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MEDIA RELEASE

### **Mine workers benefit from FIFO lifestyle**

A questionnaire by the PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum has unearthed a range of benefits that the Fly-in/Fly-Out (FIFO) operating model delivers to PNG workers, their families and the broader community.

Distributed to mining projects with PNG employees engaged under FIFO arrangements, the questionnaire revealed inspiring stories and long-term benefits for employees from across PNG.

Thousands of workers within Papua New Guinea's mining industry are employed on a FIFO basis, complementing the staff drawn from local communities and host provinces.

Respondents cited a number of benefits of the employment arrangement including:

- Quality time to spend with their partners, children and extended families
- Time to take part in community obligations, volunteer at their children's schools and participate in church and community activities
- Time to focus on achieving personal goals, including home improvements and starting part-time businesses
- Opportunities to travel
- Sufficient time to switch off completely and relax away from the pressures of work

Dr Albert Mellam, Executive Director of the PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, said the responses also highlighted the financial benefits that FIFO delivers, enabling workers to secure better opportunities for their families, including education and health.

FIFO workers will typically work on a roster such as 15 days at work, then 13 days off; or 21 days on site, followed by 14 days off. Many PNG mine workers have been participating in a FIFO arrangement for 10 years or more, and express great satisfaction with the FIFO system.

"Our research shows that FIFO workers are in many instances able to achieve life goals in their home communities which would not have been possible in a traditional working arrangement," said Dr Mellam.

"Importantly, the FIFO employment model provides the best balance of shared benefits to communities right across PNG.

"It enables employees and their families to remain within their own community, rather than permanently relocating to remote areas where the majority of the mines operate. By returning on a regular basis to their families, the economic benefits of mining are spread instead of being concentrated in a single area."

Senior Engineer Joseph Palei of Porgera Joint Venture says as a FIFO worker he is able to spend more time with his family in Lae and use his days off to relax away from the worksite.

“When I return to the gold mine after 14 days, I am more focused and can perform my job to a higher level of safety and diligence,” said Mr Palei.

“Being a FIFO worker has also allowed me to build a home during field breaks and provide better opportunities for my family, including health and education.”

Highly-regarded independent mining expert Richard Jackson recently presented at a Chamber workshop, in which he explained that building a project township for a mine does not necessarily deliver a better outcome for the local community.

“Even from a landowners’ viewpoint, building a project town has some disadvantages. Many of the economic benefits derived from such a township will not accrue to local people unless a great deal of effort is put into planning for them.

“Most resource projects are located in what were previously remote areas whose relative lack of access to the outside world placed very severe restrictions on their potential for trade and economic development. In many cases, despite the construction of roads, airports and other physical forms of communications and despite the arrival of telecommunications, once the project ceases to operate, the basic fact of geography re-asserts itself. They remain remote and at a disadvantage for economic development.

“Building a mining township will provide access to modern services, but only during the life of the mine.”

Mr Jackson said there were several other ways of providing sustainable benefits for local landowners including skills training throughout the life of the project.

“This form of FIFO has a major benefit,” Mr Jackson added. “It means that mine workers spend their earnings in existing towns and villages across PNG and thus spread mining benefits in ways that no government regulations or policies can do.”

-Ends-



*Mr Joseph Palei is a Senior Engineer at Porgera Gold Mine employed under FIFO arrangement on a 21 day on site, 14 day off site roster.*



*Mr Palei says FIFO employment has allowed him more time to build his family residence in Lae, Morobe Province.*



*Ms Maria Akis is a Officer Nurse at Porgera Gold Mine Medical Centre and has been employed under FIFO arrangements for more than ten years.*



*Ms Yanda, who resides in Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province, says her work does not only cover mine employees but extends to members of the local community in Enga Province.*



*Ms Ongi Jambert has been able to spend more time with her family and take part in community obligations under FIFO arrangements with Newcrest Lihir.*



*Ms Jambert says FIFO employment has also allowed her more time to build her family residence in Kralmul Village, Mount Hagen, Western Highlands Province.*



*Ms Serah Sereman is employed by Newcrest Lihir under FIFO arrangements on a 15 day on site, 13 day off site roster. She says this allows 13 days for quality time with her children..*



*Ms Sereman has recently started renovating her home in Port Moresby and under FIFO arrangements is able to help her husband manage the team of builders.*

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