Political Integrity and the Search for Stability

Implications of the *Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates* 2001 for Political Stability in PNG

Louise Baker

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Overview

- Background to the Integrity Reforms
- The meaning of ‘Integrity’ of political parties and candidates
- Main features of the OLIPPAC
- The OLIPPAC in practice
- Where to now for the OLIPPAC?
The OLIPPAC is a comprehensive constitutional reform package introduced in 2000 by the Morauta government.

The primary goal of the legislation is to engineer the development of a stable system of parties and Executive government in PNG.

PNG’s Rationale for reform - ‘economic integrity and stability go hand in hand with political integrity and stability’.
A Crisis in Governance

The **OLIPPAC** is a home grown response to:

1. the development of a highly fluid and inherently unstable political system with weak political parties, personalised and parochially based politics and intense political competition.
2. the overwhelming dominance of Parliament by the Executive.
3. the widespread popular belief that PNG politics and government is corrupt.
Two Meanings of ‘Integrity’

1. Integrity of *conduct* – honesty and uprightness in the conduct of political parties and candidates. Integrity of conduct is measured against public welfare and the national interest.

2. Integrity as *stability* – the idea of wholeness or an unbroken state. Implies the ability of parties to stay together.
   - The *OLIPPAC* legislates for the integrity of PNG’s political system by strengthening it to create stability and continuity.
The Constitution obliges the parliament to enact an Organic Law to implement Sub-Division V1.2.H of the Constitution – “To make provisions regulating the behaviour and conduct of political parties and candidates”.

No Organic Law on this topic was passed for 25 years.
Main Features of the OLIPPAC

The legislation includes rules controlling:

- The formation of Executive Government
- Defections from political parties
- Restrictions on Independent MPs
- Party endorsement of candidates
- The establishment of an Office of the Opposition
- The formation, composition and funding of political parties through a series of financial and other incentives
- Financial incentives for parties to support female candidates
The OLIP PAC in Practice

- Positives
  1. Compulsory party registration.
  2. Reduced influence of Independents.

- Negatives
  1. Formation of government: ‘horse trading’ continued to play a big role in the 2002 national elections.
  2. Voting restrictions on MPs have not been complied with. There are now major party splits in the PPP, URP and PLP.
  3. Executive instability – A Vote of No Confidence remains a strong possibility.
Where to now for the OLIPPAC?

- The OLIPPAC does not appear to have provided the answers PNG needs to achieve political stability.
- Prime Minister Somare has called for the Integrity Laws to be respected:

  “The time when political parties were just temporary shelters for Members of parliament is gone. We are bound by the Organic Law to be members of our respective political parties in every way during our tenure in Parliament”