

Ok Tedi landowners want shares to themselves

BY: Freddy Mou

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The landowners of the Ok Tedi mine in Western Province are calling on the Government to have their 33% shares of the Ok Tedi mine to themselves and no one else.

President of Ok Tedi Mine Impacted Area Association (OTMIAA) Nick Bunn on behalf of the people of Western Province thanked the Government for the 33% direct shareholder holding in Ok Tedi Mine and says the shares will empower the people of Western to participate in the Ok Tedi Board and make decisions for its people.

“We would like to see decisions are made at the ward levels on how this funds are used for development purposes in the village and ward level.”

He said under BHP, PNGSDP and OTDF, the people of Western were receiving limited benefits and the ownership and sustainability of the benefits were minimal.

“The people were not empowered to make decisions on the use of their resources and benefits,” he said.

“These benefits are enormous and we really want to see changes at our door steps.

“The people would like to see that the Provincial Government, the district Development Authorities and the people are fully consulted and prior informed consents must be given in the sharing of the 33% direct equity for transparency and accountability purposes.”

Bunn added that the direct participation means that we now take ownership of the mine and will work together with the Government to build capacities, in order to sustain the livelihoods of the people Western.

However, South Fly MP Aide Ganas i last Thursday in Kiunga called on the government to leave the 33.3% shares for the Ok Tedi

landowners with the Fly Provincial Government.

When speaking at the official launching of impact projects in Kiunga, Ganasi said the allocation of shares now confirms who the real landowners of the mine are.

He said it was about time the people of Western Province enjoyed the benefits after being spectators in the past 40 years.

The Government has approved to give 33.3 percent of the Ok Tedi shares to the landowners and 17.4 percent to the landowners of the Panguna in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

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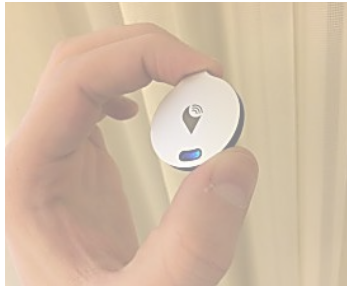
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