



**TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

PRESS STATEMENT

**RESPONSE TO TEACHERS CONCERNS OVER
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2017 PAY RISE**

By Chairman of the Teaching Service Commission Mr Baran Sori

Mr Baran Sori speaking on behalf of the Teaching Service Commission as the employing authority for our teachers has made this public statement to counteract the misinformation being published in the media about payment of the Government approved 3% pay rise and back pay from 2017.

He said teachers across the Country have complained to his office that following pay out of the teachers back pay accumulated from 1st January 2017, which commenced in Pay No 13 on 20th June 2018 up to Pay No 19 on 12th September 2018, they had received “pay cuts” in Pay No 20 on 26th September 2018.

Mr Sori said that he has consulted the Department of Personnel Management and he has held extensive discussions with the PNG Teachers Association who are both joint signatories to the Teaching Service Pay Fixation Agreement 2017 to 2019.

As a result he said, the true situation has been uncovered and he wishes to assure the teachers that there have been no such pay cuts as they believed had happened. It is a misunderstanding due to the implementation process which he now wishes to explain.

Government experienced serious cash flow shortages during 2017 and into 2018 due to low commodity prices and the natural emergencies throughout the Country. By Pay No 13 of 20th June 2018 sufficient funds could not be located to pay off in one pay period the teachers accumulated back pay amounting to K55 million. Therefore, the Budget Management Committee programmed the back pay in six equal cash flow installments to be completed by Pay No 18 on 29th August. However, due to operational problems in the Finance Payroll this extended to Pay No 19 on 12th September 2018.

Over the six pay periods, teachers had received an equal back pay installment in each pay period of between K115 at the lowest Elementary School level, K234 at the Primary School level and K480 at the High School level.

The Chairman said that in discussions with the PNG Teachers Association, it became clear that many teachers had wrongly assumed that each of the six fortnightly back pay installments received in each pay period was the actual fortnightly pay rise. Therefore, in Pay No 20 on 26th September 2018 when the back pay installments ceased and normal pay resumed, teachers mistook the drop in their pay as a “pay cut”.

During this period, the Finance Department “Web Self Service” was not available so that teachers were unable to see their pay slips on line. They could not therefore see that their increase in fortnightly pay over the six fortnights was the result of the back pay and not as a result of the pay rise in the pay scale. In fact, by applying the 2017 pay rise, over the six pay periods, teachers had received total back pay (before tax) of between K726 at the lowest Elementary School level and, K1,598 at the Primary School level and K3,029 at the High School level.

A TSC Circular Letter is being sent out to all schools providing a table of the representative range of pay rises and back payments. Teachers will then be able to verify that no pay cuts have been made.

With regard to the balance of back pay owed from the 3% pay rise in 2018, the Chairman said that he has requested assurance from the Budget Management Committee that the cash flow situation will be managed so that the back payment owed is accumulated and paid in one pay period. There will be no more staggered back payments to avoid any future misunderstandings.

Chairman Baran Sori said that he wished to apologize to the teachers on behalf of the Government for the misunderstandings that had arisen over the manner in which the pay rise and back pay had been implemented, without realizing that teachers did not have access to their pay slips. The Secretary for Finance has been requested to restore the Web Self Service for pay slip access as soon as possible.



BARAN SORI
Chairman
Teaching Service Commission



TAIES SANSAN
Acting Secretary
Department of Personnel Management