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2019 Budget – Health and Education Losers from the Budget

“Contrary to the sweet promises of the Treasurer, the health and education sectors are losers from this budget. At a time when the international community comes to Port Moresby and hears awful stories about the outbreak of polio, rising TB and malaria rates, the fourth highest level of child stunting in the world, we should have a budget that had a clear vision on making things better. Instead, beyond the nice words, we have a budget released just before APEC which demonstrates that there is in fact no real plan to fix our health and education problems” stated the Shadow Minister for Treasury & Finance Ian Ling-Stuckey.

“So how does the health sector go in terms of funding – how much did they get out of the huge and fiscally irresponsible big increase in spending in the 2019 Budget? The sad answer is only 3% of the increase – indeed, after allowing for inflation, the real level of funding for health was cut from K1,590 million in 2018 down to K1553 million in 2019. This is a national disgrace. The Medium-Term Development Plan just released by this PNC government claims the doctor to patient ratio will jump from 5 per 100,000 to 50 per 100,000 by 2022. This would require an increase in the number of doctors from around 450 to over 5,000. This is important to do. But there are not the funds provided in this budget to do it! Where is all the extra medical training? Where is the provision for increased salary costs? So how does the Treasurer justify his claim that the health sector is a winner? Simply because they have included K20 million for the failed so-called “free health care plan”. Everyone in rural areas knows that’s a joke. This is a sweet-talking Treasurer that doesn’t know how to do the hard yards to actually improve our health sector” stated the Shadow Treasurer.

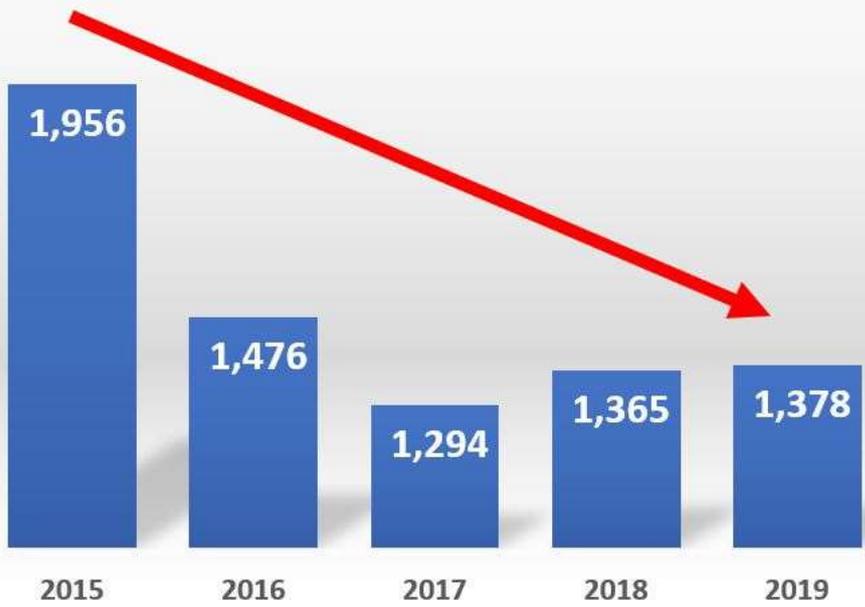
“So how does the education sector go in terms of funding – how much did they get out of the extra-ordinary K1,416 million in spending?

Fortunately, slightly better than health spending, but only an increase of 2% after allowing for inflation – an increase from K1,365 million in 2018 to K1,378 million in 2019. So how on earth is this paltry increase going to be enough to fund the increases required for all the students entering our schools – nearly an extra 100,000 students every year? How will such a small increase pay for all the extra teachers, the new classrooms, the increased training, the additional school books? Clearly, the answer is that it will not be enough. The PNC's just released Medium-Term Development Plan promised an extra 40,059 teachers by 2022. There is no program to actually achieve this. But once again we have sweet promises, but we have a PNC government that doesn't know how to actually deliver. I call on all sensible and fearless Governors in PNG to rise and support the alternative government to review and if warranted, take radical measures to restructure the Budget" stated Mr Ling-Stuckey.

Hon.Ian Ling-Stuckey,CMG.MP
Shadow Minister for Treasury & Finance

16 November 2018

Real Education Expenditure - 30% Cut since 2015



Real Health Expenditure - 17% Cut since 2015

