CONSTITUTIONAL AND LAW REFORM COMMISSION
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NEWSLETTER

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CLRC and UPNG Sign Landmark MOUs to Preserve Constitutional House and Establish Underlying Law Centre



L-R: UPNG Executive Dean of the School of Natural and Physical Sciences Professor Simon Saulei; CLRC Secretary Dr. Mange Matui; UPNG Vice Chancellor Professor Ian Findlay; and CLRC Deputy Secretary for Corporate Services Mr. Xavier Winnia posing with the signed MOUs. Inset (L-R): CLRC Secretary Dr. Mange Matui and UPNG VC Professor Ian Findlay signing the MOUs.

The Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) and the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) have formalised a landmark partnership through the signing of two Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) that will preserve one of Papua New Guinea's most significant constitutional landmarks and strengthen the development of the nation's Underlying Law.

Signed at UPNG, the agreements establish a collaborative framework for the rehabilitation and preservation of the Constitutional House on Motupore Island and the establishment of an Underlying Law Centre within the UPNG School of Law.

The first MOU authorises the CLRC to rehabilitate and preserve the Constitutional House, which is situated on Motupore Island and managed by UPNG through its Marine Sciences Research Centre.

The Constitutional House holds immense national significance as the venue where the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) undertook much of its work in developing Papua New Guinea's Constitution between 1972 and Independence in 1975. As the successor to the CPC, the CLRC continues to uphold that legacy through its core mandate in law review and reform, ensuring that the voices of Papua New Guineans continue to shape the country's legal framework.

Through this partnership, both institutions will work together to restore and preserve the Constitutional House as a national heritage site, providing future generations with an opportunity to appreciate the vision of the nation's Constitutional Fathers while supporting historical research, education and civic learning.

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LAW REFORM UPDATES

CLRC Continues Consultations on TOR No. 26 with NCDC

The Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) carried out its consultations on Terms of Reference (TOR) No. 26 – Review of the Laws on District Development Authorities (DDA) in Papua New Guinea, with a consultative meeting held with the National Capital District Commission (NCDC) Team.

As part of the consultation, CLRC also took note of emerging issues affecting the three open electorates within the National Capital District (NCD). Given the special arrangement of NCD under Section 2 of the District Development Authority Act 2014, which excludes NCD from the application of the Act, the consultation provided valuable insight into the unique administrative and development challenges faced in the nation's capital and how these relate to the DDA system operating in other parts of the country.

The insights will assist CLRC in ensuring that its law reform recommendations are comprehensive, practical and responsive to the legal, administrative and policy gaps within the DDA system.

Invaluable perspectives were shared by representatives from NCDC, including the District Administrator for Moresby South Mr. Aisop Mol; NCDC Deputy City Manager – Regulatory and Engineering Mr. Wavala Leka; Acting Deputy City Manager – Community and Social Services Mrs. Edith Laufa, District Administrator for Moresby North-East Mr. Davies Kia; and the Technical Advisor to the Motu Koita Assembly Mr. Bri Olewale.

Provincial consultations, including consultative meetings in NCD, are ongoing as CLRC seeks to ensure that Papua New Guineans have a say in TOR No.26.

Stakeholders and members of the public who wish to share their views are encouraged to participate in the online consultation for TOR 26.





NCDC Officers speaking during the consultation on TOR 26 in Port Moresby.



CLRC Team posing with the NCDC Team after the consultations on TOR No. 26.

CLRC Commence Review on Laws Relating to Internal Displacement in PNG

The Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) has launched an Issues Paper to commence its nationwide review of laws relating to internal displacement in Papua New Guinea under Terms of Reference No. 27 (TOR 27).

The review seeks to identify legal; policy and institutional gaps affecting the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and recommend legislative and policy reforms to establish a more comprehensive and coordinated framework for preventing, managing and responding to internal displacement. CLRC was tasked by the Minister for Justice and Attorney General on the 15th of April 2026 to conduct its review into TOR 27.

The review will consider related pieces of legislation and instruments such as the Constitution, the Disaster Management Act 1984, Land Act 1996, Land Groups Incorporation Act 1974, Climate Change Act 2015, and other relevant legislation, policies and instruments concerning displacement, land, housing, livelihoods, social protection and access to essential services.

The Commission noted that Papua New Guinea currently has no dedicated legislation governing the protection, assistance and administration of internally displaced persons. Existing laws address aspects of displacement but do not provide a comprehensive framework defining the rights of displaced persons, institutional responsibilities, data management, protection, resettlement and durable solutions. The review will also build on the recently endorsed National Displaced Persons Policy 2025 - 2035, with CLRC examining the need for supporting legislation to give effect to its objectives and strengthen institutional coordination.

CLRC Secretary Dr. Mange Matui emphasised that the Issues Paper marks the beginning of a broad consultation process and called for participation from stakeholders and the wider public.

“The success of this review will not be measured simply by the recommendations we produce, but by whether those recommendations genuinely reflect the experiences, aspirations and needs of the people of Papua New Guinea.”

CLRC will undertake consultations with government agencies, provincial administrations, churches, civil society organisations, development partners, academia, community leaders and affected communities throughout the country.

The Commission is encouraging members of the public and stakeholders to read the Issues Paper, participate in consultations and provide their views to help shape practical and responsive law reform recommendations. CLRC will also conduct online consultations for the review.

The CLRC is PNG’s mandated law reform agency responsible for ensuring all laws remain relevant and responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of the people of Papua New Guinea.



CLRC Secretary Dr. Mange Matui (middle), with the technical working group for Terms of Reference No. 27 posing with the Issues Paper. Inset: CLRC Deputy Secretary for Legislative Services Mrs. Dorothy Mimiko-Kesenga speaking during the launching program.

CLRC Commences Review of Provincial Health Authority Act 2007 in Papua New Guinea

The Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) has launched the Issues Paper Terms of Reference No. 28 (TOR 28) – Review of the Provincial Health Authority Act 2007 in Papua New Guinea, commencing a national review of the legal and institutional framework governing Provincial Health Authorities (PHAs) in Papua New Guinea.

"Law reform must ultimately be about people. For a mother in a remote village, health service delivery is not an abstract policy issue. It is about whether there is a functioning health facility nearby, whether essential medicines are available and whether health workers have the support they need to provide care."

Hon. Desmond Kipa, MP
CLRC Chairman

TOR 28 was issued to CLRC by the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General in April this year, calling on the Commission to review and recommend necessary reforms on the laws relating to Provincial Health Authorities in Papua New Guinea.

The review comes against longstanding concerns about the delivery and accessibility of health services across the country, including the condition of health facilities, availability of medical supplies, staffing, funding, governance, accountability and coordination between national, provincial and district-level institutions.

The Provincial Health Authority model was introduced in 2007 to improve the integration and management of hospital and rural public health services at the provincial level. Almost two decades on, the CLRC considers it timely to examine whether the existing legal framework continues to adequately support the health needs of Papua New Guineans.

The review will examine the Provincial Health Authorities Act 2007 together with other relevant legislation, including the Provincial Health Administration Act 2007, National Health Administration Act 1997, Public Hospitals Act 1994, Medical Registration Act 1980, Public Finances (Management) Act 1995 and other related laws.

Through CLRC's desktop research and stakeholder meetings, the Commission has identified 7 key issues under TOR 28 that are currently being taken out for consultations following the launch of the Issues Paper for TOR 28. These issues are funding, human resource (recruitment), board appointments, The Partnership – Service Level Agreement; Reporting and Accountability; Procurement Threshold; and Board Qualification and Performance.

Newly appointed CLRC Chairman Hon. Desmond Kipa, said the review was ultimately about ensuring that Papua New Guinea's laws and institutional arrangements support a health system that is responsive to the needs of its people.

"Law reform must ultimately be about people. For a mother in a remote village, health service delivery is not an abstract policy issue. It is about whether there is a functioning health facility nearby, whether essential medicines are available and whether health workers have the support they need to provide care."

The Chairman said the review also aligns with Papua New Guinea's broader national development aspirations,



(L-R) CLRC Deputy Secretary for Corporate Services Mr. Xavier Winnia; CLRC Chairman Hon. Desmond Kipa, MP; CLRC Secretary Dr. Mange Matui, PhD; and CLRC Deputy Secretary for Legislative Services Mrs. Dorothy Mimiko-Kesenga, posing with the launched Issues Paper for TOR 28.

including the National Goals and Directive Principles, Vision 2050 and the Medium-Term Development Plan IV (MTDP IV), particularly in strengthening human capital, improving the wellbeing of citizens and ensuring equitable access to essential services.

TOR 28 consultations have been condcuted in provinces namely Hela Province, Western Province, Morobe Province, East Sepik Province, New Ireland Province, Western Highlands Province, Manus Province and the upcoming consultation to be held in the National Capital District. The Commission is accepting written submissions from all stakeholders and the general public.

The Commission emphasises that the Issues Paper for TOR 28 is not a final position on the reform of the PHA system. It is intended to identify key issues within the existing legal and administrative framework and provide a basis for further discussions and public input.

The CLRC is therefore calling on stakeholders and members of the public to participate in the consultation process and share their experiences, concerns and recommendations on how the legal framework governing Provincial Health Authorities can be strengthened.

As the independent mandated agency responsible for law review and reform in Papua New Guinea, TOR 28 is expected to contribute to stronger governance, clearer institutional responsibilities, improved coordination and greater accountability within the health system.

CLRC Launches Custom Recording Exercise In West New Britain Province

The Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) launched its Custom Recording Exercise in West New Britain Province, marking the third province to be covered under the Commission's Underlying Law programme to document and preserve customary laws and practices across Papua New Guinea.

The exercise, launched at the West New Britain Tavur Centre, will see CLRC officers engage participants from six language groups during the first batch of the recording programme.

"While the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission has a broad mandate to law review and reform the laws of Papua New Guinea, the Commission also has a specific and important constitutional responsibility in relation to the development of the Underlying Law of Papua New Guinea."

Dr. Mange Matui, PhD
CLRC Secretary

The six language groups are the Uenaka, Munduapa, Garowe and Bulu language groups in Talasea District, and the Bileki and Wau/Apsokok language groups in Nakanai District.

West New Britain has 34 identified language groups across its three districts. CLRC has previously recorded the customs for the Bola Language Group, leaving 33 language groups to be covered under the remaining programme for the province.

The Commission plans to undertake the recording in four batches, with the remaining 27 language groups, to be covered through the remaining batches in 2027. CLRC aims to complete the recording of the remaining customs of West New Britain by mid-2027.

Speaking at the official launch, CLRC Secretary Dr. Mange Matui said the custom recording exercise forms part of the Commission's special responsibility to monitor and support the development of the Underlying Law of Papua New Guinea.

"While the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission has a broad mandate to law review and reform the laws of Papua New Guinea, the Commission also has a specific and important constitutional responsibility in relation to the development of the Underlying Law of Papua New Guinea," Dr Matui said.

Section 12 of the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission Act 2004 provides for CLRC to monitor the development of the Underlying Law of Papua New Guinea in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Constitution. The Underlying Law Act 2000 also provides the framework for the development and application of the Underlying Law.

Dr Matui said the custom recording programme is not an ad hoc undertaking but was guided by the Commission's Underlying Law Research and Monitoring Strategy and Action Plan 2021–2031.

He also highlighted the importance of the Fifth National Goal and Directive Principle, "Papua New Guinean Ways," and the vision of the Constitutional Planning Committee in developing a home-grown Constitution suited to the country's circumstances and aspirations.

West New Britain Provincial Administrator Mr. Leo Mapmani welcomed the initiative and reaffirmed the provincial government's support to CLRC over the two weeks of custom recording.

The programme began in Central Province, where CLRC completed the recording of customs from 34 language groups in 2025. The exercise was subsequently undertaken in Jiwaka Province, covering its four main language groups and completed in 2026.

West New Britain is now the third province to undergo comprehensive custom recording.

The Commission undertook preparatory visits to West New Britain in 2025 and 2026, including consultations with the West New Britain Provincial Government, relevant agencies and identified participants.

CLRC also conducted desktop research using information and reports from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) to assist in establishing the number of language groups in the province.

The completed documentation will contribute to CLRC's monitoring of the development of the Underlying Law and provide a resource for legal practitioners, researchers, academics and the courts where customary principles are relevant to the development and application of law.

The West New Britain Custom Recording Exercise is being undertaken as a joint project between CLRC and the Australia–Papua New Guinea Law and Justice Partnership (APLJ).

CLRC acknowledged the support of APLJ, the West New Britain Provincial Government, relevant government agencies, traditional and community leaders, and the participants who will contribute their knowledge and experiences to the exercise.

The Commission said the successful completion of the West New Britain programme will contribute to its broader national objective of progressively documenting customary laws and practices across all 22 provinces of Papua New Guinea and strengthening the foundation for the continuing development of the country's Underlying Law.

Highlights of the Launching Program for the West New Britain Province Custom Recording



CLRC Concludes Consultations on Review of Laws Relating to Internal Displacement in PNG

The Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) has concluded its consultations for Terms of Reference No. 27 (TOR 27), which calls for a review of the laws relating to internal displacement in Papua New Guinea.

The two-day consultation held in the National Capital District (NCD) brought together key government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), representatives of internally displaced groups, civil society and members of the general public to share their views, experiences and concerns on internal displacement in PNG.

The discussions focused on four key issues identified through CLRC's desktop research and stakeholder engagements. These include the lack of a clear and comprehensive legal framework for internally displaced persons (IDPs); the lack of an effective institutional framework; gaps in data and information management; and issues relating to cultural identity and land rights.

Participants were guided through a series of questions under each issue, providing an opportunity to discuss the challenges faced by internally displaced persons and identify potential areas for law reform.

As part of the consultation process, CLRC engaged relevant government agencies, organisations and stakeholders, including the Department of Education, Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council, Manam Resettlement Authority, Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC), National Housing Corporation (NHC), National Statistical Office (NSO), National Disaster Centre, Department of Lands and Physical Planning, National Energy Authority, Department for Community Development and Religion, representatives of internally displaced groups and members of the general public.

CLRC Deputy Secretary for Legislative Services, Mrs Dorothy Mimiko-Kesenga, said the consultation was an integral part of the Commission's law review and reform process, particularly in identifying legislative and administrative gaps relating to internal displacement.

"We respect the agencies that are already in existence, their processes and the systems that they have. Our job is to review and see if there are any gaps or challenges that we can address to fully equip the existing organisations to perform their mandate accordingly."

She further emphasised the importance of stakeholder participation in informing the Commission's law reform work.

"Your views are very important, and when it comes to the practical application of it, it's people like yourselves who will provide us with the information so that CLRC, in its core mandate of law review and reform, can propose practical solutions."

The conclusion of the two-day NCD consultation marks the completion of CLRC's provincial consultations for TOR 27. However, the online consultation remains open, and stakeholders and members of the general public are encouraged to participate and share their views.

In accordance with CLRC's law review and reform process, a seminar will subsequently be held to vet the Commission's proposed law reform recommendations for TOR 27 before the recommendations are submitted for tabling in Parliament.



CLRC Concludes Consultation on Review of Provincial Health Authority Act 2007 in East Sepik

The Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) has concluded consultations in East Sepik Province under Terms of Reference No. 28 (TOR 28), which calls for a review of the Provincial Health Authorities Act 2007.

The review examines the legal and administrative framework governing the delivery and accessibility of health services across Papua New Guinea, including health facility conditions, medical supplies, staffing, funding, governance, accountability and coordination between national, provincial and district-level institutions.

During the consultation, the CLRC team met with the East Sepik Provincial Administration, East Sepik Provincial Health Authority (PHA) and the District Administrator to gather their views on the issues affecting the implementation and effectiveness of the PHA system.

Discussions with the Provincial Administration took place on the first day, followed by consultations with the PHA team on the second day. The discussion on the authority's performance and operational challenges was led by East Sepik PHA Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Mathew Kaluvia.

CLRC values the practical experiences and firsthand accounts of stakeholders, which are essential in identifying legislative and administrative gaps and developing appropriate law reform proposals to strengthen the effectiveness of provincial health authorities.

In addition to the 12 key issues identified in the TOR 28 Issues Paper, stakeholders raised further concerns, including outdated statistical data relating to PHAs, the need for penalties for non-compliance with reporting requirements, and political interference in the operations of provincial health authorities.

CLRC emphasised that the Issues Paper does not represent the Commission's final position on reforming the PHA system. Rather, it identifies key concerns within the existing legal and administrative framework and provides a basis for further discussion, stakeholder engagement and public input.

The review extends beyond the Provincial Health Authorities Act 2007 to consider other relevant legislation, including the Provincial Health Administration Act 2007, National Health Administration Act 1997, Public Hospitals Act 1994, Medical Registration Act 1980 and Public Finances (Management) Act 1995, among other related laws.

During a courtesy call by the CLRC team, Acting Provincial Administrator, Mr. Alphonse Kami, welcomed the review as an important and timely initiative, particularly in light of the establishment of the PHA in East Sepik Province in 2018 and its transition from the provincial administration. He called for the collective participation of relevant authorities in the province to ensure the review captures the key challenges and opportunities for improving health service delivery.

To date, CLRC has conducted TOR 28 consultations in Eastern Highlands, Morobe, Western, New Ireland, East Sepik and Western Highlands provinces. Further consultations are to be carried out in Manus and the National Capital District.

As Papua New Guinea's independent, mandated law reform agency, CLRC's review under TOR 28 aims to strengthen governance, clarify institutional responsibilities, improve coordination and enhance accountability within the provincial health system.

The findings and stakeholder input gathered through the consultation process will contribute to the Commission's ongoing review of the legal framework and inform proposals for reform aimed at improving the delivery and accessibility of health services through the PHA Act in the country.



East Sepik Provincial Administration Team and the CLRC Team after the consultation session on TOR 28.

COMMISSION UPDATES

CLRC and UPNG Sign Landmark MOUs to Preserve Constitutional House and Establish Underlying Law Centre

From front page...

CLRC Secretary, Dr. Mange Matui, said the partnership reflected a shared commitment to preserving one of Papua New Guinea's most important national institutions.

"This signing is much more than the commencement of a restoration project. It is a reaffirmation of our collective responsibility to preserve the birthplace of Papua New Guinea's Constitution, honour the legacy of our founding leaders, and safeguard one of our nation's most treasured landmarks for generations to come."

Dr. Matui said the Commission's long-term vision extended beyond restoring the building itself.

"Ultimately, our vision extends beyond restoring a historic building. We envision the Constitutional House becoming a place where students, researchers, public servants, legal professionals and visitors can learn about the history of our Constitution, appreciate the work of the Constitutional Planning Committee, and reflect upon the enduring values that continue to unite us as a nation."

The second MOU reinforces the Commission's statutory responsibilities under the CLRC Act 2004 and the Underlying Law Act 2000 to promote, develop and monitor Papua New Guinea's Underlying Law.

Under the agreement, an Underlying Law Centre will be established within the UPNG School of Law. The Centre will store and feature CLRC publications, including custom recording reports, underlying law conference papers, seminar reports and other research materials relating to customary law and the development of the Underlying Law.

The Centre will provide students, academics, legal practitioners, judges, researchers and the wider public with direct access to valuable legal resources that support research, teaching and the continued development of Papua New Guinea's unique legal system.

To support the establishment of the Centre, the Commission presented a cheque of K50,000 to the UPNG School of Law to commence preliminary works.

UPNG Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Findlay, welcomed the partnership, describing the two agreements as complementary initiatives that honour the nation's past while investing in its future.

"I am very pleased to sign these two MOUs. One recognises the history and heritage of the development of Papua New Guinea's Constitution, while the other looks to our future by strengthening legal scholarship and supporting the continued development and review of our laws."

Professor Findlay said the two initiatives reflected the dual role of legal education in preserving history while shaping future generations of legal professionals.

"One MOU looks to our past by preserving the Constitutional House and honouring our history. The other looks to our future through the continued development of our laws. Together, they represent exactly what a law school should aspire to achieve."

The MOUs were signed by CLRC Secretary Dr. Mange Matui and UPNG Vice-Chancellor Professor Ian Findlay, witnessed by senior management representatives from both institutions.

While committed to its core mandate in law review and reform, the partnership reflects CLRC's broader commitment to preserving the nation's constitutional heritage while strengthening institutions that contribute to the development of the Constitution and the Underlying Law for future generations.



CLRC Launches Revised Publications Policy

The Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) launched its revised Publications Policy, strengthening the Commission's approach in publishing, preparation, management, and dissemination of CLRC publications.

The first CLRC Publications Policy was adopted in 2012 to guide the Commission in managing all its publications. Since then, significant developments in the Commission's functions, publishing practices, and digital information management have called for a comprehensive revision of the policy.

The revised policy was officially launched by CLRC Secretary, Dr Mange Matui, who emphasised that all law reform publications undertaken by the Commission should not remain within the organisation but should be shared with the public and government.

Dr Matui said CLRC publications must uphold quality, integrity, accessibility and timeliness, noting that all research work and CLRC reports must meet appropriate standards and contain accurate and relevant information.

"Report that is written must not be put on our shelves within the CLRC office. This information must be disclosed. The most important thing that I would like to emphasise is this, our publications must be of quality, and our publication must be of integrity", said Dr. Matui.

He added, "The effective implementation of this publications policy will strengthen the quality and integrity of the CLRC's publications and further enhance the Commission's ability to deliver on its mandate in law review and reform."



The revised policy reaffirms the need for timely completion of CLRC reports, including the management of publication process, submission protocols, quality standards, production, security and confidentiality measures, monitoring and review, authorships, electronic publications and the concept of Artificial Intelligence.

It provides the Commission with a more comprehensive and standard process to guide the preparation, review and publication of its research, reports and other law reform publications.

The Secretary acknowledged the collective efforts of both of Deputy Secretaries and responsible officers in developing and reviewing the revised policy, stating that the revision of the CLRC Publications Policy is a timely approach for the Commission.

The revised document reinforces the CLRC's core mandate in law review and reform, by ensuring its publications are evidence-based, well-structured, and capable of supporting informed policy and legislative decisions.



CLRC Team posing with the revised publications policy. Inset: CLRC Secretary Dr. Mange Matui speaking during the commissioning of the revised CLRC Publications Policy.

CLRC Strategic Retreat Charts the Way Forward

The Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) held a two-day strategic retreat on 24–25 August 2026 under the theme, "Repositioning CLRC for a Modern, Innovative, Dynamic and High-Performing Future for the Next 50 Years."

The retreat provided an opportunity for officers to reflect on the Commission's institutional development, assess existing challenges and identify practical strategies to strengthen its operations and delivery of its law reform mandate in Papua New Guinea.

Discussions focused on key areas requiring institutional improvement, including digital transformation, information management, research and legal resources, and public relations and communications. Officers examined opportunities to modernise internal systems, improve access to legal information, strengthen knowledge management and enhance public awareness of the Commission's work.

The feedback and recommendations highlighted the importance of adopting more efficient work processes, strengthening institutional coordination, embracing appropriate digital technologies and aligning divisional activities with the Commission's Annual Work Plan and Corporate Plan.

The retreat also reinforced the need for CLRC to remain responsive to the changing legal, social and institutional needs of Papua New Guinea. As the Commission looks towards its next 50 years, strengthening its institutional capacity, preserving knowledge and improving public engagement will be important to sustaining its role in reviewing and reforming the country's laws.

The retreat marked an important step in identifying priorities and practical approaches to repositioning CLRC as a modern, innovative and high-performing institution, equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.





HAVE YOUR SAY!

Participate in CLRC's Online Consultations

Your views matter. Scan the QR codes below to participate in our ongoing law reform consultations.

Online Consultation on Terms of Reference No. 26 - Review of the Laws on District Development Authorities in Papua New Guinea.

Scan the QR Code to share your views.

Online Consultation on Terms of Reference No. 27 - Review of the Laws Relating to Internal Displacement in Papua New Guinea.

Scan the QR Code to share your views.

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