



BARRICK (NIUGINI) LIMITED
(Manager of the Porgera Joint Venture)
PO Box 484
Mount Hagen 281, WHP
Papua New Guinea

Tel: (657) 547 8200 (Porgera)
(675) 547 8201
Fax: (675) 547 8132
Tel: (675) 545 1288 (Mt Hagen)
Fax: (675) 545 1514

PO Box 851
Port Moresby 121, NCD
Papua New Guinea

Tel: (675) 322 4800
Fax: (675) 322 4824
Telex: 23369

02 October, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

First timers Porgera women bag top three awards at Bilum Festival

PORT MORESBY, 02 October , 2019, 0900HRS: Porgera women have made their mark at the annual Bilum Festival in Goroka, Eastern Highlands following their inaugural participation at the event on 14 September this year.

As first time participants, three billum weavers from Porgera bagged the top three awards in the Bilum Wear category.

The invitation to the festival came on the back of a two-week bilum weaving training that was facilitated for women in Porgera in June this year by *Jaukae Bilum Products* trainer Florence Jaukae Kamel, who is founder of the Bilum Festival.

The training was facilitated by the Porgera Joint venture (PJV) through its Community Development section. PJV also supported the women's participation at the bilum festival.

This year's bilum festival was held from 12-15 September at the Pacific Gardens Hotel. The billum festival is staged as a lead-up to the Goroka Cultural Show, which falls on 16 September annually.

Bilum weavers from Chimbu, Eastern Highlands, East Sepik and Porgera in the Enga Province, exhibited an array of billum products over three days to tourists and international buyers.

The Porgera women weavers were represented by Pauline William, a single mother from Mungulep, Alice Six, mother of five from Alipis and Yangopie Meke, a young mother from Kulapi. Kulapi and Alipis are villagers within the Porgera Special Mine Lease (SML). All three women are unemployed and depend on informal activities to sustain their livelihood.

The Porgera weavers entered four bilum dresses of the total eight that were entered for the Bilum Wear category and collected the top three awards for the category.

All of the bilum dresses submitted for judging were showcased at a gala event and were judged by an independent panel of judges. The bilum dresses were judged on the technique used, quality, and most importantly the history or story behind a piece.

For Ms Williams who designed the wining bilum dress, winning was beyond believe.

"It was my first time to weave a *bilum* dress. I had no idea how to design or take the measurements to make a bilum dress but Florence (Ms Kamel) taught us the skills and knowledge of making a bilum dress and I am overjoyed that my dress won first place", an excited Ms William said.

Porgera weavers Jacklyn Nathan and Alice Six claimed the second and third spots respectively for the bilum dress category.

PJV Community Development Manager Jacqueline Nen, who accompanied the bilum weavers to Goroka said PJV is providing such platform for local women to generate an income to sustain their livelihood.

“In talking to buyers and potential customers, the trip gave us an idea of what the consumer ultimately wants, and for our women weavers to tailor their products to meet consumer demand. There are two life skills women from the highlands region (including Porgera) are naturally good at – farming and bilum weaving. However our challenge is in ensuring that we meet market demand in all we do, so that in the process, there is economic viability in what comes naturally to our women,” Mrs Nen said.

Ms Kamel was pleased to see the Porgera women participate in the festival and expressed that for first time participants, Porgera weavers had done exceptionally well at the festival.

Ends//

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Porgera Gold Mine in Enga Province, Papua New Guinea, is operated by Barrick (Niugini) Limited (“BNL”)– through an equal partnership between Barrick Gold Corporation and Zijin Mining Group Company Limited – which owns 95 percent participating interest in the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV). The remaining 5% in PJV is owned by Mineral Resource Enga (MRE) Limited – a consortium consisting of the Enga Provincial Government and the Porgera landowners.

The Porgera Mine employs over 3,300 Papua New Guineans, and over the life of the mine has produced more than 20 million ounces of gold and contributed approximately 10% of PNG’s total annual exports.



Porgera weavers Ms William (centre) Mrs Six (right) and Mrs Meke (second from left) with models displaying the bilum dresses from Porgera. Ms William’s wining dress is in blue while the orange and yellow dresses won the second and third prizes respectively.



Ms William (right) assisting a visitor from the Australian High Commission inspecting a woven cushion cover product.



Police Minister Bryan Kramer (centre) taking a look at cushion cover products by Porgera women weavers while Ms Kamel looks on from the side



Five year old Jemina Ann Kidd is happy with her Porgera bilum purchase.

PJV Media Contact Details:
Email: PJVMedia@porgerajv.com
Phone: (+675) 547 8200