



Agenda

PANU'S KICKING STRAIGHT

BRIGID O'CONNELL

PANU Suga arrived in Australia as a boy, with a wince-inducing walk and a predictable future mapped out.

But he returns to Papua New Guinea this month as a man – and an uncle – who can now walk tall.

Armed with a new English vocabulary, Panu will carry home to his island village the ability to fulfil his aspirations and walk his own path in life, as well as the knowledge he can make a contribution to his village.

Through Moira Kelly's Children First Foundation and Cabrini Hospital, Panu was given the chance to take the incredible leap of faith and leave his tiny island home and 11 siblings to put his dream for an independent and fulfilled life in the hands of strangers.

The *Sunday Herald Sun* has followed Panu's journey over the past year – from his arrival in frosty Kilmore as a shivering, shy teenager who spoke little English; through four painful surgeries,



right up to his final surgical appointment to give the all-clear to his straightened legs.

In a reversal of the usual partnership between Moira Kelly's foundation and Cabrini Hospital, it was orthopaedic surgeon John Griffiths who first spotted Panu.

Mr Griffiths started volunteering in Papua New Guinea 10 years ago and convinced the private hospital to

sponsor surgical visits. Panu's aunt Hilda Shong, who works at Madang General Hospital, heard about the team's impending visit to the hospital.

She knew this was Panu's chance and organised for him to take the two-hour boat ride from Karkar Island to the mainland.

Panu was one of the 100 people to arrive at the makeshift triage.

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**WE NEED AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE
INCREASINGLY EXPENSIVE TOLL ROADS**

EDDIE
McGUIRE
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