

**Press review:  
Mining in the South Pacific**

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**Abbreviations in common use:**

BCL: Bougainville Copper Limited

LNG: Liquid Natural Gas

PIR: Pacific Islands Report

PNG: Papua New Guinea

**Websites:**

Radio New Zealand: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news>

PNG Post-Courier: <https://postcourier.com.pg/>

PNG National: <https://www.thenational.com.pg/>

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**Mining, petroleum sector regrowth in 2024**

By Dale Luma, Post-Courier, 29 December 2023



The Mining and Petroleum sector has had an eventful year 2023. This article delves into the year that was for the industry and the outlook into the future.

### **Porgera reopening**

After four years of closure, the Porgera mine was finally reopened last Friday. The mine was closed in 2019 after Government refused to renew operator Barrick Niugini Limited (BNL) its special mining lease (SML). However, after going through a long process, it was announced in the recent 17th Papua New Guinea Resources and Energy investment conference last week that the Porgera mine would be reopened on December 22. Following the announcement in Sydney, the amendment of Porgera Project Commencement Agreement (PPCA) which entails distribution of equity split of 5 per cent to the Enga Government, 7.5 per cent to the SML landowners and 2.5 per cent to the LMP landowners was signed. A resettlement action plan will be designed in two years.

The plan will commence within six months of that plan being approved. The reopening is a big bonus for the PNG Government, which holds the controlling 51 per cent interests through Kumul Mineral Holdings, under the new Porgera Mine under Special Mining Lease (SML) 11 agreement. Barrick Gold from Canada and Zijin Mining Group Corporation of China share the remaining 49 per cent in a joint venture partnership. The mine would provide a benefit of 51 per cent to the country while the Barrick Niugini Limited has agreed to get the 49 per cent for its extraction cost. Production is expected during the first quarter of next year.

### **Newmont Enters Papua New Guinea**

World's leading gold company Newmont Corporation entered the Papua New Guinea extractive industry with the acquisition of Newcrest this year. According to Prime Minister James Marape, the arrival of Newmont adds value to PNG's global branding and signals that PNG is a mining investment destination. According to Newmont Chief Development Officer Peter Toth, PNG now becomes a key jurisdiction for Newmont with the company now having an office in Port Moresby with Alwyn Pretorius running the office as its Managing director.

### **K30 billion in benefits expected from mine life extension**

Ok Tedi Mining Limited projects over K30 billion (US\$8.0 billion) in Social Benefits, which includes taxes, royalties, and dividend payments, over the next 27 years. This is based on the company's current Strategic Business Plan which includes Life of Mine (LOM) extension to 2050, ushering in significant sustainable development for mine operation impacted communities, Western Province, and Papua New Guinea.

### **Papua LNG**

The integrated FEED (Front End Engineering Design) for the Papua LNG project was launched earlier this year with the Final Investment Decision (FID) expected sometime next year. The Papua LNG project will create up to 6000 jobs at the peak of its construction period. The project will rake in K1.4 billion per year on average for the first 10 years of production. The project is strategically situated close to the Asian market with the backing of strong joint venture partners which after a final investment decision will see Total, the operator with 29.1 per cent, JX Nippon with 2 per cent, PNG State with 22.5 per cent, Santos with 17.7 per cent and ExxonMobil with 28.7 per cent. Papua LNG production is projected at 5.6 million tonnes with a capital investment of over US\$10 billion (About K36 billion). The project will see shared benefits to state, province, district, landowners with a planned long-term fund for future generation.

### **New Developments on the Horizon**

EXXONMOBIL is on the verge of making Papua New Guinea's largest LNG discovery. Termed wildebeest, it will be bigger than the PNG LNG and the Papua LNG combined, and the super major is working with the Minister for Petroleum and Energy Kerenga Kua and his team to advance

exploration to determine the size of the resource. WILDEBEEST has the potential to start construction after the completion of the P’Nyang LNG and extends PNG’s eight years construction benefit envisioned from the Papua LNG and P’Nyang construction further to 13 years with construction of Wildebeest. Exxon with its joint venture partners have invested more than K2 billion into exploration activities.

In mid-2022 we conducted a K300 million seismic activity in the Gulf Province. Currently ExxonMobil is working with the Minister for Petroleum and Energy and his team on how to advance exploration to prove and quantify this resource through exploration drilling. Exploration drilling will enable and its joint venture partners to determine the size of this resource. It is believed that there will be a reward for a potential discovery that will be larger than the PNG LNG and the Papua LNG. The process for the Wafi-Golpu mine is ongoing with other mines having expansion plans such as the K92 mine with a K70 million expansion plan in place while the others continue to operate.

### **Ok Tedi: Vagrants worry Landowners**

The National, 29 December 2023

OK Tedi Mine landowners in Tabubil who are tired of continuous violence by people from other provinces, are repatriating everybody back to their provinces of origin from the mining town. Assistant police commissioner, border, Peter Philip said after the ethnic clashes in Tabubil, people who had been involved had been repatriated with the help of local MP James Donald and the district development authority. “They have repatriated all the people from Ningerum and Kiunga and also helped people from Oksapmin. “Mine operations are not affected and everyone within that vicinity have been told to move 50 to 100 metres away from the mine lease,” he said. He said last Wednesday, some Engans who were living in Tabubil, were airlifted to Mt Hagen.

“Our police on the ground are negotiating with people from Tari and Komo and once we did a head count everyone who wants to return to Tari via Mt Hagen, we will have them airlifted before the New Year. “That also includes those from other Highlands provinces. Some have already left on their own accord,” he said. Meanwhile, bodies of the two men from Hela and Enga killed during the ethnic clash in Tabubil were still in the morgue and would be airlifted to their home provinces. “As for the woman who was raped, police could not further investigate because she was not able to identify the suspects,” he said. Philip said detectives from police headquarters and internal affairs officers who are on the ground will carry out investigations into the fight that resulted in the death of two people.

### **Komo-Hulia locals facing struggle to reach services**

By MAJELEEN YANEI, The National, 29 December 2023

THE people of Komo-Hulia in Hela have been facing many challenges over the years and are struggling to access basic services. Located in the Kutubu oil and gas extraction area, no tangible services like proper road connections, schools and health infrastructure have reached the people. Mt Sisa president Jackson Tapa said they were still living like they were during the colonial days. “Pregnant women are dying during childbirth due to limited access to medical care while others are dying from curable diseases as our sub-health centres are not medically equipped,” Tapa said. He said the it was a struggle to reach Komo to buy rice, salt or soap with the journey made more difficult due to the distance and threats from criminals.

“It takes about two days to reach Komo through the rugged Mt Sisa ridge, crossing the fast-flowing Sowa River between Walagu and Komo and onto the narrow bush track before reaching Komo Station,” he said. Tapa said local trade store owners usually bought store goods there to resell at the village and while trekking through that part, most had cash and goods robbed by gunmen. “This scares us and many people stopped trekking to Komo, being the only access point where stores are located, people are affected with no option to buy basic necessities. “Trade store owners buy a kilogramme of rice for K7 and resell at the village for K12. “The resell price is a big markup as youths engaged to carry goods from Komo are paid,” Tapa said. “We will continue to live this way. “No leaders have addressed our concerns but make only empty promises during national election campaigns.”

## **Supreme Court dismisses claims by former Porgera mine association executives**

By Melyne Baroi, Post-Courier, 29 December 2023



THE Supreme Court has dismissed appeals by former executives of the Porgera Mine Landowners Association against several National Court orders that confirmed new executives in preparations for the reopening of the Porgera Gold mine. This decision was handed down this morning at the Supreme Court in Wiagani after being considered by the a full-bench consisting judges Justices Ellena Batari, David Cannings and Kingsley David. “We appreciate the grievance of the appellants who argue that they were appointed clan agents under the initial arrangements that paved way for the initial 30-year special mining lease for the Pogera Gold project,” the judgement read.

However, the initial 30-year special mining lease had expired and a new special mining lease was established requiring the election of 25 new sub-clan agents which was done in 2021 and subsequently and new executives were appointed. This was confirmed in the National Court but then appealed against by former executives Kimaleya Ondalane, Yanale Lare, Nelson Akiko, Pawe Menepa and Ruben Nalepe. However, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the new executive and clan agents led Mark Tony Ekepa. Former Mining Minister Johnson Tuke (former), the Mineral Resources Authority, the Investment Promotion Authority and the State were the defendants in the case. “The making of each consent order was a valid exercise of judicial power,” they added. Read more on your Post-Courier next Tuesday, January 2nd, 2024.

## Explosion at nickel plant in Indonesia kills 18

Post-Courier, 28 December 2023



JAKARTA: At least 18 workers have been killed and dozens more injured after a smelting furnace at a Chinese-owned nickel plant on Indonesia's Sulawesi island exploded. Central Sulawesi police chief Agus Nugroho said at least four Chinese workers and nine Indonesian workers died while trying to repair a furnace on Sunday (local time). Three more victims died a day later while being treated at a local hospital. Two more workers died on Tuesday at the hospital, bringing the total number of fatalities to 18, including eight workers from China.

Mr Nugroho said the blast demolished the furnace and damaged parts of the side walls of the building, and about 46 workers were injured with some in critical condition. A series of deadly incidents have plagued nickel smelting plants in Indonesia, that form China's ambitious transnational development program called the Belt and Road Initiative. Nickel is a key component in global battery production for electric vehicles. Mr Nugroho said rescuers extinguished the fire and evacuated workers after a nearly four-hour operation, adding that police were trying to determine whether negligence by the company caused the deaths. – ABC

## Porgera: Results of deal will be realised later

Editorial, The National, 28 December 2023

THE longer-term fruits of the deal the State had struck with mine developer Barrick Gold will be realised some time into the future but the obvious first benefit of reopening the Porgera mine is employment for Papua New Guineans. Last Friday, the mine's operations resumed with the cleaning up work. Three to four years of accumulated loose soil and mud have to be cleared first prior to miners reaching the actual ore. The Government had decided against renewing the special mining lease forcing the mine into a state of care and maintenance in April 2020, a decision that has put 3,600 out of work overnight. So there would have been a collective sigh of relief for those workers who would still want to go back and others lining up for possible job openings at the mine under the new management arrangements.

Last Friday a government team visited the mine site to witness the initial work that is being undertaken to make prepare for actual gold production in the first quarter of the new year. The loss of jobs is for individuals and families much closer to home than the bigger picture in losses of business or Government revenues and returns to the State, the Enga provincial government and other PNG stakeholders of the mine operated by New Porgera Limited (NPL). In the next two to three months NPL will look to build up the staff required. About 3,500 nationals are expected to be employed by the mine presumably when the mine is at full operational capacity. That is a welcome news long

awaited by former employees hoping to get back their jobs as well as others who would be applying for jobs at the mine. Besides those directly employed, hundreds more should be expected to find employment with enterprises that are allied with mine operations or those that provide the goods and services required for the operation of the mine.

So employment alone is a major positive to come for the reopening of the mine, however belated. Those thousands of workers will be earning paying taxes to the PNG Government. Minister assisting the Prime Minister Jimmy Maladina said at the opening that a significant event that happened on the day was that the mine workers were on salary under new books of the new mining company, NPL. About 98 per cent of staff are Papua new Guineans working as engineers, mine managers, geologists and operators. The clearing up work on the mine has begun. There are also other necessary works like reestablishing the power and water supply systems for the mine operations to commence. Actual gold production is therefore expected to resume in the first quarter of the new year. It has been a long and difficult journey of negotiations and deferrals to the resumption of the mine but finally on Dec 22, the mine has official resumed operations.

Critics of the deal reached which lead the reopening of the mine may argue that the developers are the real winners and not the State and its agencies. One argument is that even under the new arrangements, Barrick would still have full control over the mine cash flows for a decade at least while PNG Government and landowners would await their windfalls. Time, be it a decade or the entire mine life, will be the best judge of the deal; whether James Marape has actually won a great deal for Papua New Guinea or not. However, the fact that thousands of people now have the opportunity to work in the mine is reason enough to celebrate. And the mine reopening couldn't have come at a better time. From here, it will be upon NPL and the State to prove to their respective shareholders how good a deal they had sealed.

### **Mine infrastructure prioritised**

By ZARA KANU LEBO, The National, 28 December 2023

DAMAGES to vital infrastructure of the Porgera gold mine are not to be repeated if landowners want consistent flow of benefits from the project, which was reopened last Friday. New Porgera Limited chairman Sarimu Kanu said while the reopening was a milestone welcomed by everyone, tough lessons learnt in the past following the shutdown of the power pylons along DHL heights to Porgera and damages to the Wairiki water control center must not be forgotten. "These damages slowed progress at the mine," he said. "Landowners who stand to benefit from the re-opened mine are being urged to refrain from intentionally damaging vital infrastructure." Kanu said from here on, the major activities would involve the recommissioning of the plant and equipment and to get it into full production. First gold pour was expected in quarter number one of 2024.

"Any persons found damaging any plant and equipment will be referred to police. "People cannot continue to damage these infrastructures and expect to be seated at a roundtable to discuss their benefits. "You damage anything, then you will end up discussing your benefits with police, Kanu said. According to the new Porgera project commencement agreement (PPCA), landowners and the government would have a 15 per cent stake in the project. Distributed, it meant 2.5 per cent would go to other tenements landowners who did not received such benefits before, five per cent belonged to the government and 7.5 per cent would be shared between all special mining lease (SML) landowners, plus a three per cent levy at every gold sale. SML landowners were those directly impacted or affected by the mining activities. "The benefits are great. Landowners should change their habits and attitudes and support this project," Kanu said.

“I appeal to everyone in the communities to embrace this moment and support the mining operations of Porgera for their own greater benefits, that of the Enga government and the State of PNG.” Landowner chairman Nickson Makapen said: “The closure of the mine this past four years has affected us greatly; we all suffered. “When the Government introduced the ‘take back PNG’ approach starting with Porgera, we walked and talked that mission alongside the Government to ensure a proper agreement was in place, especially on the part of landowners.” “Last week, the agreement was signed and work has started. So, my good people of the SML, LMP and Enga, the 15 per cent allocated, plus the three per cent levy for the SML landowners, is a lot of money.

So, there is no need to go to social media and talk about this when you should be getting ready to benefit from this project.” In the previous project agreement, landowners and respective governments were allocated a five per cent stake, which had increased by 10 per cent to 15 per cent in the new benefits deal. “We are getting big benefits in equities, royalties and business spin-offs and, as the Government has already mentioned, funds have been allocated to respective bodies to ensure we are taken care of,” Makapen said.

### **Gulf establishes entity to participate in Papua LNG project**

The National, 28 December 2023

GULF leaders and people have launched a joint umbrella entity for participation in the Papua Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project. The Gulf Papua Umbrella Joint Venture Ltd launch took place in Port Moresby last week. Kikori MP Soroi Eoe said the entity would participate in business spin-offs and development activities derived from the Papua LNG project. He said the entire project area footprint comprised six tribal groups (Pawaia, Koura, Iare, Muro, Popo Coast and Orokol Hereva) from the petroleum development licence (PDL) and pipeline areas. “It has been a challenge to gather all six landowner companies to form a single umbrella entity,” Eoe said.

He said project construction would cost about US\$138 billion (about K514.4 billion), emphasising that landowners be accorded a 30 per cent stake. “This is non-negotiable,” Eoe said. Making reference to the national content policy, the Kikori MP said from the lessons and experiences of the PNG LNG project, “there are certain businesses reserved for locals. We appreciate the fact that landowners are being considered”. “However, other major work packages such as aviation, fuel, financing, insurance, shipping, piping, storage facilities, logistics and others must also be included as reserved for local participation.”

Eoe also pointed to section at of the national energy policy (2016) regarding indigenous participation in the energy sector. “The developer must not forget its corporate obligation and responsibilities as contained in the gas agreement per section 184.” He said Gulf’s three Members of Parliament were working on including other Baimuru and Ihu tribes that missed out in the initial listing. “They are the tribes of Era Maipua, Iare, Kaimare, Koriki, Varoi, Ipiko, Baimuru, Aita Orokol and the Kouri tribes,” he said.

### **Porgera boasts unique composition**

By ZARA KANU LEBO, The National, 28 December 2023

THE Porgera mine in Enga sits as unique apart from the others in Papua New Guinea because most of its ore components comes out as free gold. Free gold does not combine with other minerals. It is retrieved in its pure state. Mining experts said such gold could be rapidly recovered in high amounts and with less energy using gravity concentration methods. Superintendent for open pit mining, Ezekiel Nori, said: “Free gold coming out makes Porgera different from Lihir and Ok Tedi. “A good

component of our ore is free gold; that's why we have our mills up top. Porgera gold is both free and refractory.



“Free gold makes up about 20 per cent of our recovery while the remainder form just about 80 per cent or less. “Whatever cannot be recovered from the safe mill area runs down the pipeline for further processing. “Restarting the mine will involve drilling into the rock using our two rigs now located there, giving us a more detailed understanding of what the ore is like down there,” Nori added. Work had started on the western wing of the mine, where excavators were currently clearing out mud that had piled up over three years after the mine closed.

### **Landowners big winners in new Porgera**

Post-Courier, 27 December 2023



The giant machines rumbled to life last Friday. In a significant gamble of life, the previously shut down Porgera Gold Mine, resumed operations with a renewed hope for Papua New Guinea, its landowner shareholders and the foreign partners in Canada and China. No business wants to be stuck in the mud for too long. And the three-year blockage was far too painfully long, if not the biggest hole in the ravaged PNG economy. But that's behind us and 2024 should be a golden opportunity for Kumul Mineral Holdings and the Engan landowners of Porgera. We applaud the State Negotiating Team led by experienced public servant and chairman Dairi Vele who have delivered a unique model agreement that should underpin all future mineral agreements that put the interests of the landowners first and foremost.



In the new Porgera Mine under Special Mining Lease (SML) 11 agreement, landowners are the biggest players and by far the biggest winners. In the old Porgera Mine, landowners owned 1.5 percent of equity in the mine through five percent held by their provincial government. But now with the new Porgera Mine, landowners will get 13 percent while the Enga Provincial Government will retain 5 percent, which means Porgera involvement in the mine will be a huge increase to 18 percent. This is in itself unprecedented and we applaud the Marape Government for considering the plight of the Porgera people and the hardships of the Engan people. The obvious question now, which is always a public concern, is that of security.

It is well known that Enga, and Porgera has descended to the depths of great despair in the past three years with the post 2023 national election period being the deadliest with death and destruction everywhere. The security forces, both police and soldiers were outnumbered and outgunned. Hundreds of innocent lives were lost in the chaos, men, women and children, were not spared by gun toting, knife wielding thugs fueled by blood thirsty warlords. According to Dairi Vele, the 18 percent gifted to the Enga Government and landowners is expected to translate into K7.8 billion over 20 years of the life of the new Porgera agreement.

What will the benefits mean for war weary Porgerans? How will an 18 percent bonus in benefits truly appease tribal warlords and their enemies? Because, history has demonstrated in the past that even the best of intentions for a community can always lead to bloodshed, and we don't need that in 2024. Therefore question of security for the business operators, the community, the province and PNG is a serious concern for the PNG Government. We appeal to the MPs of Enga, the LLG presidents, the businessmen and women, the pastors and clergy, the elite of Enga, to unite as one voice and stop the violence.

## **K92 announces share participation**

The National, 22 December 2023

THE operator of the Kainantu gold mine in Eastern Highlands has announced a distribution of K1.2 million in its share participation plan for Papua New Guinean employees. K92 Mining Limited said this meant all its employees, of which 95 per cent were Papua New Guineans with a majority being locals and landowners, would become shareholders of the project. The participation programme also included additional award payments based on safety and performance targets. K92 Mining chief executive officer and director John Lewins said: "We are delighted for all of our employees to be owners through being shareholders of K92 Mining through the implementation of the share participation plan.

"In addition to the significant benefits that stages three and four expansions will deliver to PNG and our communities, they will also provide share ownership to our employees," Lewins said. "Currently, K92 is focused on executing its largest growth plans to date, investing more than K3 billion as part of the expansions which will transform the Kainantu project into a world class, tier-1 gold mine. "The stages three and four expansions are expected to greatly benefit the economic prosperity and development of PNG through increased taxes, royalties, foreign exchange, investment, economic output, employment and community programmes," Lewins explained.

He said the successful delivery of the expansions would also generate increased K92 shareholder value over time, in which local employees could be able to buy shares. "For many of the employees, this will be their first time owning shares in a publicly-traded company." Lewins added that K92 Mining had placed a strong focus on generating long-term and sustainable value for all stakeholders and was proud to support the economic well-being of its employees and indirectly impacting their communities. "By executing on our growth and expansion plans, the company looks forward to

continuing to advance the economic development and prosperity of PNG for many years to come,” he said.

### **Ipatas urges locals to take ownership**

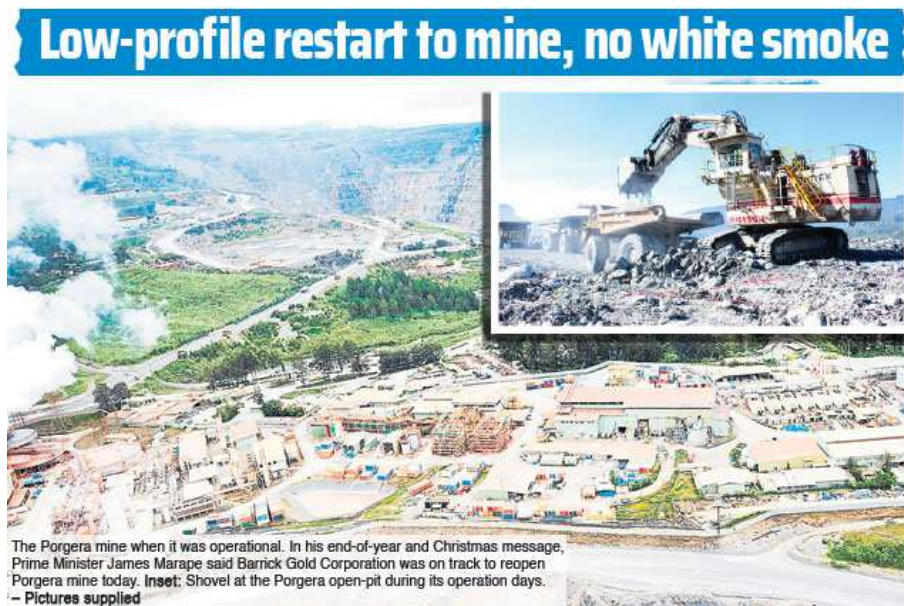
The National, 22 December 2023

ENGA Governor Sir Peter Ipatas has urged the people of the province to take ownership of the New Porgera project and maintain its security. “We have a better stake in the mine now – three per cent royalties are a lot of money,” he said. “Tax credit is also going to be another thing that we will benefit from which is one per cent of tax credit. We have an equity in there. So what more do we want?” Sir Peter was at the signing of the amendment to the New Porgera start agreement which centred on the equity structure to landowners and the re-commissioning of the mine today. “We also got infrastructure development money that the Government has put in – K700 milion in total. We will be benefiting from a K100 million business grant, also from MRE under a K100 million allocation from the government.

“So these are benefits coming to the province. Therefore people must learn to appreciate and reciprocate by providing peace during the project. With peace we can get more out of the mine. “Let’s maintain law and order in the province so that we and the country can benefit.” He added that the mine was structured to accommodate lot of local contract work. “So I want to call on (Engans) to get organised as the mine is firing up today. If you have been sleeping then you only have yourself to blame. You should be more organised to take part in spinoff businesses. “No paper companies, no paper businessmen. We are willing to help people who are genuinely trying to improve their lives but in business.”

### **Porgera opening today**

The National, 22 December 2023



PORGERA Gold mine, closed for four years, is set to restart today (Dec 22), but the white smoke signalling full plant operation will only be possible next year. It is understood this will happen once all the required plant and equipment has been fully recommissioned and the ramp up process including recruitment has been completed. Thirteen power pylons that have been felled between Porgera and Hides gas to electricity plant site have yet to be erected in order for full power to be

supplied to Porgera. Water from the Waili Creek which supplies the bulk of the water to the mine is disrupted as the control centre has been vandalised and requires parts which are still on order.

Today the final legal steps will be undertaken to achieve completion under the Porgera Project Commencement Agreement, marking the start of New Porgera and the resumption of operations at the Porgera gold mine which has been in care and maintenance since April 2020. The commencement of operations is expected to be officially witnessed by a State delegation comprised of Mining Minister Sir Ano Pala, Minister Don Polye, Vice Minister Jimmy Maladina and SNT Chairman, Dairi Vele. It is understood that Prime Minister James Marape is unable to attend but will be present to witness achievement of one of the upcoming key operational milestones.

On Saturday there will be a number of small activities in the Paiam sports field to commemorate the official restart of the mine. In his end of the year and Christmas message Prime Minister James Marape said Barrick was on track to reopen Porgera mine on December 22nd (today). “Under the renegotiated terms, New Porgera has 51 percent ownership by Papua New Guinean stakeholders while the remaining 49 percent will be shared by Barrick and its co-developer, Zijin,” Marape said. “This is truly groundbreaking and a feat that was never before achieved under any government since Independence in our natural resource benefits sharing.” Prime Minister announced earlier that the following steps needed to be taken to bring the mine back to full production:

- OFFICIAL restart of operations on 22 December, 2023.
- RE-COMMISSIONING to be completed in the coming weeks.
- MINING and processing operations to restart in the First Quarter 2024.
- FIRST Gold production expected in the First Quarter 2024.
- FULL production throughout into the Third Quarter of 2024.
- EMPLOYEE ramp-up to occur throughout 2024, reaching 3,200 employees by year’s end.

Over the 20-year life of mine, PNG shareholders, which comprises Porgera landowners, Enga Province and the State, will receive 53 percent of Porgera’s overall economic benefits. The investors, Barrick and Zijin will share the remaining 47 percent. Marape said: “At an assumed gold price of US\$1,800 per ounce, PNG shareholders can expect to receive nearly US\$7.3 billion (approximately K27.6 billion) over 20 years and US\$2.8 billion (about K10.6 billion) in the first ten years. As we all know, the current gold price is much higher at approximately US\$2,000 per ounce.” As it stands, New Porgera Limited looks set to be a significant contributor to the National Treasury, with a 32 percent Corporate Tax rate imposition and facing an increase in royalty from 2 percent to 3 percent.

## Frieda project operator hails inaugural flight

Phil McCormack, The National, 21 December 2023



THE arrival of the first Boeing 787 Dreamliner operated by China Southern Airlines at Jackson International Airport in the National Capital District (NCD) yesterday is good news for PanAust, the owner and operator of the Frieda River copper-gold project.



Civil Aviation and Transport Minister Walter Schnaubelt (left) and National Airports Corporation acting managing director Dominic Kaumu at the Jackson International Airport awaiting the inaugural China Southern Airlines flight into Port Moresby yesterday from China.

PanAust was represented on the maiden flight by mine project director Phil McCormack, PanAust secretary Chengjie Li and chief development officer Jonathan Kort. They were travelling as part of the Papua New Guinea government delegation. NCD Governor Powes Parkop and Guangdong governor Wang Weizhong, staff, management, and board members of the airlines, PNG and Chinese government officials all came on the inaugural flight.



Civil Aviation and Transport Minister Walter Schnaubelt welcoming the inaugural flight from China.

The inaugural flight, a 787-9 Dreamliner, had 150 passengers onboard with 11 tonnes of cargo, while 180 passengers were booked with three tonnes of cargo for the return flight. McCormack said the flight's arrival marked the beginning of regular direct flights between Guangzhou in China's Guangdong province and Port Moresby, and the opening of PanAust's Port Moresby office.



The Boeing 787 Dreamliner arriving at the Port Moresby's Jackson International Airport yesterday.

“For PanAust, the direct travel route meets a growing demand for connectivity between the two destinations.



NCD Governor Powes Parkop addressing and welcoming delegates on the inaugural flight from China.

“With a new office in Port Moresby at Ela Beach Tower and a project office at the Frieda River site in West Sepik, it is anticipated that PanAust and its associated entities will be frequent users of the new direct flights,” McCormack said. He said the PanAust team expressed confidence that the introduction of regular direct flights between Guangzhou and Port Moresby would add significant socio-cultural, business and economic value to the relationship between the two cities and countries.



South China Airlines cabin crew during the inaugural flight arriving at the Jackson International Airport.

### **Porgera chamber calls for unity among leaders and locals**

The National, 21 December 2023



THE Porgera Chamber of Commerce and Industry has called on leaders and people in the district and province to unite and support the mine's opening tomorrow. Chamber president Nickson Pakea said: “Leaders of Porgera, Tari, lower Porgera and other mine footprint areas must lead by example. “We all need to thank New Porgera Ltd, Barrick, Kumul Minerals Holdings Ltd and Mineral

Resources Authority for looking through all our position papers and negotiate for better benefits.” He said communities in Porgera wanted the mine to reopen earlier than expected because it was the mine that was bringing in revenue for the simple people.

Pakea said enough time had been spent on negotiating for landowner benefits. “State has 36 per cent and Barrick 49 per cent. “The company will be responsible for compensation while the State’s 36 per cent will be used for the mine-impacted and affected areas, provincial governments and the national government. “Landowner groups must be united, for a common cause and belief to attain better results for our people,” the chamber president said.

### **Industry consultations prioritised**

The National, 21 December 2023

ANY major government policy reforms in the mineral resources and energy space in Papua New Guinea will be done in consultation with the industry, says Petroleum and Energy Minister Kerenga Kua. Kua said there would always be consultations on major policy changes including exempting the mining industry from the proposed production sharing regime. Kua gave the assurance to industry participants at last week’s PNG Resources and Energy Investment Conference in Sydney, Australia. “We do listen a lot to our stakeholders. By listening, we have changed the form and content of it a number of times,” he said.

“This present version will exclude minerals, we just stick to petroleum,” Kua said in relation to the proposed production sharing agreement (PSA) arrangement. He said more research was needed on the financial and economic feasibility of adopting a PSA option. “The legal aspects of the proposed PSA changes were okay, however, there needed to be more research to incorporate financial and economic aspects, to ascertain the impact this would have on the industry, and the returns on investment by the Government. “The conclusion of the legal drafting is, therefore, pending until the outcomes of the financial and economic studies are completed,” Kua said.

### **Government can now resume Wafi-Golpu project negotiations**

By GEORGINA KOREI, The National, 2w1 December 2023

THE State can now resume all negotiations for the K18.5 billion Wafi-Golpu project after the National Court set aside the restraining orders by aggrieved incorporated land groups (ILG). National Court acting Judge Pauline Bre yesterday ordered that the restraining orders of Oct 25 stopping the State from conducting any meetings with other stakeholders on the Wafi-Golpu project be dissolved. “The interim orders granted on Oct 25 are set aside,” she ordered. Acting Judge Bre also reserved the decision on the application by State to dismiss the proceedings filed by Piu Land groups as a registered ILG and Special Agriculture Lease Holder Tribe. The case is between Piu Land Groups, as the plaintiff, and Morobe Governor Luther Wenge, as first defendant for Morobe provincial government, Sir Ano Pala as Minister for Mines and Mineral Resources Authority (MRA) as the second defendant and the State as the third defendant.

On Oct 9, the aggrieved landowners filed a notice of motion against the State claiming that there was a breach in the constitutional rights of the landowners. In the National Court in Waigani on Oct 26, Acting Judge Bre issued a restraining order to the State and all its stakeholders from conducting any negotiations, meetings and holding forums on Wafi-Golpu Special Mining Lease (SML) known as SML10 until the substantive matter is fully determined or resolved concerning the issues raised for the breach of Constitutional rights were restrictions lifted in court heard. Solicitor-General Tauvasa Tanuvasa told The National that: “The ex-parte Court Order (by Piu ILG) effectively

prevented the State from conducting any meetings between the stakeholders but now that it was dissolved, it is a great way forward for the State to continue its negotiations, meetings and forums for the Wafi-Golpu project.

“The stakeholders include affected LLGs and landholders from the SML area, mining easements and lease for mining purposes areas including Morobe Provincial Government. “Now that the exparte orders have been dissolved the State can now deal with the Special Mining Lease (SML) for the US\$5.4 billion (about K20 billion) Wafi-Golpu project which is pending the conclusion of the Mining Development Contract (MDC), headed by the State negotiation team.” He added that the MDC is the high level agreement between the State and the developers or proponents which is the South African Miner-Harmony Gold and Newmont.

## **PNG's Porgera set to re-open Friday**

Don Wiseman, RNZ Pacific Senior Journalist, Radio New Zealand, 21 December 2023



Porgera gold mine. Photo: [Richard Farbelini at English Wikipedia / Public domain](#)

The long-awaited re-opening of the Porgera gold mine in Papua New Guinea's Enga Province is set to happen on Friday. New Porgera Ltd was borne out of several years of fraught discussion over mining leases and will see the multi nationals involved, Barrick Gold and Zijin Mining, taking a minority stake, with the PNG government, the Enga government and landowners holding 51 percent of the shareholding. The parties were in a stand-off from early 2020 after the PNG government refused to renew the company's mine lease, prompting the companies to suspend operations, laying off several thousand workers. Now a new agreement has been agreed with Prime Minister James Marape saying it's an example of the government's new approach to negotiations with mining companies. Marape said it "has been a long road we have travelled to the reopening of Porgera Mine, but it has been worth the effort". The prime minister said New Porgera Ltd looks set to be a significant contributor to the economy, through a corporate tax of 32 percent and royalties rising from two to three percent.

### **Negotiations worked**

The man heading Barrick Gold, Mark Bristow, told RNZ Pacific earlier this year he had no concerns that his company is now a minority shareholder. He said the economics of the operation will work to different percentages. "The PNG PM James Marape had advisors and we had advisors and every time we had a negotiation we worked through this economic split and eventually we settled on 47 percent of the economics goes to the investors - Barrick Gold Corporation and Zijin, and 53

percent goes to him, which is a fair deal. It is a fair deal anywhere in the world." Bristow said there will be equal representation on the board.

### **'Huge amount of effort'**

Professor of human geography at Massey University, Glenn Banks, did his PhD on Porgera when it opened more than 30 years ago. His contact with the region has continued right through and he has witnessed the mine's impact on society and the environment. He said the re-opening is an impressive achievement. "I think there's been a huge amount of effort, a huge amount of talk and negotiation carried out by the Mineral Resources Authority by some of the key actors involved in the new structure for the new programme. So, I think that's kind of the first thing to say," he said.

However, is concerned that issues around how landowners will be compensated are unresolved, after the PNG parliament rushed through changes to the country's mining laws earlier this month. "The way in which the government got around the need to have compensation agreements in place before the issue of a special mining lease was to pass a piece of legislation, which basically said, 'look, the existing compensation agreements before the closure of the mine will allow us to continue in the interim, while New compensation agreements are relocated'." Banks said there are also splits within the Porgera community, with older leaders being challenged by younger people coming through. He said getting them to agree is difficult at the best of times, something that is exacerbated by the large numbers of migrants from other regions into Porgera.

### **Putting measures in place**

A Papua New Guinea academic, who grew up in Porgera in the early years of the mine, Andrew Anton Mako, has called for structures to be put in place to ensure returns from the re-opened mine are not wasted. The Australian National University staffer has written about what he calls the blessings and the curse the mine brought back in the 1990s. He said with a bigger stake he hopes the community doesn't squander the money. "In the past it was only 2.5 percent of the mine equity stake," Mako said. "Now the landowners have been given ten percent, free carry, by the government. So, it will be a lot of money. It is estimated around 25 billion Kina. That's a lot of money for the next 20 years. "So even though the proceeds will increase, the main issue is in the governance, the use of that money, whether it will be used productively to improve the lives of the people or whether it will be used mostly on consumption." Mako also wants some focus on what happens when the mine stops producing in 20 years or so.

### **Airline prioritises support for extractive industry**

The National, 18 December 2023

THE national flag carrier, Air Niugini, will focus more on supporting the growth and development of the extractive industry, says acting chief executive officer Gary Seddon. "In the face of our country's remarkable growth, Air Niugini recognises its pivotal role in facilitating and supporting the extractive resources sector and is committed to playing a leading part in connecting people, businesses, and resources across our vast and diverse nation," he said. "PNG stands on the cusp of a golden age, primed to harvest the fruits of a revitalised extractive resources sector.

"Gold, copper, and gas projects, coupled with expansions of existing operations, are poised to not only transform our economy, but propel us onto an enduring path of economic growth, whilst stimulating other non-resource sector opportunities in agriculture, fisheries, livestock and tourism," Seddon said. He added that the resource sector was experiencing an evolving wave of development, promising a sustained level of investment over the next decade. Seddon told The National newspaper that this was not a passing surge, but a powerful and enduring swell that would reshape the landscape of the nation.



“We [at Air Niugini] are poised to not only meet the increased demand for air travel but also harness the opportunities presented by this growth to further connect our nation, facilitate trade and investment, and contribute to the sustainable development of PNG. “We are already witnessing the increased demand for air travel driven by the extractive resources sector,” he said. In the last few years, Air Niugini has seen a significant rise in passenger and cargo traffic to and from mining and resource project sites. Seddon said that this trend was expected to continue and intensify as new projects come online and existing operations expand. Anticipating this surge in demand, Air Niugini has embarked on a strategic transformation to ensure that it is fully equipped to meet the needs of the extractive resources sector.

### **Porgera businesses happy**

The National, 18 December 2023

THE business community in Porgera, Enga, is looking forward to the reopening of the gold mine set for Friday (Dec 22) that will also boost the local economy, according to the Porgera Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Chamber president Nickson Pakea, when welcoming the reopening announcement by New Porgera Ltd, said he hoped a K100 million grant was put to good use. “The PM (James Marape) has made available more than K100 million for Porgera through Mineral Resources Enga, Enga government and the Porgera district. “It is almost four years now and the Porgera mine will reopen. “We are happy to hear that the mine will reopen on Dec 22. We will celebrate the reopening,” he said. “On behalf of the business community and locals, I extend our gratitude to the national government, and the state negotiating team for the hard work going forward for greater benefits to PNG including Enga, Porgera district and landowners.

“Prime Minister Marape stood tall with his slogan to back Papua New Guineans and it started with Porgera mine with the PNG stakeholders owning the majority. “I also extend appreciation to the Barrick chief executive officer and his management to ensure mutual benefits flow back to the host communities and country.” Pakea said the Porgera mine had been placed on care and maintenance and had not been able to support the community in terms of law and order and bad roads. “Recently, all the stores are closed; there is no supply going into Porgera valley due to the road being cut off at Yakenda on Nov 10. “However, it has been cleared and transport is flowing. “Thanks to landowners there for allowing Barrick to carry out urgent maintenance work to allow cargo trucks to pass through.” He said issues leading to the roadblock would be addressed along with all other outstanding matters.

### **Misappropriation case to resume**

The National, 18 December 2023

A K52 million misappropriation case is set to resume on Feb 5, after a National Court judge refused no-case submissions by all six defendants. The case involving two lawyers, an executive assistant and three board directors of a development foundation went before the National Court on Friday for a ruling on the submissions. National Court Judge David Cannings said he refused to believe that there was no evidence to continue the trial as submitted by the defendants’ lawyers. Judge Cannings said he had considered the submissions by both the defendants and the State and found there was no just cause to accept no-case submissions by the defence. “I am not persuaded by the no-case submissions,” he said. “I have not considered the weight of the evidence, nor the number of witnesses.” He refused all no-case submissions by each of the defendants and said the trial would proceed.

He set the date for the trial to continue on Feb 5. “It’s important that the trial continues as soon as possible,” he said. Five of the six defendants – Gloria Salika, 39, from Kulakea village in South Fly,

Western; executive assistant Tabitha Malken, from Jambitanget village in Wosera-Gawi, East Sepik, and Ok Tedi Fly River Development Foundation Limited board directors Boston Kasiman, Edna Oai and Annie Smerewai – are being represented by Edward Sasingian of Sasingian Lawyers. The sixth defendant, lawyer Greg Sheppard of Perth in Australia, is being represented by Ron Webb. Salika, Malken and Sheppard are being charged with one count of misappropriating K52 million belonging to the people of Western. The three directors are each facing two counts of allegedly being involved in the transaction of the same K52 million, as well as another K216 also belonging to the people of Western.

### **K52mil misappropriation case set for ruling today**

By DYLAN MURRAY, The National, 15 December 2023

THE National Court will rule today on a no-case submission involving two lawyers, an executive assistant and three board directors alleged to have misappropriated K52 million. Accused Greg Sheppard, of Perth, Australia, yesterday submitted through his lawyer, Ron Webb, that the alleged transfers from the Western people's trust account to an account belonging to Young and William Lawyers was done legally. "Therefore, there is no case," the defence argued. Judge David Cannings said he would deliver his ruling on the defence submissions today at 3pm. "There is no evidence that the funds were applied to the use of Young and William (law firm)," Webb argued. "Some of the funds transferred in were transferred out." He told the court that the funds that were transferred into the law firm's account were to be used for and on behalf of the Western people.

The other defendants, Gloria Salika, 39, from Kulakea village in South Fly, Western; executive assistant Tabitha Malken, from Jambitanget village in Wosera-Gawi, East Sepik; and Ok Tedi Fly River Development Foundation Ltd board directors Boston Kasiman, Edna Oai and Annie Smerewai, were all represented by Edward Sasingian. State prosecutor Helen Roalakona said there was enough evidence against all the accused, and that there were text messages that showed that the accused had conspired. Roalakona said there was also evidence that two of the accused had received money outside the trust. "Evidence shows that during the alleged period of the indictments, (named) received K58,000 and (named) received a sum of K161,500."

Prosecution also argued that the recipients of these payments had arranged and facilitated a change of signatories on the people's account, including evidence of a transfer from a commercial bank to the account of Young and William. "There is evidence from Western that there was no knowledge of OTFR Development Foundation Limited," she said. "All accused should answer to the charges." However, defence lawyer Sasingian argued that there was no evidence of text messages that suggested there was a conspiracy. He said the accused who facilitated the change in signatories were directed to do so. Salika, Malken and Sheppard are being charged with one count of misappropriating K52 million belonging to the people of Western. The three directors are each facing two counts of allegedly being involved in the transaction of the same K52 million, as well as another K216 million also belonging to the people of Western.

### **Marape says reopening of Porgera mine 'worth the effort'**

Radio New Zealand, 15 December 2023

Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape has welcomed the reopening of the Porgera Mine in Enga, saying it's an example of the government's new approach to negotiations with mining companies. The mine, run by New Porgera Ltd, and majority owned by the national and provincial governments and landowners, is set to officially re-start on Friday 22 December. The mine was closed

for nearly four years as the government and multi nationals Barrick Gold and Zijin Mining battled over lease conditions.



Aerial view of the Porgera gold mine. Photo: Zijin Mining

Marape said it "has been a long road we have travelled to the reopening of Porgera Mine, but it has been worth the effort". Under the renegotiated arrangements, New Porgera has 51 percent ownership by PNG stakeholders which Marape said will deliver unprecedented benefits for Papua New Guineans. The prime minister said New Porgera Ltd looks set to be a significant contributor to the economy, through a corporate tax of 32 percent and royalties rising from two to three percent. Marape announced the following steps back to full production:

- Official restart of operations on 22 December, 2023
- Re-commissioning to be completed in the coming weeks
- Mining and processing operations to restart in the First Quarter 2024
- First Gold production expected in the First Quarter 2024
- Full production throughout into the Third Quarter of 2024
- Employee ramp-up to occur throughout 2024, reaching 3,200 employees by year's end

He said Porgera's return to full production depended on the Hides Power Station and transmission lines being brought back into operation following recent acts of vandalism, and there being no further damage to the mine and essential infrastructure that supports the project, such as the Highlands Highway. "Separately, the Community Development Agreement negotiations will be conducted starting in the first quarter of 2024, led by the Mineral Resources Authority on behalf of the State. "We expect to conclude this at the earliest but not more than two years so our landowners of all project areas, including powerlines and source and riverine areas, can benefit. He thanked President Mark Bristow and Barrick Gold Corporation for ensuring that PNG got more in the New Porgera SML 13 for the next 20 years. "New Porgera is a fine example for mining companies demonstrating that they can still make money in the new benefit-sharing arrangement we have carved out with Barrick," he said.

## **Lihir: K435.4 million in tax and production levies paid**

Dale Luma, Post-Courier, 14 December 2023

Newmont Corporation's Papua New Guinea operation, Lihir, operated by the Lihir Gold Limited has paid K435.4 million in total tax and production levy to the PNG Government for the financial year 2023 (FY23). Prime Minister James Marape during his keynote address at the opening day for conference on Monday stated that the miner does not pay tax however, figures obtained by this paper highlighted that it does pay corporate tax, production levy, salary and wages tax and other forms of payments. Figures obtained during the conference indicate that Lihir for this year alone paid K220.5 million in corporate tax, K144.1 million in Salary and Wages tax, K87.2 million in Royalty payments, K26.5 million in customs and excise and K22.3 million in production levy. Taking all these into account, total financial contribution to the country for FY23 totalled over K1.72 billion.

Lihir also paid approximately K1.2 billion in payments to PNG suppliers, excluding taxes and royalties and over K553 million of the total was paid to vendors from New Ireland Province. It is understood with a large operation at Lihir, it does incur significant running costs, including large-scale investments in infrastructure, equipment, labour, maintenance, consumables, accommodation, food and fuel/energy. The Lihir Gold Limited was previous under Newcrest Mining Limited but is now owned by world number one gold miner Newmont Corporation which acquired Newcrest's global business portfolio with a US\$15 billion acquisition. With the recent acquisition, Newmont also made its debut for the first time in this year's 17th Papua New Guinea Resources and Energy Investment Conference with President and chief executive officer Tom Palmer attending and presenting during the conference in Sydney, Australia.

## **Government industry strengthens ties**

Post-Courier, 13 December 2023

The three-day Papua New Guinea Resources & Energy Investment Conference held in Sydney, Australia will end today. Prime Minister, James Marape in his keynote address on Monday acknowledged the collaboration with the private sector and the positive mergers and transitions that have occurred in the likes of Newmont, Telstra, Santos, and others that have invested in Papua New Guinea despite global uncertainties. Mr Marape when reflecting on the country's economic growth journey in the resource sector, said that the significant role played by oil and gas companies, as well as mining companies, deserves applause.

"The transformative impact of projects like the PNG LNG project led by ExxonMobil has been monumental. It doubled our economy, demonstrating the positive outcomes of strategic investments in the resource sector," he said. Highlighting the importance of finding a balance between national interests and investor interests, Mr Marape said Papua New Guinea remains committed to providing a conducive environment for investment while ensuring a fair return for both parties. "The fiscal stability agreements in place underscore our commitment to consistency and reliability in the business environment.

"The lineup of upcoming projects, including Porgera, Papua LNG, P'nyang, and Wafi-Golpu further underscores the potential for growth and collaboration," he said. PNG Chamber of Resources & Energy president Anthony Smaré in his opening remarks said the 17th PNG Resources & Energy Investment Conference is the biggest one held yet, catering for an expected 1500 attendees, over 90 exhibition booths with a dynamic program featuring 102 speakers over three and a half days. Mr Smare said the conference is traditionally held in Sydney, due to ease of access of international attendees to travel to Sydney compared to holding this conference in PNG or other locations, and due to Australia traditionally being an important source and gateway of investment into PNG.

## **Relationship important for supply chain, says Kua**

Post-Courier, 13 December 2023

Papua New Guinea (PNG) must have a relationship with countries from both the North and the South, says Petroleum and Energy Minister Kerenga Kua. He said that when it comes to production of natural resources, the country depends on its neighbors to the South, but when it comes to market PNG's products, PNG needs the support of its neighbours to the north. "We have to have a relationship with both the south and the north to have a total package where we can market our product," Mr Kua said. Minister Kua when presenting an outlook for the petroleum industry said: "These are exciting times to be involved. I encourage all of you to find your space, find your opportunity, find your partnership, develop your relationship, network, pick your space and go forward because there will be plenty of opportunities."

Mr Kua said also highlighted that for the petroleum industry: "Things get interesting for there are announcement of new projects with business opportunities coming up. "We think that we will be witnessing eight years of sustained construction at the baseline and if we manage other emerging prospects properly, we have the potential to extend the eight years further to 12 or 15 years maybe, industry captains will talk about those prospects. "There will be sustained economic growth that should be supported by the petroleum industry." Minister Kua also highlighted the partnership the petroleum sector could have with the mining industry. "I am sure, occasionally, there will be room for collaboration between mining and petroleum and my department stands ready to work with the mining industry."

## **17<sup>TH</sup> PNG RESOURCES & ENERGY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE**

The National, 13 December 2023

### **Kua notes snags in funding**

PETROLEUM and Energy Minister Kerenga Kua says it is becoming difficult to secure finance for project developments, considering the increasing awareness by climate change activists. "The banks are now starting to listen to climate change activists," he said during the PNG Resources and Energy Investment Conference in Sydney, Australia, yesterday. "Right now, we have to deal with climate change advocates who have been campaigning vigorously around the world; it has also impacted on the ability of banks to finance projects. "Banks are listening to objections when we go out to raise money to finance energy projects." Kua said this was one of the challenges in project financing.

"We trust the management of TotalEnergies and we know that they will manoeuvre that through, and we will assemble the finances necessary to continue with the project to construction. These two challenges, availability of contractors, their cost and the availability of finance from financiers worldwide can impact on our work schedule so we have to contemplate that in our original planning," he said. Kua said for projects such as the Papua LNG: "Our original plan is to move into final investment decision towards the end or early in the second quarter next year, but depending on how we manage these emerging issues." Meanwhile, Kua said he had met with leaders from Gulf regarding issues with the determination of landowner identification.

## Oil and gas giant sends out reminder about LNG



The ExxonMobil LNG plant in the Southern Highlands.

OIL and gas company, ExxonMobil, yesterday reminded a Sydney conference participants of the growing importance of liquefied natural gas (LNG) towards the security of supply and energy transition. Company chairperson and managing director Tera Shandro said ExxonMobil's predictions going into 2050 indicated that the world population would grow by 25 per cent, levelling at around two billion people. Demand for energy, Shandro said, would increase by 15 per cent come 2050. "The 15 per cent increase will be driven largely by developing countries seeking to enhance their standards of living, which will also result in a doubling of global GDP growth," she said. "As the world's population increases, so too does its need for affordable, secure, and reliable energy, with improved emissions intensity compared to legacy sources." Shandro added that against a backdrop of an unprecedented energy supply diversification, the role of oil and gas would remain critical. ExxonMobil forecasts projected that these would still account for more than half of the world's energy needs in 2050.

"Natural gas, particularly LNG, will play a vital role in meeting this demand and support climate goals, as it emits up to 60 per cent fewer greenhouse gases and significantly fewer air pollutants when compared with traditional energy sources such as coal. "With 40 per cent of the world's electricity still being generated by coal, there are many opportunities for meaningful emission reductions by making the switch to natural gas, and that is why it sits at the centre of our strategy," Shandro said. Furthermore, from ExxonMobil's perspective, Asia Pacific countries were expected to be a core natural gas customer for decades to come who would continue turning to PNG due to its proximity, high quality resources and efficient and reliable operating facilities.

## Govt to issue Wafi-Golpu lease in 2024

THE Government is expected to issue a special mining lease (SML) permit for the Wafi-Golpu project by the first quarter next year, says Mining Minister Sir Ano Pala. Sir Ano told yesterday's session of the resources and energy conference that construction period would take up to five years before commissioning. Giving an industry update, Sir Ano said: "Currently, we are processing more than K40 billion worth of new capital investments on mining projects and about K10 billion investments on sustaining capital expenditures on existing mines." He said two prominent projects worth more than US\$11 billion (about K41 billion) of potential new capital investments included the US\$5.38 billion (about K20 billion) Wafi-Golpu copper-gold project comprising US\$2.8 billion (about K10 billion) capital expenditure to commercial production; and, US\$ 6 billion (about K22 billion) Frieda River copper-gold project.

"The permitting of the development of the US\$5.4 billion (about K20 billion) Wafi-Golpu project is at advanced stages, pending the conclusion of a mining development contract negotiations," Sir Ano said. "Negotiations for a community development agreement have started." Meanwhile, Sir

Ano said the US\$ 6 billion (about K22 billion) Frieda River copper-gold project would receive full Government attention by the first quarter of next year. “Freda River should get its permit by the third quarter of next year. “The K92 mine programme is an expanding mineral producing asset. “The stage 2A expansion final commissioning was completed in May 2023 which increased throughput by about 25 per cent.”

### **Local firm’s ASX listing expected to boost confidence**

LOCAL home-grown company Tolu Minerals listing on Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) last month should encourage entrepreneurs to consider exploration in the country, says executive director and founder Howard Lole. Lole said this to The National on the sidelines of the PNG Resources and Energy Investment Conference in Sydney after visiting the ASX office yesterday, that saw the “ringing of the bell” and presentation of ASX listing certificate. Mining Minister Sir Ano Pala congratulated Tolu Minerals who took up the rehabilitation of the abandoned Tolukuma gold mine in Woitape, Central. “I welcome our home-grown company, Tolu Minerals, which had been successfully listed on the ASX and has raised AU\$11.3 million (about K27.7 million) secured in a private pre-IPO (initial public offering) financing; and AU\$17.3 million (about K42.5 million) secured in the IPO.”

Lole said Tolu Minerals had successfully listed and “now we will start doing the work”. “We are starting the mobilisation for the road construction to Tolukuma and all the stakeholders are involved, we will start to recruit key people to start taking up key positions in the company to start work on the mine.” Preparation for the construction of mine access road and rehabilitation of the mine’s facilities has commenced. Tolu Minerals has also committed to conducting a geophysical survey and drilling programmes over its tenements. Lole said listing in ASX was a milestone. “I give credit to all the people involved, I need finance and people believed in me and the vision to deliver.”

### **Governance and returns on investments to drive growth: Miner**

PAPUA New Guinea’s focus on improved governance and better returns on foreign investments will propel the country towards continued growth, the boss of the world’s top miner has said. Newmont Corporation president and chief executive officer Tom Palmer said it was the resilience of the people, stabled policy and legislative settings and a demand for unprecedented unity of purpose that would drive PNG forward. He said while the East and West had benefited immensely from economic growth and stability, PNG’s location was the gateway between these two regions, thus presenting great opportunity for development and economic growth. Palmer was speaking during the opening of the PNG Resources and Energy Investment Conference in Sydney, Australia, this week.

“The responsible production of gold, copper and other minerals remains the only way we can generate sustainable value for our workforce, our communities, our host countries and our shareholders while supplying the essential resources necessary for the new energy future,” he said. “Gold’s role in society has evolved over time. “Its relevance is often debated from its significance as a currency, a commodity, a symbol of financial freedom, as security, and used in industrial material for advanced technologies. “A hedge against inflation, or to store and hold value. “Gold’s unique physical and chemical properties, historical significance and diverse applications in various sectors mean that it has always been a relevant and highly-valued commodity. “The recent strong price performance, experts affirmed that the past two years have demonstrated gold’s ability to maintain a steady hold, providing a safe haven for investors.”

## **K30bil for social benefits and others**

The National, 13 December 2023



SOCIAL benefits and others, including taxes, royalties and dividend payments, from the Ok Tedi mining project will exceed K30 billion over the next 27 years. These projections, contained in the Ok Tedi Mining Ltd (OTML) strategic business plan, were revealed yesterday at the Resources and Investment Conference in Sydney, Australia. The plan, according to managing director and chief executive officer Kedi Ilimbit, was inclusive of a mine-life extension bid to 2050. Ilimbit said the benefits were based on strategic undertakings this year, driven by our vision to: “Operate with excellence, maximising the value of our mineral resource in an environmentally-responsible way, and to deliver sustainable economic and social benefits to our communities and the people of PNG.”

He said 2023 was a transformative year for OTML with the appointment of new board chairman Jeffrey Innes, and himself. “This change in leadership was the catalyst for a comprehensive overhaul of restoring, resetting and reinvigorating the entire business with strategic emphasis on business improvement, cost efficiencies and liquidity, stakeholder engagement, long-term planning, and the implementation of tax credit projects aligned with the National Government’s strategy,” he said. “OTML’s next key projects include the east wall cut back, engineered waste rock dump two and the tailings storage facility (TSF), and no underground operations.

“This approach is expected to generate a robust K28 billion in cash flow. “Looking ahead, OTML envisions sustainable growth up to 2050, with a particular focus on energy transition.” Ilimbit added that key enablers for these strategic projects included the east wall cut back, cleaner safer haul truck re-fleeting, engineered waste rock dumps, the (TSF), and the support infrastructure renewal emphasising on cleaner, safer power-generation, energy-efficient housing and accommodation, and environmentally-conscious transportation. He said: “While the challenges of the El Nino phenomenon are real and have affected our operations recently, we are optimistic our operations will continue and we look forward to delivering benefits to our shareholders.”

## **Compo talks set for Jan**

By ZARA KANU LEBO, The National, 13 December 2023

A COMPENSATION agreement for the Porgera mine-affected areas will be signed once negotiations, expected to start next month, are completed with landowners. The agreement negotiation



would include benefits for the entire SML 13 landowners, reviewing both the outstanding and up-graded rates prior to restarting operations at the Porgera mine. Prime Minister James Marape said: “The New Porgera, in my view, is carved out far better and we’ve already released K40 million for business development grants, a balance of K60 million is in our Government accounts already tied to the SML landowners. “They stand to be the biggest winners as the New Porgera has greater benefits compared with Barrick.

“We want to get our mines into production while we engage our landowners and I want to give assurance to every landowner included in the new SML13 that your issues are not brushed aside as we are working according to a timeline – unlike PNG LNG that had no timeline. “The landowner interest has not been removed as per this amendment under the Mining Act, but rather it preserves the interest that allows for the mine to start up but we’ll work towards it as it gives a two-year process in which we will go through every negotiation with all landowners to have a compensation agreement signed, including those who are in the affected and non-affected areas.

“With emphasis on the river side and mine site areas, we will work through the compensation in the next two years, if not earlier, and they’ll be paid their rate of the last SML that was left from SML1. “But, once we’ve completed the negotiations with the landowners, then the upgraded rate under the new SML13 will be back-paid to all landowners in the affected areas.” The Government would meet with all affected area landowners from December to January to collect position papers on their issues and claims for compensation. Once that is done, a negotiation schedule would be agreed to for implementation by all project proponents. The SML 13 landowners had already made known their concern for environmental sensitivity and the need for zero displacement.

### **Newmont’s acquisition of Newcrest doubles their exposure to copper**

Post-Courier, 12 December 2023

Newmont Corporation president and chief executive officer Tom Palmer says Newmonts US\$15 billion (About K54 Billion) acquisition of Newcrest more than doubles Newmont’s exposure to copper in addition to gold with 50 billion pounds of copper reserves and resources coming from Newcrest added to Newmont’s existing 42 billion pounds with the Wafi-Golpu project being a significant contributor to this impressive resource base. Mr Palmer said the acquisition complemented Newmont’s existing copper production and project pipeline with world-class growth optionality. “Our decision to acquire Newcrest was underpinned by a very clear and focused strategy... designed to ensure that the Newmont of today not only retains its leadership position in the gold industry... but also opens the door to copper optionality,” Mr Palmer said.

“With copper being essential to the energy transition, there will undoubtedly be a supply/demand shortfall and Newmont, strengthened through our acquisition of Newcrest, we will be naturally poised to help fill that gap”. Mr Palmer added that: “With coppers rich history dating back to ancient civilizations, is now set to play a critical role in our energy transition to a low carbon economy. “The initial copper mining boom of the 20th century has created a steady demand for copper due to its excellent electrical conductivity, durability, and versatility. And it is this versatility which has allowed Copper to maintain its importance from ancient times to present day. “As the world seeks cleaner and more sustainable energy solutions, the demand for copper will only intensify. Its importance in a wide range of clean and renewable energy technologies will play a critical role in our ability to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.”

According to a study by S&P Global, copper demand is expected to nearly double from 25 million tons today to about 50 million tons by 2035 in order to deploy the technologies needed to achieve net-zero targets by 2050. “Based on current copper production trends, we will experience a shortfall

of 10 million tons by 2035. Bridging this gap will require significantly more copper mines, copper recycling and enhanced copper leaching processes,” Mr Palmer said. “This means more deposits need to be discovered and mines built at an unlikely pace given the drawn-out timeframes to secure approvals. To even come close to achieving this pace, we are going to need to rely on partnerships and as much goodwill and trust as possible, by demonstrating that our industry is responsible.”

### **Investments worth K111 billion**

The National, 12 December 2023

PAPUA New Guinea companies must be ready to participate in the next wave of resource projects in the country, according to the PNG Chamber of Resources and Energy (PNG Core). Addressing yesterday’s opening of the PNG Resources and Energy Investment Conference in Sydney, Australia, Core president Anthony Smare said: “For the first time, our country is on the brink of delivering, not just one but, four major resource projects, totalling more than US\$30 billion (about K111 billion) in investments; Papua LNG, P’nyang, the reopening of Porgera, and the Wafi-Golpu copper-gold project.” Smare was confident that by coming on stream, the four would double PNG’s gross domestic product over the next eight years.

“Having witnessed the missed opportunities by PNG companies with the first PNG LNG project in early 2010, we were just not ready for the project but for the doubling, or tripling, of GDP.” He said with the recent US\$15 billion (about K55 billion) acquisition of the Lihir gold mine, a market capitalisation of US\$45 billion (about K167 billion) and with US\$100 million (about K372 million) shares available on the PNG Stock Exchange meant that PNG’s investment environment was viable. “It is my fear that PNG companies have not adequately readied themselves for the opportunities these projects will provide.

“Opportunists and critics over the past few years have introduced a lingering sense of pessimism and doubt among many PNG companies. “Negative thoughts are holding them back from readying themselves properly to maximise the opportunity to participate,” Smare said. “PNG is now a top-tier in terms of political and sovereign risks and adherence to fiscal terms. “We have seen that the wheels and tables have turned. “That is a result of the work of the Government over the past 20 years, particularly in the private sector,” he said. “That is a huge change for us as a country, from the narrative that was painted 20 years ago labelling PNG as a politically unstable country and a risky investment destination to be avoided.”

### **Porgera to restart Dec 22**

The National, 12 December 2023

THE New Porgera Mine is expected to restart operations on Dec 22, three days before Christmas. New Porgera Limited (NPL) announced that all legal and contractual conditions necessary for the reopening of the gold mine had been met, and the mine was set to resume at the earliest possible date. The Porgera mine was shut down in 2019 amidst the global Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and after the Government initially declined to renew its licence until a new deal with improved benefits could be reached. After negotiations which took place over the last four years, mine operator Barrick Niugini Limited agreed to a 53 per cent to 47 per cent split to the State and Barrick shareholders respectively. With the ramp up of operations, first gold is expected to be processed in the first quarter of 2024.

New Porgera Limited will be managed by Barrick (Niugini) Limited and is expected to employ more than 2,300 people by June 2024 and over 3,000 by the end of the year. Prime Minister James

Marape, noted during his keynote address at the 17th Papua New Guinea Resources and Energy conference in Sydney, Australia, yesterday that the long road to Porgera's reopening had reached the finish line. "The result is an unprecedented partnership between PNG and two leading global mining companies, Barrick Gold Corporation (Barrick) and Zijin Mining, which for the first time gives majority ownership in a major resource project to Papua New Guinean shareholders," he said. "New Porgera will deliver unprecedented benefits to the people of PNG," he said.

"Over the 20-year life of mine, PNG shareholders – comprised of Porgera landowners, Enga and the State – will receive 53 per cent of Porgera's overall economic benefits. "The investors will share the remaining 47 per cent," Marape said. Furthermore, PNG shareholders can expect to receive nearly US\$7.3 billion (about K27.6 billion) over 20 years and US\$2.8 billion (about K10.6 billion) in the first 10 years, that is at an assumed gold price of US\$1,800 (about K6,720.38) per ounce. Meanwhile, Enga Governor Sir Peter Ipatas said that the landowners and the whole province were looking forward to the reopening of the mine. He added that the state negotiation team (SNT) needed to immediately organise signing of the amended Porgera Project Commencement Agreement (PPCA) before Dec 22.

SNT chairman Dairi Vele recently said that the State and the shareholders of the New Porgera were holding back the signing due to the passing of Porgera-Paiela MP Maso Karipe. Also yesterday, Prime Minister Marape assured the 1,500-odd audience at the Sydney conference that the special mining lease (SML) and mine development contract (MDC) for Porgera had been granted. He said the Government, through its state negotiating team, was working closely with other partners and project stakeholders on resolving outstanding matters such as the landowners' compensation agreement. In his address, Marape also provided an update on the progress of five major resource projects in the country, including Papua LNG, Porgera mine, Pasca LNG, P'nyang LNG, and the Wafi-Golpu mine.

- PAPUA LNG: Developer Total would provide an update at the conference, with the final investment decision (FID) expected next year.
- PASCA: Progress is dependent on developer Twinza, Mineral Resources Development Company (MRDC), and the state negotiating team reaching a consensus.
- P'NYANG: Construction work would start immediately after Papua LNG starts production, with synchronisation planned between the two projects.
- WAFI-GOLPU: Nearing completion, pending resolution of a landowner court case, expected to be resolved this month.

He also hinted at ExxonMobil's announcement of a major gas find, which would provide a significant boost to the country's economy.

### **After months of setbacks and delays, Porgera mine set to begin operations next week** Don Wiseman, RNZ Pacific Senior Journalist, Radio New Zealand, 12 December 2023

A huge mine in Papua New Guinea, closed for more than three years in a dispute over a lease, is set to re-open next week. The company, New Porgera Ltd, in Enga Province, has announced that all legal and contractual conditions necessary for the re-opening of the Porgera mine have now been met and it is officially set to restart operations on 22 December. The company said the first gold production will be due in the first quarter of next year. In announcing the decision, the company said "the result is an unprecedented partnership between Papua New Guinea and two leading global mining companies, Barrick Gold Corporation and Zijin Mining."

The majority ownership in New Porgera Ltd is held within PNG - to be divided between the national and provincial governments and the landowners with Barrick and Zijin taking the balance. Barrick (Niugini) Ltd will manage the mine and said it will be employing more than 2,300 workers by June next year and over 3,000 by the end of 2024. The company said the mine, over its 20-year life is expected to earn the PNG shareholders US\$7.3 billion dollars, based on an assumed gold price of US\$1,800 dollars per ounce. PNG earnings of US\$2.8 billion are anticipated in the first ten years. The new compensation agreements for the landowners around Porgera are yet to be calculated so last month the PNG parliament amended the legislation affecting the mine to allow the existing arrangements to stay in place until the new agreements are reached.

## **PNG committed to just and equitable energy transition**

Post-Courier, 11 December 2023



Papua New Guinea is committed to a just and equitable energy transition for a climate-resilient future. In a significant address at a high-level ministerial forum at COP28 in Dubai, Vice Minister for Petroleum and Energy, Thomas Opa, spoke on PNG as the largest island state in the Pacific. PNG, with a population of approximately 10 million, proudly asserts its unwavering support for the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) initiative. He highlighted PNG's enduring membership with IRENA and emphasised the nation's conscientious approach to managing its rainforests and abundant resources, including oil and gas, with a focus on responsible monetisation.

“In alignment with the visionary aspirations of Prime Minister James Marape, PNG is dedicated to championing the global agenda on climate change. A recent milestone in this commitment was the signing of a significant agreement with French President Emmanuel Macron, securing \$100 million in forest conservation support. “This agreement accentuates Papua New Guinea’s firm support for the Pacific Island Forums and all small island developing states, recognising the undeniable reality of climate change and the imminent challenges faced by small island states, including those within PNG,” Mr Opa said.

Turning attention to the renewable energy sector, Mr Opa said that PNG stands ready to actively back IRENA and its initiatives in the energy transition. He said the nation is committed to contributing substantially to the collective effort aimed at creating a more sustainable and secure world for all. Mr Opa’s statement reflects PNG’s dedication to playing a pivotal role in the global movement

towards renewable energy and climate resilience. The nation's proactive measures and collaborative initiatives align with international efforts, positioning PNG as a leader in the pursuit of a climate-resilient future.

### **Miners encouraged to help energy sector**

The National, 11 December 2023

MINING companies can help energise and electrify the local community and the country and improve the energy sector, according to the International Finance Corporation (IFC). IFC Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Island Countries senior operations officer Aicha Sow said during the pre-conference session of the PNG Resources and Energy Investment Conference in Sydney, Australia, yesterday that IFC had various financiers to support growth in the energy sector. "It seems that mining companies can really help in initiatives for electrification in PNG," she said. "The mining companies have great opportunities in this sector. "It not only makes economic sense for everyone.

"Technology plays faster and it will also do good for PNG. "We have been doing that with some companies using solar, hydro, as well as wind and green hydrogen as well. "From Rio Tinto to American companies, we want to not only come on foreign direct investment but also we want the mining companies to help develop the communities that they are operating in and that help the development of the country as a whole. "We have various financial products that varies from direct investment or indirect investment using loan or equity. "On the upstream, we can create the market and by working closely with the private sector, and good to address policies and reform needs.

"We can also advise Government through our public private partnership or advice our client. "PNG Power Limited needs to be strengthened to rehabilitate some of the transmission and able to attract Independent Power Producers. "The investment requirements a large and the government budget is stressed. "We are engaged to advise the Government on how to expend the National electrification rollout plan." "IFC works with mining companies to sustainably develop operations in line with international best practices, catalysing multi-user infrastructure and processing minerals supportive of a low carbon future."

### **Sector can power economy: Official**

The National, 11 December 2023

PAPUA New Guinea Chamber of Resources and Energy (PNG Core) senior vice-president Richard Kassman says there is huge potential in the energy sector to power the economy. Kassman said PNG was blessed with an abundance of resources. "Vast renewable energy resources and the traditional renewable resources and gas have been the backbone of our economy since Independence," he said. "These all have the potential to transform our nation into a prosperous and sustainable one. "As an industry, we are cognisant of the need to ensure that our resource projects are environmentally and socially responsible and that they adhere to high standards of Government and transparency and importantly that they deliver fair and incredible benefits to our people and our communities and that we see an improve standard of living for our people.

"We, in Papua New Guinea, need to attract and retain quality investors, partners and service providers so we can develop our resources. "This is why this conference is valuable. "It showcases the latest in innovation, technology and best practices in the resources and energy field by engaging in constructive dialogue and collaboration. "We can learn from each other. "Identify opportunities and challenges and find solutions and strategies that work for PNG."

## **Haiveta warns of LNG backlash**

By REBECCA KUKU in Sydney, The National, 11 December 2023

GULF Governor Chris Haiveta has warned that no development forum or any other such meetings on Papua LNG will take place until social mapping is done right and completed. Speaking in Sydney, Australia, yesterday morning, Haiveta said that the Gulf government had identified flaws in the project's social mapping process and these needed addressing before endorsing the Papua LNG project. This turn of events came after Petroleum and Energy Minister Kerenga Kua last week endorsed three ministerial determinations for Papua LNG, allowing the project to proceed towards development. But the Gulf governor said no development would take place until all the deficiencies were addressed, adding: "The State has not learnt its lessons." Haiveta said the provincial government's objections would be formally lodged with the office of the minister for petroleum and energy.

"Unless all the legal beneficiaries from Gulf are included, the provincial government will advise against developing Papua LNG," he said. "Our efforts to include beneficiaries who were left out of the Kutubu oil and PNG LNG pipelines on the Gulf side have fallen on deaf ears. "These legacy issues have taught my provincial government not trust State promises. "We will not be fooled." "So for Papua LNG, the last pre-forum awareness will take place after the New Year, when all outstanding issues will be addressed." Meanwhile, Kua explained that the development forum would be held next year, where 800 landowner representatives were expected to attend. According to the minister, a Papua LNG development agreement would also be signed at this gathering.

## **PNG makes commitment to safeguard land, sea**

The National, 11 December 2023

Papua New Guinea recently made a commitment to safeguard its land and sea areas while halting deforestation by 2030. In a historic declaration at the COP28 Global Climate Action Summit on Dec 2, PNG would see the help of the European Union and French to provide comprehensive plans for forests, nature and general climate change prevention strategies. Its objective is to unite donor countries, major NGOs, philanthropists, the private sector, and multilateral development banks to ensure the enduring sustainability of PNG's conservation policies through the mobilisation of joint funding, that will happen overtime in a piecemeal basis. PNG is home to the third largest tropical rainforest after Amazon and Congo basin and seven percent of the world biodiversity in less than one percent of the planet and is considered to have the world richest flora. Forests cover 78 per cent of the land area, making PNG a country considered to be a net carbon negative country.

## **New Caledonia - nickel debt**

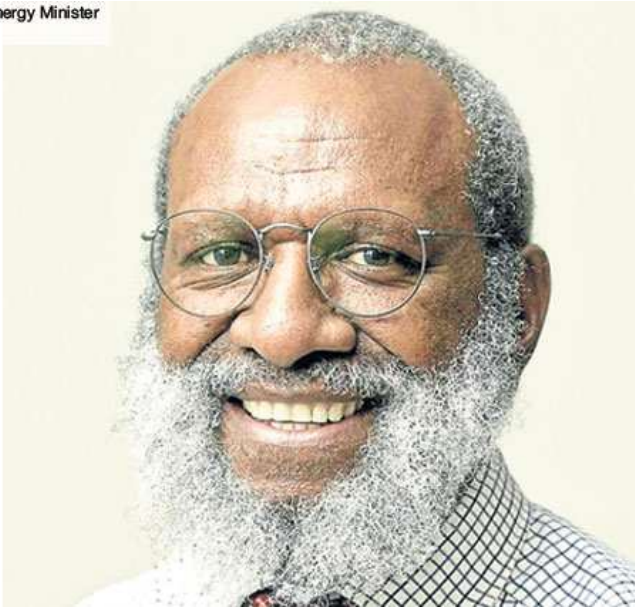
Radio New Zealand, 11 December 2023

New Caledonia's nickel industry has accumulated debt of about \$1.5 billion Euro. This was disclosed during French economy minister Bruno Lemaire's recent visit to New Caledonia. In the face of what he termed a "critical" situation, Lemaire hoped an agreement could be signed by the end of January. This would involve drastic reforms in terms of profitability, market adaptation and productivity from all nickel mining companies. Major shareholders of Société Le Nickel and Koniambo Nickel S-A-S have already indicated they will stop financing those subsidiaries by early 2024.

## Petroleum licences approved

Th National, 8 December 2023

Petroleum and Energy Minister  
Kerenga Kua



THE Government has ticked off the first step towards a development forum for the Papua LNG project, after Petroleum and Energy Minister Kerenga Kua endorsed three Ministerial Determinations. The Licences include the:

- PETROLEUM Retention Licence (PRL) 15 – application of Petroleum Development Licence (APDL) 15, application of Petroleum Pipeline Licence (APL) 18, application of Petroleum Processing Facility Licence (APPFL) 4
- PIPELINE Export Route – APL 19 and 20 and Off-Shore; and
- APPFL 5

“It is my pleasure to endorse the three Ministerial Determination instruments for the Papua LNG project in Gulf and Central,” Kua said. “This allows the Papua LNG Project to proceed towards development. “This is the first milestone in a series of regulatory steps that will culminate in a Development Forum where a development agreement will be signed by all beneficiaries and the State. Both events are anticipated to occur early 2024. About 800 landowner representatives will be invited through this office to attend the Development Forum. Kua said TotalEnergies PNG Limited and ExxonMobil Antelope Limited, as stipulated under Section 47 (5) and 63 (a) (iii), have compiled and submitted their respective social mapping and landowner identification (SM&LI) studies to the department on Sept 13 last year and May 12 this year.

“The Lobid (Landowner Beneficiary Identification) awareness and implementation was village-based. The identified clans in Gulf were verified and confirmed through the clan consent forms (CCF). Mid-stream offshore and the down-stream licences clans remain the same as identified through PNG LNG PPFL 2 Ministerial Determination Gazette No: G692 of 2015. “A total of 224 clans were verified and confirmed in the Papua LNG Lobid exercise as identified through the SM&LI studies within the portions of land demarcated within PRL 15 (APDL 15, APL 18 & APPFL 4), Onshore and Off-Shore Pipeline Export Route (PER) (APL 19 and 20) and the APPFL 5. Of these, 138 clans in Gulf have been endorsed through the CCF. The remaining 86 clans in Central were also verified and confirmed through PNG LNG PPFL 2 and Kido PL (Pipeline Licence) 4 Segment 8 Ministerial Determination No: G692 on the Oct 23, 2015. “This marks a significant milestone for the Papua LNG project, demonstrating their continued commitment to working closely with local communities and ensuring their involvement in the project’s development.

## **New Caledonia's nickel industry accumulates 1.5 billion Euros in debts**

Radio New Zealand, 8 December 2023

New Caledonia's three nickel industry players are currently indebted to an accumulated amount of some 1.5 billion Euros. This was disclosed during the recent visit in New Caledonia by French economy minister Bruno Lemaire, who travelled especially to assess the industry's bleak situation and offer a rescue plan to avoid bankruptcy. In the face of what he termed a "critical" situation, Lemaire hoped an agreement involving necessary drastic reforms in terms of profitability, market adaptation and productivity from all nickel mining companies could be signed by the end of January.

The three main nickel producers in New Caledonia are Société Le Nickel (SLN), Prony Resources and Koniambo Nickel SAS (KNS), with short-term financing needs of respectively 493 million Euros, 149 million Euros and a staggering 13.7 billion Euros, SLN and KNS major shareholders, respectively France's Eramet and Anglo-Swiss Glencore, have already clearly indicated they will stop financing those subsidiaries by early 2024. New Caledonia holds one of the largest nickel reserves in the world. During his visit late November, Lemaire suggested that those nickel producers diversify their markets instead of only relying on Asian clients and make the necessary transition in order to produce a nickel adapted to the production of electric car batteries, including with European car manufacturers. Lemaire also strongly advised not to mix politics and economics in New Caledonia.

## **US gold mining company to debut at Sydney meet**

Post-Courier, 7 December 2023

Newmont Corporation is set to make its inaugural appearance at the 2023 PNG Resources & Energy Investment Conference and Exhibition in Sydney next week. This follows its successful acquisition of Newcrest's global business which also includes the Lihir gold mine in New Ireland. This will mark a significant moment for Newmont, underlining the company's enhanced presence and commitment to the Papua New Guinea mining sector. Newmont CEO Tom Palmer is leading the mining giant's participation, by providing an insight into what Newmont sees as potential opportunities within the PNG market. Newmont's participation as a key speaker reflects the diverse range of investors engaged in business within PNG, showcasing the industry's global significance and the company's dedication to fostering collaboration and development in the region.

Newmont (PNG) Managing Director Alwyn Pretorius will give an update on Lihir Gold Mine. Mr. Pretorius's return to the PNG mining sector, this time under the banner of Newmont as its managing director is a strategic move to reinforce Newmont's commitment to PNG. Mr. Pretorius previously served as the Chief Operating Officer for Harmony Gold Mining Limited, the operator of Hidden Valley gold mine. This year's conference is anticipated to be the biggest international investment conference ever held by PNG, with over 1500 attendees with three floors of the Sydney International Convention Centre reserved for the four days duration of the Conference, and a program designed to promote investment in PNG's resources and energy sector.

## **K92 Mining to spend K1 billion**

By NATHAN WOTI, The National 7 December 2023

K92 Mining Incorporated is spending K1 billion over the next two years expanding production to 300,000 ounces by 2025 and 450,000 ounces by the end of 2026. Chief executive officer and director John Lewins told The National that this expanded resource meant a significant extension to the life of the K92 project. On a similar note, he said Papua New Guinea, landowners and other stakeholders would directly benefit from the mine going into 2026. Lewins' comments came after the



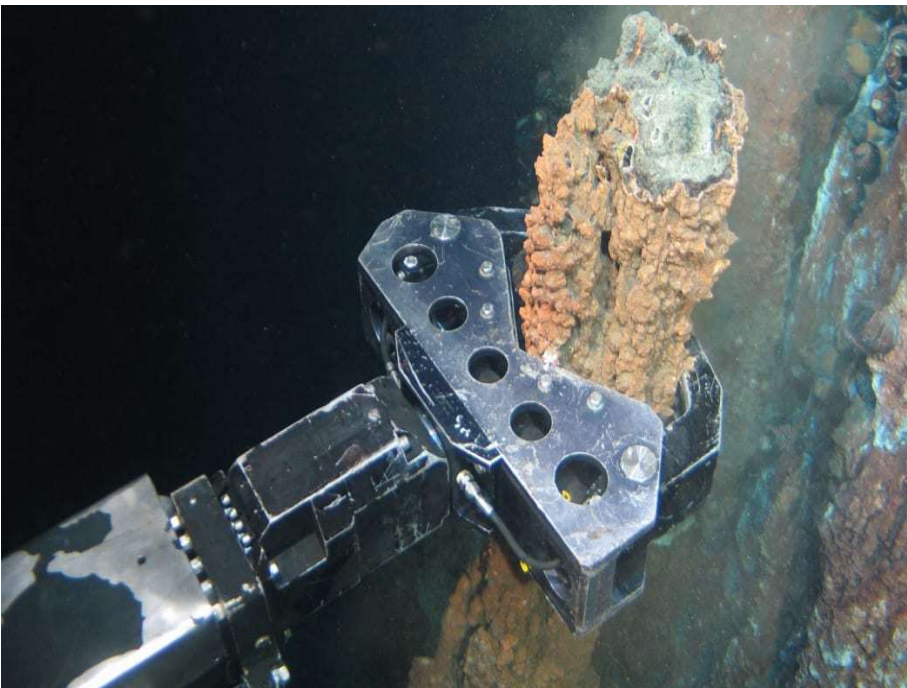
miner had announced its results following updated resource estimates from the Kora and Judd deposits. “The updated Kora and Judd resource estimates significantly exceeded the company’s expectations for both the measured and indicated resource, as well as inferred (or secondary) resource,” he said.

“The resource growth was achieved efficiently, over a period of less than two years and at discovery cost of less than US\$7.5 (about K28.40) per ounce of gold equivalent. “We also just announced an updated resource of 2.6 million gold equivalent ounces of measured and indicated resource and 4.5 million gold equivalent ounces of inferred resource for a total of 7.1 million ounces. “This is an increase of more than 40 per cent on the previous resource of 4.9 million ounces, with 2.5 million ounces of gold equivalent added. “K92 Mining is spending K1 billion over the next two years expanding production to 2026.”

Lewins added that in order to achieve this, K92 had invested considerable capital into exploration, “increasing our investment for several few years”. K92 will spend K75 million on exploration in 2024, making K92 Mining the largest explorer in the mining industry. Lewins said the K92 project had also increased its exploration expenditure guidance to US\$20 million (about K75.4 million) in October. Furthermore, the K92 Mining CEO said the company was looking forward to announcing results from multiple target areas near-term in addition to operational announcements as it transforms K92 into a tier 1 mid-tier producer over the next 18 months with construction of the stages three and four expansions underway.

### **Fears PNG province again keen to embrace seabed mining**

Don Wiseman, RNZ Pacific Senior Journalist, Radio New Zealand, 7 December 2023



Sampling copper under the sea Photo: Nautilus Minerals

Campaigners aiming to ensure seabed mining does not happen in Papua New Guinea (PNG) are angry the New Ireland government has been meeting with two prospective mining operations. This is despite the PNG National government having ruled out seabed mining, with Prime Minister James Marape backing an international call for a moratorium on any seabed mining activity. Some years ago, a company called Nautilus had hyped its Solwara One seabed mining project in the Bismarck

Sea, just off the coast of New Ireland. But this collapsed in 2018, costing the PNG government hundreds of millions of dollars in lost investment.

Now two companies which acquired Nautilus's assets - Deep Sea Mining Finance and Sustainable Mining Solutions - have held talks with the New Ireland government. West Coast Development Foundation director Jonathan Mesulam, who has been campaigning to stop seabed mining for 13 years, told RNZ Pacific this new meeting has made people angry. "For us, it makes one angry, and frustrated, Mesulam said. "We all know that the companies are Australian. We know that seabed mining is not going to happen anymore, but meeting now, you know, it makes you angry. "Why is the government trying to renegotiate about this project. And it's very frustrating at the moment," the director of the environmental group said. There has been no public revelation of what was discussed at the meeting.

### **Oil peaks in New Ireland**

Post-Courier, Posted in National News, December 6, 2023



Chairman of Peak Oil, Professor Brent McInnes met with New Ireland Governor Sir Julius Chan on Friday. Prof McInnes briefed the governor on potential discovery of oil and gas around offshore islands of New Ireland. This is a potential project for development if negotiations are in the best interest of New Ireland Province. Pictured are from left: Lawyer Dr John Kwimb, Peak Oil Chairman Prof Brent McInnes, Governor Sir Julius Chan and principal of Namani Lawyers, Hubert Namani.

### **Legislation paves the way for Porgera Mine to reopen**

Post Courier, 1 December 2023

The multi-billion kina Porgera gold mine in Enga could reopen as early as this year following the passing of the Mining (New Porgera) (Amendment) Act 2023 by Parliament on Wednesday. It is understood the agents representing more than 85 per cent of the landowners have signed "Consent Compensation Agreements" with the New Porgera Limited (NPL) to allow the mine to reopen as soon as possible. The parties have agreed to engage in substantive negotiations on new compensation rates after the mining resumes. NPL in a statement welcomed the passing of the Mining (New Porgera) (Amendment) Act 2023 stating that it paves the way for the mine to reopen this year.

Since the grant of SML13 on 13 October 2023, representatives of NPL have spent the last six weeks at Porgera and Tari holding face-to-face meetings with over 1,000 landowners and their legally designated agents, explaining the company's proposal for compensation agreements prior to reopening

the mine. Importantly, to ensure that landowners are not disadvantaged by the deferral in negotiations, NPL has agreed to make a backdated “true-up” payment to landowners for any increase in compensation rates agreed or determined after the mine reopens.



The amendments to the Mining Act passed by Parliament yesterday do not affect those Consent Compensation Agreements that have already been signed by landowners, which will be fully honoured by NPL. NPL notes that the Amendment Act also preserves and protects the right of landowners to be properly and appropriately compensated. The Amendment Act and the Consent Compensation Agreements that have been signed ensure that the wishes of the overwhelming majority of landowners to see the mine reopened before year-end and the benefits begin to flow again, will be realised.

### **Bankrupt Aust miner arrested for illegal mining**

Post Courier, 1 December 2023



Bankrupted Australian miner, Nikolajs Zuk has been arrested by Bougainville police allegedly over illegal mining and exploration under the Bougainville Mining Act 2015. He was formally charged and arrested on Wednesday at the Buka Police Station with the presence of authorised ABG Department of Mining Officers, and Immigration Officers. He was released on a K1000 bail. Nikolajs Zuk is the Director of Perth based Wyndale Holdings Pty Limited has been linked and have joint ventures with Karatapo Resources, Paruparu Joint Venture and Bakeuroro Joint Venture in Bougainville. These two joint ventures had applied for exploration licenses, however, the Bougainville Executive Council (BEC) upon advice from ABG Mining Department had not granted any licenses to them.

The principal complainant is the Mining Secretary on behalf of the Department of Minerals and Energy had Nickolajs Zuks charged under Sections 354 and 355 of the Bougainville Mining Act for illegal mining and exploration. Principal Legal Officer for Bougainville Chief Inspector James Pais said that the Bougainville Police were empowered to the Bougainville Mining Act and the arrest was an indication to strengthen enforcement of the offences and penalties under the Bougainville Act. Zuks, under the Momis Government had placed him Persons Non Grata banning him to travel to PNG and Bougainville in 2018 for disrespecting customs, laws and causing disharmony amongst Bougainville people. Zuks had two travel bans imposed on him, the first on 3rd October 2018 and the second on 24th September 2019. However, his travel ban to Bougainville was uplifted by the ABG's Toroama/Nisira Government recently and since then had gone into mining arrangements with local groups in Bougainville.

### **Landowners reassured despite amendments**

The National, 1 December 2023

THE amendments to the Mining Act passed by Parliament on Wednesday will not affect the consent compensation agreements signed by landowners of the Porgera mine. A media statement from New Porgera Limited (NPL) said the company "will fully honour the agreements signed". It said "NPL notes that the Mining (New Porgera) (Amendment) Act also preserves and protects the right of landowners to be properly and appropriately compensated". The company said the changes in law and the agreements were cues for the mine's reopening and flow of benefits. "Since granting special mining lease 13 (SML13) on Oct 13, NPL officers have spent the past six weeks at Porgera and Tari holding face-to-face meetings with more than 1,000 landowners, explaining the company's proposal for compensation agreements prior to reopening the mine," it said. "More than 1,200 landowner agents, representing more than 85 per cent of the agents, have signed consent compensation agreements to allow the mine to reopen. "Parties also agreed to engage in substantive negotiations on new compensation rates after mining resumes." "Importantly, to ensure landowners are not disadvantaged by the deferral in negotiations, NPL has agreed to make a backdated 'true-up' payment to landowners for any increase in compensation rates agreed or determined after the mine reopens."

### **Porgera will fix FX, economy: Marape**

By GYNNIE KERO, The National, 30 November 2023



People in Paiam, Porgera, Enga in July during the security forum. - Picture courtesy of MPA

PRIME Minister James Marape says once the Porgera gold mine comes on next year it will help fix the country's economy, especially the shortage of foreign exchange (forex). "Our people need the mine to start immediately. Our investors need the mine to start immediately," he said. "The economy needs Porgera. I do apologise for the lengthy (four years) delay. "If Porgera comes on next year, we will secure our economy next year, especially the foreign exchange (forex) issue. This time next year, Porgera will alleviate the forex issue." Marape said this while supporting a bill tabled by Mining Minister Sir Ano Pala in Parliament yesterday to allow the mine to start immediately and at the same time the protect rights of the landowners.

The Porgera gold mine has been under care and maintenance for almost four years awaiting restart. Major operator Barrick Niugini Limited told *The National* in an earlier (2021) interview, the cost of restarting the mine was expected at around US\$300 million (K1.09 billion). Sir Ano said that the Mining (New Porgera) (Amendment) Act 2023 recognised that it was in the national interest that mining operations at the Porgera re-started as soon as possible. "The Amendment Act (also) enables the landowners to start benefiting from the mine's operations immediately." Enga Governor Sir Peter Ipatas said he was in support of the bill "because rights of landowners are preserved, it won't be an issue for us (Enga)".

"I have been governor for a longtime and haven't realised the impact Porgera had on the nation." According to Sir Ano, the amended Act once passed would achieve one uniformity within the mining, oil and gas sector. "Whereas, the Oil and Gas Act 1998, allows the licence holder to commence activities while continuing to negotiate compensation with landowners, or having compensation determined by the Warden; the Mining Act under Section 155 actually prevents the tenement holder from entering into an occupying the land until the tenement holder has agreed on compensation with the landowners, or the compensation is determined by the Warden," he said.

### **Pacific - deep sea mining**

Radio New Zealand, 27 November 2023

With COP28 on the horizon, climate advocates want Pacific leaders to unite on a deep sea mining moratorium. The Pacific remains divided on the issue of deep sea mining as the Cook Islands continues to spearhead exploration despite criticism from environmental groups. Pacific Islands Climate Action Network (PICAN) regional coordinator Lagi Seru said it is important to press pause until more research is available. "Our position is clear," he said, adding "We need a moratorium on deep sea mining we are strongly urging leaders to take a precautionary approach on this issue". "Lets not rush [deep sea mining]. It is going to have ramifications on our community we don't know what the impact will be."

### **France's top 2 ministers in New Caledonia: political future, nickel on the table**

Patrick Decloitre, Correspondent French Pacific Desk, Radio New Zealand, 27 November 2023

**Analysis** -The French government's number two and three were in New Caledonia this weekend to continue tense discussions on the French Pacific territory's political future, but also on urgent steps to assist the ailing nickel industry. This was Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin's fifth travel to New Caledonia for the past twelve months and there could be a sixth travel to Nouméa next month. French Finance minister Bruno Lemaire had also travelled to New Caledonia previously, as a then-minister for agriculture. While in New Caledonia, they followed sometimes joint, sometimes different schedules, each one focusing on their respective priorities: politics for Darmanin, economy and nickel for Lemaire. But they came back together for a joint television interview on Sunday, in front of a panel of local media.



Pro-independence protesters in downtown Nouméa on 24 November 2023. Photo: NC la 1ère

Darmanin's visit was once again monopolised by a series of meetings with both pro-France and pro-independence parties, as was the case for the previous series of meetings held in Paris in September. His goal, this time again, was to get all parties around the table at the same time in what has often been referred to as the "tripartite", "all players" session with France, the pro-independence camp and the pro-France camp parties. However, since September, one of the main members of the FLNKS pro-independence front, the Union Calédonienne (UC) has said it would not attend "tripartite" sessions and only wanted to speak to France in a "bilateral" (only two players, one-to-one mode). UC confirmed at its recent Congress that it regarded Darmanin's proposals in the form of a "martyr" document as "unacceptable". At the weekend, Darmanin once again agreed to meet UC in "bilateral" mode and even to spend more time with them than the rest of the delegations. While there were few comments from political parties after the meetings with the French minister, he expressed disappointment at UC's refusal to take part in the "all players" sessions.



Gérald Darmanin (L) and Bruno Le Maire © visit New Caledonia's Prony resources nickel plant. Photo: NC la 1ère

### **Darmanin ready to come back next week**

He even told local media that if he obtained an assurance that UC accepts to change its stance on this, he would be ready to travel again to New Caledonia as soon as early December (4-5). The date is no coincidence as Nouméa also plays host, from 2 to 8 December, to the South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting (SPDMM) and that French Defence minister Sébastien Lecornu (who is also a former minister for Overseas) will also be in attendance. The draft "martyr" document, submitted by Darmanin in September, was regarded as a preparation for amendments to the French Constitution that French President Macron said he would like to put to the vote early 2024. The French constitutional amendment will specifically touch on the special provisions dedicated to New Caledonia.

It is believed since September, several rounds of separate work sessions in New Caledonia have now produced four amended versions of the "martyr" document. The main subjects of the draft are also the most contentious ones: a New Caledonian citizenship that could be introduced and that would be compatible with the French citizenship, the criteria to qualify as New Caledonian citizen (now the pre-condition is believed to have been agreed to at least ten years of uninterrupted residence), the reform of the electoral roll for local elections and future ways to express desires for change, otherwise than by a binary yes/no referendum.

### **New Year's Eve deadline**

The electoral roll had been "frozen" under the 1998 Nouméa Accord and only French citizens born in New Caledonia or having resided there before 1998 were allowed to vote at local elections (provincial assemblies). However, the provisions were not in keeping with universally-recognized democracy rule: the "frozen" roll is believed to currently deprive up to 12,000 voters who would otherwise be eligible to cast their votes. The State Council (the highest administrative court in France) has been requested to provide a ruling on this matter, especially with regards to the proposed amendment's compliance with the Constitution, Darmanin said. The ruling is expected to be delivered during the first week of December. "And on December 31, a text will be submitted to modify the electoral roll, so that (New Caledonia's provincial) elections can be held in 2024", Darmanin told local media.

This effectively materialises a deadline for talks with local parties. If no inclusive "all players" draft amendment is achieved by then, then the French State will go ahead, Darmanin stressed. "That's why I am ready to come back next week in yet another attempt to reach the most inclusive agreement, with UC (...) The ball is in their court", he said. During this weekend talks, Darmanin also revealed he had suggested that New Caledonia's President should be elected directly in a universal suffrage, but he said this was rejected. He also said he had suggested that the name of "Congress" of New Caledonia should be simply changed to "Parliament" and that in future, a more significant role could be devoted to the existing Customary Senate (the equivalent of a Great Council of Chiefs), which could be given an upgraded role comparable to that of a fully-fledged Senate. Regarding future referendums,

"There won't be any more dateline for future referendums. And there won't be any more 'yes/no' question to independence. What we are suggesting is a process that would allow the advent of a 'referendum of project'. The way it is formulated at this stage, which is still amendable, is that the Congress could decide to come up with a project that could then be endorsed by two thirds of the members and then if it is endorsed by the Congress, it can be put to the vote to the population in a referendum. So the idea is that it would be a consensual and no more confrontational approach between pro-independence and anti-independence parties that would allow to bring about a new project, including, but not only, on the notion of independence", the minister explained, adding he was "placing a bet on intelligence".



Pro-independence protesters in downtown Nouméa on 24 November 2023 We will never give up on our fathers' dreams. Photo: Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes

### **Nouméa march: 'We will never give up on our fathers' dreams'**

On Friday, in the streets of Nouméa, a crowd of close to one thousand pro-independence protesters marched to "welcome" Darmanin and Lemaire, brandishing Kanaky flags and banners reading "We will never give up on our fathers' dreams". The mobilisation was organised mainly by USTKE, once the union arm of the FLNKS, with a noticeable participation by UC. But more moderate FLNKS components such as PALIKA and UPM parties had called on their members to refrain from taking part in activities that could disrupt talks in progress.

### **French finance minister ready to help New Caledonia's nickel**

As for New Caledonia's nickel industry, a highly political topic which is undergoing yet another crisis, Lemaire has visited all three nickel plants in New Caledonia: the North (Koniambo), the South (Prony) and Nouméa (Société le Nickel). He said solutions had to be identified and implemented in "a matter of weeks, not months". "The status quo is no longer possible", he stressed, adding that solutions will have to identify new markets (including in Europe) and possible changes of production processes for New Caledonia's nickel. In August this year, a French audit had sounded the alarm bell for all three of New Caledonia's nickel mining plants. One of those, Koniambo, is currently under threat from its major financier, Glencore. The Swiss-British giant said it would stop financing the New Caledonian plant by February 2024 unless a "new financial solution" was found. Lemaire said the situation was currently "critical".

"France is ready to commit itself to taking part financially in future reforms, provided they are economically profitable", he said. The gloomy situation in New Caledonia, where its nickel is deemed uncompetitive due to high production costs and relevance of the final product, comes in contrast with the current worldwide boom in demand for nickel, mainly because of the ever-rising production of electric cars (nickel is a key component of the batteries). "The European Investment Bank and European car manufacturers could be ready to invest in those projects (...) I'm even ready to convince them that it's worth investing in New Caledonia nickel plants and ensure that the (French) State brings financial guarantees (to future financial operations). But this can only happen within the framework of a profitable business model", he said. "We are only at the beginning of the electric vehicles revolution. It will accelerate and then a market diversification with, on one hand, the Asian markets and on the other hand new European markets, looks to me like a very good strategy", he predicted.



## **K31m capital expenditure forecast for Simberi Mine**

Post-Courier, 21 November 2023



Capital expenditure for the growth strategy at Simberi is anticipated to be between AUSD\$10 and AUSD\$13 million (About 30.9 million) in 2024. Developer St Barbara in a market announcement recently highlighted that Resource definition and metallurgical drilling programme for Simberi commenced during the quarter. This programme is focused on infill and extensions to the sulphide Resource at Pigiput, Sorowar and Pigibo. The programme is targeting the conversion of Inferred resources outside of the current Ore Reserve pit designs, with the intention to add additional Ore Reserves to the Simberi Expansion Project. In addition, the metallurgical drilling will provide samples for test work on grinding, gravity recoverable gold, flotation and leach test work, rheology, concentrate analysis, mineralogical analysis and tailings geochemistry.

The first diamond drill rig has completed two Resource definition holes and four metallurgical holes during quarter one, with assay results expected in quarter two in 2024. A second diamond drill rig has recently commenced to fast-track completion of both drill programmes. Engineering studies are underway on flow sheet optimisation, process plant design efficiency, mine fleet selection and pit wall angle steepening following receipt of geotechnical conclusions subsequent to earlier studies. Managing Director and CEO Andrew Strelein said “St Barbara has made rapid progress to advance its strategic focus of moving the 15-Mile Project and Simberi Expansion Project to decision points by the end of FY24.

The value proposition for St Barbara now lies in demonstration of the development potential of the projects in Nova Scotia and the Simberi Expansion. At 5.9Moz the mineral endowment is incredible for a Company of our size.” “The highlight of the new team’s work so far has been the announcement earlier this month of the strong Pre-feasibility results for 15-Mile, at a US\$1700 (About K6,210) gold price. “We look forward to progressive results from the Simberi Resource definition drilling that is now well underway with two drill rigs on the island. “On the operational front we have completed stockpile processing at Touquoy and at Simberi we have the mining fleet transitioning to contract trucks and plant refurbishment well underway to allow reliable production through the next three years.”

## **Geologist to head Woodlark project**

The National, 17 November 2023

GEOPACIFIC Resources Limited has appointed Australian mining executive and geologist James Fox as chief executive officer to drive the 1.56 million ounces Woodlark gold project in Milne Bay. Effective yesterday, Geopacific chairman Graham Ascough said: “We have significantly de-risked the project’s development pathway and there is immense exploration upside which can further

enhance its financial metrics. “The appointment is centred on driving growth and value at Geopacific’s 100 per cent-owned project.” Fox said the Woodlark project held significant potential with a number of technical development components optimised, de-risked and advanced over the past 12 months. “I am excited to join Geopacific during a transformative phase for the company,” he said.

“After a recent site visit, which highlighted extensive existing investment, strong exploration upside and a highly capable team, I am eager to apply my experience and insights and to collaborate closely with the existing team and board. “Woodlark is a technically de-risked development project with numerous opportunities for further resource expansion outside of the current pit-designs, to extend and further optimise the future production profile and financial metrics, allowing it to become a world-class asset with premium returns for all our stakeholders.” Ascough said the appointment had paved the way for Woodlark’s future. “James’ multi-disciplinary skills and vast process development experience will help ensure Geopacific capitalises on the huge opportunity we have at Woodlark.” A qualified geologist, Fox has held various positions working in the United Kingdom, Australia, Cyprus and Uganda.

### **France against Pacific deep-sea mining, prefers research: minister**

Radio New Zealand, 17 November 2023



French Secretary of State for the Seas Hervé Berville with President Moetai Brotherson and High Commission Eric Spitz. Photo: French High Commission in French Polynesia

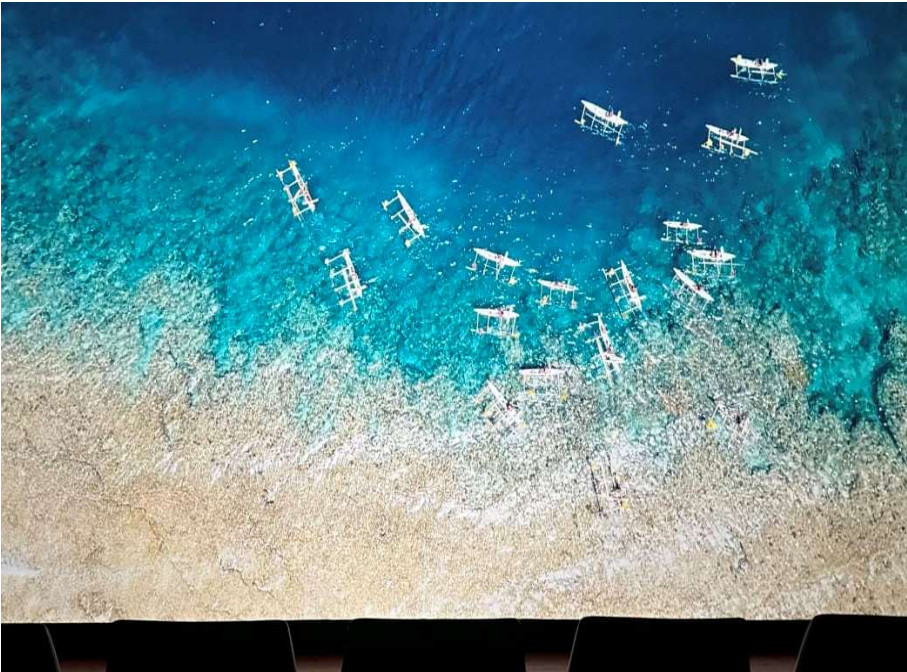
France is against Pacific deep-sea mining, but encourages research, Secretary of State for the Seas Hervé Berville said during his recent visit to the region. Berville was last week part of the delegation representing France at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders summit in Rarotonga (Cook Islands), then went on to French Polynesia (which represents about half of France's Exclusive Economic Zone area) for four days. "There is, at this stage, not sufficient knowledge and this (deep seas exploitation) could lead to potentially irreversible damage to marine ecosystems. On the other hand, we must absolutely accelerate our research efforts", said Berville, who holds a position similar to that of Assistant Minister.

A new oceanographic research vessel, the Michel-Rocard, is scheduled to be commissioned by 2027 for scientific research in the Pacific and Antarctic regions, French President Macron announced on 10 November at a so-called "One Planet - Polar Summit" held in Paris. The 70-meter-long vessel project is to be named after former French Prime minister Michel Rocard who was also the first French ambassador for the North and South Poles. It will be jointly based in

Nouméa (New Caledonia) from March to November for campaigns in the South Pacific and Hobart (Australia) from December to February for Antarctic-dedicated campaigns. Calls for tenders for the construction of the vessel are scheduled to be launched by the end of 2024.

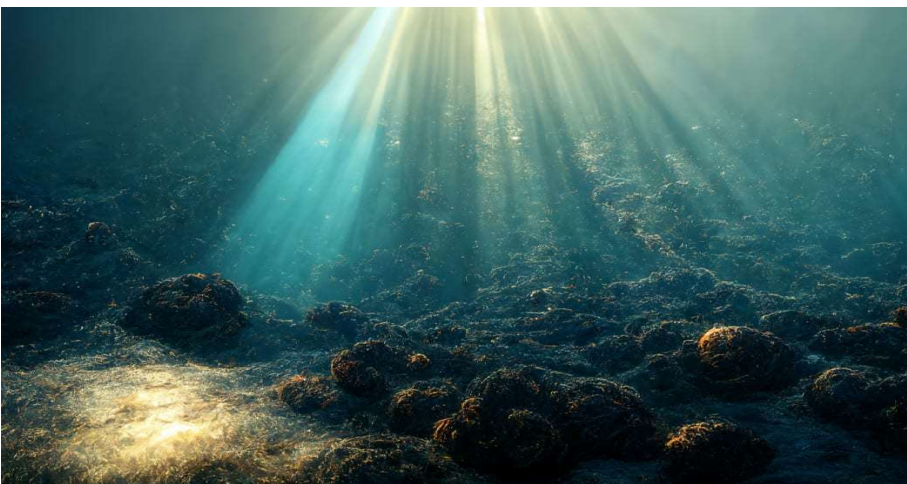
## **Divergent views on deep sea exploration and mining in the Pacific**

leisha Foon, Lydia Lewis, RNZ Pacific Journalists, Radio New Zealand, 17 November 2023



Deep Rising movie screening. Photo: RNZ Pacific / Eleisha Foon

A documentary narrated by Hollywood actor Jason Momoa delving into the pressing issue of deep sea mining attracted Pacific leaders on the sidelines of the Pacific Islands forum. President of Palau Surangel Whipps Jr, New Caledonia's president Louis Mapou, and Vanuatu's Ralph Regenvanu came to the free viewing organised by Cook Island environmental group Te Ipukarea Society and Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG). The film follows Gerard Barron, chief executive of The Metals Company. Barron is for deep sea mining, believing that rather than drilling into the earth for precious metals, we can just pick up the metals already lying exposed on the seabed. The minerals on the sea floor are used to make batteries to power electric cars.



Abstract abyss under sea background. coral reef underwater with sun ray. 3D rendering image. Photo: Copyright: [isam-puntarat](#)

But critics fear removing these resources will upset the ocean's ecological balance and lead to the extinction of certain marine species and other unforeseen consequences. "Anything to stimulate some discussions is a step in the right direction so we can get more people asking questions," Te Ipukarea Society director Alanna Matamaru Smith said. Smith said the film illustrated the potential risks of seabed mining but also gave the seabed mining industry perspective. A representative of the Seabed Mining Authority in the Cook Islands told RNZ the film was "unbalanced". Vanuatu's Climate Minister Ralph Regenvanu said "it was a very moving film". Regenvanu said Vanuatu's position is for no deep sea mining at any point.

"We have a lot to think about in the Pacific. We are the region that is spearheading for seabed minerals," he said. He said it was important for Pacific nations to find common ground on the issue. The Cook Islands is already carrying out deep sea mining exploration while other countries like Vanuatu are calling for a moratorium. Cook Islands Prime Minister and Forum chair Mark Brown has [indicated that his country will continue "looking at the potential our ocean is providing us"](#) through exploration and potential mining for minerals in the deep sea. "It's important that Pacific comes to where we are divergent right now on this issue and it's important that we agree on certain common positions and we are on the end of the spectrum where we believe there should be a moratorium," Regenvanu said.



Prime Minister Mark Brown is an advocate for deep sea mining. Photo: Supplied

Whipps Jr told RNZ Pacific on the sidelines of the Leaders Summit in Rarotonga, that science and data must be used to make informed decisions. He also continues to call for a moratorium on deep sea mining in light of a lack of scientific data to support its sustainability. "We feel that there's not enough data out there yet," he said. "So, we've continued to ask for a moratorium on deep sea mining, we understand that is the Cook Islands is trying to have a centre to do studies. But I think we need independent research, and a little bit more robust to make sure that we protect our ecosystems and don't destroy the beautiful nature that we have."

### **'Potentially disruptive industry'**

Greenpeace Aotearoa seabed mining spokesperson James Hita said not enough is known about the ocean for deep sea mining to start. "One thing that we can all agree on from across the spectrum is that we don't have enough information, we cannot make a decision to go ahead with such a potentially disruptive industry without having access to a wide range of resources and a deep understanding of the deep sea," Hita said. The film provided an "unbiased lens" on deep sea mining, which was lacking in the Cook Islands and the Pacific region, Hita said. Another Greenpeace campaigner Aigagalefili Fepulea'i-Tapua'i said deep sea mining in one Pacific country would affect the whole region so decisions could not be made in isolation.

"It needs to be made in totality," she said. "They need to be made in the Pacific way in the context of the Forum, the Pacific way is to make sure that everyone gets a say and that everyone is able to

come to a conclusion that it's beneficial for us all." Also in attendance was Sahil Abbi, an investor at DYNE, which is focused on providing investment to Cook Islands-based seabed mining companies. There are no companies mining the ocean floor in the Cook Islands, but exploration work is under way. Abbi said DYNE has no desire to push projects through at the expense of the environment.

"We totally agree that there isn't enough information which is why we're investing significantly in producing more data and understanding the environment better and understanding our impact better," he said. Abbi said if there is a way for companies to mine in a sustainable way DYNE wanted to provide companies with the necessary funding to get that done. The countries represented at the film were seated among a cinema of representatives from the Seabed Mining Authority, investors of seabed mining and environmental and climate advocates as well as Swiss, Micronesian delegates. Forum hosts, the Cook Islands, gifted a seabed nodule to dignitaries and leaders as a gesture at the leaders meeting.



Forum hosts, the Cook Islands, gifted a seabed nodule to dignitaries and leaders as a gesture at the leaders meeting.  
Photo: Supplied

A foreign ambassador who wished to remain anonymous said they were not impressed with the gift and would rather "throw it back in the ocean". Cook Island locals have mixed opinions on deep sea mining, many have voiced opposition while some elders are aligned with the government. The controversial issue divides the Pacific, with some nations seeing it as an opportunity to combat climate change but also for immense wealth. The film was funded by a Swiss national and directed by Swiss-born, Montreal-based filmmaker Matthieu Rytz.

In June 2023, Switzerland said deep sea mining in the international seabed area must be postponed until protection from the 'harmful effects' could be ensured. Special envoy of Switzerland for the Pacific Region, Emmanuel Bichet said: "We have to be 100 percent sure of what we are doing before we start exploiting. It's a precautionary approach by 22 other countries. We should not rush to do things." He said it was crucial people educate themselves and learn about the potential impacts it could have on our ocean.



Alana Matamaru Smith - Director of Te Ipukarea Society helped organise the event. Photo: RNZ Pacific / Eleisha Foon

### 'Call for caution'

PANG, which is a regional organisation that has been working on the issue advocating against deep sea mining for the past 15 years, has been calling for a global ban on deep sea mining. The organisation's co-deputy coordinator Joey Tau said it is "on the basis that it is a very speculative industry". "It is one that implicates the human rights of Pacific people and those that have very close connections with the oceans," Tau said. "It's very contradictory when we acknowledge the ocean as the largest climate regulator yet we like to exploit the resources down at the depths of the ocean. Responding to Brown's comment about deep sea mining, Tau said: "We also need to consider that we're on a climate crisis". "What would exacerbate the current climate crisis? There is this call for caution and any any work of exploration needs to adhere to concerns raised by Pacific peoples and international organisations on deep sea mining.



Joey Tau Photo: RNZ Pacific / Lydia Lewis

## Deep sea mining finance and partners meet with Sir Julius

Post-Courier, 16 November 2023



Deep Sea Mining Finance (DSMF) met with New Ireland Governor Sir Julius Chan on Monday, November 13 in Kavieng.

DSMF CEO Chris Jordinson and DSMF shareholder Mathias Bolliger briefed the Governor on the company's recent decision to partner with SM2 Limited. SM2 founder Richard Parkinson proposed a new and less environmentally invasive mining system that will provide the required infrastructure and expertise to develop the Solwara 1 project in the waters of New Ireland. The provincial government's stance has always been clear that the company engage an independent scientist to evaluate possible environmental impact and give confidence to the locals that the project will not in any way affect the livelihood of the West Coast people. Sir Julius stressed to the executives of the company on the proposed mining (Amendment) Bill 2023 that he is taking to Parliament which aims at transferring the ownership of minerals, oil and gas to the landowners who own them. The meeting gave an opportunity to the Governor to listen, ask questions and assess the pros and cons of the proposed Solwara project.

## KPHL eyes additional 5pc in PNG LNG project

The National, 15 November 2023

THE Kumul Petroleum Holdings Limited (KPHL) is set to acquire an additional five per cent project interest in the PNG LNG from Santos Limited, according to the Independent Consumer and Competition Commission (ICCC). KPHL's current project interest in the project is 16.8 per cent. This will increase to 21.8 per cent after the completion of the acquisition. ICCC chief executive officer Paulus Ain said they had invited submissions from stakeholders on the proposed acquisition. The submissions will be treated as public information unless confidentiality is sought. The proposed transaction will follow two steps.

Firstly, the KPHL will acquire a 2.62 per cent project interest in the PNG LNG project from Santos pursuant to a share sale and purchase agreement between Santos and KPHL. The completion of the share SPA is not subjected to finance and conditional only on KPHL obtaining clearance from the ICCC on or before Dec 31, 2023. Secondly, a call option deed under which Santos will grant KPHL an option to acquire a further 2.38 per cent project interest in the PNG LNG Project on the conditions set out in the call option deed. The call option is to be exercised on or before June 30, 2024. Upon the exercise of the call option, Santos and KPHL will execute and complete the asset SPA to deliver a further 2.38 per cent project interest in the PNG LNG Project to KPHL.

## **Chamber gets new name, logo**

By PETER ESILA, The National, 14 November 2023

THE Papua New Guinea Chamber of Resources and Energy is the new name replacing the PNG chamber of mines and petroleum. This came into effect at a launching ceremony in Port Moresby yesterday. Chamber's chief operating officer Pansy Taueni-Sialis said the name-change was all about the commitment of being the economic hub of development in the country. "This is not just a change of name, it is the redefinition of our purpose, refocusing of our goals and, more importantly, realignment of evolving global landscape," she said. "After 36 years, there is a shift in the organisation's dynamics, an indication of growing evolution and progress. "The new entity stands as a central chamber to the heart of the nation's economic body.

"The chamber aims to energise all sectors of our economy, ensuring that there is a flow of investment, innovation as well as sustainable practices that reach community and industry across Papua New Guinea. "Our chamber will adeptly respond to the evolving demands of our economy ranging from traditional mining to cutting-edge renewable energy." Taueni-Sialis said the chamber was crucial in disseminating information, resources and economic advantages to nurture and sustain the nation. "Our role is to manage our economy's lifelines, resources and energy in a way that benefits every sector and every individual," she said. "The name-change heralds an era of holistic thinking led by our president Anthony Smare. "Mining, petroleum and renewables cannot function in isolation, but must synergise under the Chamber of Resources and Energy for our nation's greater good.

"With the foundations that was led by the former leaders and champions, we now evolve to meet our country's growing needs. In this growth, our chamber will glow and fortify our growing and expanding industry. "Let us embrace this transformation with the understanding that the chamber is not just a name-change but a commitment. "We are committed to act as a central chamber of our nation's economic heart to pump vitality into our industries and to circulate the wealth and economic benefits. "As we move forward, let us do so with a unified purpose." Chamber councillor Leon Buskens said: "There are few projects coming up that will help our economy; we are all about adding value and proving jobs and each of us have our own key performance indicators for making the world a better place."

## **Secretary facing contempt charges**

The National, 14 November 2023

SECRETARY for the Department of Petroleum and Energy, David Manau, is facing contempt of court charges for failing to comply with court orders to pay royalties to Hides Gas to Electricity landowners. In the National Court in Waigani yesterday, Deputy Chief Justice Ambang Kandakasi ordered that Manau file his evidence in affidavits and serve it by Nov 30 for hearing on Dec 5. "Parties should liaise with each other and serve affidavits before the hearing date," he said. Manau's lawyer informed the court that they would file their evidence before the hearing on Dec 5. "We seek an adjournment so we can file and serve the evidence in affidavit before the returnable day." The case is between Mai Hiyabe, chairman and clan agent for the Yugu clan of Hides Gas, and Manau. Lawyer Dick Korowa, representing the landowners told the court that there was no evidence served to them as per the court orders of Nov 10 summoning Manau to appear in court to face contempt of court charges.

"There is no objection with the adjournment but they have to file and serve their affidavits before the hearing date so I can respond for my clients," he said. Manau was charged with contempt of court for contumeliously and intentionally failing to respect and comply with the orders of the District Court made on Oct 4, 2005, and the National Court order of May 14, 2005 to pay royalties to



the Hides landowners. Hiyabe is also representing eight sub-clans of the landowner groups of the Hides Gas. Hiyabe and his executives were elected into office on June 11, 2005. He was re-elected as chairman on Dec 22, 2022.

The Yugu clan is entitled to receive royalties from the Gas to Electricity (GTE) produced at the Hides Gas Field and supplied to the Porgera gold mine by the Hides Gas. The GTE is an existing standalone project. The Yugu clan have benefitted through royalty since 1996 when the electricity was first started. From 2005 till 2023, due to management issues, Manau has refused to pay the landowners. If there was any payment made, the Yugu clan landowners have not received any. Last Friday, deputy chief justice Kandakasi ordered that “unless Manau was able to have settled in accordance with the court orders as extended and failing to file and serve to move for a set aside of service of the proceedings, a bench warrant for his arrest shall be issued and remanded”.

### **Over K7 billion invested in PNG: MCC official**

By NATHAN WOTI, The National, 13 November 2023

THE developer of the Ramu Nickel mine, Metallurgical Group Corporation (MCC), has investment valued at about K7.5 billion – which is China’s largest investment project in the region. It is ranked third in PNG. MCC chairman Chen Jianguang said it was the biggest metallurgical construction contractor and metallurgical enterprise operation service provider in the world. Since the construction of the Ramu NiCo project in Madang in 2006, Chen said it had fulfilled its social responsibilities and promoted the localisation process, providing more than 3,000 jobs for local people. It is also investing in multi-field professional staff training, and cultivating a number of technical management talents for China and PNG.

“The success of the Ramu nickel cobalt project is inseparable with the support of the PNG Government, Embassy of China and the PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum,” Chen said. He added that in the past 20 years, Ramu NiCo provided a large number of business opportunities for landowners and local companies, aided the construction of roads, clinics and schools, organised agricultural training, helped start businesses, greatly improved people’s livelihood, promoted local economic and social development. “MCC will take Ramu NiCo as the link to proactively implement the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), give full play to the advantages of the whole industrial chain, and further expand business investment opportunities in mining development, infrastructure construction and other fields in PNG under Prime Minister (James) Marape and the guidance and support of the Embassy of China in Papua New Guinea,” he said.

### **Team conducts awareness on DSTP facilities**

The National, 13 November 2023

AN awareness has been conducted on the deep sea tailings placement (DSTP) facilities built at the Basamuk Refinery in Rai Coast, Madang, on why it is an environmentally safe disposal system. The team from the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority (Cepa), Mineral Resource Authority (MRA) and the Madang provincial government plus Ramu NiCo Management (MCC) Ltd officials visited communities in Madang on Oct 26. They went to Matapun village in Saidor and Kaut to explain to locals how the DSTP system worked, the monitoring process and why the DSTP was an environmentally-friendly disposal system. Team leader Steve Opur said the company visited Karkar Island and Bagbag Island along the coast of Madang to conduct similar awareness. “The awareness was to inform and educate people on how the DSTP system in Basamuk has always been safe and to prevent any negative rumours in villages,” he said. People who attended the programme

were happy to know that their marine ecosystem was in good condition. Ward councillor Morit Samkoi said the awareness helped people's understanding of the DSTP system.

### **Partnership Key to achieve MTDP-IV**

Post Courier, 9 November 2023

The Papua New Guinea Chamber of Mines and Petroleum ("The Chamber") participated in the recently concluded National Development Forum. Chief Operating Officer Pansy Taueni-Sialis delivered the Chamber's presentation titled, "Sustainability and Optimisation of benefits must underpin prudent management of non-renewable resources". Ms Sialis highlighted the importance for greater collaboration between industry, government, and stakeholders, to collaborate closely, throughout the life of MTDP-IV with emphasis on ensuring sustainable development of the non-renewable resources beyond MTDP-IV. "The extractive resource sectors have for many years formed the foundation of economic and social development in communities, especially in and around project areas. In many resource project areas, project developers often play a leading role in ensuring critical services of health, education, and infrastructure are maintained, so that communities benefit.

With the National Government recently launching the Medium-Term Development Plan IV (MTDP-IV), industry stands ready to partner, for the benefit of Papua New Guinea." Although not being privy to discussions leading up to the formulation and development of MTDP IV, the Chamber recognises the importance of industry to work together with Government, and stakeholders, for a better PNG. As PNG prepares for the next wave of development in the resources and energy space, we acknowledge the need for closer collaboration to working together to achieve common targets within MTDP-IV, for the benefit of Papua New Guinea. The Chamber acknowledges progress made by the government in working closely with respective project stakeholders, including developers and landowners, to address issues to progress projects.

The successful reopening of Porgera mine and the development of Papua LNG projects are expected to support the achievement of MTDP-IV. To optimise benefit streams, as well as promote sustainable development, particularly in regard to the country's resources and energy industries, it is highly recommended that clear targets and guidelines be set for the allocation of extractive sector proceeds towards priority sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure and sustainable economic diversification. Alignment of investor-friendly sectoral policies can be developed with consultation based on principles of good governance and anti-corruption, social safeguards, environmental safeguards and local content and diversification, recognising that communities must be empowered through capacity building initiatives.

### **A long-term fund to lift Porgera mining curse**

*The following blog is about talks about Porgera mine in Enga. The mine closed in 2019 when the mining lease expired. But it is being planned to reopen soon as most agreements are understood to have been signed.*

By ANDREW MAKU, The National, 9 November 2023

THE last three decades of goldmining in Porgera (1989 to 2019) have been wasted, with little to show in terms of the socio-economic conditions of the landowners and the people of Porgera-Paiela district in Enga. I had written previously about the curse the Porgera goldmine has brought on the people, including heightened lawlessness, deteriorating government services, missed opportunities in education, destruction of arable land forcing the landowners to depend largely on mine royalties for survival, and infighting among leaders of landowners for control of mining benefits. The mine closed in 2019 when the mining lease expired, but it is being planned to reopen soon as most

agreements were signed on Oct 16, 2023. After renegotiating terms of ownership, the mine will now be majority-owned by PNG stakeholders (51 per cent), with the landowners given 10 per cent equity (or ownership) for free. The landowners will receive an estimated K2.5 billion from the 10 per cent equity over the next 20 years when mining resumes. With other benefits such as contracts, special support grants and mining royalties, large sums of money will flow to the landowners.

The landowners have formed a company to provide mining services, but there are no proper governance mechanisms in place to manage and invest the large amounts of mining proceeds, particularly to sustain the landowners' and the entire district's long-term future beyond the mine. This is a fundamental failure of all parties: the Government, mining company, landowners, and the provincial government. Without these mechanisms in place, the mining curse will not be lifted. What will be left behind after the mine has closed will be a huge crater in the ground, a forgotten township, and people still living in poverty, struggling to access basic public services. If the mine's closure since 2019 is anything to go by, the future for the Porgera landowners and the Porgera-Paiela district is gloomy.

However, there is a small window of opportunity. I propose three urgent initiatives to help lift the curse and chart a sustainable future for landowners and the people of Porgera-Paiela. Firstly, establish a long-term fund to fund the socio-economic development needs of the landowners and the district for perpetuity after the mine closes. This can be modelled around the PNG Sustainable Development Programme (set up using the proceeds of Ok Tedi mine), and the Lihir Development Investment Limited (established with the proceeds of Lihir mine for Lihir landowners). It should not be part of the Mineral Resources Development Company which currently manages the landowners' equity share. Rather, the long-term fund needs strong governance and accountability, including an independent board to protect it from unscrupulous people. It must be set up outside PNG to provide it with legal protection.

I am aware that the Porgera Sustainability Fund will be established by the mining company. However, it will cease to exist beyond the mine, and will mostly duplicate the roles and responsibilities of existing government agencies in the district. The funds which are being earmarked for the Porgera Sustainability Fund should be invested instead in the long-term fund. The long-term fund can assume most of the roles of the proposed Porgera Sustainable Fund. Secondly, strengthen and streamline public agencies in Porgera-Paiela. Currently, there are two key government agencies in the district which are supposed to provide public services – the Porgera Development Authority (PDA) and the Porgera District Development Authority (PDDA). There is a significant duplication between these agencies.

The PDA receives part of the mining royalties annually, as well as special support grants from the national government, to fund its operations and to provide basic infrastructure and services in health, education, law and order, and economic projects. But it has been plagued with huge governance issues – its books have not been audited for many years. There have been leadership tussles. As a result, there is little trace of development on the ground for the large sums of money PDA has received over the years. The PDDA was set up recently as part of a national reform. Direct funding to Members of Parliament (MPs) from the District Services Improvement Programme (DSIP) (are for) priorities determined by the MP who is the chair and head of the PDDA. The PDDA is controlled by the MP of Porgera-Paiela. Its main source of funds is determined by the Government. This means allocation of resources can be influenced by political affiliations both at the district and national level. The PDDA and PDA will need to make sure their roles are properly demarcated, and the governance and accountability mechanisms of each agency strengthened to ensure full accountability of the funds each spends, so that basic public services reach the people.

The PDDA and PDA will fund socio-economic development of the landowners and the district while the mine is in operation. The proposed long-term fund would be for their future development needs in perpetuity, beyond the mine. Thirdly, reform and strengthen the Special Mining Lease (SML) Children's Trust Fund, established to fund the education of Porgera landowners' children. As proposed in my last blog, the SML Children's Trust Fund, including its management, must be reviewed and reformed, with stringent control and accountability requirements put in place. An independent board must be entrusted to oversee the governance of the trust fund, and a merit-based scholarship award system established to ensure students put in the effort at school.

The long-term fund would be able to fund the SML Children's Trust Fund when the mine closes for good. In the haste to reopen the goldmine, the key parties to the mine have completely overlooked the importance of establishing proper governance measures to better manage proceeds and benefits of the mine for the next 20 years and beyond. If relevant corrective measures are not taken in the next few weeks, the future of Porgera landowners and the people of Porgera-Paiela district will be irreparably damaged.

*Disclosure: This research was undertaken with the support of the ANU-UPNG Partnership, an initiative of the PNG-Australia Partnership, funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The views are those of the author only. This article appeared first on Devpolicy Blog ([devpolicy.org](http://devpolicy.org)), from the Development Policy Centre at The Australian National University.*

### **Wafi-Golpu principles to be disclosed at conference**

By NATHAN WOTI, The National, 8 November 2023

The key principles of the Wafi-Golpu mine development contract and special mining lease will be made known at next month's mining and petroleum conference in Sydney, Australia. Prime Minister James Marape gave the assurance when welcoming Newmont Corporation into PNG on Monday. Newmont had taken over all Newcrest Mining Limited's interests in the country, particularly the Wafi-Golpu and Lihir gold mining projects. "We are now at the stage where the principle of what constitutes the mine development contract (MDC) and special mining lease (SML) is waiting to be agreed upon," Marape said. "We want to have these two key documents ready at the same time ... hoping that we will make an announcement to the market at the mining conference." Marape said successful collaboration had resulted in the creation of a MDC and SML for the Porgera mine.

The prime minister was hopeful of a similar progress on the Wafi-Golpu project. He thanked project partners Harmony Gold, Newmont and Kumul Mineral Holdings for committing to work within a defined timeline. A 36-month timeline has been stipulated for the partners to reach a final investment decision, underscoring the state's vested interest in advancing this pivotal project. Newmont vice-president Peter Toth assured the prime minister that the developer would carry on dialogue and discussion with the state negotiating team from where Newcrest had left. "Newmont and Newcrest will own 69 per cent and 31 per cent of the combined entity in PNG," he said. "This is unique on multiple dimensions. "It will be a combination of the best people from the two companies, the best assets in 10 countries, and bringing in the five Newcrest assets in PNG, including Wafi Golpu, into the Newmont portfolio."

### **Trial over 'misuse' of K52mil set**

By BEVERLY PETER, The National, 8 November 2023

THE substantive trial of a misappropriation case involving K52 million against two lawyers, an

executive assistant and three board directors is set to start at the National Court in Waigani today. Hearing submissions on Monday to verify search warrants used in obtaining documents to substantiate a trial, Justice David Cannings ruled that while the warrants were defective, the documents obtained did not prejudice the defendants and can be used. Appearing in court would be lawyers Greg Sheppard of Perth in Australia, and Gloria Salika, 39, Kulakea village in South Fly, Western; Ok Tedi Fly River Development Foundation Limited board directors Boston Kasiman, Edna Oai and Annie Smerewai and executive assistant Tabitha Malken. "The court exercised its common law discretion by allowing the unlawfully obtained documents to be admitted into evidence," Justice Cannings said.

Sheppard, Gloria and Tabitha were charged with one count of misappropriating K52 million, allegedly transferring the money from a trust account to another belonging to Young and William Lawyers. The three directors each faced two counts of allegedly being involved in the transaction of that same money and another K216 million belonging to the Western people. Salika, Malken, Kasiman, Oai and Smerewai, through lawyer Edward Sasingian, filed to verify the search warrant while Sheppard, through his lawyer Ron Webb, filed to object an evidence which were all to be used in the substantive trial. Sasingian and Webb said the search warrants were defective as there was no information on oath on which the warrants were obtained. Sasingian, in his submission, claimed that the police officers were bribed and that a police officer, who was not part of the investigation team, obtained the warrants.

And, therefore, all the documents obtained through the defective search warrants should not be used in trial. However, while the judge upheld arguments that the absence of information on oath by the police officer was a breach in law and the warrants were unlawful and invalid, it was at the court's discretion to rule that the documents be admitted into evidence. "The impropriety on the part of the police was extensive and, to some extent reckless, but I consider there is no evidence of bad faith or bias deliberately cutting corners to obtain an advantage that would otherwise not have been available," Justice Cannings said. He considered the offence very serious and, therefore, had exercised the court's discretion to allow the unlawfully obtained documents to be used as evidence.

### **Lihir and Wafi-Golpu not affected by Newmont takeover of Newcrest**

Dale Luma, Post-Courier, 7 November 2023

Prime Minister James Marape says PNG's business interest in Lihir Gold mine, New Ireland, and the upcoming Wafi-Golpu resource project in Morobe is not affected by Newmont Corporation taking over from Newcrest Mining Ltd. "With the transaction complete, it is now no longer Newcrest in Lihir and Newcrest interest in Newmont and that's the way they have restructured," Mr Marape said. "In any case, the PNG business is not affected, in fact this adds value to our PNG interest. "We have a keen interest about what's happening in Newcrest, we want to see Lihir going, productions in Lihir to be maintained, return on investment, not just to Newmont now but to the economy and the country. "More important for me under my watch our transition of just a project concept stage to a project develop stage as far as Wafi-Golpu is concerned."

Mr Marape also explained that the acquisition of Newcrest by Newmont is a business decision and not government's. "That's how the corporate world operates and exists, one business submerged or subsumed or incorporated into another business and it has little or nothing to do with government. It is a private sector transaction," Mr Marape said. "But as a beholder of regulatory requirements in our country, the Newmont executives came in earlier to give respect to our country and indicated to me that they would possibly be taking over Newcrest, not just here in PNG but as a company globally. "Newmont now brings onto the table their own characteristics and their own presence into the

country. For our country it adds value to our global branding as a good investment destination,” the Prime Minister said.

## Marape welcomes Newmont to PNG

By NATHAN WOTI, The National, 7 November 2023



PRIME Minister James Marape yesterday welcomed the world’s largest gold miner, Newmont Corporation, to the country, saying its presence has “added value to the economy and boosted investor confidence as well”. “We now have two of the biggest mining companies – Newmont and Barrick (Niugini) Limited – in the country,” he said. “This is something PNG should appreciate. “This adds value to the economy and the development of the country, and shows that PNG is a good investment destination.” This followed Newmont’s acquisition of Newcrest Mining Limited.

“Newmont has been around since the 1980s as an exploration company and it is pleasing to hear of the merger with Newcrest Mining Limited. “The mergers are done between companies,” Marape said. “Newcrest was part of Newmont before it became its own entity. “These kinds of company mergers and accusation does not involve Government. “It is between two global private companies. “Newmont will now take on board all the current projects under Newcrest, as well as the Wafi-Golpu project as a joint venture with Harmony and the Kumul Minerals Holdings.” Newmont agreed to four requests from the Government:

- TO have a operation head office based in Port Moresby;
- TO allow a local investors to buy shares in the company;
- NOT to sabotage Wafi-Golpu mid-term of operations; and,
- INCREASE local content and local employment.

Marape assured Newmont that the Government had always honoured agreements and contracts with foreign investors in the petroleum and gold mine sector. Newmont Corporation executive vice-president and chief strategy and sustainability officer Peter Toth said the company had confidence in the investment environment, labelling it “safe”. Toth said Newmont would be listed on PNG stock exchange using the PETS Depository Interest (PDI). This would allow PNG investors to directly invest in the company. Marape said Newmont would likely receive the Mining Development Contract and Special Mining Lease for Wafi-Golpu by the end of this year.

## Calls grow for moratorium on seabed mining

Caleb Fotheringham, RNZ Pacific Journalist, Radio New Zealand, 6 November 2023



Abstract abyss under sea background. coral reef underwater with sun ray. 3D rendering image. Photo: Copyright: [isam-puntarat](#)

The United Kingdom is the latest country calling for a moratorium on deep sea mining, making it the 23rd nation wanting a precautionary pause. The call came just before the International Seabed Authority or ISA meeting in Kingston Jamaica, for the third part of its 28th session, that started last Monday. Other countries like New Zealand and France have also called for a deep-sea mining moratorium before it starts.

However, the Pacific is divided with the Cook Islands and Nauru wanting it to go ahead and Fiji, Palau and Samoa being some of the nation's calling for a pause. Last week, Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown told RNZ Pacific that Cook Islands will continue its seabed "exploration phase", despite facing criticism from campaign groups. The current meeting is a continuation of what was discussed in July, where member states agreed on a non-binding timeline for mining rules to be adopted in 2025. Deep-Sea Conservation Coalition international lawyer Duncan Currie said there were "opposite currents" within the ISA with the growing list of countries calling for a moratorium. "There is a crosscurrent going on," Currie said.



Duncan Currie Photo: RNZ Pacific/Lydia Lewis

"You have 23 countries including Aotearoa New Zealand and now the United Kingdom and other significant countries, such as Canada, Switzerland, that are now saying we want a moratorium. "That directly cuts across the regulations, because of course, the regulations will allow seabed mining to start." Currie said although it is a strange situation, a similar thing happened in the late 1980s when the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities was negotiated. "That was actually finished as a template for mining in Antarctica and then after that, a number of countries said 'no, we don't want mining in Antarctica, we want a moratorium', so they agreed on a 50-year moratorium.

"The law is different, but the international political dynamic is the same. "I think the majority of public opinion gets their way then we'll get a moratorium, but a number of other countries feel differently." A big discussion point during the July meeting was the two-year rule - a provision under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that once triggered means if regulations are not adopted within two years, mining licenses could be granted under whatever rules exist. Nauru triggered the rule in 2021 that lapsed on 9 July of this year.

It means The Metals Company can apply to mine under its subsidiary Nauru Ocean Resources and the ISA would have to consider the application. "Nauru is expected to file this application to go seabed mining after the July meeting in 2024," Currie said. "There's a lot of countries that do not want to see unregulated seabed mining happen. "This is a very contentious, very legalistic and very politically contentious area, so that will really come to pass in July of next year." Currie believes there will be a lot of "legal and political wrangling" around the two-year rule between now and June next year.

### Challenge set for locals

By SAMANTHA KATI in Telefomin, The National, 3 November 2023



PEOPLE of Telefomin in West Sepik have been urged to make the best use of the newly constructed road connecting their villages. Ok Tedi Mining Limited (OTML) Community Relations superintendent Yon Buhuyana said the highway was built using the Government money through the tax credit scheme for OTML. Buhuyana told the people that the road comes with blessings and challenges. "Blessing is when you received the road and you can now access service without delays, but it also brings along social challenges and problems and you must try to manage, and continue improve your life using the resources available by using this road," he said. "The road is a blessing but it will come with good and bad things. "Accept the good things and let go of bad things."

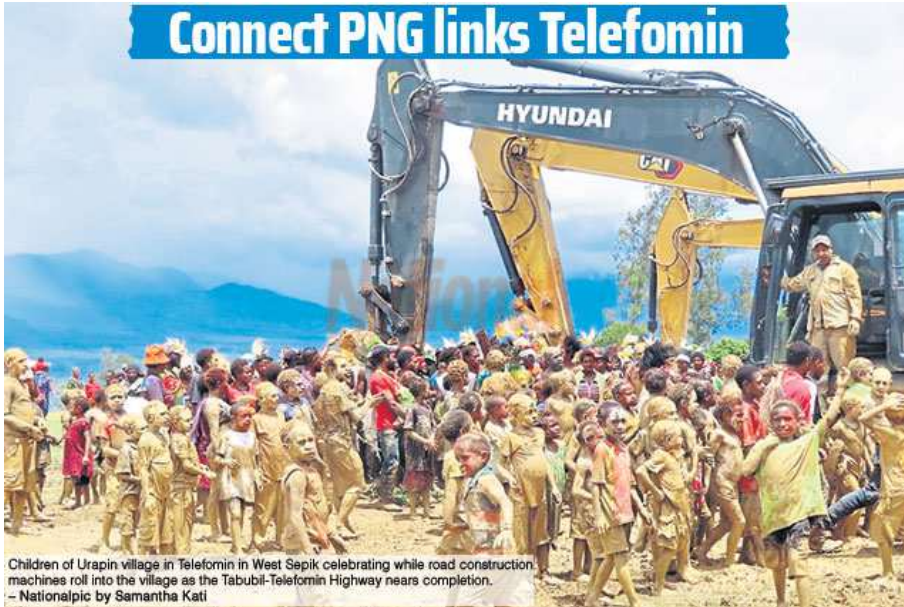
Buhuyana also said the road development would pass through their land, rivers or garden and they should accept it and should not charge unnecessary land compensation. Meanwhile, Minister for Works and Highway and Member for Telefomin Solan Mirisim said the road was now in Urapmin and would go further to Telefomin station and into Oksapin and Kopiag. "I pay my greatest commendations to Ipwenz Construction Ltd, Department of Works and Highway and OTML Tax Credit Scheme," he said. "It took five hard years to deliver the pilot track of the Tabubil-Telefomin-Oksapmin-Kopiago Road under immense pressure constituting one of the toughest land geography



in the country. “The joy we see in the eyes of people tells us what a road can bring to the people in remote and forgotten places in the country,” he said. Mirisim said this important enabling infrastructure would wipe away the tears, remove the sweat and reduce the pain of his people.

### Joy over new road

By SAMANTHA KATI in Telefomin, The National, 3 November 2023



IT was a sight to melt the heart. On Wednesday, for the first time ever, road construction machinery rolled into Urapmin village in remote Telefomin of West Sepik. Adults and children rolled in the mud, mothers and fathers hugged machine operators, wailed and shed tears of joy. Walking for days and weeks on end to reach Tabubil in Western or Vanimo in West Sepik will now be a thing of the past. Prime Minister James Marape’s Connect PNG programme has borne real fruits for this community and the feeling of intense joy and celebration was palpable in the cool mountain air. The Tabubil-Telefomin Highway has breached the Hindenburg Wall (previously thought to be impassable), and has connected Telefomin by road for the first time.

People wailed and shed tears of joy while children and some adults covered themselves in mud and stood along the new road as the machines slowly cleared the road into the village. It was later explained by a community leader Sani Sikmindep that they covered themselves in a symbolic gesture of their past when they used to trek through the bushes like animals, covered in mud and grime to reach Vanimo or Kiunga and Tabubil to market or access goods and services. Urapmin former ward councillor Rom Korangim, 72, said it was first time for his people to see excavators and other road construction equipment. Some had never seen any machine in all their lives, Korangim said. “I was born in early 1950 and I have seen and experienced a very hard life with my people,” he said.

“Some parts of West Sepik were privileged to have roads connecting their villages and communities unlike us people of Telefomin that share border with Western.” Korangim said Urapmin and other villagers were surrounded by high mountains and thick forest which made it very difficult for them to access basic services. “We grow surplus vegetables like taro, sweet potato, cabbages and carrot and look after pigs and chicken. “When we want to go sell our garden produce in Kiunga or Tabubil, we have to trek through some very risky and steep terrain for days or even a week to reach town and then return to the village with the heavy loads on our shoulders and heads,” he said. He said most times their goods got rotten along the way and never made it to the intended destinations. Korangim said if they could not go to Kiuunga or Tabubil, they usually went to Telefomin station,

about six hours walk from Urapmin to sell their products just to buy a packet rice, salt or sugar which cost about K14 to K15 a packet.

“I have seen this same scenario since the time of my great grandfathers, grandfathers, my fathers and even me and my children now and because of that people still live in their traditional way of life,” he said. “So I became a ward councillor in 1987 to 2007 and I tried my best to tell the Government to bring us road but it never eventuated until just now. “I am so happy and thank the Government and our MP Solan Mirism for this very important service.” Korangim said since the road work started, people’s lives had changed tremendously. They are able to get on the PMVs to and from Tabubil and Kiunga to sell their produce and return to their village same day. They also have money in their pocket.

Urapmin Primary School teacher Fiatha Frasthom said with no access to road the school struggled to transport school materials with teachers finding it difficult to access banking and other services. “Most times much of our school money was spent on air transport which is very expensive to transport school and curriculum materials,” he said. He said the road would help them get enough materials for schools and also help teachers and other government officers carry out their duties. The highway has been constructed using Ok Tedi Mining’s credit scheme.

**'Building resilience takes money': Deep sea mining an opportunity, Cook Islands PM says**  
Lydia Lewis, in Rarotonga, Radio New Zealand, 3 November 2023



Prime Minister Mark Brown in Rarotonga ahead of the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting starting next week. 2 November 2023 Photo: Tiana Haxton

Cook Island's Prime Minister Mark Brown says he plans on protecting the country against climate change through seabed mining. Speaking to RNZ Pacific in Rarotonga on Wednesday, Brown said he views the Cook Islands as environmental stewards of the ocean. "The issue of seabed minerals has now come to the fore and some of our member countries in the Pacific, including the Cook Islands have taken a stand to look at exploration of the potential of seabed minerals," Brown said. "But let's not forget the key theme behind our exploration phase is the protection of our marine environment to ensure that before we take the next steps, towards harvesting any of this mineral wealth, that it must be done in a way that ensures the protection of our oceans.

Brown said the Pacific leaders were "unanimous in their particular stand" and as a result "there is no mining taking place anywhere in the Pacific or the world". "We're very much focused on gaining the knowledge and understanding to enable us to make the decision whether we do take the next step, or whether we don't make the next step because it will be too environmentally damaging."

Brown believes the issue of seabed mining is similar to how the Pacific has managed its fisheries. "We have some of our member countries in the Pacific have very strong stand against any sort of commercial fishing the waters and don't allow any sort of licensing in our waters, we have some of our members who are very strongly dependent on fisheries. "What we've done as a region that is put in place a framework to manage our fisheries, which recognises and respects the position of some countries who are dependent on fisheries and recognizes and respects the position of those countries who do not allow any fisheries to take place. "We see the same sort of reciprocal respect for the positions at countries have taken in terms of seabed minerals."



The desire to explore the deep ocean for minerals, such as copper, cobalt, and manganese is not new, but only now are companies pushing for commercial-scale mining. Photo: 360info

Brown said the Cook Islands was not putting money before the environment and will not do anything that was going to harm or damage the ocean. "We're putting this in the front of being able to protect our country from the impacts of climate change. We know the impacts of climate change, the building of resilience against the impacts of climate change will cost just in our country alone hundreds of millions of dollars. That money is not coming from any of the countries that have pledged toward protecting countries like ours from the impacts of climate change." When asked if that meant protecting the Cook Islands against climate change by seabed mining, Brown said: "Protecting the country against the impacts of climate change by helping build resilience."

"Building resilience takes money. We're not getting the money that we need to be able to build the resilience from those countries who are contributing to carbon emissions and earning not billions of dollars but trillions of dollars from their carbon emissions." Some deep-sea areas within the Cook Islands contain valuable minerals. There are no companies mining the ocean floor in the Cook Islands, but exploration work is under way. Brown said Cook Islands has always maintained that it adheres to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. "These principles are enshrined in our legislation. We see ourselves as environmental stewards of our ocean, we will not do anything in our ocean that is going to harm or damage our ocean." "What we are looking at is the potential that our ocean is providing to us, to help us protect ourselves and to build the prosperity levels of our people," he said.

### **'Reconsider position' urges campaigner**

Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG) deputy coordinator Joey Tau told RNZ Pacific that Brown's comments raise the question of being environmental stewards as Pacific peoples. "In response to the Cook Islands Prime Minister there are growing concerns not only within the Pacific, but in the international community," Tau said. "Even at the International Seabed Authority, where

the international community and the science and the legal narratives around [seabed mining] call for caution, that we cannot be looking at exploiting this this rare earth minerals."

Tau said scientific data available is already saying the process of extracting seabed minerals will have major impacts on the current climate crisis. "We hope the Cook Islands Prime Minister in his leadership not only as the leader of the Cook Islands, but one who is a sponsoring state and who currently assumes the role of the chair of the Pacific Forum to reconsider his position," he said. "There is growing calls for a moratorium within the Pacific and that the international arena to take heed of these concerns and reconsider to really understand our ocean, to understand the depths and to understand the possible impact this destructive industry would have on our ocean on a place where we call home," he added.

### First ore for Frieda set for 2035

Dale Luma, Post-Courier, 2 November 2023



WITH first ore for the US\$2.8 billion Frieda River copper and gold mine in the Sepik scheduled for 2035, developer PanAust is committed to regular Government and community engagement throughout the project to ensure alignment. Managing director Daniel Zheng recently said PanAust is committed to the host communities and Papua New Guinea through establishing necessary public infrastructure, general skilled employment and creating business opportunities for local communities. The copper and gold mine project itself is a conventional electrified open pit with copper and gold deposits containing 13 million metric tonnes of copper and 20 million ounces of gold with 175,000 tonnes of annual copper production.

The project also proposes a compelling opportunity for investors through the Frieda copper and gold mine project, the Frieda River Hydroelectricity project, Sepik Infrastructure project and Sepik Power grid project. According to Frieda River Project website fact-sheet, The Frieda River Copper-Gold Project is a major undeveloped greenfield project located in the northern foothills of the New Guinea Highlands (Central Range) in Papua New Guinea's West Sepik Province. The Project is located approximately 200 kilometres from Papua New Guinea's northern coast. The Project's infrastructure and transport corridors are in the East and West Sepik Provinces. The Project's proposed initial operating life is expected to be 33 years plus a 20 year renewal may be granted. There are extension opportunities with the 100 per cent owned Nena deposit. The payback period for the project is four years post-production.

Homepage of the Chinese state-owned company Guangdong Rising Holding Group [link](#) & [link](#)

## **Petroleum sector national content policy launched**

Jeffrey Elapa, Post-Courier, 2 November 2023

THE Petroleum Sector has learnt from its past and has now developed a Petroleum Sector National Content Policy. The Petroleum Sector National Content Policy (PSNCP) was launched by the Minister for Petroleum and Energy Kerenga Kua and assisted by Minister for Labour and Employment Kessy Sawang at the Hilton Hotel in Port Moresby yesterday after the National Executive Council (NEC) approved it in July this year. Mr Kua who launched the Policy said he was blessed to be part of the development of the policy as it would go a long way to empower the citizens and the landowners of this country. He said while all other sectors would develop their National Content Policy for all economic sectors, the Petroleum sector of which he take charge of has now developed the Petroleum Sector National Content Policy that will be beneficial to all stakeholder, and particularly the landowners and the citizens of this country, as it will give more clarity in the national content benefit in the sector.

“As the country experiences increased in economic activity, we need to give rise to national content. “Since the development of the petroleum sector in 1991, up until 2010, when the first PNG LNG project was developed, the country has never had a Petroleum Sector National Content Policy and that has been the learning point for the country. “We have not developed thing to give more clarity to what benefit should go to the landowners and the citizens,” he said. He said as times goes by, the country needs to put in place policies that are consistent with the National Development Strategy and develop the Petroleum Sector National Content Policy. However, Minister Kua said the Petroleum Act section 129 – (Local Purchase Obligation) that says that the operator by license should purchase goods and services manufactured in PNG , encourage and assist citizens of PNG who want to supply those goods and services and maximising the opportunities but the National Content policy goes beyond empowering our local SMEs and our landowners companies.

The Minister said that a National Policy Office will be established with a Director to lead and optimise business for our landowners and our people. He said Simon Sinagke, the Executive Deputy Chairman Petroleum Sector National Content and his team will led the office and guide the Petroleum Sector National Content Policy so that our local landowner companies get the maximum benefit from our major project developments in the country. “We need to provide guidance. The project developers should step into our shoes and allow our local companies to be engaged. “Empathy is requires for each other for a win-win situation. I have put on the table for developers like Total Energies for the Papuan LNG to look and legitimising 33 per cent of project cost for National Content and Total Energies did not agree or refused but they said to look at it. “As a national leader, I put it on the table but if they can’t then we’ll relook at it,” he said. The Minister said National Content is just one aspect of the whole benefit from the resources sectors, we also have employment opportunities, taxes, equities and royalties and many others and if all put together we would have greater benefits,” Mr Kua said.

## **Outlook promising for resource sector, says minister**

The National, 2 November 2023

MINING Minister Sir Ano Pala says the industry is set for a rise in performance next year onwards with the Government working to boost investor and local confidence. Sir Ano said key state institutions in recent years had stepped up efforts to provide quality data and advice while improving systems within the resource sector which had resulted in positive feedback from investors. “Next year is good news because we would have made progress in other potential mining areas and the ones that we have will continue production and exploration,” he said.

“We are certain as a Government because the data tells us and that it is a job well done to the agencies that we have in this country. “We have a very credible and competent State negotiating team working for us, and including all the state institutions, providing advice and are working hard to ensure that the outcome is favourable for investors, and importantly for the people of PNG. These are just fundamentals. Once we attend to the fundamentals, everything should fall into place.

Sir Ano added that the Government was confident because the systems were working in the ministries and departments. He said there was still room for improvements in some areas, however, he was pleased with how the Government and its agencies had handled the dialogue and negotiations to bring in investment and secure better deals for PNG at the same time. Sir Ano also congratulated the Frieda River project developer for receiving its exploration licence this week after meeting all the environmental safety requirements. He said that the EL was a green light for the project to start exploration. Sir Ano said the Frieda River Project had the potential to be as big as the Porgera gold mine.

### **LOs want issues resolved before mine reopens**

The National, 2 November 2023

THE Hides Petroleum Development Licence 1 (PDL1) wellhead and facility owners from the Hiwa and Tuguba tribes want a fair deal out of the New Porgera mine. Their Hiwa Tuguba Hides Association Inc welcomed the State’s decisions to grant the Special Mining Lease 13 licence to New Porgera Limited for the mine to be reopened. The Hiwa and Tuguba beneficiaries in the Hides GTE project said that they had put on notice, both Mineral Resource Authority (MRA) and Department of Petroleum and Energy, through the State Negotiation team and developers, Santos and NPL to look into its compensation agreements or reviews of subsequent agreements pertaining to Hides PDL 1 GTE project in Komo Hulua.

Association chairman Aluja Jakari and executive members chief Amaia Ola of Hiwa and chief Walabe Mara of Tuguba Tribe demanded that State, through the MRA and Department of Petroleum, Barrick, Santos are to consider the Hides GTE project binded under the compromise agreements called the “Hiwa Tuguba Compromise agreements”. Association deputy chairman Aluja Jakari said that the State through various stakeholders including the MRA, SNT and Department of Petroleum should not turn a blind eye to the underlying issues. “If the Government wants to reopen New Porgera in Enga, it must come and negotiate with us as the landowners of the Gas which we’ve owned at Hides Gas field in Mount Gigira because of the power that we supply to Porgera mine,” he said.

“For the last 30 plus years we’ve been misled and ill-advised by outsiders and now we’ve learnt from past mistakes and all our social benefits and spin off’s and many others we missed out on. “Our elders before knew nothing of agreements and our Gas at Hides was given away by both the developer and the State. “Today, we will protect our interests at all costs even if it means stopping the reopening or forums at Hela in the name of Hides GTE power project. “We want long-term business opportunities, infrastructure projects, compensations demand package’s for the Hides PDL1 GTE Landowners alone. Jakari added that the landowners were simply requesting the Hela government, the Government and development partners to settle outstanding issues.

## **Yandera project exploration licence to end this month**

The National, 1 November 2023

THE exploration licence for the Yandera project will end this month, says Mineral Resource Authority (MRA) acting managing director Jerry Garry. Garry said that unlike the Frieda River project and Wafi-Golpu, Yandera had low rates of gold and molybdenum to give the Government impetus to advance the project to a feasibility study and to bring it to a bankable stage. “What they were trying to do is to find high grade pockets (of gold) within the deposit that would entice the development of the project,” he said. “That is why it is taking so long. “There have been a lot of exploration work to see if they can blend with the overall low grade materials to fit a plant that could be deemed as an economically viable project.”

## **Economy ‘suffered’ K1.1bil hit**

By DANIEL EALEDONA, The National, 1 November 2023

PAPUA New Guinea’s economy suffered an estimated K1.1 billion hit with the closure of the Porgera gold mine in 2020, PNG-Europe Business Council president Michael Sullivan says. Giving an assessment on the PNG economy on Monday, Sullivan explained that the gold mine contributed an estimated 1.8 per cent of PNG’s gross domestic product (GDP) in the year before its closure. “With a financial loss to the PNG economy being at approximately K1.1 billion, in the price of gold in 2019, the country’s actual loss per annum is considerably more given that from 2020 to 2022 the price of gold increased from US\$1,800 (about K6,673) per ounce (28.3g) to US\$2,000 (about K7,409),” he said.

Sullivan added that as of August the country’s economy was “a bust” which came about with the closing of Porgera and other additional factors such as the previous economic boom that PNG experienced from the mid 2000’s to late 2014. He said it was fairly normal for an economy to experience lows, particularly when no new resource development projects had come about, which attracted and strengthened investment opportunities as well as the revenues created from these extractive projects. However, with the closing of Porgera, the Coronavirus (Covid-19) period in 2020, and the Ukraine-Russia conflict, the lows in the economy had expanded into high inflation on imported goods and services and limited foreign exchange for businesses to buy imported goods and services. Sullivan admitted that these factors along with Porgera’s closure and significantly affected the national economy.

“In economics there are booms and busts,” he said. “For PNG, the economic boom is on the horizon and will be something unprecedented in the country’s history.” Sullivan explained that Porgera’s re-opening as expected would impact the country positively with investments and revenue from the first phase of production expected to boost the economy. He predicted that the proposed Papua Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) development project with other resource project developments like the P’nyang Gas project in Western and offshore Pasca deep sea gas project in Gulf, would make PNG one of the world’s leading suppliers of LNG which was a widely preferred source of energy. “When Porgera re-opens, this is an indication that PNG’s economy will start to appreciate, we are expecting improvements to the economy by 2024,” he said.

## **Mining firms receive licences**

By NATHAN WOTI, The National, 1 November 2023

FOUR exploration licences were yesterday handed over by the Government to four mining companies: New Porgera Limited (NPL), K92 mine, Ramu NiCo management (MCC) Ltd and the Frieda

River project. Mining Minister Sir Ano Pala said the four applicants had successfully met the minimum requirements to be given licences. The Government was also satisfied with the processes which the mining companies had come through. Sir Ano added that the Government was expecting the Frieda River Project to be as big as Porgera. Mayur Resource Ltd, involved in the limestone project in Central, did not attend the presentation yesterday. In total, 18 tenement agreements were signed. Fifteen were ancillary tenement agreement for the New Porgera mine project, including the exploration licence for areas under the approval for development agreements.



The other three were exploration licences for the Frieda River Project, K92 Mine, and RamuNiCo MCC. Mineral Resource Authority managing director Jerry Garry said it was the first time for the MRA and the mining minister to publicly hand over licences to mining companies. Garry said Sir Ano had demanded that the renewal of licenses, issuing of a new tenement, particularly the mining, and mining tenements, be held in public. “This would give meaning to the document,” he said. “In the past, some of us have, have gone through the process without having an official ceremony as such. “And sometimes, people take these documents away without appreciating the importance of this document. “Once we issue a tenement or extend a term of an exploration license or mining license, it is a process whereby we transfer the rights to a certain extent of the mineral resources in the country to the successful applicant.

## **Pacific - seabed**

Radio New Zealand, 1 November 2023

The United Kingdom is the latest country calling for a moratorium on deep sea mining, making it the 23rd nation wanting a precautionary pause. The International Seabed Authority or ISA is meeting again in Kingston, Jamaica, for the third part of its 28th session. It is a continuation of its July meeting where member states agreed deep sea mining rules should be finalised by July 2025. However, a lawyer for the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition Duncan Currie says the ISA is debating on mining regulations while a growing number of countries do not want it to start. "What I'd have to say is there is a crosscurrent going on because now you have 23 countries including Aotearoa New Zealand, and including now the United Kingdom and other significant countries, such as Canada, Switzerland and so on, saying 'we want a moratorium'. And that directly cuts across the regulations because the regulations will allow seabed mining to start."



## **Westpapua: TPNPB tötet sieben Minenarbeiter**

Westpapua-Netzwerk, Oktober 24, 2023

Die Angriffe – auch von Seiten der TPNPB – auf die Zivilbevölkerung in Westpapua gehen weiter. Die Nationale Befreiungsarmee Westpapas (TPNPB) hat sich zu dem Angriff auf eine Mine im Distrikt Seradala, Landkreis Yahukimo, am Montag, den 16. Oktober 2023, bekannt. Unter anderem [Jubi](#) berichtete, dass einen Tag nach dem Angriff der Sprecher der TPNPB, Seby Sambom, erklärte, dass die Goldmine in Seradala ohne gesetzliche Genehmigung betrieben werde und dass indonesische Spione als Minenarbeiter dort tätig seien. Sambom betonte, dass die TPNPB die Zivilbevölkerung wiederholt gewarnt habe, aus den Konfliktgebieten zu fliehen. „Die TPNPB werde nicht verhandeln und notfalls auch Gewalt anwenden.“

Er ermahnte alle Zivilisten, die in der Konfliktregion handwerkliche Arbeiten, Projektarbeiten oder illegalen Bergbau betreiben, die Region unverzüglich zu verlassen. Darüber hinaus forderte Sambom die Regierung auf, den Dialog als Mittel zur Lösung des anhaltenden bewaffneten Konflikts in Papua zu initiieren, und drückte die Ernsthaftigkeit der Absicht der TPNPB aus, eine Lösung zu erreichen. Berichten zufolge kamen bei dem Angriff sieben Bergleute ums Leben. Zusätzlich wurden weitere 11 Personen verletzt und drei Bagger, zwei Lastwagen und ein Lager für die Goldgewinnung in Brand gesetzt. Der Leiter der sogenannten Cartenz Peace Operation, Senior Comr. Faizal Ramadhani erklärte die Absicht, die Täter zu fassen und rechtliche Konsequenzen gegen die TPNPB durchzusetzen.