OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

4th December 2022

MEDIA RELEASE

RE: NRI COUNCIL HAILS GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The NRI Council submitted two funding requests for maintenance and renovation of existing buildings and houses and equipment and for construction of the PNG Knowledge Hub Precincts including the Sir Henry Chow Building.

The NRI Council resolved in 2007 to establish a Knowledge Hub, comprising buildings, improved technology, NEC Decisions and public policy documents and library, printery and bookshop and conference center and seminar rooms that provides intellectual space for academics, researchers, practitioners and students.

On behalf of the NRI Council, we commend the Government and the Members of Parliament for the approval of our two PIP projects and the funding support in the 2023 National Budget. We commend the Prime Minister, James Marape who immediately been elected PM in 2019 and 2022 took his two first official visits to the NRI Campus and the vision and support of Hon. Don Pomb Polye, CMG, MP, the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science, Technology and Sports in championing this national agenda and landmark building.

“The Government allocated K4 million for feasibility and design and also approved facilities upgrade and construction from 2024. This funding and project is substantial PNG government investment since the current NRI campus was gift from Australian Government by transferring the New Guinea Research Unit of the Australian National University. This approval and funding will be a national landmark and institutions development that will be the pride of the nation. Further, this decision and its implementation will be the first PNG Government infrastructure support to NRI since its inception in 1953”

The two renovation and maintenance and construction project will provide the physical space, equipment, materials and books and technology and so NRI Council has sought DPM technical support and is now reviewing its organizational and pay structure. This will
enable NRI to recruit for all the 84 existing positions including new Professional and Associate Professorial Fellows in the 6 Divisions to equip it with the best brains to coordinate with all sectors and the private sector to produce the outcomes.

Further, for the first time since 1999, the Government provided K400,00, K600,000 and K600,000 for carrying out research in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Often NRI is provided salaries and wages and funds for administration and utilities only whilst we rely on other government agencies and departments, donor and consultancy for research funds. This is in line with Prime Minister Marape emphasis on evidence-based decision making and policy formulation based on data and research.

“On behalf of the Council, NRI Management and the Research sector in PNG, we appreciate recurrent funding of K4.2 million and the two PIP Projects which is a step forward. We look forward to working with the Government to re-establish the National Research Council, establish the Research and Innovations Grants Scheme and develop the National Research Agenda for all research institutes, research agencies and universities and research and innovation grant recipients to contribute to evidence-based decisions, policy making and strategic direction and evaluation and review of policies.”

The NRI Council and Management will to work with the Department of National Planning & Monitoring, Finance, Treasury, DPM, DPM & NEC and Department of Higher Education, Research, Science & Technology to progress implementation and reports.

Approved for Release.

Mr Wilson Thompson, ML
Chairman, PNG NRI Council