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National projects 'of concern'

ONLY ABOUT 17.5 per cent of the country's infrastructure projects are considered to be in a "safe" (green) zone, while the remaining are "of concern," according to a Cook Islands Investment Corporation graphic showing the current state of infrastructure work.

The graphic was presented during a project status update at tourism Global Update Breakfast on Thursday.

Cook Islands Investment Corporation (CIIC) chief executive

Left: Cook Islands Investment Corporation (CIIC) chief executive officer Petero Okotai. 18062238

green zone. On the rest of the islands, including Rarotonga, water supply is considered to be "of concern".

Pukapuka and Manihiki are in the green zone for provision of cyclone shelters, while the rest of the islands are in orange and red zones.

Waste management and sanitation show up as major concerns on all the islands with Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Mangaia in the red zone while rest of the islands are in the orange zone.

Energy is depicted in the safest zone, with most of the islands considered to be in a safe zone except for Mangaia, Atiu and Mauke, which fall in the

yellow zone. Okotai said CIIC was undertaking a number of infrastructure projects.

"When it comes to decisions with regards to infrastructure like water taps, that decision isn't made by government. It is made in consultation with people and landowners," he said.

Okotai said most of the infrastructure projects took time because there were a number of processes CIIC had to follow before the actual work started.

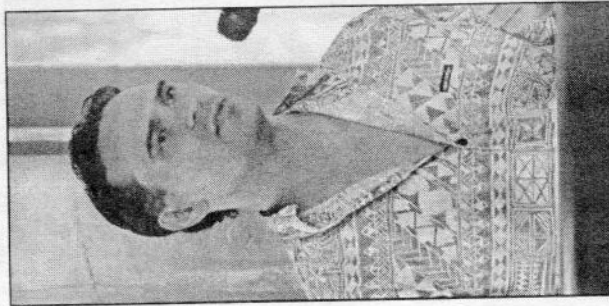
"We have started to definitely improve in our budgeting and planning process between Infrastructure Cook Islands and MFEM, so works are occurring but they take time," he said.

"I know it's really frustrating for people in the community; they want results now. But sometimes if you want the right results for long term, it takes a bit of time to plan and make sure we get it right."

"The thing you don't want is where you spend a lot of money and build something and it turns out to be wrong because you didn't take the time to consult or plan and research. That's what we are really trying to avoid."

"There are problems now and I think for us it's making sure they are not still problems in 10 to 20 years' time."

"That's our approach."
■ Rashneel Kumar



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