

# Sea cucumber sales still on

By ADAM MERA

DEMAND is turning the harvest of beche-de-mer (sea cucumber) in Papua New Guinea and Australian waters into a thriving business despite it being illegal, the Western police commander says.

Chief Insp Silva Sika said markets provided by Indonesians crossing illegally into PNG was seeing harvesting booming.

Papua New Guinea's National

Fisheries Authority had in 2009 put a ban on the harvesting of beche-de-mer due to over exploitation that resulted in the depletion of stocks.

The ban has since been extended.

Sika said the price of beche-de-mer was "very tempting that our people are still harvesting despite the ban".

"We cannot blame the people of Western for illegally harvesting sea cucumber in the country," Sika said

"They all somehow need to make a living and the promise of making a lot of money through the illegal trade of sea cucumber is seen by them as a means to a way out.

"They are even in Australian waters. It is due to their ignorance and the lure of fast money."

Sika said police had information on beche-de-mer buyers from Indonesia but were unable to launch a full-scale investigation due to re-

strictive resources.

"We have intelligence on their workings but are unable to do anything as we are under-resourced," he said.

Sika said the same applied to the National Fisheries Authority and PNG Customs.

"Until something is done, we will still be handicapped and these illegal activities will be still beyond our reach to contain."

## Certain buai markets still open: Parkop

NATIONAL Capital District Governor Powes Parkop says certain markets in NCD are still selling betel nuts due to selected sites for wholesaling and retailing not being ready.

He said the Laloki market was on schedule to finish next month and the completion date of the market in Ruburogo was not clear.

"Chewing betel nuts in private cars will attract fines because you are using public roads," Parkop said.

He said Laloki would be open for retail and wholesale of betel nuts while Ruburogo would be for retail only.

Parkop said he had plans to build a fuel station and grocery shops complete with toilet and shower facilities.

"Both markets will be a place for passengers from the highway to recuperate before completing their journey," he said.

He said he had a good meeting with the super funds, Nasfund and Nambawan Super, as an insurance company moving in to join.

"It will be a collaboration to provide housing for public servants. It is unfortunate that Nasfund did not collaborate with NCDC before embarking on the housing project at 9-Mile.

"If they had consulted the NCDC, I would have assisted in repairing their roads," he said.

He said roads at 9-Mile NPF Compound were deteriorating but he could not do anything about it as it was a private road.

# Early Christmas for learning centres

MORE than 300 children attending Digicel Foundation's community learning centres (CLC) at Gerehu Stages 5 and 6 received Christmas presents this week.

A total of 310 children attending the O'Connor CLC at Gerehu Stage 5 and ANCOP (Answering the Cry Of the Poor) CLC at Stage 6 received presents from the foundation's staff volunteers.

For the first time this year, the foundation prepared gifts to award the best performing girl and boy of each CLC. This award was to try to motivate and encourage student punctuality and to encourage them to attend school everyday.

"When you see the humble beginnings of our CLC and the strides it has taken to become sustainable, you cannot help but admire the passion, commitment and tenacity to overcome the odds," the foundation's executive officer Beatrice

"We believe that the visits to our Digicel Foundation partner communities nationwide will go a long way in making this Christmas a special occasion for all those children who may not get a chance to celebrate.

"We will do our best to put a smile on every child's face this Christmas with the Digicel Santa and his helpers on hand with a gift pack full of surprises for every child."

O'Connor CLC was one the best performing CLC in 2013. This is a reflection of the commitment and effort of teachers with direction from head teacher Renagi Tomureisa.

The ANCOP CLC offers early childhood learning, including bridging programme for children aged 10-21 years.

"We are so grateful to Digicel PNG Foundation," Tomureisa said



A cheerful O'Connor school child receiving gifts from Digicel volunteer Francisca Burmister – Picture courtesy of Digicel Foundation