



AFL PNG LIMITED

Pure AFL.....purely Papua New Guinea.



16 September 2008

**To all Friends & Wantoks of AFL PNG,
PNG, Australia & around the World.**

Dear AFL PNG Wantoks,

It is with great pride and satisfaction that I write to thank each of you for your enormous support both personal and financial, your physical efforts, your personal best wishes and messages of goodwill and your very public efforts to effectively support the AFLPNG "Telikom" Mosquitoes as they pursued our dream of PNG being recognised as the 2008 winners of the AFL International Cup.

As you all know it was the third time lucky for our national team after being Runners Up in 2002 and 2005, and I can assure you all it was an immensely more enjoyable experience walking off the hallowed turf of the MCG as winners than once again Bride's maids.

The team had a truly magnificent tour starting from their first training match at Coolangatta to the long bus trip from Brisbane to Melbourne, to settling in quickly to the accommodation arrangements at Bacchus Marsh FC (our PNG home away from home).

The boys continued their professional approach on to the Round games against Nauru, who proved a very tough, uncompromising opponent, against the Israeli Palestine Peace Team with whom our boys shared their love of AFL footy, and then against the Bulldogs from Great Britain who showed a tenacity and desire matched only by our boy's superior footy skills and instincts and our professional attitude.

Next came South Africa, a blossoming footy nation who had climbed great heights to defeat the USA to make this Semi Final. We had not played South Africa before, but they were the talk of the Tournament for their skill and speed,

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**AFL PNG Limited is the representative of the Australian Football League in PNG and has been incorporated to coordinate, support and operate Development and Community based programmes relating to AFL footy in PNG. Scott Reid, Andrew Cadzow, Garry Bruest, Jason McIvna and Mel Togolo are the current Directors of AFL PNG and are responsible for establishing and promoting AFL Development Programmes in PNG. Peter Cates is the COO. AFL PNG is a non-profit organisation.*

obviously qualities our Mosquitoes believed they were well equipped to match. Our preparation was to focus on our tackling, pressure and to carefully use the football once we had it. The team executed our plan to perfection and dominated all facets of the game, leaving the South African boys to contemplate the next stage of their exciting development and ensuring the footy world were reminded that PNG had real talent and prospects that will continue to flourish with still greater support and commitment.

So to the Grand Final against old foe New Zealand and once again the hallowed turf of the MCG.

PNG had come to this Final like 2005 with its young team a by-product of a strong and growing participation program & a talent model focussed on junior development. Many of the Mosquitoes were still very young having played in successful Binatang U14 & U16 teams and now benefitting from greater exposure to really good footy while on scholarship in Australia, some for several years.

The team's average age was just 21 years and that had been pushed up by veterans, some on their last campaign: Overa Gibson, Rex Leka, Nick Apamumu, Alestar Sioni and Bruce Sovara with National Coach Pepe Kila, all of whom provided experience and guidance to their younger talented teammates.

Australian based scholarship stars John James, Stanis Susuve, Donald Barry and Emmaus Wartovo, among all of the other scholarship players, carried themselves with great pride in representing their nation and lived up to high expectations. Others like Joseph Ila, Boas Keu, Sylvester Mangaea and Jimmy Loggha played well above expectations and the depth of the Mosquitoes squad became a defining factor in the team's success.

Certainly the boys started nervously and their kicking for goal left us at risk, but in the end our theme of the day "Play without Fear" came to the fore as the boys stuck to the tournament plan to play our PNG style of football; to tackle harder and more often, to harass and pressure for the full match and to run faster and harder than our opponents and then to use the ball with skill and guile to our advantage.

All this came to the fore in the second half of the final. The big move of the match and the tournament came when coach Andrew Cadzow asked PNG's Mr Football, Overa Gibson to run with a NZ forward who was hurting our defence. That not only meant asking Overa to sacrifice his own game, but it also required young forwards Ali Pinda and Amua Pirika to take the baton from Overa and win the ball in our forward line and kick a winning score.

And so the fairy tale was written with Ali and Amua magnificent, Overa shutting down New Zealand's danger man, the PNG boys running the game out stronger

and finally the PNG team as a whole rejoicing in front of Hawthorn's supporters and Cheer Squad as young Amua Pirika emulated Buddy Franklin to kick the winning goal and finally seal victory for the PNG Mosquitoes in the International Cup.

Walking off the MCG that afternoon in the company of people like Garry Breust, Andrew Cadzow, Mal Michael, Barry Jenks and thinking of all the others who have contributed so much time and effort and sacrificed themselves and their families for the AFL PNG cause, I at last felt it all seemed worthwhile. I felt real satisfaction at the organisation we have built and the opportunities we have given to so many people in PNG, not just to play a sport we all love, but to feel truly and justifiably proud of their country and their countrymen.

In PNG, with all the challenges we face, it is sometimes easy to forget to reflect on the Nation's strengths and its blessings, on the god given strengths that our people possess.

And so just as the boys did, amid their celebrations on the MCG that afternoon, on behalf of all of us at AFL PNG I would like to pause and give thanks to God for all of you and all of your efforts to support our organisation. Any success we have enjoyed is thanks to you and we invite you to join with us in a moment of gratitude and self satisfaction at your involvement with our organisation.

We are proud to have served our Nation well and we invite you, our supporters and sponsors to share in that pride.

Yes, we have much work to do and challenges ahead, but today we can give thanks for Papua New Guinea and our sons and daughters and their strengths.

Congratulations to the AFL PNG Mosquitoes and congratulations to all of you, our AFL PNG Wantoks, on winning the 2008 AFL International Cup !!!

Yours in celebration,

Scott Reid
Chairman,
AFL PNG Limited