

# Academic asks 'where is the international outcry?' as new index reveals poorest regions in PNG

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Papua New Guinea's "poorest" region - the resource rich Western Province - would rank just above Zimbabwe but below the Democratic Republic of Congo in terms of human development according to new data unveiled by Deakin University's expert in International Development, Professor Mark McGillivray, at the Papua New Guinea: Securing a Prosperous Future conference.

"If PNG's Western Province was a country there would be an international outcry about their plight, given its appalling low levels of human development," he said.

Professor McGillivray's analysis used the principles of the Human Development Index to create a new measure which specifically looked at the districts and provinces in Papua New Guinea. This has not been done before.

"The United Nations Development Program's [Human Development Index \(HDI\)](#) is well-known and widely used in research and policy circles," Professor McGillivray explained.

"It combines achievements in health, education and income and is primarily used to compare levels of human development between countries.

"The Human Development Index is typically applied at the level of countries, not to parts of countries.

"This means that it is blind to achievements and disparities within countries.

"When we apply the principles of the Index to provinces and districts within PNG, we find not only huge [disparities](#) but levels of human development that are extremely low by international standards."

Professor McGillivray said based on one version of the Human Development Index [Papua New Guinea](#) as a country is ranked 121 out of 137, so down towards the bottom.

"Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe has the lowest level of human development and is ranked 137, at the very bottom," Professor McGillivray said.

"The conflict-affected [Democratic Republic of Congo](#) is ranked 136.

"Yet if the resource rich Western Province was a country it would be ranked in between [Zimbabwe](#) and Congo and as such among the three very poorest in the world in terms of human development."

Professor McGillivray said that the National Central District – the province with the highest [human development](#) in PNG - would rank 99th in the world if it was a country, between Morocco and Tajikistan and slightly ahead of India.

Provided by Deakin University

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