

Ken Granger – Taim bilong bipo – Highlands of PNG since 1961

PNG SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS 1961 TO 2021



The area of PNG that is covered in my talk was amongst the last parts of PNG to be explored by Europeans and to be brought under government “control”. It was still very wild country when I had the fortune to be part of the CSIRO survey of the area in 1961.

Our survey route took us through the more populated areas and across some incredible terrain. It was clear to me, even at the tender of 20, that PNG would play a very large part in my subsequent life and career.

Since that first experience, I have been fortunate to have returned to the area several times in the 1970s and have kept a keen interest in the social, political and economic changes that have taken place in the ensuing years. It has gone from isolated populations of subsistence farmers, often in conflict with their neighbours, with no schools, hospitals and very few roads to a flourishing resources-based economy with well-educated elites and the current and immediate past Prime Ministers of PNG.

This then is a very personal view of 60 years of evolution in the life in this remarkable part of PNG.