rejected. I told him that he should not give up but to persevere.”

Over the course of five years, HCL did not stop. It kept on working hard and finally ticked all the boxes. Waipi said the requirements involved investing in coffee production, having a warehouse, processing mill, and the last is to go into third-party exporting to learn the pros and cons of exporting. He acknowledged Kofi Management Services Ltd (KMSL) for being that conduit for HCL.

Timbie acknowledged the hard work of his wife and children, who have been silently supporting him behind the scenes throughout the years. “I have been just a front liner to direct the traffic of coffee flow, but you have been my support since the start of this journey.”

He also thanked his boys at the factory house, all his coffee supply chain partners; Mr Takus Irantiweb, David Skairara, Stallon at Henganofi and Meme Wakikura at Okapa and his friends at Maprik, Kimbe, Rabaul, Finschhafen and Popondetta for supplying good quality coffee.



Hatavile Coffee Ltd General Manager, Philip Timbie (3rd from left) receiving his export license certificate from CICL-PACD Project Manager and CICL team on Thursday, May 15th, 2025.

Anego coffee factory reopened

The Anego Coffee factory in Kabiufa, Eastern Highlands Province was reopened after 15 years by the Coffee Minister Hon. William Bando on Friday, 14th February 2025.

Anego Coffee is one of 18 successful matching grant partners under the Coffee Industry Corporation Ltd's PNG Agriculture Commercialization and Diversification (CICL-PACD) project 3.2 component. A contract worth K432, 000 was signed between CICL-PACD and Anego to revive the coffee factory, which Anego contributed K72, 000 and CICL-PACD put in K360, 000.

During the occasion, Minister Bando presented Anego its Processing and Export License, and a cheque of K100, 000, which was witnessed by government officials, coffee stakeholders, development partners and coffee farmers.

CICL Chief Executive Officer, Charles Dambui commended Anego Managing Director, Albert Wamiri, in taking the first step to bring back the factory into operation in partnership with CICL and PACD project. Dambui congratulated Wamiri on his recent appointment as the Chairman of Plantation and Processors Association and thanked Mark Munnoll of Kosem Kofi Ltd for his contribution as the outgoing chair.

He added that the government supported the reforms that are currently being undertaken by the Coffee Minister and one of them is to get all coffee farmers registered through their respective associations. He said a detailed advert would be put out in the daily newspapers soon regarding this government policy and initiative.

Minister Bando acknowledged the Wamiri family for their determination to reopen their factory in his keynote address. "Today, I congratulate you for seeing that your coffee factory is in operation again. I am honoured to turn on the switch at the factory to mark this reopening. After this opening today, the onus is now on you, it is your business, your property and your life to see it operate to its full potential to serve coffee farmers," he said.

The Anego Coffee plantation was purchased from former owners just few months in 1975 before PNG attained independence from Australia.

Whilst PNG is approaching its 50th anniversary this year, Anego Coffee will also celebrate its 50th anniversary commemorating the foundation built by the late Sir Akapite Wamiri, and his family for being resilient and having the courage to continue on the good work that began 50 years ago.



Coffee Minister Hon. William Bando turning on the main switch for the 200 KVA genset at the Anego Coffee factory during the reopening of the factory on Friday, February 14th, 2025.

Coffee nursery opened in Dagoda, Central



A 44,000 capacity Robusta coffee nursery was opened in Dagoda village in the Hiri-Koiari District by Central Province Governor Hon. Rufina Peter on Thursday, 24 April 2025.

The Robusta nursery is a first of its kind to be set up by the Dagoda Cooperative with assistance from the Central Provincial Government (CPG) and the Coffee Industry Corporation Ltd (CICL) following an MOA signed in 2024.

The event was witnessed by the CPG, Hiri-Koiari MP Hon. Keith Iduhu, Central Provincial Administration, Central DAL, CICL, local leaders and the Dagoda community.

Madam Governor Peter said the partnership be-



From left: Central Provincial Administrator Edward Kila, Hiri-Koiari MP Keith Iduhu, CICL Chief Operations Officer Steven Tumae, Central Madam Governor Rufina Peter and CICL Central-based Provincial Coffee Coordinator Jorine Hetora at the official opening of the 44,000 capacity coffee nursery at Dagoda, Central Province.

tween CPG and CICL is aimed not just at increasing production but also to build a coffee processing factory and an export centre in Central Province.

“This means exporting our coffee direct to the world market. This nursery is more than a collection of seedlings. It is a symbol of opportunity, transformation and prosperity for our province. It is the first tangible outcome of the MOA and today we celebrate the first step towards a larger and brighter future.”

CICL Chief Operations Officer Steven Tumae congratulated the Dagoda community and its provincial, district and local leaders who have willingly worked with CICL to establish the coffee nursery.

“The CICL Strategic Business Plan, 2025-2029 aligns itself with the Government’s target to produce 3 million bags by 2029. It calls for concerted efforts through such partnerships. Setting up this nursery is not a mistake but an excellent intervention to contribute towards that target.”

Mr Tumae highlighted that from a Rapid Rural Appraisal carried out by the CICL in 2024, less than 3.5 percent of Central Province’s 29,998 km² of land-mass is currently producing coffee. Less than 1% of Central Province’s 269,756 people are growing coffee. “Despite less use of land to grow coffee, the potential is there to expand coffee cultivation for both Arabica and Robusta coffee,” he said.

“In real terms of quantities and value, 3,973 green bean bags weighing 198,708 tons were exported and earned K1.6 million from 2018-2024. Central Province has vast areas of land with suitable soil and climate for massive coffee development,” he added.

CICL Provincial Coffee Coordinator Jorine Hetora, said initial work on the Robusta nursery with the locals started in June 2024. “We began with 7,000 seedlings and today it has reached 44,000 ready to be distributed to farmers under the Dagoda Cooperative. We will not stop here but increase its capacity to 100,000 seedlings.”

Hetora said it was a first of its kind for the coastal community to go into coffee and CICL together with its partners will continue to guide and train them through the whole process. The Dagoda Cooperative with its 66 members will receive 200 seedlings each as a start. There are plans to increase the seedling distribution to 3,000 per farmers to make it equivalent to a farmer having a hectare of coffee.

A day in the life of a coffee buyer



Ian Mopafi (second from left) with international partners and Outspan Coffee representatives during a visit to his buying point at Mendikwae in Goroka.

"We have not been getting the volume we usually get at our buying point. In recent times, there have been incidents where foreigners camped out in the villages and bought parchment coffee, something which should not happen in the first place as it is reserved for nationals."

Coffee season in coffee growing provinces have begun and for Eastern Highlands Province, coffee traders are busy at their buying points purchasing coffee from groups and individuals.

Being in the coffee business trade for 15 years, Ian Mopafi said they have had both good and bad seasons. "For this year, prices have been good for both farmers and traders," he said.

Mopafi said prices on the international scene can fluctuate, however prices offered at the domestic front such as parchment buying points do not really see a big change.

He said for this year, coffee prices have gone so high, many people have come into the scene to buy coffee. "We try to stick with class 1 and class 3 when purchasing parchment coffee. International prices can go up and down, but prices here do not change very much. At one point, it went up to K13 early this year and then after that in the next 2-3 months that followed it remained between K12.00 and K12.50."

Mopafi said they have not been getting the volume they usually get at their buying point. In recent times, there have been incidents where foreigners camped out in the villages and bought parchment coffee, something which should not happen in the first place as it is reserved for nationals.

Mopafi emphasized that the expected volume was not coming into the buying points because of this type of illegal acts. He urged the government to be stern and enforce regulatory policy guidelines through the coffee regulating body (CICL) to address this issue as a matter of urgency.

In a day, Mopafi's team purchases on an average 2.5 tonnes of parchment coffee from their buying point and this coffee is then taken to a factory to further process into green bean. Their main trading hours starts at 7.30am and ends at 2pm daily but during peak season, they go late into the evenings buying parchment coffee.

Farmers come from all over the eight districts of Eastern Highlands to sell their parchment coffee bags to buyers stationed at various locations in Goroka town.

Johannes Sire is a regular coffee farmer from Kama who sells his parchment coffee to Mopafi.

On Wednesday June 18, Johannes brought four bags of parchment coffee to Mopafi's buying point and was paid at K12.50 per kilogram.

"We are his regular client and we come here to sell every time. This year from March to May, the price has been good and we have been happy. In mid-May and into June price started dropping. I own a hectare of coffee block at the George plantation at Kama and I have been coming here to sell."

PIONEER COFFEE ADMINISTRATOR LAUNCHES BOOK ON HIS LIFE JOURNEY AND THE COFFEE INDUSTRY IN PNG

The coffee industry in Papua New Guinea has held a long-standing history with its own struggles and achievements driven by genuine and dedicated people who contributed their time, effort, commitment and resources to bring it to what it is today.

One of such person is a man called the 'Walking Encyclopaedia of Coffee', or better known as 'Papa bilong Kofi'. He is Ricky Moke Mitio. Originally from Moke village in the Okapa District of Eastern Highlands Province. Mitio is a testament of a resilient young man during the early colonial days who has seen both worlds of change and transformation from traditional cannibalism age before PNG's independence and post-independence.

Ricky's autobiography book titled "Ovu ga hoe" (I will not go) was launched on Thursday, May 8th, 2025 at the Lamana Hotel in Port Moresby.

This significant event had all tables to the venue sold out and room filled to capacity with old friends, coffee acquaintances, government representatives, family and friends of Ricky past and present to witness the special occasion.

One may ask what the title of the autobiography (Ovu ga'hoe, I will not go) signifies and how it relates to lessons to be learnt today. In a fascinating story, the Book takes you back to when civilization was not in the picture. It tells how Ricky grew up in both worlds. The arrival of early Lutheran Missionaries who brought the Gospel of Peace, education and changes from the Stone Age to modern civilization. It is a very moving story of how the words of his mother, Mangkeo, "Ovu Ga hoe" (I will not go) impacted greatly on her family. Papa Evan Mitio was posted to an area called Rihongka behind Henganofi District from Raipinka. Mama Mangkeo faced Mitio straight in the face and said "Ovu ga'hoe". This stand switched Evan Mitio's posting south which later became Okapa. Her stand had a lasting impact on Ricky and his siblings and their ability to stay connected to their land and heritage and witnessed all the changes civilization brought along

their life journey in the early 1950s and 60s.

After completing formal education in Okapa Primary School then and Goroka High School in the early 1960s, Ricky attained Diploma in Tropical Agriculture in 1972 at the Vudal Agriculture College in East New Britain, and immediately commenced formal employment with the then PNG Coffee Marketing Board (PNGCMB). Much later after all formal employment ended Ricky in 2014, attained his MBA from the Divine Word University in Madang.

While working for the PNG-CMB in 1972, the statutory body was under the leadership of Mr Lloyd Hurrell as Chairman, a retired military cross veteran, kiap and coffee planter in Wau, Bulolo. I was just employed as the only Native Officer in 1972. Mr Hurrell was a hard faced and straight talker who cornered me at the old PNG Coffee Industry Board (PNGCIB) office in West Goroka. He looked me straight in my face to proclaim that "yes, your country will get independence sooner or later, and then



CIC Chief Operations Officer, Steven Tumae acknowledging Mitio's contribution to the coffee industry in PNG during the book launch night.

you must stand up to manage your affairs."

Ricky said he did not quite understand the veracity of that statement but much later in 1979 under Hurrell's chairmanship, he was appointed the first

native Executive Officer to take over the colonial Executive Officer position from Australian Didiman veteran Mr Barry Beil. By then Copra Marketing Board already had a national General Manager. Mr Hurrell was a strong believer in development of local people to progress in business enterprises.

Ricky joined as a Coffee Inspector with the PNG/CMB in 1972, and rose throughout the ranks to the position of Executive Officer in 1979, later returned to CEO under CIC.

There were doubts among white planters whether Ricky could manage the complex multi-million industry of diverse ethnic and cultural people involved.

By then the industry was structured as 30 percent plantation and block sector and 70 percent smallholder village coffee growers.

Ricky said that during those early days, Australia instituted a Tariff Relieve Arrangement where Australian buyers of coffee (roaster soluble coffee manufacturers etc) were required to import 25% of requirements from PNG before they could qualify to buy coffee from other origins. He said this really helped guarantee a market for PNG coffee and helped to boost coffee production in PNG.

By 1975, Brazil the biggest coffee producing country's coffee was destroyed by frost. Coffee prices rose through the roof. Mr Michael Wheeler, the current PNG Representative to the International Coffee Organization (ICO), was employed by DASf. He formulated the policy guidelines for setting up a Coffee Industry Fund (CIF). The Board imposed 0.15 toea/kg export levy on all green bean coffee exports from PNG. The CIF accumulated to K30 million by 1987.

The three export commodities held a meeting with the Governor of BPNG on how to sustain the value of Kina. We negotiated for a low exchange rate for the Kina to US dollar so that maximum foreign exchange earnings could flow into PNG. In return, for PNG Coffee Industry Board, we were required to hold 60% of the total CIF in Treasury Bills at competitive rates while the balance was distributed at competitive rates among commercial banks.

Coffee was bringing in K300 – 500 million per annum based on 750,000 bags exports in foreign exchange revenue to PNG. The overall aim was to strengthen the value of the Kina against the US dollar. It goes to demonstrate how coffee played its

part in building the economy of PNG after independence. After Sir Michael Somare declared independence for PNG in 1974, the new country needed lots of money to drive economic and social development.



CIC staff and CIC COO Steven Tuma with Mitio during the launch night.

Ricky upheld the Private Sector driven model, maintaining the PNG-CMB as a Regulator Authority and Marketing Promotion of PNG's image promotion. The private sector was given freedom to perform from production to export of coffee and strengthened under the regulatory framework to regulate performance of private sector without fear or favour.

Ricky acknowledges the contribution of his former expatriate Boss – Mr Barry Beil and other prominent people in the early days of his career who prepared him well to take carriage of the coffee industry.

He said Barry Beil played a bridging role between expatriate driven to PNG national driven coffee industry, training the nationals to take over from production to marketing and exporting.

He has travelled the five continents of the world, putting the image of PNG coffee on the world map and has been the most hired and fired state CEO.

During his time as the CEO of the then PNG-CMB, he has brought about the following legislative changes:

- Coffee Dealing (Control) Act 1974, introduced Reserved Business Activities list.
- Coffee Industry Act, 1976 saw the conversion of PNG Coffee Marketing Board to PNG Coffee Industry Board.
- Took over Coffee Research & Development func-

tions from the National Government and established Coffee Research Institute (CRI) in 1986 and Coffee Development Agency (CDA) in 1987.

Mitio said success and/or failures should not be measured in production levels as other forces are at play. It is how you strategize to bring changes for the better.

He dedicates his autobiography to his late parents who devotedly raised him and his siblings in the outback Okapa in the early 1950s, his benevolent father, Simeon Ipul from Gabmazung village, Markham, his maternal uncle Komana Kromeso, his godfather Ariga' o Arekaso, midwife who helped delivered him and mama Yogiso Aro' ara Paul for time spent in babysitting him during his critical early stages of life.

His autobiography book "Ovu ga' hoe" is now exclusively available in PNG through CHM, including the duty-free shop at the Port Moresby International Airport. It is also available to the rural sector through Farmset stores throughout the country and selling at K150.

A proud moment in time

The following speech was delivered by Sue Hurrell-Spargo at the launch of Ricky Mitio's autobiography *Ovu ga' hoe!* at the Lamana Hotel, Thursday 8 May 2025

It is an honour to represent my late parents, Lloyd and Margaret Hurrell, at the launch of Ricky Mitio's book. Thank you, Ricky, for inviting me to your book launch. My father worked closely with Ricky during his time as Chairman of the Coffee Marketing Board and held Ricky in the highest regard. He would have been deeply proud to witness this moment.

Before I begin, I would like to thank Malum Nalu for his recent interview with Ricky, as well as the late James Sinclair for his information in his book *The Money Tree*. Malum's interview and James's book provide valuable insights.

My name is Sue Spargo. I am Lloyd and Margaret Hurrell's youngest daughter. I was born in Wau and grew up on our farm, Kosali, in Wau. I have always had a strong connection to my birth country, returning after I completed my schooling and teacher training in 1978 to teach at Bulae International School in Lae, and then returning after retirement to volunteer with the Australian Volunteers Program in Kokopo to write and implement an Adult Literacy program. I am fortunate that my husband, Geoff, also has a love for PNG and its people. We have worked together on education and adult literacy programs. We return regularly to be involved in projects and to visit old and new places.

My father arrived in Rabaul in 1939. His brother Les was already in Rabaul working with the Department of Agriculture. Both Dad and his brother enlisted in Rabaul. Les was killed at Buna. Dad returned to the then Territory of New Guinea as a kiap. He was the

kiap who established the first administration station in Menyamya. He later bought a block of land in Wau and began planting coffee. To begin with, he grew vegetables that he flew out to Port Moresby and sent to Lae by road.

I would like to share a little story of coffee in PNG and how Kosali Plantation was connected to it.

In 1929, Arabica Blue Mountain seed was imported from Jamaica and planted in Wau on a small Department of Agriculture-owned block. An AWR Carpenter & Company vessel collected and delivered a huge wooden cask in which the Blue Mountain Seed was packed in charcoal. At the time, Blue Mountain seed was banned for export by the Jamaican authorities. The company got away with the escapade, and Arabica Blue Mountain Coffee was brought to Wau.

Wau was developing into a thriving gold mining town. Carl Wilde arrived and bought the block from the government Department of Agriculture. He rehabilitated the coffee and replanted, expanding the block to 100 acres. The coffee was excellent and was being sold in Wau as ground and roasted, as well as being exported. At the time, there were no roads from Wau to Lae, and the coffee had to be flown out. My father bought the block in later years, and it became part of Kosali.

My father was appointed Chairman of the then Coffee Marketing Board and served on this board from 1965 until 1979. He took over from Ian Downs, who served briefly as the foundation Chairman. Ricky



Mitio began with the board in 1972.

Ricky asked me to talk about how things were in those early days. I do know that my father travelled frequently to Goroka for Board meetings and had frequent disagreements with politicians who were trying to influence Board decisions. I know he was also involved in building the new Coffee Marketing Board building which I remember visiting. I am sure Ricky remembers those days.

Plantations in Wau were different from the highland plantations. Dad always said that Wau coffee wasn't the same quality, and the plantations were smaller. I can only tell you of my experience growing up on a coffee plantation.

At Kosali, in Wau, my father had a strong connection with the Buang and Menyamya people from his time as a kiap. We had many people from these two areas working at Kosali for many years. Eventually, he sold Kosali to the local Wandumi people in 1979. Unfortunately, after poor management and bank intervention, the bank eventually took over Kosali. The people who had worked for him were not looked after, and they found they had no work. It was a difficult decision that my parents made as they loved living in Wau and felt great sorrow in leaving their workers who had been with them for so long. Ricky helped Dad through this period. I still return to Wau to look at Kosali, but alas, it is not what it used to be. Both Mum and Dad wanted their ashes to go back to Kosali, and I made sure that happened. When I return to Wau, many of the old families find me and we talk and cry together.

Wau was different to the highlands as gold has always been a way for people to make money. The highlands had much bigger plantations and a bigger population who were interested in making money from coffee. There wasn't enough interest from small landholders to grow coffee in Wau.

Now, back to Ricky. I love the name of Ricky's book and how it pays respect to his mother.

You all know Ricky Mitio was born in Okapa Sub-District, Eastern Highlands. In a recent interview with Malum Nalu, Ricky mentioned his mother and what a strong lady she was. She refused to move the family when Ricky's father had suggested that they move. The family stayed at Okapa, where Ricky went on to attend school. The title of his book I will not go! is in memory of his mother's strong stand. Ricky went to Goroka High School and Vudal Agricultural College, where he obtained his Diploma in Tropical Studies. He joined the Coffee Marketing

Board in 1972 as a Project Officer.

Dad thought highly of Ricky and supported him in gaining the position of Chief Executive Officer when Barry Beil left in 1979. Barry says, "I had to get Ricky ready to take over. He had a crash course."

Ricky travelled to Australia to meet coffee roasters to ensure the coffee coming out of PNG was what they wanted. In his recent interview with Malum Nalu, Ricky admits this was a tough time for him. On one of these trips, he visited my father and mother in Tweed Heads - something my father greatly appreciated.

Jim Sinclair says Ricky established a fine reputation in his many years of service. He completed a number of courses of study overseas, represented PNG as a permanent delegate to the International Coffee Organisation (ICO) and was chief advisor to the government on ICO matters.

In 1987, Ricky left the Coffee Industry Board and went to work with ANGCO as an executive officer. Jim Sinclair says that Ricky's period with ANGCO as an executive officer gave him an insight into the private sector of the industry. Under Ricky's leadership, the Coffee Marketing Board was amended to the Coffee Industry Board and then the Coffee Industry Corporation.

In 1969, there were 237 recognised coffee plantations. Most of the coffee was produced by plantations. Oversight of the coffee trade, registration of coffee exporters and processing facilities, quality control of exports and promoting the sale and export of coffee at home and abroad was controlled by the Coffee Industry Board. Ricky documented this. It was a time of huge change.

The Plantation Redistribution Scheme lasted from 1974 to 1980. The scheme was funded by an Australian Grant. Ricky was very involved during this period. I am sure that he had to deal with political pressure, a lack of financial support, and some aggressive behaviour from the plantation managers. Ricky says that he used the regulatory guidelines to guide him. He was described by Dick Hagon from Gumanch, which was the biggest coffee plantation in the highlands as 'a competent, professional and dedicated official.'

Read more here: <https://smartshopper-png.blogspot.com/2025/06/a-proud-moment-in-time.html>

LO BILONG SERI KOPI



PRESIM STRONG MAU SERI
LONG TUPELA PINGA.
SERI I MAU GUT,
BIN BAI KAM AUT ISI TRU.



~~OL DISPELA KAIN SERI
INO MAU GUT,
NOKEN PIKIM O SALIM.~~



~~OL DISPELA KAIN SERI
I BAGARAP,
NOKEN SALIM.~~

TAMBU - Long Salim Grin na Sting Seri Kopi



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TAMBU LONG MASINIM O SALIM

- Ol seri i grin o ino mau
- Ol seri i mau igo bilak o sting
- Ol seri igat ston na pipia wantaim
- Moa long tripela grin seri istap insait long wan handret mau seri