

PACNEWS

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COOKS - ELECTION: COOK ISLANDS NEWS

PACNEWS 2: Tue 12 Jun 2018

Social media vital campaign tool

RAROTONGA, 12 JUNE 2018 (COOK ISLANDS NEWS) --- Social media websites such as Facebook have become a vital campaign tool for the major political parties in the Cook Islands to engage with voters leading up to the 2018 general election which will be held this Thursday on June 14.

Both the Cook Islands Party (CIP) and the Democratic Party have been updating their Facebook pages daily with policies and promises in a bid to get maximum votes in the upcoming polls.

They are also using the platform to encourage people, especially in the 18-25 age bracket, to exercise their right to vote.

A local social media expert, who wished to remain anonymous, said that while the most effective way of marketing was public rallies or face-to-face interactions, the use of social media in this election campaign has been far-reaching.

The expert said social media is a platform through which people can interact and voice their opinions on what is being produced instantly.

However, he said it was hard to measure the effectiveness of campaigning through social media.

"Every party would like to feel that when the voter goes in to cast their vote that they know what they are voting for and are well informed about the parties or candidates' policies, so the use of social media can be an effective way of growing awareness if that voter isn't watching the TV, reading the paper or listening to the radio. Everyone has a cell phone and a majority of adults are on Facebook," the expert said.

There are roughly 9600 residents in the Cook Islands aged from 18-65 on Facebook, although not everyone is an active daily user.

"As Facebook has a limited reach for people that like your page, to get the most out of it, you need to run ads or put really engaging content that people want to share so they can promote on your behalf."

The expert also said that interest regarding the elections was evident on social media websites through activity on different Facebook pages.

He said people like to leave their comments, asking questions which can be replied to by the party themselves to provide clarifications to the concerned voters.

"There is a lot of interest from people living overseas, who quite often seem to have the loudest opinions about how things are here, but at the end of the day it's about the voters in each constituency and who they are going to vote for on June 14."

CIP boasts higher likes and followers on Facebook with 1691 and 1757 respectively, compared to the Demos' 1182 likes and 1183 followers.

The social media expert said the use of Facebook was more apparent in this year's elections compared to the last one in 2014.

"Probably one thing that wasn't available was the ability to use Facebook Live, as it wasn't around back in 2014 so we have seen parties adopt it more than others," he said.

"If I had to make a comparison from 2014 to the 2018 election, the Democratic Party was quite active in the social media scene compared to this year, which has been a bit less.

"And CIP definitely didn't do much in 2014 but have been active this year."

CIP's social media coordinator Thomas Wynne said social media has been an integral part of their campaign.

As of this week, he said they have reached 35,000 people with their campaign message and videos, with 11,000 in New Zealand, 10,000 in Australia and 7000 in Rarotonga alone.

"Consider around 7000 people voted in Rarotonga in 2014, so we have reached nearly every voter potentially in Rarotonga," said Wynne. "Some 14,000 people watched our launch and over the last month our followers on Facebook have grown by 600.

"The largest demographic of people engaging with our social media are those in the 25 to 45 age bracket, with men and women being about equal in number.

"We understood that the 18 to 25 age bracket were not engaged in voting so we targeted them in our campaign to get them active." Wynne said social media platforms have also allowed them to engage with Cook Islanders overseas.

He said this was important as Cook Islanders living abroad often felt outside the process and they in turn comment and talk with family here, sharing their thoughts on voting, policies and the future of the Cook Islands.

"Social media has meant we can reach so many more people and it is one of a number of points of difference from the 2014 campaign.

"Social media cannot be underestimated, its influence is huge and we have capitalised on this tool to reach out to the wider Cook Islands community with our message."

The Democratic Party's Eddie Drollet said the party has a Facebook page where they were updating their policies leading up to the election.

He said each candidate also employs their own content on their personal pages, adding that the party does not dictate on what they choose to share.

"We are also employing other effective ways of sharing information in the media, and not focusing on social media," Drollet said.

"Our strategy is to focus on print media, TV and radio to reach out to the voters in Rarotonga and the Pa Enua.

"The Pa Enua have limited access to social media, so we diversify our media strategy in the best way we can to reach out to the voters."

CIP's Wynne said while social media has proven an effective tool in campaigning, it could not replace the old campaigning strategies.

"Nothing beats door knocking and our grassroots people-to-people campaigning, so social media can never take the place of that," he said.

"It can, however, add value to that face-to-face door knocking by bringing the message to everyone's phone, tablet and laptop and creating another platform to engage, to critique to discuss and promote.

"What's clear going forward, social media will be an essential tool of any campaign... PACNEWS

PNG - CLIMATE CHANGE: THE NATIONAL

PACNEWS 2: Tue 12 Jun 2018

Aussies join climate fight

PORT MORESBY, 12 JUNE 2018 (THE NATIONAL) --- Papua New Guinea and Australia have agreed to work in partnership on an action plan to address climate change challenges.

The agreement was signed by Minister for Environment and Conservation John Pundari and his Australian counterpart Josh Frydenberg to acknowledge their commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement, which reinforces stronger regional cooperation to address climate change risks while contributing to mitigating climate change.

"Under the action plan, Australia will continue to support PNG to implement its commitment under the Paris Agreement," Frydenberg said.

He said this would include enhancing the capacity of government institutions to implement climate change policies and to access international financing.

"Support will also focus on strengthening the resilience of rural communities and building climate-smart infrastructure in PNG," Frydenberg said.

He said the two countries would also establish an annual dialogue on climate change to share lessons from their domestic actions, including reviewing activities under the action plan and identifying areas for cooperation on the regional and international agenda.

"In addition, the two countries will continue to work together to articulate and advance the climate change agenda on the international stage," he said. Pundari was delighted to formalise the long standing partnership.

"Papua New Guinea faces major challenges in addressing the effects of climate change. We look forward to an even deeper partnership with Australia to address these challenges through this agreement."

Minister Frydenberg is looking forward to working with PNG.

"This is a real opportunity for Australia and Papua New Guinea to partner to provide a strong voice for the Pacific on climate change. Australia and Papua New Guinea face unique challenges as a result of climate change – this is a fantastic opportunity to work together to address them," Frydenberg said.... PACNEWS

No confidence motion filed in Vanuatu

PORT VILA, 12 JUNE 2018 (RNZ PACIFIC) --- A motion of no confidence against Vanuatu's Prime Minister Charlot Salwai has been filed today by the leader of the opposition Ishmael Kalsakau.

Officials at the Speaker's office confirmed the motion had the required nine signatures and that if ruled in order would be debated on Tuesday June 19.

All of the signatories are opposition MPs.

In December last year Mr Salwai defeated a motion of no-confidence lodged against him by 37 votes to 13... PACNEWS

Aussie troops and US marines tested in large-scale war games

SYDNEY, 12 JUNE 2018 (9NEWS) --- Australian troops and members of the US Marine Corps have honed their skills today in the warm waters off Fiji.

From the air, land and sea, the naval might of Australia was on display with the humanitarian assistance disaster relief (HADR) exercise; part of one of the most significant tours of the South Pacific.

The visit to the region by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is to strengthen security and partnerships.

As China becomes increasingly active around the waters surrounding the Pacific islands, Australia is responding through development assistance, defence cooperation and emergency disaster response.

About 300 Australian troops were joined by the Fijian military and backed-up by our greatest ally in the form of almost 50 US marines.

They've embedded on HMAS Adelaide, a show of force and friendship.

"It's great to strengthen those ties and show American faces on the little islands around Australia," First Lieutenant Lou Caraglia of the US Marine Corps told 9NEWS.

"It's very important especially with Fiji being an island nation," Second Lieutenant Jerome Taoi from the Fijian military added.

Athleticism, precision and naval know-how were also front and centre, along with world class techniques used in cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes- the same prowess also needed for combat operations.

"It's very important that we keep this skill happening. We've got this fantastic capability to so much for so many nations in our footprint," POB Matthew Jarvis of HMAS Adelaide said.

This naval tour is undoubtedly a push back. The Australian presence has been prioritised by the federal government, as Beijing continues its push into the South Pacific.

Even now a suspected spy ship has been lingering off the Adelaide in the port of Suva, suspected of gathering intelligence... PACNEWS

Coordinated maritime surveillance kicks off in Palau

KORO, 12 JUNE 2018 (PNA) --- Operation Kaukledm, a coordinated maritime surveillance in Palau's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) kicked off recently. The operation involved Palau's Patrol Boat PSS Kedam, a Japanese Fisheries Agency vessel, US Coast Guard Washington, and a surveillance aircraft chartered by the Australian Defence Cooperation program.

Kaukledm, which means "working together," is a joint operation involving one aircraft and three ships that spent a week searching the entire Palau EEZ (750,000 square kilometres) for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity.

Last year, as a result of a similar operation, Palau's patrol boat Remeliik detained two Filipino vessels believed to be involved in fishing activities in Palau waters, in violation of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary Act (PNMS). The detained vessels included one purse seiner with 16 crewmembers and a fish carrier with eight crew.

Instead of filing charges against the fishermen caught on board the seized vessels, the marine law enforcement unloaded the fish and repatriated the fish carrier and its crew, along with the crew of the purse seiner, and other fishermen who have been held since 2016, back to the Philippines.... PACNEWS

PACNEWS BIZ

A first in Fiji – one of only two in the Pacific

SUVA, 12 JUNE 2018 (FIJI TIMES) --- Fijian owned and multi award-winning Likuliku Lagoon Resort, is to announce that they have been accepted as a National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World (NGULW) — the first and only one in Fiji and one of only two in the Pacific.

When Likuliku Lagoon Resort opened in 2007, it blazed a trail for Fiji with the country's first and only over-water bure bungalows and immediately set new benchmarks for cuisine and service.

In the 11 years since, the resort has garnered an enviable reputation for excellence while continuing to set more benchmarks for not only service and experiences but in environmental practices.

National Geographic Unique Lodges has exacting and uncompromising standards, and to be accepted into their portfolio of lodges is a testament to the excellence that Likuliku has achieved.

And, like all of the exclusive Unique Lodges of the World, Likuliku chooses to tread lightly — celebrating nature rather than conquering it, supporting cultural heritage and engagement with local communities, in addition to offering an authentic, quintessential Fijian experience in pristine ocean and wilderness surroundings.

"We are honoured that Likuliku Lagoon Resort has been selected to join this extraordinary and prestigious collection of boutique accommodation around the world," said Steve Anstey, Ahura Resorts, Group general manager.

"Becoming a member of the National Geographic Unique Lodges collection — with its esteemed global reputation in hospitality and conservation and cultural experiences, was a natural fit and step forward for us.

"We have always been environmentally focused as one needs to be when building and operating in pristine locations. During construction, extraordinary care and attention was taken to protect the natural resources including our reef and forest areas which were always intended to be a focal point of the Likuliku experience.

"Programmes based on marine flora and fauna including turtle conservation, coral and clam planting, and consultation with the local community to install marine protection areas on reefs in order improve fish stocks, have been in place since we opened," Anstey said.

Likuliku's Fijian owner, Tony Whitton said: "To become part of this extraordinary and internationally renowned worldwide network and being associated with the significantly historical organisation that is National Geographic, is a culmination of all that has been achieved for our young resort company and the product that is Likuliku Lagoon Resort.

"This a global stage like no other, and to be the first and only in Fiji is a credit to the Ahura Team on creating a product worthy of this type of attention and inclusion".

Likuliku's environmental initiatives took a dramatic turn in 2010 when a single Fiji Crested Iguana (*Brachylophus Vitiensis*) was found at Likuliku.

Guests who book their experiences at the Likuliku Lagoon Resort through National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World www.nationalgeographiclodges.com will also enjoy exclusive, specially-designed eco experiences.... PACNEWS

PNG - FISHERIES SUBSIDIES: PNA

PACNEWS BIZ: Tue 12 Jun 2018

PNG's Scovell appeals to WTO for enforcement

PORT MORESBY, 12 JUNE 2018 (PNA) --- Papua New Guinea is looking to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for more and better enforcement of their rules.

Manufacturers' Council PNG Chief Executive Officer Chey Scovell was part of a panel for the key note address of WTO Director General Roberto Azevedo at recent inaugural APEC discussions.

During discussions Scovell said that countries like PNG can't compete because, while 17% of the fish comes from their waters, "most of the value derived from harvesting and value-adding of that resource is not given to PNG and the Pacific Islands."

Other governments provide "very significant subsidies for people to come and extract our resources."

He appealed to the WTO to enforce rules already in place against providing heavy subsidies.

He continued, "When you look at the WTO, on who is driving the conversation, it is not the people who have the resources but those who want to feed their people more cheaply."

Last year PNG's Prime Minister Peter O'Neill announced plans to bring an end to subsidising foreign tuna companies to take fish off shore as well as subsidising tuna processing and jobs in other countries, a practice that had been in place for years.

In January 2018, O'Neill instituted a new rebate system that rewards US\$400/mt when fish is processed in PNG. As processing grows the rebates will be revised as provisions for rebates will be taken up in the annual National Fisheries Authority budgets and any revised budgets during the year.... PACNEWS

Real Tonga grapples with Eua flights' suspension

NUKU'ALOFA, 12 JUNE 2018 (CH-AVIATION) --- Real Tonga Airlines is considering staff layoffs as it grapples with the financial impact of the suspension of flights to Kaufuna Airport on the island of Eua.

Airline CEO Tevita Palu told Radio & TV Tonga last week that the airline had lost approximately TOP\$100,000 (USD\$44,890) as a result of the suspension which began over two months ago.

In late March, the airline complained to Tonga Airports Limited about the excessive height of trees on the approach into Kaufuna. As nothing has been done since then, the service is currently suspended.

In addition, Palu said flights to Ha'apai, Niuafo'ou and Niuatoputapu have also been affected owing to damaged runways and associated aeronautical infrastructure at each of the airfields. Given diminished revenue inflows, the airline may have to retrench staff, he said.

Despite the gloomy short-term domestic outlook, Palu did confirm plans were in the pipeline to launch international flights to Apia Faleolo, Samoa from Tongatapu via Vava'u beginning June 29. The 2x weekly service will operate on-board Saab 340B equipment.

As previously reported, the service launch was suspended as a consequence of Cyclone Gita's impact on the region back in February.... PACNEWS

PNG - AVIATION: PNG TV

PACNEWS BIZ: Tue 12 Jun 2018

Tari flights resume

PORT ORESBY, 12 JUNE 2018 (PNG TV) --- Link PNG will resume flights to Tari airport in the Hela Province

The airport authority had initially closed the airport due to civil unrest and also damage caused by a major earthquake aftershock

National Airports Corporation, the Hela Provincial Government and Link PNG have been able to address the damage caused by the aftershock and associated issues, and are pleased to be able to announce the recommencement of services.

Link PNG, a subsidiary company of Air Niugini operates four flights a week to Tari, every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.... PACNEWS

PACNEWS DIGEST

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Pacific convenes protected areas workshop

APIA, 12 JUNE 2018 (IUCN) --- With the aim to strengthen the management and governance of protected areas in the Pacific region, close to one hundred participants from governments, NGO stakeholders and partners convened in Apia this week for the inception workshop of the second phase of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) programme.

Welcoming the participants, Afioga Taefu Lemi Taefu, Associate Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, Government of Samoa acknowledged the significance of protected areas.

"The protected areas that exist today were established to protect the best remaining natural terrestrial, coastal and marine areas in our region. This is to ensure sustainability of these areas for the benefit of not only our generation but for many generations to come."

Minister Taefu also highlighted some of the challenges that were faced by Pacific island countries.

"One of the region's major challenges to sustainable development, especially for Small Island developing states is the lack of data and information. The issue for Samoa is not the accessibility of data, but rather, the availability of data. This week is a kind reminder of what needs to be done," Minister Taefu continued.

The BIOPAMA programme is an initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States financed by the European Union's 11th European Development Fund, jointly implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (EC-JRC). In the Pacific region, BIOPAMA is implemented by IUCN's Oceania Regional Office (IUCN ORO) in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

The partnership between IUCN ORO and SPREP has seen the enhancement of the Pacific Islands Protected Area Portal (PIPAP), the 'one-stop shop' for all information on Protected Areas maintained by SPREP with partners and Members. Through BIOPAMA, the EC-JRC is also contributing essential technical support to the PIPAP.

"The PIPAP, established prior to but then supported and strengthened by BIOPAMA, will play a key role as an interactive repository of data and learning tools for protected areas planning and management. It will continue to help measure our progress towards meeting Aichi Target 11 on protected area commitments", Acting Director General of SPREP Stuart Chape commented.

"In forging ahead, we need to pause and remind ourselves of the unique context of protected areas in the Oceania region that requires a high level of consultation and innovative solutions and approaches", IUCN ORO Regional Director Mason Smith emphasised.

ACP representative Edmund Jackson, in his address also reiterated the importance of partnership. "Essentially, each agency is a particular piece of the puzzle and the workshop will see where each of you will fit to help implement the BIOPAMA programme as best as possible. The implementing partners must ensure that everybody has a role to play," Jackson noted.

Recognising the significance of the five-day workshop, EC-JRC's Stephen Peedell highlighted how the workshop would be a great opportunity to address the fundamental questions faced by the BIOPAMA programme.

"How can we ensure that our improved knowledge of protected areas really does drive better decisions, better outcomes and improved effectiveness?"

"How can we make that step from knowledge to action for a protected planet?" Peedell said.

Bringing together a wide range of expertise from the region to collectively review protected area records and discuss ways to improve data and information sharing amongst key partners, the BIOPAMA inception workshop will run from 11-15 June at the Tanoa Tusitala Hotel... PACNEWS