



PRIME MINISTER
PORT MORESBY

14th March 2019

Hon. John. L Momis, GCL MHR
President
Autonomous Bougainville Government
PO Box 322
BUKA
Autonomous Region of Bougainville

My dear President,

Proposed Amendments to the Bougainville Mining Act

I take this opportunity to thank you for your constructive engagement and contributions at the recent meeting of the Joint Supervisory Body in Port Moresby. As Prime Minister, I valued your frank approach and I was pleased we could reach agreement on a number of critical issues, including the date for the conduct of the referendum.

As I stated during our meeting, I am committed to continued peace and stability in Bougainville and the full implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

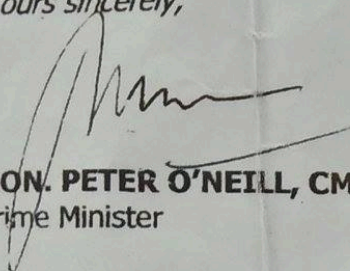
It is in that context that I seek to raise concerns I have with respect to proposed amendments to Bougainville's mining laws. Based on recent media reports it is clear that some land owner and community groups have concerns regarding the amendments being proposed. I am of the view that these concerns and the issues that they raise have the potential to cause discord and potential conflict. I think we would both agree that this is something that should be avoided at all costs, and that it is important that a wider consultation process take place before any final decisions are made. This is particularly the case with respect to constitutional issues, which in my view, require more detailed consideration.

I am also concerned about reporting from Radio New Zealand that suggests you have made public comments that link the proposed amendments to the referendum. I fail to see how these two issues are linked and respectfully request that any further debate in the Bougainville Parliament be delayed until such time as our two governments have been able to consult further.

I ask that immediate discussions take place between our respective officials, so that an understanding can be reached with respect to issues of concern and an agreed way forward. I am firmly of the view that such consultations are consistent with the spirit of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and will enable more informed decisions to be made.

I am happy to discuss the issues raised in this letter further and would welcome an opportunity for us to meet in the near future.

Yours sincerely,



HON. PETER O'NEILL, CMG, MP
Prime Minister

- cc: Hon. Charles Abel, MP
Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer
- cc: Hon. Johnson Ibo Tuke, MP
Minister for Mining
- cc: Hon. Raymond Masono, MHR
ABG Vice President and Minister for Mineral and Energy Resources
- cc: Hon. William Samb, MP
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Bougainville Affairs
- cc: Amb. Isaac. B. Lupari, CBE
Chief Secretary to Government
- cc: Mr. Joseph Nobetau
Chief Secretary to the ABG