



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

## LAND COMMISSION OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER

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### MEDIA RELEASE

## **KAINANTU SPECIAL COMMISSION HEARING – AWARENESS AND VERIFICATION PROGRAM CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY**

The Land Commission of Papua New Guinea (LCPNG) wishes to acknowledge the successful completion of the recent awareness and verification activities undertaken in Kainantu from 14<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026 in preparation for the forthcoming Kainantu Gold Project Special Hearing.

The Land Commission highly regards the importance of conducting awareness and consultations on the process and procedures on its roles and responsibilities prior to conducting its hearings.

The awareness and verification exercise were conducted in accordance with the Commission's Rules of Engagement, the Verification Form and the awareness framework as per the published Notice of Awareness, which are designed to promote transparency, procedural fairness, community participation, and a clear understanding of the Commission's role and jurisdiction. The program provided an important opportunity for customary landowners, local stakeholders, government agencies, and project-related parties to receive information on the hearing process, registration requirements, verification procedures, and the respective responsibilities of participants appearing before the Commission.

The Land Commission is encouraged by the positive response from landowners and stakeholders throughout the awareness program. Constructive discussions were held with positive verifications on matters relating to submissions filed with LTC, clan representation, clan boundary maps, and related policy requirements for the Special Hearing process. These engagements have contributed significantly to ensuring that all

interested parties are adequately informed and prepared for the formal hearing process.

The Commission extends its sincere appreciation to the **Mineral Resources Authority (MRA)** for enabling us to be able to conduct this important awareness. MRA is the national regulator for mining and as such, we will liaise with them and seek support to carry out our mandated responsibilities according to law.

We are grateful to **Mr. Harry Kore, the Acting Managing Director of MRA** for the support and firm commitment in ensuring we are able to conduct the awareness and verification process, through the **Project Coordinator for Kainantu, Mr. Iosia Kaitolele**. His presence on the ground was important as it enabled positive discussions on the way forward in addressing this project.

The Commission further extends its appreciation and acknowledgment to **Mr. John Lewins, CEO and Director of K92 Mining Ltd** for their cooperation and support throughout the awareness and verification program. Their invaluable assistance in facilitating stakeholder engagement and logistical arrangements contributed greatly to the success of the exercise, ably led by **Mr. Stanley Komunt, the Vice President, Community Affairs and External Relations**, effectively managed by **Mr. Felix Kipalan, the General Manager, Community Affairs**.

We were so also humbled to meet and work with the ever-reliable Community Affairs Team, including the GIS Team, police, security and others etc. This great collaboration and team work enabled us to achieve the desired outcomes of this program. Furthermore, the aerial and underground trips also gave us a rare opportunity to appreciate the issues raised in relation to the surface and sub-surface land and boundary issues. We appreciate the efforts and kind assistance of all that were involved.

The Commission also acknowledges and thanks the **Governor of Eastern Highlands Province, Hon. Simon Sia, MP** for the discussions on land within the province and specific land issues within the Goroka township.

The Commission further acknowledges the **Kainantu District Administrator, Mr. Dickson Penai**, local-level government leaders, and community representatives for their continued support and commitment to

ensuring that the process is conducted in an orderly, transparent, and inclusive manner.

Particular appreciation is extended to the **Agarabi Local Level Government Administration** for making the LLG Council Chambers available for use during the awareness and verification process and for further use as the venue for the Special Commission Hearing. The confirmation and use of the LLB Chambers as the hearing venue provide an appropriate and accessible forum for the Commission to undertake its statutory responsibilities. We sincerely hope our choice of the LLG Chambers will result in improvements made on the facility to ensure it is conducive for the formal hearings.

In addition to matters directly associated with the Kainantu Gold Project, the awareness visit also provided a valuable opportunity to engage with stakeholders on several other important land administration matters affecting the region that fall under our jurisdiction.

Discussions on land concerning the **Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)** issues, land matters relating to **Kainantu Township, Goroka Township**, and other land administration concerns were productive and it highlighted the importance of continued collaboration between the Land Commission, government agencies, provincial authorities, and local communities.

The Land Commission remains committed to conducting the Kainantu Special Hearing in a manner that is independent, transparent, fair, and consistent with the provisions of the **Land Commission Act 2022** and all applicable laws. The Commission encourages all interested parties to continue engaging constructively with the process and to ensure that relevant information and evidence are presented through the appropriate channels during the hearing.

The Land Commission is mindful of existing or pending court proceedings which may restrict the Land Commission from further involvement and as such, is humbly calling on all concerned parties to withdraw any current court proceedings to allow the Land Commission to address this issue amicably.

As was stated during the awareness and consultations, all **legal issues** will be considered during the first formal hearing and as such, parties are refrained from discussing such issues in public. Social media communications on all media platforms should be discouraged as these

may amount to contempt charges being filed once the Commission resumes its hearings.

The team is now collating all the verified information and once completed, we shall issue the Notice of Hearing for Kainantu Gold Mine, which by law, requires 30 days' notice. All registered parties will be informed accordingly.

The Kainantu Gold Mine Project is a pending matter under Section 101 of the *Land Commission Act 2022* and as such, we will be formally issuing the Notice of Hearing soon once we are ready. We will be seeking financial support from the Government to enable us to conduct the hearing. We are targeting August 2026 to start the hearing.

The Commission will be publishing its **Rules** and **Practice Directions** as part of the consultation and awareness program prior to the Formal Notice being issued for the hearing.

We seek everyone's understanding and cooperation in ensuring this is addressed as a matter of urgency.

**Issued by:**

**Mr. Molean Kilepak**  
**Chief Commissioner**

Dated 01<sup>st</sup> July 2026