

BNL provides K800,000 in financial assistance to see Paiam District Hospital continue health services to the community

PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA – THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 2020 – Barrick (Niugini) Limited (“BNL”), majority owner and operator of the Porgera gold mine in Papua New Guinea (PNG), confirms that it will be providing financial assistance to support the continued operation of the Paiam District Hospital, following reports that the Hospital had not received adequate Government funding and would have to cease operating.

Today, a symbolic cheque to the value of K800,000 was presented to the Hospital staff led by General Surgeon Dr Jerry Hoga.

“I say thank you to Barrick for coming, this is a big amount of money, so thank you.

“A lot of our stuff was sourced from outside. The initial MOU signed with Barrick to help fund these stuff, Barrick supported us very well until the lease issue.

“Now we are short on funding and it would be hard for us to reach the end of the year and beyond that.

“Thank you that you have come to help us the people, on behalf of the Porgera Valley and also the people that come from Laigam and Kandep to receive health services here, thank you”, Dr Hoga said.

In 2019, Barrick (Niugini) Limited provided direct assistance to the Enga Provincial Health Authority totaling more than K2.25 million to support the refurbishment and re-opening of the Paiam Hospital, which had been closed for several years due to mismanagement of funds by its previous operators.

Additionally, BNL agreed to donate a further K2.6 million annually to support the operational budget of the hospital. That support, however, ceased when Prime Minister Marape announced on April 24 the Government’s rejection of BNL’s application for an extension of the Porgera Special Mining Lease (SML).

Management of the Paiam Hospital is now the responsibility of the Enga Provincial Health Authority; however, it is understood that there has been no allocation of funding from the Enga Provincial Government for 2020.

Hospital administrators reported earlier this month that due to the lack of adequate funding, the hospital would have to cease providing services to the community, and would close in September of this year.

In light of the critical importance to the Porgera and Paiam community of the health services provided by the Paiam hospital, Barrick (Niugini) Limited Executive Managing Director, Mr Tony Esplin, has announced that Barrick (Niugini) Limited, despite having no current revenue from Porgera Mine, will provide additional financial assistance to ensure that the hospital can continue to operate for the remainder of the year.

“It is concerning that the Paiam Hospital has not received adequate public funding from the Government to support its operations in 2020, particularly during the current public-health crisis,” Mr Esplin said.

“Porgera landowners and community leaders have raised serious concerns with us regarding the potential loss of this important health service and the impact that would have on local communities, and BNL shares those concerns.

“The services provided by the dedicated staff and management of the hospital are extremely important to the community in the Porgera Valley of which we are a part, and for that reason, while we remain in management of the Porgera Mine, Barrick Niugini Limited will provide financial assistance totaling more than K800,000 to support the continued operation of the hospital throughout the remainder of the year,” Mr Esplin said.

Community leaders Kensary Lawaipa and Isaac Kilap were appreciative of BNL’s timely support to the hospital.

“I represent the Paiam Town council and the community. This K800,000 to rescue Paiam Hospital, it’s a huge amount that Barrick has brought to the hospital”, Mr Lawaipa said.

“Thank you very much Barrick. I thought you left but you are still here. This is a Porgera hospital. The money that you have brought will be placed in the Paiam Hospital account,” Mr Kilap said.

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Porgera Gold Mine – Part of the Community

PJV Media Contact Details:

Email: PJVMedia@porgerajv.com

Phone: (+675) 547 8200