

Kiunga's Cassowary Hotel to open in January 2017

BY: Anonymous

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THE new Cassowary Hotel in Kiunga, Western Province is set to open in January 2017.

Construction currently underway, following the arrival of all 99 modules and associated construction materials in May.

The 40-room hotel, set to be the most architecturally iconic building in Kiunga and the Western Province, is the eighth major Trust investment project of the Community Mine Continuation Agreement (CMCA) communities.

It is expected to set a new standard in accommodation and related services, filling a gap in the higher end business traveller market and be a catalyst to encourage tourism.

Additionally, this investment will provide employment and spin-off business opportunities for the Province.

The Cassowary Hotel is a joint venture between CMCA Properties and the Steamships Trading Company, being supervised by their property development arm in Pacific Palms Properties and managed by their hospitality arm in the Coral Sea Hotels chain.

The hotel is being constructed by building construction firm, The George Group, a Sydney, Australia-based company, expert in commercial modular construction.

Western Province Governor, Ati Wobiro, Ok Tedi Development Foundation Board Chairman and OTML Deputy Chief Executive Officer Musje Werror, and Coral Sea Hotels General Manager Glenn Murphy officiated at the hotel's ground-breaking ceremony on June 18 in Kiunga, symbolised by the placement of the first ground floor module onto the steel foundation beams.

Representatives from the Fly River Provincial Government, OTML Kiunga, the OTDF Board & Management, PNG Constabulary, the PNG Defence Force, Lotic Bige Limited, business and church leaders, LLG Presidents, councillors, women leaders and interested community members were also in attendance at the ground breaking ceremony.

Speaking on behalf of the STC Group of Companies Glen Murphy has promised a successfully managed hotel once completed.

"Coral Sea Hotels are absolutely dedicated to making this project a success. We're very proud to be selected as the company to run this hotel project and we promise you that we'll give you a successful hotel. We promise you that we'll give you skills, we'll give you training, we'll give opportunities that you can carry through the rest of your life. We'll look at opening this hotel early next year but we'll be on site about October (2016) and at that point we'll be looking at recruitment and all the training and development necessary to open this wonderful facility," Mr Murphy said.

Murphy also urged locals to produce a lot of garden food, rice and fruit so that the hotel could buy from them once it opens, keeping the money in Western Province.

Werror said the dream to have a hotel project like the Cassowary started back in 2001 when the CMCA communities negotiated with the Government and Ok Tedi to secure investment funds amongst other benefits and ensure the mine could continue operating.

"That dream started then (2001) and we are now realising one of the fruits of that dream. The key people behind that dream, who the CMCA communities should be grateful to, are the mothers of the CMCA. Since 2001, it was the mothers who prayed, who cried, who wanted to see a difference, and see a better future for current and future generations. So much so that they took the lead and established Women's Associations, and developed plans for the eight CMCA regions, and the mine villages. These plans have been adopted by OTDF to bring much needed development services for the CMCA communities" he said.

Governor Wobiro then presented the keynote speech and said he wanted to see OTDF and the FRPG work closely together to develop both the CMCA and non-CMCA regions of the province.

"Let OTDF worry about the big things, about our investments, about our roads, our education and health. We just need to reach that understanding and arrangement as to how funds can then flow in to make that happen. I want to see that happen under my leadership because it is important for the people of Western Province. Let OTDF do the development work for us. We don't need to be convinced as to whether OTDF can do that job, it is self-evident" he said.

The hotel project is valued at a total K30 million and will generate a minimum annual 8% percent return on the K27 million investment by the CMCA Trusts and Women's Associations.

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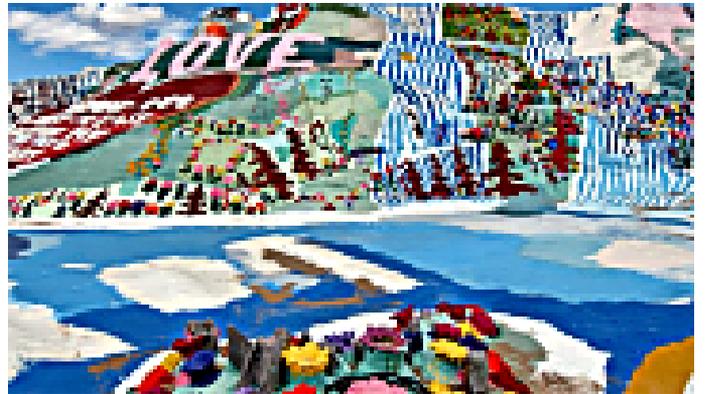
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