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MEDIA RELEASE

TITLE: Kiwibank and Niue agency

Meeting of the minds bode well for the future.

I met with senior Kiwibank executives who came to celebrate the first 5 years of our excellent relationship.

I was pleased to note their willingness to assist us more than they were able to before. They are constrained by the laws passed to establish Kiwibank and we discussed the changes that have taken place over the last five years.

You will all be pleased to note that they have agreed subject to finalisation of details to allow all of us who want to join their superannuation scheme to join. This includes private sector workers and public servants. It is also possible to transfer your current contributions into this scheme from your current super scheme provider at no cost'.

These need some work to be done before any final decisions are made. In saying that it may take 2-4 weeks for this to start or sooner. More information will be provided to ensure you make an informed decision. But it is unlikely we'll be able to attract any other super scheme.

We also discussed the offer of more Kiwibank services here in Niue. Previously these were not available and include savings accounts, investment accounts, term deposits etc.

We also discussed the trust fund investments and will try something slightly different to see if we can take a bit more risk but get better returns. I am not averse to this but need more details and Ian and his team to thrash out the details. Excellent meeting, great team, well informed and informative, showed their current strategic direction which makes a lot of sense to me and very clear. I was very pleased and happy with them.

I met the Niue Youth Council representatives, what a difficult meeting that was. It's hard to tell what they really want. They talk the talk but failed to walk for many months. And that continued to be the case at the meeting. I was surprised when someone went on and on about my village. Youth in the room are unhappy. Not sure whether other youth feel the same. But I thought they were one dimensional and had some very set views. I had hoped they would be more modern outward thinkers but disappointing still they may feel the same about me. Mind you not all of them followed or trotted out the same views. They appeared to be more measured and reassuring.

What a contrast.

I also met the Niue High School seniors at Matavai. Great bunch, very eager and engaging, asked some really clever questions and demanded answers.

Some even offered solutions to issues important to their schooling and options available from the internet. More classrooms, better toilets spruce up the school generally with a coat of paint, faster internet, and so on.

Jobs, scholarships available, 4 day working week, population, roads. Talked to them about the strategic direction we are taking with population and how it has started to grow again reversing the trend which has dogged us for over 50 years. We touched on investments life here compared to our cozy life here living in New Zealand. How our income levels were higher than those in NZ. How more of us have internet, use internet than those overseas. It was also something the kiwi bank executives observed.

I really was very impressed and thought if they keep this up we will have some excellent leaders and business people, and workers in years to come.

They were given some light snacks courtesy of the Chinese and we will invite some to attend the presentation of the new Chinese Ambassadors credentials in two weeks. Pats will prepare a report for the Chinese ambassador when she comes.

I asked them to form a small committee who can meet with me every 4-6 weeks to discuss their concerns I think they will really make some outstanding leaders of the future. Politics, business and public service and the community.

Really made my day.

Pats went to look at the women's kitchen and take photos of the new stove sink bench and working surface. Trying to modernise it and easier to clean and better flow of food preparations. If we can we will find funds from one of our foreign friends to fund it. It just needs revamping and space for a couple of laptops and printer for their use. We're going to try to change lighting and how the floor area can be best used. More visitor friendly and a proper sales area.

Checked the hospital car park again and showed Pats what I wanted so the contractors can give us a quote. Saw progress on the new solar farm funded under McCully and the next lot using the Peters/Arden \$5m fund. Probably get more batteries to store power generated by the solar farms we have already.

Meeting with the Ekalesia Niue last Friday 6th July.

Tabled the State Owned Enterprises annual 2018/19 in Cabinet. Will present it in the house when we meet next meet.

There's a local comedic moment doing the rounds. Sack the premier. Very original and profound thought. It's the usual terrible quintets. Thick as thieves clueless walking around with pinched bottoms. Or is it plums on the pines.

Hey if that's what people want I'll walk. Don't think that this is all there is in life. I've never hidden to caucus my book, plumbing invention idea, development of accommodation on one of our properties in Auckland and so on. That's what I would do normally.

But know that while at the helm I'm enjoying my job very much. This is a challenging undertaking and not easily understood by many in the way we are changing the management of our resources to generate more revenues. This transformation has started to show positive outcomes.

I think my comedic moment came when I said in 2005 they sacked me as finance minister. Within 6 months we were in deep trouble and pay cuts by 20% etc. Literally at the drop of a hat they got rid of me. Easy peasy. No pun intended or is that something else. Lucky to survive a secret hat moment.

These have turned into troubleshooting to keep us all out of trouble. It's important to know how to deal with these things.

Anyway in 2008 they said to me fix it. We did but took 4 years.

Last year our deficit went from \$1m budgeted to \$2m unbudgeted. 2 months. We have managed this and I think we reduced it to \$300,000 or so by May this year. Caught me by surprise because I was confronted with this on my return from medical treatment in NZ. Stuffed up everything I had planned. Old folk's pension increase, more community investments more revenue generation.

Tractor for Vaiea Tamakautoga VC is here finally. Look pretty snazzy.

Contracts for Liolau have been signed. Local builder Mautama Builders contract signed. Builder's labourers from Avatele will all be involved.

So an interesting week.

And finally the home visits for our old folks will start next week. Met them as well as the crèche workers to discuss their involvement with the new crèche.

[ENDS]

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